

Calling Letter



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

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

9 November 2018

Dear Friends,

We are looking forward to our first residential meeting which will be at Woodbrooke in Birmingham from Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th November. We hope that we will have a good time of fellowship one with another and of listening to the guidance of the Spirit. We know that we will be sharing information and growing in our understanding of our faith and the action to which it leads, and, at this meeting in particular, we look for a greater understanding and sharing of how we work together so that we may joyfully step forward. We hope we will become drawn together, united in recognising and owning the direction in which we are travelling, following the Inner Guide.

The agenda is attached but if you are able to arrive in the afternoon there will be a learning session at 4.30 with Woodbrooke tutors on 'Doing Quaker business in a large meeting'. If you have not yet registered to attend this and would like to please contact Graham Spackman on grahams@quaker.org.uk

I hope you will be able to arrive in time for supper – we will gather in the Cadbury Room (at 5.45) before going into the meal in our home groups. In the Friday evening session we will gather and deal with necessary business.

On Saturday morning we will have a chance to engage with representatives from all the central committees – we have received their reports to us and hope that they will share with us the way in which their committee's work has strengthened the life of Quakers in Britain and what work has been taken up or laid down and what challenges lie ahead for them. This is a chance for us to interact with the committees so that we can better understand the issues in their work.

Later in the day we hear from trustees and have home group time together. We hope the evening session will have a lighter feel in that we will be hearing about the 'Speaking out' that has taken place on our behalf from the centre and also sharing how the truth prospers in our own area meetings. Sunday morning we are back to our formal agenda and deciding the way in which we discharge our responsibility over the sustainability testimony within BYM and summarising how we work together to guide the trustees of our centrally-managed work.

If you have any queries about the weekend or the papers, please do get in touch with us by emailing sufferings@quaker.org.uk. I trust your journeys go well and look

forward to worshipping with you all.

In peace



Anne Ullathorne, Clerk

Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

MfS 2018 11	Forward Agenda
MfS Arrangements Group	October 2018 meeting minutes
MfS 2018 11	Practicalities and welcome
MfS 2018 11 06	Appeal to Meeting for Sufferings
MfS 2018 11 07	Church Government Advisory Group report
MfS 2018 11 08	Children and Young People's Work Advocates
MfS 2018 11 09	Quaker Recognised Bodies
MfS 2018 11 10	MfS Annual Report to Yearly Meeting
MfS 2018 11 11	Central & Standing Committees reports
MfS 2018 11 12	Reports from other European Yearly Meetings
MfS 2018 11 14a	Priority-setting for Centrally Managed Work
MfS 2018 11 14b	BYM Trustees strategic priorities
MfS 2018 11 15	Home Groups list
MfS 2018 11 16	Speaking Out
MfS 2018 11 17	Committee on Clerks review
MfS 2018 11 18	Living up to our Sustainability Commitment

n.b. the following papers will be available on the day of the meeting:

MfS 2018 11 04	Membership
MfS 2018 11 13	Appointments

A reminder of how you can prepare for the meeting

- Register (hopefully you have already done this)
- Go through the 'Essential Information' and read the 'Practicalities and welcome' paper
- Read the agenda papers in good time
- Contact the other representative/alternate from your area meeting or body
- Send any comments or questions to the clerks, before the meeting
- Bring something to share which illustrates an example of Quaker life and witness in your Area. Be prepared to describe the story briefly, perhaps with a picture, an object or a short video. It might be something related to the work of Quaker Life, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Christian and Interfaith Relations, or Quakers around the world.



Britain Yearly Meeting
of the Religious
Society of Friends

Meeting for Sufferings 23-25 November 2018

Woodbrooke Quaker Conference Centre, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ

Agenda

Main sessions will take place in the Cadbury Room.

	Item	Paper
Friday		
16.00	Arrivals	
16.30	Doing Quaker business in a large meeting An opportunity for learning/induction with Woodbrooke tutors	
17.45	Meet in Cadbury Room for initial introductions	
18.00	Supper	
19.15	Session 1	
1	Opening worship	
2	Welcome and introductions	
3	Agenda Adoption and acceptance of the agenda.	
4	Membership (Tabled Paper)	MfS 2018 11 04 (to note)
5	Court and Prison Register (if required, a paper will be tabled)	
6	Appeal to Meeting for Sufferings	MfS 2018 11 06 (for decision)
7	Church Government Advisory Group report Mark Tod, convenor of CGAG will speak to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Nominations Committee: revised text • Yearly Meeting Nominating Group: revised text • Implications of the decision to revise the Book of Discipline 	MfS 2018 11 07 (for decision)

	Item	Paper
8	Children and Young People's Work Advocates To receive Quaker Life Central Committee's minute regarding this AM role	MfS 2018 11 08 (for decision)
9	Quaker Recognised Bodies To register Quaker Recognised Bodies	MfS 2018 11 09 (for decision)
10	Meeting for Sufferings annual report to Yearly Meeting To receive the draft report	MfS 2018 11 10 (for consideration)
21.15	Epilogue	
Saturday		
07.45	Breakfast	
09.00	Session 2	
	Worship	
11	Central and standing committees	MfS 2018 11 11 (for information)
	Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations Introduced by Rowena Loverance, clerk of QCCIR	
	Quaker Life Central Committee Introduced by Jocelyn Bell Burnell, clerk of QLCC	
10.45	Short Break (please hold the silence in the meeting room)	
	Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee Introduced by Jeff Beatty, Clerk of QPSWCC	
	Quaker World Relations Committee Introduced by Ann Floyd, clerk of QWRC	
12	Reports from other European Yearly Meetings To receive reports from Friends appointed to attend other European YM's as representatives from Britain Yearly Meeting in 2018.	MfS 2018 11 12 (for information)
12.30	Lunch	
13.30	Free time	

	Item	Paper
16:00	Session 3	
13	Appointments (Tabled Paper) To consider nominations brought by to MfS from Central Nominations Committee.	MfS 2018 11 13 (for approval)
14	BYM Trustees report Ingrid Greenhow, clerk of BYM Trustees will report on their work. The two papers for this item were seen by MfS in October.	MfS 2018 11 14a and MfS 2018 11 14b (for consideration)
15	Home groups To reflect together on reports from central and standing committees, and from BYM Trustees	MfS 2018 11 15 (for information)
18.00	Supper	
19.15	Session 4	
16	Speaking Out Reflecting together, with Home Groups: sharing news about local activities and speaking out	MfS 2018 11 16 (for information)
21.15	Epilogue	
Sunday		
08.00	Breakfast	
09.00	Session 5	
	Worship	
17	Committee on Clerks Rhiannon Grant will speak to the report of the review group.	MfS 2018 11 17 (for decision)
18	Living up to our sustainability commitment To consider proposals for taking this work forward.	MfS 2018 11 18 (for decision)
19	As led	
11.15	Short Break (please hold the silence in the meeting room)	
11:45	Worship	
12.30	Lunch and departures	

Meeting for Sufferings: 23 - 25 November 2018

Practical information

Arrivals

Members of Meeting for Sufferings will be arriving at different times on 23rd November.

We assume you'll arrive in time for our introduction at 17:45, unless you tell us otherwise. Please note that the Friday evening meal is from 18.00 to 19.00. Food cannot now be kept aside now for late arrivals, so if you know you'll be arriving later, you will need to make your own catering arrangements.

When you arrive, please check in at the main Woodbrooke reception desk, staff can then let you know where your room is, either at Woodbrooke or at The Beeches.

Members of the Support Group will be available in the hall from 17:00. You will be able to collect any tabled/late papers from there.

Friday afternoon

There will be a learning/induction session on 'Doing Quaker business in a large meeting', designed to help Friends as members of MfS. The session will be delivered by Woodbrooke tutors, from 16.30 to 17:45 (just before the evening meal).

To attend the session, please email Graham Spackman on grahams@quaker.org.uk in advance, so we can confirm numbers with Woodbrooke.

Accommodation

Woodbrooke allocates rooms, and we've passed on everyone's stated preferences. Some Friends will be staying at The Beeches, which is about 20 minutes' walk away, or 5 minutes in a car. We'll do our best to co-ordinate lifts and/or walking together. All meals, including breakfast, will be at Woodbrooke.

Meals

The Woodbrooke dining room can't hold all of us at one time. Ideally, we'll avoid all arriving at once, and forming an exceptionally long queue. Once you've finished, please leave the table to make room for other Friends.

Woodbrooke staff

We will be a large group, and will stretch Woodbrooke to the limit. Woodbrooke staff and Friends in Residence will be working hard to help us. Please help them do that!

Support Group

Members of the Support Group will be available throughout the weekend, based in the Rendell Harris room.

Meetings

All the main sessions will be held in the Cadbury Room. Information about home group locations will be provided during the meeting.

Worship

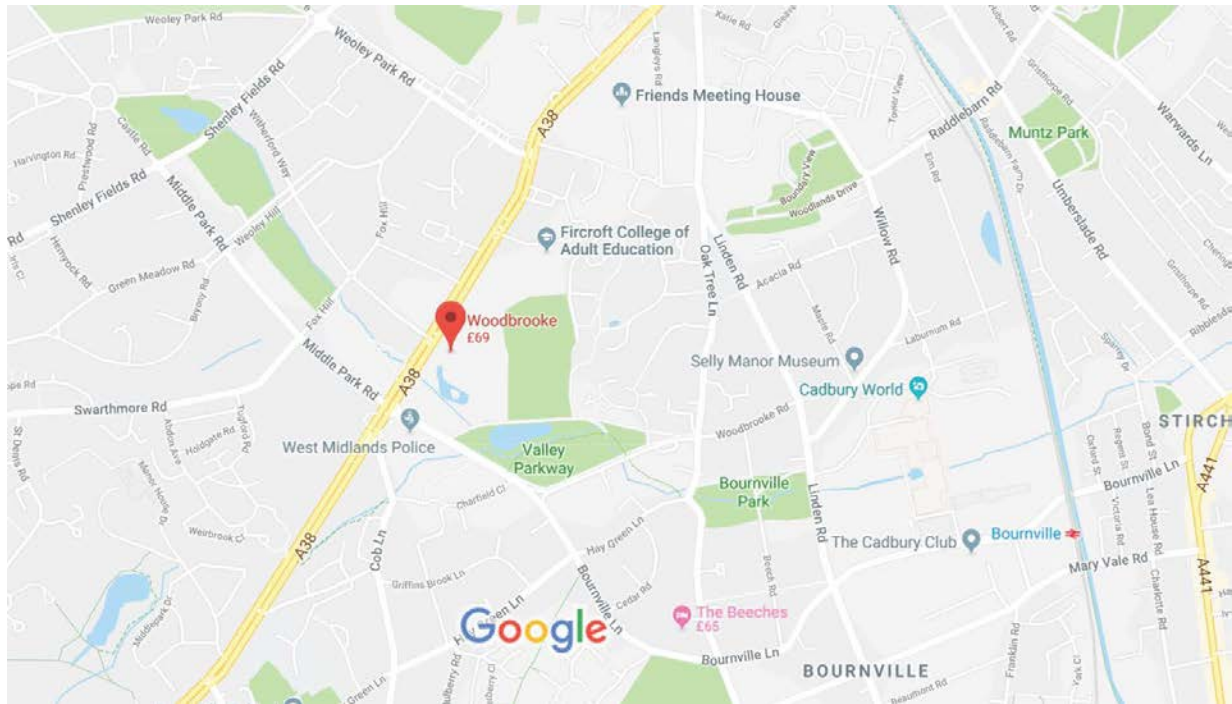
The agenda has been planned so that open worship is threaded through our time together.

At Woodbrooke, morning worship (in the Quiet Room) and epilogues (in the Cadbury Room) are open to anyone who is in the building (i.e. not only members of Meeting for Sufferings). Epilogues will be led by members of our Support Group.

Departures

Our meeting will continue until lunchtime on Sunday. Woodbrooke can provide packed lunches (on request) for those who need to leave before the shared meal; and can help with information about buses, taxis etc.

Travel directions to Woodbrooke



Getting there

Woodbrooke is in Selly Oak – around five miles south of Birmingham city centre. Visitors are encouraged to travel by public transport where possible. For satnavs use the postcode: B29 6LJ

Rail

Trains arrive into Birmingham New Street, Moor Street and Snow Hill stations. From New Street Station you can catch a bus or taxi (see below).

Local trains from New Street to Selly Oak take about 10 minutes. From Selly Oak it is a short bus ride on the 63 or a 20-25 minute walk. Taxis from Selly Oak station need to be pre-booked. (For The Beeches, Bournville station, on the same line, is nearer).

Coach

National Express coaches terminate at Digbeth Coach Station in Birmingham, a 10-15-minute walk from New Street from where you can travel by bus, taxi or train.

Bus

Number 63 bus from Birmingham New Street station to Woodbrooke. The bus stop, NS3, is near Boots on St. Martins Queensway. Ask the driver for the ‘Witherford Way’

stop. After passing through Selly Oak, you will pass Sainsbury's (on your right) and you will go past the Christian Life Church (on your left).

The Woodbrooke stop is the one after George Cadbury Hall. Get up to get off the bus as it begins to go down the hill. Buses accept the exact fare only so please have plenty of change with you. For more information visit <http://nxbus.co.uk/local/west-midlands/B29%206LJ>

Taxi

TOA Taxis 0121 427 8888.

Road

Woodbrooke is accessible from the A38 Bristol Road.

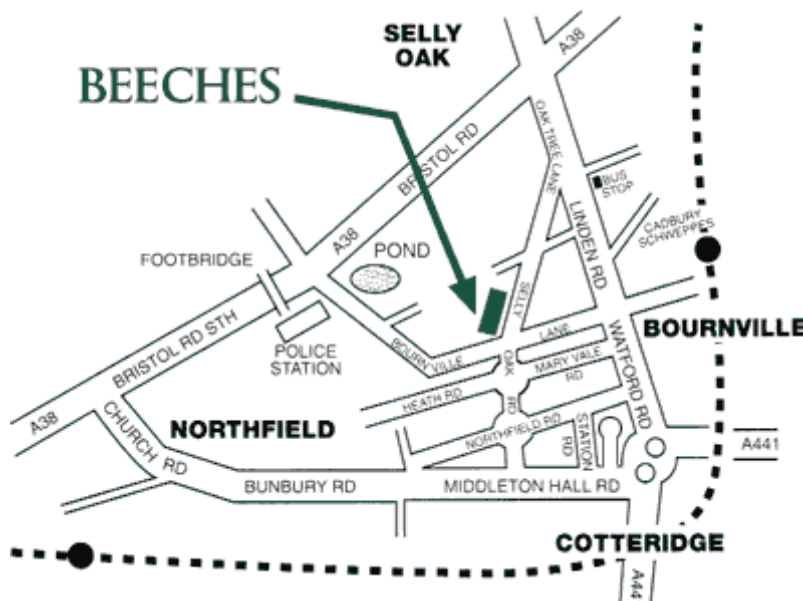
Coming south (from Birmingham city centre towards Longbridge): travel through Selly Oak, passing a Sainsbury's supermarket on your right. Continue straight ahead; when the road slopes downhill, pass Fircroft College on your left. Woodbrooke is on the left shortly afterwards.

Travelling north on the A38 (towards Birmingham city centre): after leaving Northfield, continue straight ahead. When you pass under a footbridge, look out for Woodbrooke 200 yards on the right, on the opposite side of the carriageway. Go further up the hill and do a U-turn through the next gap (as signposted) to come back down the hill to the Woodbrooke entrance.

To get to the A38

- From M6 – Junction 6 towards the M38 Aston Expressway which will turn into the A38 Bristol Road. Continue for around five miles.
- From M40 – join the M42, exiting at Junction 2. Take the A441 towards Birmingham (signposted Cadbury World). After six miles, turn left onto the A38 Bristol Road.
- From the M5 Junction 4 – A38 (travelling north) for approximately six miles.

The Beeches



For directions & traffic information use this link <http://www.multimap.com>

The Beeches

Selly Oak Road, Bournville,
Birmingham, B30 1LS
Tel: 0121 433 3311
Email: beeches@chartridge.co.uk

Meeting for Sufferings Forward Agenda – November 2018

The following items are currently proposed or being considered by Arrangements Group. These plans may change.

As in 2018, reports from all four standing committees are scheduled to come to the December meeting. This approach will be tried for at least two years.

Feb 2019	Post-truth world - responses to Southern Marches AM concern MfS Annual Report to Yearly Meeting
April 2019	Report on Vibrancy in Meetings and next steps Inclusion & diversity – taking forward the call from YM 2017 minute 38 (second consideration)
July 2019	Yearly Meeting – reflections
Oct 2019	Residential meeting
Dec 2019	Young People’s Participation Day Reports from four central/standing committees Quaker Council for European Affairs triennial report

Other matters expected to return in due course:

- **Pastoral and spiritual support to people who are not able to regularly attend local meetings** – sent to Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC), for advice, in February 2015 (update received Feb 2018)
- **Concern about the poverty of the public services** – sent to Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) in December 2017
- **Payment of taxes for terrorism and war in the UK** – sent to QPSWCC in December 2017
- **Gender identity, transgender and non-binary inclusion** – sent to QLCC in April 2017; QLCC has been reporting on progress
- **Religious understandings** – about how we share our differing religious understandings - sent to QLCC in July 2018



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

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

22 October 2018 at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

Present: Margaret Bryan (convenor), Karen Draycott, James Johnson, Mark Lilley, Juliet Prager, Anne Ullathorne

Prevented: Gill Greenfield

1. Reflections on last Meeting for Sufferings

We have received feedback from Meeting for Sufferings support group. Yet again the agenda was very full, and we have considered the discipline of the meeting and its function in testing.

2. Meetings attended by the clerks

Anne has attended a meeting of central committee clerks, part of Quaker Life Representative Council and spoke at the BYMSG sustainability gathering.

3. Forward agenda

We have reviewed our forward agenda which informs our planning.

4. Agenda planning for the next meeting

We have planned the agenda for the residential meeting in November.

5. Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee meeting on 28 October

Karen is attending on our behalf and we have agreed the text of our submission.

6. Date and time of next meetings (2018/2019)

Friday 21 December (9.30-2pm)

Monday 18 February 2019 (11-3.30pm)

Thursday 30 May 2019 (11-3.30pm)

Thursday 22 August 2019 (11-3.30pm)

Thursday 31 October 2019 (11-3.30pm)

Margaret Bryan
Convenor

Appeal to Meeting for Sufferings

Introduction

An appeal has been sent to the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings. Between meetings, the clerks have agreed that an appeal group should be established. Central Nominations Committee has been asked to bring names for service on the group.

Background

Guidance for dealing with disputes among Friends is set out in sections 4.23 to 4.26 of *Quaker faith & practice*. Briefly: if an area meeting makes a decision about an individual, which the individual is dissatisfied with, the individual may appeal. The area meeting concerned is expected first to try to settle the matter internally; and if that is unsuccessful, to ask a neighbouring area meeting to appoint an appeal group. If the appellant remains dissatisfied with the decision of the appeal group, he or she may then appeal to Meeting for Sufferings (MfS).

MfS in April 2018 (Paper **MfS 2018 04 06** and minute **MfS/18/04/05**) agreed to recommend changes to our Appeals Process to be considered by Yearly Meeting 2019. This includes restricting the scope of appeals and removing the intermediate steps listed in the paragraph above. MfS asked Church Government Advisory Group to draft appropriate text for *Quaker faith & practice*, and this work is in progress.

The appeal

As noted in *Quaker faith & practice*, the nature of the appeal and name of the appellant should be kept confidential as far as is possible or is desired by the appellant; so MfS is not given any details.

The Recording Clerk has been in touch with the appellant and with the area meeting, and confirms that the appeal would be acceptable under both the existing appeals process and the proposed process. In addition, he recommends that the current intermediate step of involving another area meeting should be omitted.

The appeal group will be asked to consider and determine whether or not the appeal should be allowed and whether any further recommendations should be made.

Central Nominations Committee has been asked to bring names of five Friends, who should be independent of the area meeting concerned.

Church Government Advisory Group report on revisions to *Quaker faith & practice*

Summary

Yearly Meeting will need to decide how to deal with any necessary revisions to church government during the years that a new book of discipline is being prepared.

Decision needed

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to consider whether it is able to take on the responsibility for keeping up-to-date the current Church Government text included in *Quaker faith & practice*.

Background

Yearly Meeting 2018 agreed to a complete revision of *Quaker faith & practice*. This will take some years to complete. During that time, the current constitutional text in the church government chapters is likely to become out of date.

What body is responsible for suggesting changes to the current text

Church Government Advisory Group, (CGAG) considered what its role might be during the revision process. It minuted in March 2018 “We are charged with keeping the Church Government passages of *Quaker faith & practice* up to date, and it is our view that it would be best if appropriate changes continue to be made, particularly where there has been an alteration in procedure, and what is said in the existing text is now wrong or misleading.”

There is no definite list of what parts of *Quaker faith & practice* constitutes our current church government. CGAG generally restricts itself to considering the text of Chapters 3-9, 11, and 14-17.

What might need to be changed during the revision period?

CGAG has already prepared text needed to reflect changes to Yearly Meeting Nominating Group, Central Nominations Committee, and the appeals process.

Additionally, Meeting for Sufferings will be receiving a report reviewing the work of Committee on Clerks, it is also appointing a group to review Quaker Stewardship Committee. The terms of reference of BYM Trustees are also being reviewed. Any of these reviews may result in revisions to our current constitution being desirable. Further reviews may be agreed. There may also be regulatory or legislative changes that would make changing church government necessary. Leaving the text unchanged would not be an option in such circumstances.

Recommended solution

The Recording Clerk suggests that Yearly Meeting should delegate the ability to approve interim changes to Church Government to Meeting for Sufferings. This has the advantage of enabling necessary changes to our discipline to be made, without taking up session time at Yearly Meeting. During the revision process, Friends might not consider making changes to the current text is a priority for using our precious time together. It would also avoid confusion about what is text for the new, revised, book of discipline, and what is merely an update of existing church government.

Yearly Meeting would have the opportunity to see what has been accepted in its name as part of the annual report of Meeting for Sufferings to Yearly Meeting, and subsequently these changes would appear in Yearly Meeting Proceedings. The changes made would be included in *Quaker faith & practice* online, which would remain the definitive church government text until replaced by the new book of discipline approved by Yearly Meeting in due course.

Michael S Booth
Church Government Advisor

Church Government Advisory Group updated text proposed for *Quaker faith & practice* paragraphs 4.23-4.26

Summary

This paper contains updated text proposed for *Quaker faith & practice*. The text reflects changes to the appeals process recommended by Meeting for Sufferings in April 2018.

Action required

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to consider the proposed text. After making any amendments desirable, Meeting for Sufferings is asked to forward the text to Yearly Meeting for consideration, alongside the recommendations to change the appeals process.

Introduction

Church Government Advisory Group (CGAG) suggests revised text to *Quaker faith & practice* paragraphs 4.23-4.26, in response to the report offered to Meeting for Sufferings by the Appeal Review Group and the subsequent minute MfS/18/04/05. CGAG has endeavoured to incorporate the three recommendations contained within the Sufferings minute. The main parts of the recommendations have resulted in relatively straightforward amendments to 4.25 and 4.26; the second part of recommendation (a) impinges on other parts of *Quaker faith & practice*, notably 10.21-10.24, which are not usually within the scope of CGAG's work. CGAG suggests an addition to the current text of 4.23, reflecting a need that is wider than that envisaged when the original 4.23 was drafted. CGAG is aware that the two paragraphs now suggested under 4.23, together with paragraphs 10.21-10.24, could usefully be further reconsidered, but suggests that this might best be left for the full revision of our book of discipline.

The proposed text

In the tables below, the current text is on the left and the proposed text on the right. On the right hand side, deleted text is shown with a strike-through and new text is shown underlined.

Current text	Proposed Text
Disputes among Friends	Disputes among Friends <u>and disunity</u>
<p>4.23</p> <p>Area meetings are recommended to appoint a group of experienced and knowledgeable Friends who would be available to give general assistance in the amicable settlement of disputes. If help from outside the area meeting is needed, enquiry should be made of the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, who may suggest Friends qualified to give it. Techniques of problem-solving, mediation, counselling or</p>	<p><u>Our meeting communities are not immune to conflict but we are sometimes ill prepared or unwilling to accept it and engage with it. In times of conflict we are required to show love and face our difficulties so that we can move forward together in unity. It will not always be possible to find conflict resolution and in such cases appropriate conflict transformation should be considered. Further guidance on conflict in meetings can be found in 10.21-10.24 Conflict within the meeting.</u></p> <p>Area meetings are recommended to appoint a group of experienced and knowledgeable Friends to give</p>

<p>meetings for clearness may be appropriate in particular instances where disputants wish to mitigate the consequences of confrontation.</p> <p>It should be borne in mind that Friends were among the pioneers of conflict resolution as a distinct activity and have constantly sought to promote reconciliation in the wider world.</p> <p>See also <u>10.21–10.24</u> Conflict within the meeting & <u>20.67–20.75</u> Conflict</p>	<p>general assistance in the amicable settlement of disputes <u>among Friends</u>. If help from outside the area meeting is needed, meetings should ask <u>Quaker Life the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings</u>, who to suggest Friends and others able to give it. Techniques of problem-solving, mediation, counselling or meetings for clearness may be appropriate in particular instances where disputants wish to mitigate the consequences of confrontation. It should be borne in mind that Friends were among the pioneers of conflict resolution as a distinct activity and have constantly sought to promote reconciliation in the wider world.</p> <p>See also 20.67–20.75 Conflict</p>
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Right of appeal against decisions	
4.25	
Current text	Proposed Text
<p>If a member is dissatisfied with a final decision of an area meeting affecting her or him (e.g. if membership has been terminated) and feels that the area meeting has acted unjustly, unreasonably, with insufficient knowledge or not in right ordering, the member may appeal in writing to the area meeting clerk. The nature of the appeal and name of the appellant should be kept confidential as far as is possible or is desired by the appellant. The area meeting shall then appoint a small group of disinterested Friends to try to settle the matter (see <u>4.23</u>). If this fails, the area meeting shall then ask a neighbouring area meeting or meetings to appoint a small group of disinterested elders, or one drawn from those exercising eldership, to act as an appeal group. The appeal group should meet with the appellant and representatives of the respondent area meeting and issue a judgement to that area meeting, as far as possible without breaking the confidentiality of the</p>	<p>If a member is dissatisfied with a final decision of an area meeting affecting her or him (e.g. if membership has been terminated) and feels that the area meeting has acted unjustly, unreasonably, with insufficient knowledge or not in right ordering, <u>them personally and adversely, and provided that</u></p> <p><u>i) the decision concerns the termination of membership; and</u> <u>ii) the grounds of the appeal are that the decision was not made in right ordering, or was not made with knowledge of the relevant facts, or was unreasonable; and</u> <u>iii) experienced mediators have been involved and the matter is not resolved;</u></p> <p>the member may appeal in writing to the area meeting clerk. The nature of the appeal and name of the appellant should be kept confidential as far as is possible or is desired by the appellant. The area meeting shall then appoint a small group of disinterested Friends to try to settle the matter (see 4.23). If this fails, the area meeting shall then ask a neighbouring area meeting or meetings to appoint a small group of disinterested elders, or one drawn from those exercising eldership, to act as an appeal group. The appeal group should meet with the appellant and representatives of the respondent area meeting and issue a judgement to that area meeting, as far as possible without breaking the confidentiality of the parties. The area meeting should accept the</p>

<p>parties. The area meeting should accept the judgement of the appeal group, at which stage the decision should become as public as is needed for the matter to be acted upon.</p> <p>If the appellant remains dissatisfied with the decision of the appeal group, he or she may then appeal to Meeting for Sufferings against the decision of the area meeting. On receiving such an appeal, the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings shall report this to the area meeting and shall request Meeting for Sufferings to appoint an appeal group of five Friends, who should be independent of the area meeting concerned, to make all such enquiries as seem to them desirable, from the member concerned and from others having relevant knowledge, to consider and determine whether or not the appeal should be allowed and whether any further recommendations should be made. In conducting such enquiries the healing power of worship will be helpful. The decision of the Friends so appointed shall be final and be communicated directly to the parties concerned. The appeal group shall inform Meeting for Sufferings that they have reached a decision and communicated it to the parties concerned, and Meeting for Sufferings shall record this in its minutes without breaking the confidentiality of the parties concerned. Guidelines for the conduct of an appeal group are obtainable from <u>the Recording Clerk (new window)</u>.</p>	<p>judgement of the appeal group, at which stage the decision should become as public as is needed for the matter to be acted upon.</p> <p>If the appellant remains dissatisfied with the decision of the appeal group, he or she may then appeal to Meeting for Sufferings against the decision of the area meeting. On receiving such an appeal, the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings shall report this to the area meeting and shall request Meeting for Sufferings to appoint an appeal group of five Friends, who should be independent of the area meeting concerned. The group shall make all such enquiries as seem to them desirable, from the member concerned and from others having relevant knowledge, to consider and determine whether or not the appeal should be allowed and whether any further recommendations should be made. In conducting such enquiries the healing power of worship will be helpful. The decision of the Friends so appointed shall be final and be communicated directly to the parties concerned. The appeal group shall inform Meeting for Sufferings that it has reached a decision and communicated it to the parties concerned, and Meeting for Sufferings shall record this in its minutes without breaking the confidentiality of the parties concerned. Guidelines for the conduct of an appeal group are obtainable from the Recording Clerk.</p>
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4.26	
Current text	Proposed Text
If an area meeting is dissatisfied with a final decision of another area meeting	If an area meeting is dissatisfied with a final decision of another area meeting that affects

<p>that affects it, the dissatisfied area meeting may appeal to Meeting for Sufferings against such decision. The procedure on such an appeal shall be similar to that on an appeal by a member personally, but prior notice shall be given by the dissatisfied area meeting to the other area meeting concerned before invoking this appeal procedure.</p>	<p>it, the dissatisfied area meeting may appeal to Meeting for Sufferings against such decision. The procedure on such an appeal shall be similar to that on an appeal by a member personally, but prior notice shall be given by the dissatisfied area meeting to the other area meeting concerned before invoking this appeal procedure. <u>should seek advice from the Recording Clerk.</u></p>
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Questions or queries

Michael Booth, Church Government Adviser can respond to any question or queries about this proposed text: email michaelsb@quaker.org.uk telephone 020 7663 1023.

Mark Tod
 Convener, Church Government Advisory Group

Church Government Advisory Group updated text proposed for *Quaker faith & practice* sections 6.21 and 6.22

Summary

This paper contains updated text proposed for *Quaker faith & practice*. The text reflects changes agreed by Yearly Meeting to the Central Nominations Committee and the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group.

Action required

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to consider the proposed text. After making any amendments desirable, it is asked to forward the text to Yearly Meeting for its consideration.

Introduction

Yearly Meeting 2016, in minute 28, asked that new text for sections 6.21 (Central Nominations Committee) and 6.22 (Yearly Meeting Nominating Group) be prepared, taking into account changes to terms for reference for both the nominating bodies. The existing text contains lists of required nominations. Consulting with the Recording Clerk, and after considering this carefully, we feel able to recommend removing the list of appointments entirely. This is precisely the sort of detail that is likely to end up in the supplementary material of our next book of discipline.

The proposed text

In the tables below, the current text is on the left and the proposed text on the right.

6.21 Central Nominations Committee	
Current text	Proposed text
<p>The Central Nominations Committee is a standing committee appointed by Yearly Meeting (6.22) to bring forward names for service as required both by Yearly Meeting in session and by Meeting for Sufferings. It consists of twenty-seven members, with one third of the members retiring annually at the rise of Yearly Meeting and not eligible for immediate reappointment. The clerk and assistant clerk are appointed by the committee from within its number and may serve a further year beyond the initial appointment period.</p> <p>The Central Nominations Committee brings forward names to each Yearly Meeting for the following appointments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee: six Friends to serve for three years (6.18); b. Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee: two Friends to serve during the period of Yearly Meeting (6.20); 	<p>Central Nominations Committee is responsible for finding names for appointments as required by Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings, and for overseeing and developing nominations procedures. It is appointed by Yearly Meeting on the nomination of Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (6.22). Members are appointed on a rotating triennial basis. Terms of reference for the committee are agreed by Yearly Meeting.</p> <p>Central Nominations Committee consults with the committees and other bodies for which it is seeking names and ensures that up-to-date terms of reference and other information required are obtained in good time. The committee seeks nominations on the basis of its own discernment and in line with the general guidance on nominations set out in 3.22–3.25.</p>

- c. Epistle Drafting Committee: five to seven Friends to serve during the period of Yearly Meeting, including one to act as convener ([6.23](#));
- d. Yearly Meeting Elders as required by the Yearly Meeting;
- e. Yearly Meeting Overseers as required by the Yearly Meeting;
- f. Yearly Meeting Accessibility and Support Group: numbers required by the terms of reference (which may be obtained on application to the Recording Clerk);
- g. Yearly Meeting Publications Group for *Quaker faith & practice*: one Friend to serve for three years;
- h. Quaker Stewardship Committee: three Friends to serve for three years ([14.29](#));
- i. Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees: five Friends to serve for three years ([8.03](#)).

When due or required, it also brings in names of Friends to serve on ad hoc groups or for any other appointments requested by Yearly Meeting.

When interim appointments to any of these bodies are required, the Central Nominations Committee may bring forward names to Meeting for Sufferings, which acts on behalf of Yearly Meeting.

Central Nominations Committee acts for Meeting for Sufferings, in bringing forward names for appointments to the central committees, other standing committees and trusts appointed by Meeting for Sufferings (see chapter [8](#)); and as representatives to various bodies, for service on ad hoc groups or for any other appointments requested by Meeting for Sufferings.

The committee works closely with each body on which vacancies arise in order to clarify the requirements, which may include the need for representatives from other bodies.

6.22 Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

Current text

Nominations for appointment to the Central Nominations Committee and the Committee on

Proposed text

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group is responsible for nominating to Yearly

<p>Clerks are made by the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group. The group consists of six to eight Friends appointed in a Yearly Meeting session each year: a convener nominated by the previous Nominating Group and the remainder on nomination from the body of the meeting. The group meets and consults as necessary during the period up to the next Yearly Meeting, including with the Central Nominations Committee and the Committee on Clerks, to enable it to bring nominations to that Yearly Meeting, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. annually, four Friends to serve on the Committee on Clerks for a three-year period from the rise of the Yearly Meeting (6.19); b. annually, nine Friends to serve on the Central Nominations Committee for a three-year period from the rise of the Yearly Meeting (6.21); c. Friends to fill casual vacancies on these two bodies; <p>One Friend to serve as convener of the next Yearly Meeting Nominating Group.</p>	<p>Meeting names of those to serve on Central Nominations Committee (6.21) and Committee on Clerks (6.19).</p> <p>Yearly Meeting Nominating Group is appointed annually by Yearly Meeting from those attending Yearly Meeting. The convener is nominated by the previous Nominating Group.</p> <p>Yearly Meeting Nominating Group consults as necessary and brings names to the next Yearly Meeting as required. The group also offers nominations to fill any vacancies.</p>
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Questions or queries

Michael Booth, Church Government Adviser can respond to any question or queries about this proposed text: email michaelsb@quaker.org.uk telephone 020 7663 1023.

Mark Tod
 Convener, Church Government Advisory Group

CYP Work Advocate and CYP Work Advocate Support roles: request from Quaker Life Central Committee

Introduction

Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) recommends that area meetings to appoint Children and Young People's (CYP) Advocates, and that this should be added to the list of recommended roles in *Quaker faith & practice* 4.04. (It also recommends that the role of CYP Advocate Support be laid down.)

Background

For about 10 years, some Area Meetings have appointed Children and Young People's Work Advocates. There are currently 60 Advocates, with 12 Advocate Supports. In turn, these Friends are supported by the Children's Work Officer at Friends House.

QLCC set up a review group made up of people who have been Advocates and Advocate Supports, which met throughout 2018. They found that the aims of the CYP Work Advocate Role needed adjusting and recommended that the role of CYP Work Advocate Support be laid down. They proposed that the role of CYP Work Advocate remain, with adjustments, but that the support for these Advocates would best come from others locally, such as elders, second advocates, Local or Area Meeting Children and Young People's Committees, Area Meetings Clerks, or area youth workers where the Advocate is in an area covered by a youth worker. This way, the Advocates would still be supported, and potentially there would be more consistency between meetings.

QLCC asks that the role of CYP Work Advocate be added to the list of recommended roles in *Quaker faith & practice* 4.04.

Quaker Life Central Committee held 14 – 16 September 2018

18.65 Staff reports

We have received papers **QLCC 2018 09 09 (i-iii)** and Libby Adams, Head of Library & Archives, Alistair Fuller, Head of Ministry & Outreach, and Howard Nurden, Head of Children and Young People's Work (CYP), have spoken to their staff reports, which this time include information on impact.

We note the findings of the review of the roles of CYP Work Advocate and CYP Work Advocate Support, carried out by the CYP team. We are happy with the conclusions that area meetings should continue to be encouraged to appoint CYP Work Advocates, with the role being recommended in Qf&p, but that the role of CYP Work Advocate Support be laid down, with support being provided in other ways.

We send this part of the minute to Meeting for Sufferings, hoping they will forward it to Church Government Advisory Group.

Jocelyn Bell Burnell
Douglas Butterfield
Emma Roberts
Lizzie Rosewood
Clerks

Organisations applying to become Quaker recognised bodies

Introduction

This paper gives details of applications for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies. It includes those organisations previously included in paper MfS 2018 10 08.

Staff have looked at the documentation provided by each of the organisations and consider that the criteria for listing them as Quaker recognised bodies have been met.

Background

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

- The guidelines for groups that would like to be a QRB are also on the BYM Website www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/quaker-groups
- Paper MfS 2018/07/15 gives a full introduction to Quaker recognised bodies.

A Quaker Recognised Body (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.

The process aims to clarify benefits and responsibilities for QRBs and BYM. It's also a way to strengthen links between centrally-managed work and the wide range of exciting Quaker work being done by other groups, helping build a vibrant Society of Friends.

So far, Meeting for Sufferings has registered 43 Quaker Recognised Bodies.

Request for registration

The following organisations have applied to become Quaker recognised bodies.

Five appeared as a listed informal group in the 2016 Book of Meetings:

1. **Dabane Support Fund**
2. **Quaker Arts Network**
3. **Quaker Campers**
4. **Quaker Gender and Sexual Diversity Community**
5. **Quaker Social Action**

Six are in the field of education and appeared in the 2016 Book of Meetings

6. **Ackworth School**
7. **Bootham School**
8. **Breckenbrough School**
9. **Friends Schools Council**
10. **Leighton Park School**
11. **Sidcot School**

One school has not previously appeared in our Book of Meetings. Its governance has clear Quaker connections, as can be seen in the report that appears within this paper.

12. William Penn School

One is a group that has not previously been included in our Book of Meetings,

13. Quaker International Educational Trust

This is a very diverse set of groups. Recognition of these groups affords BYM an opportunity to offer guidance, oversight and upholding. The notes below give key details about each organisation.

Action required

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to approve these organisations as Quaker recognised bodies.

Michael S Booth
Church Government Advisor

1 Dabane Support Fund

Aims: To raise funds in the United Kingdom to support the Dabane Trust Water Workshops operating in Zimbabwe. It has been a concern of Mid-Somerset Area Meeting since 1991.

In Zimbabwe, the Dabane Trust's main function is to provide simple technology to access groundwater in dry river beds for growing vegetables. It attracts international funding. The Trust has changed its focus over the years from finding actual equipment and parts to funding special projects, e.g. funding interns who come from tertiary education for practical experience.

Governance: The Dabane Support Fund is a sub-committee of Mid-Somerset AM and all appointments to the committee are made by the AM. Attenders and others with particular knowledge may be appointed subject to AM approval.

Constitution: The Dabane Support Fund is part of Mid-Somerset Area Meeting

Type of Group: Linked (to Mid-Somerset AM; which is a charity currently excepted from registering with the Charity Commission).

Foundation of the fund: 1991

Publications and activities: To fund and support charitable work in Zimbabwe.

Membership: 5 committee members. 18 Quaker Meetings support the project, and there is a circulation list of about 140 people.

Finance: Donations from Quaker meetings, individuals and trusts. Varies year to year £9,000-£11,000 per annum. The annual accounts of the committee form part of the AM accounts and appear as a restricted fund.

Winding up: Will be decided by Mid-Somerset AM.

Archives: Form part of the records of Mid-Somerset Area Meeting.

Current contact details:

Hazel Hudson, Convenor
9 Homecanton House, Wincanton, BA9 9JH

hazel.e.hudson@gmail.com 01963 31663

Staff link: Governance Manager, Neil Jarvis

2 Quaker Arts Network

Aims: To develop and nurture a community of Friends interested in the arts, and to support encourage and publicise the use of arts for Quaker outreach, spiritual growth and witness.

Governance: The current constitution was agreed on 1 September 2018. The Quaker Arts Network (QAN) has a committee appointed by an Annual General Meeting. Business is conducted according to the Quaker business method. Some roles, currently the clerk and treasurer, are restricted to members of the Society of Friends.

Type of Group: Free standing

Foundation: 2013

Publications and activities: Activities include: enabling communication among Friends interested in the arts enabling them to publicise events, seek or give Advice, arranging occasional events for members to meet up and acting as an “umbrella” organisation in support of particular arts projects.

From time to time QAN may undertake other activities or be able to offer different kinds of support for some projects. In the past it has organised art exhibitions and art calendars. It may undertake other projects relating to other art forms and Quaker witness or spirituality.

Membership: About 250

Finance: Financial reports for past years are on the website. The accounts are independently examined

Winding up: The constitution contains provision is made for winding up the organisation.

Archives: Currently held by the clerk, the website has copies of all the annual reports and other documents.

Current contact details: June Buffery (Treasurer/ Email contact)
Nettlebank,
Wootton Rivers,
Marlborough SN8 4NQ

Email: quakerartsuk@gmail.com

Website: <http://quakerarts.net>

Staff link: Website and Social Media Manager, Nik Dadson

3 Quaker Campers

Aims: To provide opportunities for Quakers from all parts of Britain (and possibly further afield) who enjoy camping to share the fellowship of camping together. Currently this consists of a one-week family camp each summer.

Governance: There is no constitution; however there is a document which sets out guidelines for personal behaviour and organisation of the camp community. This is reviewed and revised by the AGM as necessary. Decisions are taken by the AGM held during the annual camp.

Type of Group: Free-standing.

Foundation: Not known – probably started at least 40 years ago.

Publications and activities: Currently the only activity is an annual family camp.

Membership: Currently there are 50 to 70 adults and children at each camp. The group has no formal membership but maintains a mailing list of those who have asked to be informed of activities.

Finance: Each camp is self-financing, i.e. each family unit pays its own costs. Some years a small admin fee is charged to cover general expenses. A small balance is held in order to pay camp site deposits, etc.

Winding up: There are no specific provision is made for winding up Quaker Campers. An AGM is held at the camp each year and this would take any decisions involved in winding up. The group holds only very small resources.

Archives: Limited archives are kept and held by the clerk or any other person willing to do so.

Current contact details: Chris Edwards (Clerk)
48 Town Street, Old Malton, Malton. YO17 7HD
Tel: 01653-698452
Email: enquiries@campers.quaker.eu.org

Website: www.campers.quaker.eu.org

Staff link: Children's Work Officer, Mel Cook

4 Quaker Gender and Sexual Diversity Community

Aims: The Quaker Gender and Sexual Diversity Community (QDSGC) brings together people of diverse sexual or gender identities within the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain. It aims to provide a voice and a meeting space for the LGBT and queer community, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, intersex, transgender and gender non-binary Quakers and their allies, for Quakers interested in sexuality, gender identity and equality, and welcomes others seeking an inclusive spiritual community.

Governance: There is a constitution, which is being revised to reflect the current structure of the group. There is a small committee, which meets regularly and uses the Quaker business method. In addition an AGM is held, normally during Yearly Meeting.

Type of Group: Free-standing.

Foundation: Founded in 1973 as the Friends Homosexual Fellowship. In 1991 it changed its name to the Quaker Lesbian and Gay Fellowship and in 2017 it became the Quaker Gender and Sexual Diversity Community.

Publications and activities: It has a newsletter distributed primarily by email and there are occasional national gatherings, as well as local groups in the Midlands, Scotland and London. There is also an active Facebook group.

Membership: About 175 individuals and also 22 member meetings.

Finance: The group no longer charges a subscription. Annual expenditure is approximately £2,500, with income from donations and events, and existing funds.

Winding up: An AGM is able to decide to wind up the organisation if is led to do so.

Archives: Held by an individual, who has a long-standing connection to the group.

Current contact details: Quaker GSD Community
c/o Zem Moffat
Glasgow Quaker Meeting House
38 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow G2 4PS
info@qgsdc.org.uk

Website: <http://qgsdc.org.uk>

Staff link: Church Government Adviser, Michael Booth

5 Quaker Social Action (QSA)

Aims: To enable people on low incomes in east London and across the UK to seek solutions to the issues affecting their lives. To do this, it listens and responds to the needs of the community by running practical, sustainable and collaborative projects. QSA shares its work with others when it is clear that it has the potential to bring benefits to their communities.

Governance: Quaker Social Action (QSA) has a formal constitution as laid out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. It is a registered charity 1069157 and also a company limited by guarantee no. 3524063. QSA has a board of trustees; all trustee meetings are conducted in the Manner of Friends. It delegates day to day management of the charity to staff.

Type of Group: External.

Foundation: 1867 as the Bedford Institute Association. Name changed to Quaker Social Action in 1998.

Publications and activities: Delivery of practical anti-poverty projects. 80% of QSA's work is delivered in London; 20% across the UK. Its work has three levels: working directly with people in need; training other professionals who work with people in need; campaigning for change on a national level. Publications include annual report and accounts. Current projects include Aberfeldy Big Local, Bags of Taste, Down to Earth, Get Set, Homestore, Made of Money, Move On Up, and This Way Up: information on each is available on the QSA website.

Size: 12 trustees; 25 staff; 100 volunteers a year (on average); 3000 beneficiaries.

Finance: The accounts are audited in accordance with Articles of Association and are available on the charity commission and QSA websites.

Winding up: Provision is made for this in the Articles of Association.

Archives: Kept at Friends House Library.

Current contact details: Judith Moran, Director
Quaker Social Action
17 Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green, London. E2 9PJ
Tel: 020 8983 5030
Email: info@qsa.org.uk

Website: www.quakersocialaction.org.uk

Staff link: Head of Networking and Engagement, Suzanne Ismail

6 Ackworth School

Aims: To create a happy and secure environment in which all pupils realise and develop their own special abilities in constant awareness of the needs and claims of others.

Governance: A board of directors report to the school committee, who take guidance from Ackworth General Meeting. The School Committee receives nomination for appointments to the School Committee from Ackworth General Meeting Nominations Committee. Ackworth General Meeting meets at least once every year: it consists of appointed representatives of Area Meeting, members of the School Committee and others as detailed in the document "Rules and regulations for the government of Ackworth School." It is a registered charity, no 1175704 (previously 529280) and a company 10562182.

Constitution: Company limited by guarantee. Registered charity no. 1175704.

Type of Group: External.

Foundation: 1779

Activities: Education of children from nursery age through to sixth form. The School also provides specific and specialist provision to around 15 pupils with autism conditions.

Membership: Currently 450 pupils and 200 staff, and 16 on the School Committee.

Finance: Annual income of about £7 million. The accounts are independently audited and the accounts submitted to the Charity Commission.

Winding up: Included in the articles, but distribution to similar Quaker bodies.

Archives: 1779 to present day

Current contact details:

Anton Maree, Head
Ackworth School,
Pontefract Road,
Ackworth,
Pontefract,
West Yorkshire, WF7 7LT

01977 611401

reception@ackworthschool.com

Website: www.ackworthschool.com

Staff link: Recording Clerk, Paul Parker

7 Bootham School

Aims: To continue the operation of Bootham School, in accordance with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends, for the education of the children of members of the Society of Friends and others (as set out in the company's Memorandum of Association).

Governance: The members of the company are also the directors of the company and the charity trustees. They act as the governors of the school and together constitute the "General Committee", which is the governing body of the school. The Governing Body of the School is its Governors' Meeting (supported by other sub-committees). Governors are appointed by Quakers in Yorkshire. The business of general meetings is conducted according to the Quaker business method.

Constitution: Bootham School has a formal constitution as laid out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. It is a company limited by guarantee no. 1686068 and a registered charity no. 513645.

Type of Group: External

Foundation: 1823

Publications and activities: An independent boarding and day school that provides education for children aged 3 -18 based on Quaker values. The school also offers its facilities for hire for both residential and non-residential events. Publications include the annual Bootham School magazine and online promotional activity.

Membership: currently 14 governors, 169 members of staff and about 600 pupils

Finance: Annual turnover about £10 million. Accounts are audited in accordance with Articles of Association and are available on the charity commission website.

Winding up: As stated in Articles of Association, upon the dissolution of the charity, any net assets remaining after debts and liabilities have been paid will be transferred to Quakers in Yorkshire, who will use them at their discretion for charitable purposes.

Archives: Within Bootham School grounds.

Current contact details:

Gavin Blackstone, Bursar/ Company Secretary
Bootham School, York, YO30 7BU

Phone: 01904 623261

Email: bursar@boothamschool.com

Website: www.boothamschool.com;

Staff link: Recording Clerk, Paul Parker

8 Breckenbrough School

Aims: Breckenbrough is a Quaker managed, non-maintained special school for male students aged 9 – 19 who are on the autistic spectrum, exhibiting high functioning autism generally Aspergers, along with other complexities such as ADHD, PDA, dyspraxia, dyslexia.

It supports, educates and encourages the students' social and emotional growth. Breckenbrough students need to have the aspiration to learn, whatever level they are, by following the guidance of the dedicated whole staff team that are here to support the students growth both socially and academically. The school applies tolerance, forgiveness, respect to all their working practices and students are encouraged to reflect and contribute to conflict resolution if it is ever necessary.

The students achieve positive successful outcomes with many leaving to access university, college or employment.

Governance: 5 – 7 Quaker Governors (one of whom will hold the position of chair), In addition there are Parent Governors, Local authority Governors, Staff representatives and Co-opted Governors with specific specialised knowledge. The school is a charity no 1122269 and a company 6223076.

Type of Group: External.

Foundation: 1948

Size: 60 students, 70 staff

Finance: £3.5 million turnover. The accounts are audited and submitted to the Charity Commission and Companies House.

Winding up: Provision is made for dissolution in the memorandum of Association.

Current contact details:

Sue Jones (Bursar)
Sandhutton, Breckenbrough, Thirsk, YO7 4EN
Tel: 01845 587238
Email: sue.jones@breckenbrough.org.uk

Website: www.breckenbrough.org.uk

Staff link: Recording Clerk, Paul Parker

9 Friends Schools Council

Aims include:

To encourage the expression of Quaker faith in action and the interpretation of Quaker vision within Friends Schools;

To provide leadership in drawing together Friends Schools within Britain Yearly Meeting and Ireland Yearly Meeting in unity of spirit and in co-operative action;

To strengthen the network of support across the Friends Schools;

To help Friends Schools maintain their Quaker identity and ethos;

To work closely with Friends, in whatever ways may be appropriate, on the wider remit of promoting Quaker values in education. By such means, whether charitable or not, as shall be determined in accordance with this Constitution.

Governance: The Council is run using the Quaker business method, it appoints an executive committee to have oversight of the day-to-day running of the council.

Constitution: It has a constitution.

Type of Group: Free-standing

Foundation: 2008 as a successor to the Friends School Joint Council

Publications and activities: Organisation of joint events between Quaker Schools, exchange of practice

Membership: 30 – which includes schools as “corporate members”

Finance: There is an annual levy on the constituent schools.

Winding up: The constitution has provision for winding up.

Current contact details:

Contact person: Paul Whitehouse

Role in the group: Clerk

Current address: 1 Slate Cottages, Manor Lane, Abbots Leigh, BRISTOL, BS8 3RX

Email: clerk@aquakereducation.co.uk

Phone: 07813 802783

Website: <http://aquakereducation.co.uk/>

Staff link: Recording Clerk, Paul Parker

10 Leighton Park School

Aims: To manage the school known as Leighton Park School and other associated schools; to carry on such schools in accordance with the religious principles of the Society of Friends for the education of the children of members of the Society of Friends and others.

Governance: Conducted through the board of governors. There are up to 20 governors, of which 12 are members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Governors are appointed for a term of 3 years.

Constitution: Leighton Park Trust has a formal constitution. It is a registered charity no. 309144 and a company limited by guarantee no. 171900.

Type of Group: External.

Foundation: 1890

Publications and activities: Leighton Park School was founded on Quaker principles: respect, integrity, simplicity, equality, peace, truth, and sustainability. These values provide the foundation for some of the long-standing, distinctive aspects of Leighton Park life, such as the holistic curriculum, the value placed on individuality, a strong sense of community and the collective moments of silence that punctuate the school day, offering students a much needed opportunity for reflection. Leighton Park publishes an annual report which is available on its website.

Size: approx. 490 students, 270 staff and 15 governors.

Finance: Annual income is approximately £11 million per annum. Accounts are examined in accordance with their constitution and are available on the charity commission website.

Winding up: Provision is made for winding up if necessary.

Current contact details:

Keith Eldridge (Bursar)
Leighton Park School,
Shinfield Road,
Reading. RG2 7ED
Tel: 0118 987 9600
Email: bursar@leightonpark.com

Website: www.leightonpark.com

Staff link: Recording Clerk, Paul Parker

11 Sidcot School

Aims: That Sidcot be a pioneer and a world-class centre of excellence for inspirational education for children aged 3-18, that is as much about nurturing the spirit as it is about outstanding academic success. This is informed by the Testimonies of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), which act as a touchstone and challenge to the whole school community, those with faith and those without, all of whom are equally welcomed.

Governance: The school has a governing body; the governors are also trustees of the charity (296491) and directors of the company (2093340). 'Sidcot General Meeting' (as explained in the articles of association) provides a Quaker underpinning to the structures and ethos of the school, and can appoint up to 9 governors. It also appoints Quaker visitors to the school, whose purpose is primarily supportive and pastoral in nature. Meetings are conducted using the Quaker business method.

Type of Group: External

Foundation: Established 1808

Publications and activities: The provision of education for children aged 3-18 in accordance with the vision and values of the school, which are rooted in Quaker principles of truth, integrity, respect, simplicity, equality and sustainability. Teachers use the diagrammatic method 'The Sidcot Learning Wheel' to ensure that all their lessons contain relevant references to aspects and ideals of Quakerism, and students will be encouraged to engage actively with their lessons and become excited by the discoveries that learning can provide.

Membership: 600 pupils, 250 staff, 13 governors.

Finance: The approximate turnover is £10 million per annum. Accounts are audited in accordance with their constitution and are available on the charity commission and companies house website.

Winding up: The articles of association make suitable provision.

Archives: These are held in the school

Current contact details:

Ian Kilpatrick (headteacher)
Sidcot School
Oakridge Lane Winscombe
North Somerset
BS25 1PD

Tel: 01934 843102

Email: info@sidcot.org.uk / headsoffice@sidcot.org.uk

Website: www.sidcot.org.uk

Staff link: Recording Clerk, Paul Parker

12 William Penn Primary School

Aims: William Penn Primary School provides a high quality and nurturing start to the education of pupils in a village setting in Coolham, West Sussex. The school values are honesty, integrity, equality, peace, reflection and friendship, it also subscribes to the same ideals for which William Penn strived, including kindness, tolerance and understanding.

Governance: Quaker Foundation. The Governing body has two Quaker Foundation Governors named by West Weald Area Meeting. There are currently 11 governors. The school is a Local Authority school maintained by West Sussex County Council, it is the only primary school in the country with a Quaker Foundation.

Type of Group: External.

Foundation: 1889 and 1973 on current site

Size: 105 students plus teaching and administrative staff

Finance: The finances are monitored by the local authority.

Archives: Within the school and at The County Records Office, Chichester, West Sussex

Current contact details:

Stephen Kear
William Penn Primary School,
Brooks Green Road,
Coolham,
Horsham,
West Sussex, RH138GR

Tel: 01403 741274

Email: office@williampenn.co.uk

Website: www.williampenn.co.uk

Staff link: Recording Clerk, Paul Parker

13 Quaker International Education Trust (QUIET)

Aims: The objects of the charity are to manage the premises and undertakings of Brummana High School in Lebanon and to advance the education of children and young people in full time education in accordance with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The Trust also appeals for donations in the UK to support bursaries at both Ramallah Friends School, Palestine and Brummana High School.

Governance: Board of Trustees, appointed by Friends World Committee for Consultation, Europe and Middle East Section. A majority of Trustees must be Friends.

Constitution: There is Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association. Charity number 1072250 Company number 3653506.

Type of Group: External

Foundation: Brummana High School was established in 1873. The trust was set up in 1998 to take over the role of managing trustee for Brummana High School from Quaker Peace & Service (which was a predecessor of Quaker Peace & Social Witness).

Publications and activities: Annual Trustees Report and annual bursary appeals for Brummana High School in Lebanon and Ramallah Friends School in Palestine.

Membership: 10 Trustees.

Finance: The accounts include the activities of Brummana High School. The accounts are independently audited and filed with the Charity Commission and Companies House. About 300 individuals and Meetings make donations to the trust each year.

Winding up: Clause 7 of the Memorandum of Association and Article 53 of the Articles of Association

Archives: Friends House Library and later files with Secretary

Current contact details:

Martin Macpherson

Millbrook Way, Dovecote Lane, Tetford, Lincolnshire, LN9 6QD

Email: secretary@quietcharity.co.uk

Website: <http://www.bhs.edu.lb>

Staff link: Church Government Adviser, Michael Booth

Meeting for Sufferings' report to Yearly Meeting 2019

Every year, Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) reports to Yearly Meeting. For YM 2019 the report needs to be ready very early in February, to be included in documents in advance. The Assistant Clerk, working with Arrangements Group has prepared the following report.

This is a *draft*. It will need to be updated after this meeting, and MfS will see and confirm the final version in February. It's shared with the Meeting now so that any substantive comments can be incorporated in good time.

Meeting for Sufferings Annual Report 2018 [DRAFT]

Meeting for Sufferings is the body which is entrusted with the general care of matters affecting the Yearly Meeting in its life and witness. It seeks to discern spiritual values and vision to guide Friends' corporate commitment and actions.

from Qf&p 6.28

Meeting for Sufferings is made up of about 100 or so members, drawn from the wide geographical and demographic spread of all 70 Area Meetings, Young Friends General Meeting, General Meeting for Scotland, and Meeting of Friends in Wales. Representatives of Quaker World Relations Committee, Quaker Life, Quaker Peace & Social Witness, Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations and Central Nominations Committee all attend our meetings. Britain Yearly Meeting trustees, senior staff and the Yearly Meeting clerk are ex officio members, and we regularly receive visitors.

In October we were delighted yet again to welcome 13-18 year olds attending the Young People's Participation Day. They worshipped with us in the Large Meeting House at the start and the close of the day, led us in an ice-breaker exercise and joined our session on Diversity. Their epistle spoke of a sense of being part of the wider all-age Quaker community and of the theme of diversity that permeated their activities during the day.

For the membership of Meeting for Sufferings this has been a year of change, as one triennium ends and another begins. Nearly a third of our number have continued, some as representatives instead of alternates, or carried on into a second period of service. Just over 60 are completely new. Our induction meeting in July was followed by a residential meeting in November, where we spent further time in home groups getting to know one another better.

Meeting for Sufferings is a place for worship and for learning; representatives from all over the Yearly Meeting are the means by which information and ideas flow to and from Friends in their local and area meetings. Above all it should be a place of prayerful listening and discernment.

Our work in 2018

In 2018 our **court and prison register** continued to record the witness of friends against arms sales, air pollution, and forced deportation. This is a real link with our history of recording the sufferings of friends in their witness to the truth.

Under the umbrella of **administrative business**, we are continuing to register Quaker recognised bodies, and have accepted Terms of Reference for the new Book of Discipline Committee which we hope will begin work in 2019.

We have heard from staff engaged in the work laid upon us by Yearly Meeting in 2017 on the issues of Diversity and Inclusion, from the Engaging Adult Quakers project, and the Vibrancy project which concludes its pilot phase early next year.

Reports in 2018 came from groups reviewing the **Appeals Process**, the **BYM Sustainability Group**, and the **Committee on Clerks**. Each report has challenged us in a different way, and we have much to learn from them all.

- The group looking at our **appeals processes** recognised that any appeal is in danger of creating ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ and that more attention may need to be given to conflict transformation or conciliation in our processes. The group said: “We therefore recommend that the yearly meeting as a whole should address the challenges arising from conflicts in meetings, and should consider initiating some further work on ways of assisting conflict transformation – including the handling of difficulties affected by lack of familiarisation with Quaker processes and mental health issues - within meetings at all levels.”

We referred the matter to Quaker Life.

- In February we received a report from **BYM Sustainability Group** - our working group on sustainability. It was set up in 2014 to provide “a leadership role, similar to eldership and oversight” in relation to the Yearly Meeting’s Canterbury Commitment to become a low carbon sustainable community. We were impressed by the amount and scope of the work undertaken but challenged to consider “what is the meaning of a Yearly Meeting concern, if we as a Yearly Meeting don’t do it?”
- At the following meeting the **BYM Sustainability Group review group** paid tribute to all that has been achieved since the Canterbury Commitment of 2011. However it also drew attention to structural problems in the group’s relationship with the Centrally-Managed Work (CMW) and we minuted that “the Review Group has found that there were inherent problems here both in terms of ambition and in organisation and we have heard of frustrations and difficulties.”

We re-affirmed our commitment to sustainability and noted that we need to explore “what it is about our structures that makes it difficult to make the progress which we would like to see.”

MfS has a responsibility to oversee the progress of its working groups. In accepting the Review Group’s recommendation that our work on sustainability must now be embedded in all parts of the CMW, all parties including MfS will need a greater level of commitment to the work than hitherto. An initial meeting of Central Committee clerks, staff and others took place in July to begin exploration of the issues. We expect this to become a regular part of our oversight as we rise to the challenge that living out our witness to sustainability across the YM presents.

- **Committee on Clerks review**
[text to be added after the November meeting]

Reports from the Central Committees

This year we [will] have experimented with taking all the central committees' reports at one meeting - the residential in November - to offer new representatives and those with more experience the chance to hear about the breadth of BYM's centrally-managed work at one time. We hope this overview will be of benefit in the future when new concerns come to us and we are called upon to discern their place in our witness.

Concerns brought by Area Meetings

In April **Southern Marches** forwarded their minutes about the erosion of truth in society, and we sent them to all AM clerks for consideration. We expect to return to the matter in 2019

Devon AM wrote to MfS about BYM trustees' investment policy in relation to the Israeli occupied territories in Palestine. We sent their minutes to QPSW and QCCIR in 2017-18 for advice. In July we reaffirmed our decision made in 2011 to boycott settlement goods, until such time as the Israeli occupation of Palestine is ended, and whilst understanding that currently BYM has no investments in any company profiting from the occupation of Palestine we "encourage them [trustees] to amend their investment policy to ensure that this remains the case".

Kingston and Wandsworth: In October we spent time considering how we can better work together to set priorities for the centrally managed work of the Yearly Meeting. This is part of our responsibility in "guiding Friends' corporate commitment" which has been a theme running through the work of Sufferings this year.

Over all the right balance between the spiritual basis of our lives and actions as Quakers – the church – and the governance responsibilities of trustees – the charity – is one that we must continue to strive for. We rely on the power of our gathered meeting for worship for business to guide our discernment.

The ground of our work lies in our waiting on and listening for the Spirit... We are a small church with pretensions to change the world. But first we must let God change us – to empower us to be better Friends, and more active in our own work. We should not be creating structures to work for us, but empowering each other to do the work laid on each of us. However we plan...the Spirit is unchanging and will always lead us... All is connected, worship with action, wisdom with love

from Qf&p 29.02

Central and standing committees

Introduction

The four central standing committees are described in Chapter 8 of Quaker faith and practice, 'The centrally managed work of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain'.

8.08 Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC)'s purpose is to support and strengthen Quaker life throughout the yearly meeting, a remit which covers faith and practice: both spiritual nurture and the practical tasks required for the running of our Quaker meetings.

8.11 Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) works for Britain Yearly Meeting to translate our faith into action.

8.12 Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) is responsible for keeping Quakers in Britain informed of the various movements towards co-operation within the Christian church and opportunities for interfaith dialogue. (More information in section 9.13)

8.13 Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) maintains contact with other yearly meetings and with Friends World Committee for Consultation and its Europe & Middle East Section to which Britain Yearly Meeting is affiliated. (More information in section 9.06)

These four committees are accountable to Yearly Meeting via BYM Trustees, and are appointed by Meeting for Sufferings (MfS). Each committee has a representative on MfS. They aren't required to report to MfS, but in recent years our clerks have allocated agenda time for each committee to bring a report, for two-way dialogue - to help Friends understand their work, and for them to hear Friends' views.

These committees *determine priorities for, monitor, and evaluate the work within their areas of responsibility* (which are determined by Yearly Meeting). They do this in accordance with the long-term framework approved by MfS (currently, 'Our Faith in the Future').

To help MfS in its role of setting the overall priorities for centrally-managed work, this year MfS is hearing from all four committees at the same time.

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

Report to Meeting for Sufferings - November 2018

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR – see *Qf&p* 9.13) is appointed by Britain Yearly Meeting to represent Quakers on national Christian and Interfaith bodies (including Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), Churches Together in England, Cytun (Churches Together in Wales), Action on Churches Together In Scotland (ACTS), World Day of Prayer and the Interfaith Network) and to communicate with Friends about what is happening and opportunities to get involved.

The committee is relatively large (about 18 people) with a rolling membership and a limited allocation of staff time at Friends House. We meet three times a year for a residential weekend, aiming to meet in different locations including in Scotland and Wales during each year because we are consciously a three nation committee (England, Scotland and Wales) in different ways on different external bodies. We are blessed with a representative from Ireland Yearly Meeting and are delighted to have been invited to hold our committee meeting for the first time ever in Ireland next June. We look forward to the opportunity to meet Irish Friends who are involved with interchurch and interfaith work.

In June 2017 we met in Dunblane where we were joined by Maureen Seir, Director of Interfaith Scotland and Barbara Potter, General Meeting for Scotland representative to Interfaith Scotland. This enabled us to get a good picture of interfaith activity in Scotland and Friends involvement in it.

There has been direct and active engagement with a range of Jewish groups in particular since the decision of Meeting for Sufferings to boycott settlement products produced in the occupied territories in 2011. More recently the issue of particular speakers being allowed to speak in Quaker meeting houses has led to some challenges for a few meetings. QCCIR has been looking for ways to improve communication and mutual understanding. In October 2017 we were joined by two representatives from the Board of Deputies of British Jews who explained the role of the Board of Deputies and also engaged with us in frank discussion of the difficult issues.

We felt that this was a valuable meeting. In June 2018 we met in Leeds and took the opportunity that this presented to meet with Quakers who are part of the Leeds Quaker-Jewish dialogue group.

This group came in to being as a response to the difficulties that arose in relationships following Meeting for Sufferings' decision in 2011. It has met approximately quarterly since its formation adopting a variety of formats for its meetings. We heard that meetings featuring sharing of experience around a topic such as our relationship with land had been more fruitful than direct discussion of issues.

It was useful to QCCIR to meet face to face with participants in this group. In January 2018 we identified the need for further Quaker theological reflection and articulation of the meaning of the 'Holy Land'. We hope to take this forward by meeting with the group 'Quakers with Jewish Connections'.

We continue to host interfaith and interchurch visitors to Yearly Meeting, over the years inviting representatives from a wide variety of faith groups. Usually two visitors are invited, but for Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG) in 2017 we had four guests. The special interest groups at which they spoke in 2017 and 2018 were extremely well attended and we have heard that after the sessions young people were among those talking about the topics raised.

Yearly Meeting Gathering also provided an opportunity to organise a visit to several places of worship in Coventry on the Wednesday and to launch the initial findings of the research project 'The Changing Face of Faith in Britain' that the Committee had commissioned. We look forward to the Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) peace education event on 9 November this year that was among the topics addressed by one of our visitors. It is being organised collaboratively by the Oasis Trust and QPSW.

Our representative on the national committee of World Day of Prayer (England, Wales and Northern Ireland formerly the Women's World Day of Prayer) has been recognised as making a big contribution and promoted to vice-chair. It is the 'turn' of Britain Yearly Meeting to nominate a Friend to serve as the fourth President of Churches Together England (representing the New Churches, the Religious Society of Friends and the Lutheran and German-speaking Churches). Work to take this forwards is being undertaken..

The results of our research project 'The Changing Face of Faith' became available early in 2018. Thanks to a lot of work from some committee members they were available online in time for our weekend conference at Woodbrooke which was planned to give Friends a chance to engage with them. The results can be accessed online.

They have been presented in three parts (a fourth may follow after more work and consideration by the committee). The first is an academic review, the second the results of a survey of relatively new Friends and attenders (with much more value to those engaged in outreach work than had been anticipated), the third a snapshot of current ecumenical and interfaith work in Britain Yearly Meeting.

The project feeds into and informs discussion about our diversity and we are confident that this is beneficial to Britain Yearly Meeting even though many Friends will not be directly aware of this work. The conference was well received by the participants, one of whom commented on how refreshing it was that the questions raised about how QCCIR might take this forward were truly open without any preconceptions about the answers.

The fact that the conference organisers weren't even sure of the questions until the last minute must have contributed towards this. QCCIR would still welcome any guidance as to ways forward. A weekend conference at Woodbrooke in March 2019 will focus on part 3 of the report and Quaker relationships with other Christian churches and faith groups. Area Meetings are encouraged to send representatives to share local experience and learn for experience in other parts of the yearly Meeting.

We have spent time considering the implications of Yearly Meeting's decision to revise the Book of discipline. We are concerned that dropping Christian based 'God-language' may make our position as full members of the national interchurch bodies

untenable. It certainly gives all Friends a lot to do in explaining the position of Quakers as a church.

Our Faith in the Future - how is the committee helping Quakers in Britain make these aspirations real?

Meeting for worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker

All our committee meetings are well grounded in worship. Sometimes, as in Dunblane in June 2017, we are able to join local Friends in meeting for worship after our committee meeting.

Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all-age

A Quaker committee is a community, just as much as a local meeting is. We are glad that our membership includes people from different across the Yearly Meeting with specific nominations coming from Scotland, Wales and Young Friends General Meeting. We enable full participation of Friends with disabilities whether that means remembering to speak loudly and clearly or carrying bags and plates of food for one another or choosing accessible locations for meetings. As well as dealing with all the business before us, we spend some time at our residential meetings getting to know one another better. A 'book club' session at one meeting was both informative and fun.

All Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline

Our experience as a committee is that 'letting go and letting God' and asking 'what does Love require of us?' sometimes takes us in unexpected directions that work out for the best in the long run. All meetings are conducted using the Quaker business method. Adopting the 'consent agenda' approach has helped us to deal more efficiently with many of the reports that come before us.

Quaker values are active in the world

We realise the importance of our Quaker values informing all that we say and do when representing Quakers to other churches and faith bodies. We hope that our lives speak of peace, equality, integrity, simplicity and sustainability in all our interactions. In particular we are called to remember that we are an historic peace church. In this regard we have been struggling to discern what we can best contribute in response to the World Council of Churches 'Statement on Religion and Violence' issued in June 2016.

Quakers work collaboratively

Working collaboratively with other faith groups is core to the work of this committee.

Quakers are well known and widely understood

Our vision statement, that we aim to be visible, to engage and to communicate, sums up how important we feel this aspiration is to the work of this committee. We aim to review how well we are achieving our vision in all our reports to the committee of events and meetings we have attended on behalf of Quakers.

Stephanie Grant

Members of QCCIR (as at October 2018)

Kate Arnot	South East Scotland AM	01/05/14 – 30/04/20
Kim Ashcroft	Sussex East AM	02/07/16 - 30/04/20
Sue Beardon	Sheffield & Balby AM	03/06/17 - 30/04/20
Freya Blyth	YFGM rep & Kendal & Sedbergh AM	01/10/17 - 01/10/20
Claire Bowman	Central England AM	07/07/18 - 30/04/19
Catherine Brewer	Northumbria AM	01/05/18 - 30/04/21
Douglas Butterfield	Chilterns AM	07/06/14 - 30/04/20
Gillian Court	Northamptonshire AM	01/05/16 - 30/04/19
Gethin Evans	Mid-Wales AM/CCR Canolbarth Cymru	05/09/15 - 30/04/21
Stephanie Grant	Luton & Leighton AM	01/05/15 - 30/04/21
Nicola Hoskin-Stone	Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire AM	05/10/13 - 30/04/20
Marisa Johnson	FWCC EMES Executive Secretary	Ex officio
Mark Lilley	Lincolnshire AM	01/05/15 - 30/04/21
Rowena Loverance	South East London AM	01/05/13 - 30/04/19
Rachel Muers	Leeds AM	Co-opted
Evelyn Shire	Craven & Keighley AM	01/04/17 - 30/04/19
Eoin Stephenson	Ireland YM, Surrey & Hampshire Border AM	23/05/15 - 30/04/21
Lynda Williams	Southern Marches AM	03/06/17 - 30/04/19
Marigold Bentley	Secretary	

Quaker Life Central Committee

Report to Meeting for Sufferings, November 2018

Those who were Meeting for Sufferings Representatives in February will recall that Quaker Life discussed with M for S our strategy for the next few years. We are grateful to M for S for their positive engagement and a very helpful discussion. So this is the second time QLCC has presented material to M for S this (calendar) year.

How has our work over the last year strengthened the life of our Yearly Meeting?

Quaker Life Representative Council (meeting twice a year for a residential weekend) continues to make a significant contribution to strengthening the life of BYM. Almost every AM sends a representative (and some send two) and it is a joy to see Reps find others with similar interests when they come to Rep Council. It is sobering to hear Reps who are rotating off Rep Council saying what a lifeline Rep Council has been, and how they are going to miss it. There is a continuing issue persuading AMs to take an interest in what their Rep has learnt and make space for a report back.

Quaker Life Ministry and Outreach (M&O) staff e-mailed everyone who had requested an Enquirer's Pack in the last 10 years, offering them 'Living our Beliefs' (the equivalent of QF&P compiled by younger Friends); over a thousand were requested. Alastair Fuller's charming [Paddington Bear blog](#) (spoiler-alert: Paddington was a refugee; people welcomed and took care of him) reached 7500 people on social media. '[Being Friends Together](#)' (an extensive online library of learning resources) is now freely available. The 'Patterns and Examples' gatherings for Elders and Overseers have had strong positive feedback.

Children and Young People's section continue to provide Young People's Participation Days alongside Meeting for Sufferings. There has been good feedback from the young people involved. The well-attended CYP programmes at the time of YM are also appreciated. The team has produced 'All are Welcome – growing our all-age community as well as a second edition of 'Living our Beliefs' and continues to produce 'Journeys in the Spirit'. Over 1000 copies of 'All are Welcome' were requested in the first 6 months following publication, and in the first 9 months of this year over 90 meetings requested CYP materials. Now running is a pilot project that has appointed two youth workers to help two groups of AMs with their youth projects.

The Library continues to welcome visits from Friends and Meetings, to advise on record holding, and to provide materials for events or exhibitions; conscientious objection and pacifism have been the dominant themes this year. Lisa McQuillan of the Library has led on GDPR, which has been a huge task; in the first 9 months of this year there were 60 enquiries from meetings about GDPR.

QLCC reports annually to YM Agenda Committee to help their discernment about the YM agenda, and works with Woodbrooke in identifying topics that need addressing. We have been following closely the Vibrancy project and the learning coming from it, and have welcomed opportunities to meet with Vibrancy staff. In general, the Committee is working much more collaboratively now compared with a few years ago; in this last year we have met with representatives of QCCIR, Vibrancy, FWCC, Woodbrooke, EYAQs, Stewardship, QPSW and the Clerks of Meeting for Sufferings and Yearly Meeting.

What work has been taken up and what has been laid down?

- Now that the Joint Libraries project has concluded we can better see a way forward. We have found the Library governance arrangements to be overly complex, and were unclear where authority for various aspects of the Library currently lies. Furthermore the Library does not seem to have an up to date statement of purpose showing why we are collecting and for what use. We have laid down the Library Committee in its present form, and are setting up a short term Working Group with representatives of Trustees, QLCC, Friends with Library experience, Woodbrooke, Management Meeting, and staff, to bring us recommendations on these issues.
- A small group of committee members has started work on the spiritual underpinning of Quaker work on sustainability. In addition to the spiritual underpinning there may be relevant process issues. The group hopes to be able to report to the February QLCC meeting.
- In order to increase the diversity of the committee we are exploring other ways of meeting and other forms of committee membership. This arose in part from the prompting of the Engaging Young Adult Quakers Group with whom we have had several meetings. We support this group wherever and whenever we can.
- Supporting isolated Friends is another area we have been working on; our first attempt was not successful and was laid down. We have had a very helpful meeting with FWCC staff learning how they support (geographically) isolated Friends around the world; this has given us food for thought, and will look at how this might be translated into a BYM context.
- How to engage with Friends locally has been a recurrent theme this year. We are in close contact with the Vibrancy group and are participating in the consideration of what should happen post the Vibrancy project. Staff are leading the 'Simpler Meetings' initiative in Friends House, to simplify as far as possible the material that goes out to meetings; this could lead in future to helping meetings simplify the nature and number of posts they need to fill.
- We are planning in future to review work done on a more holistic broad-brush, theme based manner, to encourage the breakdown of barriers.

What difficulties, challenges are there ahead?

- Probably the most difficult subject will be on gender identity issues; it is part of each of our senses of identity, and very close to the heart. This is an issue that is still emerging but will need addressing more widely by Friends in the near future. We have started work on this highly charged subject but have not made much progress yet.

Ahead lie other major changes and issues of significance to be addressed; these are challenges rather than difficulties:

- We are continuing to work out the practical implications of our strategic plan and our priorities. Saying 'no' to worthy things which are not amongst our priorities is hard!
- As the work on revision of the Book of Discipline proceeds we can see that there will need to be a lot of dialogue and space for discernment. In preparation for this, the Committee have been hearing about each other's spiritual journeys and have recognised that while Friends are willing to talk about their spiritual journeys they find much harder the naming of what they have found.
- Getting the sustainability work right is an issue for all of us.
- Finding the right reporting structure for the Library and for the Head of Library and Archives needs attention: Quaker Life currently has responsibility for the Library, but only a fraction of the Library's work is Quaker Life related.
- Helen Drewery's retirement will lead to another change, in a relatively short period, in the senior staff person responsible for QLCC and its work. The burden will fall largely on the two Friends who become the QLCC Clerks in January – Emma Roberts (Clerk) and Lizzie Rosewood (Asst. Clerk).

Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Co-Clerk

The members of Quaker Life Central Committee are:

Douglas Butterfield	Chilterns AM	1 Jan 2017-31 Dec 2019
Martin Pennock	Ipswich & Diss AM	1 Jan 2016-31 Dec 2018
Marion McNaughton	Manchester & Warrington AM	1 Jan 2018-31 Dec 2020
Alan Pearmain	Oxford & Swindon AM	1 Jan 2017-31 Dec 2019
Roy Stephenson	Lancashire Central & North AM	1 Jan 2017-31 Dec 2019
Jocelyn Bell Burnell	West Wilts & East Somerset AM	1 Jan 2017-31 Dec 2019
Jeffrey Dean	Manchester & Warrington AM	1 Jan 2016-31 Dec 2018
Marilyn Higgins	South East Scotland AM	1 Jan 2017-31 Dec 2019
Iain Law	Northamptonshire AM	1 Jan 2016-31 Dec 2018
Max Kirk	York AM	6 Oct 2018-31 Dec 2020
Emma Roberts	Leeds AM	1 Jan 2018-31 Dec 2020
Lizzie Rosewood	York AM	1 Jan 2016-31 Dec 2018
Michael Long	Northumbria AM	1 Jan 2017-31 Dec 2019

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

Report to Meeting for Sufferings – November 2018

We welcome this opportunity to engage directly with Meeting for Sufferings and our representatives will speak to this paper. The paper will offer some answers to the key questions posed by Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group, to inform MfS representatives what Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) is doing with and on behalf of Quakers, and its contribution to strategic change in Britain Yearly Meeting.

How has our work over the last year strengthened the life of our Yearly Meeting?

At a time when Quaker Membership and resources are shrinking, and our focus is rightly on strengthening the life of the Society and increasing its diversity, we should continue to celebrate the work of Quaker Peace and Social Witness in the wider world, putting our Testimonies into action in collaboration with other organisations both local and national. This work is both on **behalf of** Quakers, and also **with Quakers at local level**, echoing and amplifying the work of so many Quaker activists seeking change towards greater justice and peace.

Movement-building

With QPSW Central Committee's encouragement, we are seeing a growth in joined-up work across QPSW and with other parts of BYM. The annual Activists Gatherings – with their focus on methods rather than issues - are becoming more central to the department's thinking. Colleagues have collaborated in developing social action tools, available online here. Several programmes now communicate with Friends through a single newsletter ('Quaker Faith in Action') as well as through podcasts, blogs and social media. There is more focus on working closely with specific local meetings, as well as providing resources for all meetings.

Peaceworkers

The one-year placements of peaceworkers – usually young adults – with selected peace organisations in Britain continue to be effective both in adding capacity to the peace movement and in developing the individuals in a lifelong commitment to peace. Peaceworkers often speak about their work in Quaker meetings and former peaceworkers (and former programme assistants at Quaker United Nations Office Geneva) often go on to make significant contributions to Quaker work. Central Committee hopes to find ways to increase the number of peaceworker placements from the two per year currently budgeted for. We are delighted that recent fundraising among Friends to enable us to employ a third peaceworker, was so successful.

Peace Education

Many Friends are using the resources provided by our Peace Education programme. The INSPIRE project continues to grow, with the Tim Parry and Johnathan Ball Peace Centre in Warrington and 3 Faiths Forum and Friends in Manchester and Birmingham organising ways to do Remembrance for Peace this autumn. With other faith bodies, a large series of coordinated events across the UK, many of them in cathedrals, will promote peace around the centenary of the end of the First World War.

New economy

By the end of 2017, we had produced a series of seven New Economy booklets looking at alternative economics. These were taken up by over 50 reading groups in Local Meetings around the country, encouraged and supported by staff.

What work was taken up and laid down?

Sanctuary Everywhere. This legacy-funded project was designed in consultation with many local meetings, and now that it is operational it is getting a response which exceeds our ambitious initial objective of 50 meetings committing themselves to being 'Sanctuary meetings'. There were 93 Sanctuary meetings at the last count. The programme links local action with national action on both advocacy and local welcoming of asylum seekers and refugees in a way that we expect will strengthen both. The project is due to finish at the end of 2019 and we are currently looking at ways forward after its end.

Reframing our international work. Currently we are reframing our international work and expect to develop a broad strategy, including looking beyond the present three strands (in East Africa, Israel/Palestine and part of northeast India), in 2019. We are asking ourselves why we do international work, how we plan it from beginning to end, how we learn from the work, and what our measures of success should be.

What difficulties/challenges are there ahead?

EAPPI The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel remains challenging, because of the situation on the ground, the controversial nature of the work and the complexity of the many partnerships involved. Risk levels are monitored very regularly. Christian Aid is funding an additional part-time post of Digital Media and Monitoring Coordinator for five years, to provide additional advocacy capacity and enable better evaluation of the advocacy side of the programme's work.

East Africa How to ensure the continuation of the work here in the long term, and set up a sustainable local fundraising capability for the work in Kenya, is a current challenge for us. Our peacebuilding work in Kenya, Burundi and Rwanda, using the methods of *Turning the Tide*, is flourishing.

It's difficult to prove, but the considerable work done in Kenya in the run-up to the national elections is likely to have contributed to some degree to the reduced level of violence at that time, compared with the previous elections.

A sign of the widespread wish to participate in the training provided was that a group of Nigerians travelled to take part in one of our training events, their costs met by the Church of Brethren.

Resources QPSW Central Committee continues to struggle with the challenge of allocating resources to the work. When new short-term work, such as additional staffing for the Peace Education programme, proves to be highly successful, we need to look carefully at where we may be able to transfer resources from to allow it to continue. There is always the risk of spreading ourselves too thinly - reducing programmes to the point where they are too small to be fully effective.

QPSW's contribution to Yearly Meeting's commitments to becoming a low-carbon sustainable community (YM 2011, 2017)

This year the QPSW Economics and Sustainability programme's work has included support to local Friends on 'no faith in fracking' vigils in the North West, working with the Scottish Parliamentary Liaison Officer on a fracking ban in Scotland, and helping Friends to write to MPs about the government's Clean Growth Strategy.

Area Meetings have been encouraged to divest from companies involved in fossil fuel extraction.

The Programme has worked in collaboration with a range of partners including other religious groups and churches on Tax Justice, and advocacy/policy work with the Government on climate and sustainability including fossil fuels, Paul Parker, as part of an ecumenical delegation and briefed by QPSW, met the Minister responsible for climate change and was able to raise key issues with her.

We continue to promote shared human security as a key contribution to sustainability, taking a holistic view of security and how this can be achieved for people and the earth, rather than through concepts of military and defence. QPSW supports the Rethinking Security Group through the work of QPSW's Head of Peace Programmes and Faith Relations. Following a major conference in June 2018 they are looking at next steps.

As part of our on-going review and reporting processes, QPSW Central Committee (CC) this year asked all our sub-committees and groups to consider and report back to CC on how they address sustainability - and diversity and inclusion - in their work. The responses will be considered at CC's November meeting.

Increasing diversity and inclusion in our structures (YM 2017)

QPSWCC is asking Central Nominations Committee to actively seek younger Friends as members, and looking at how we organise our meetings so that we can meet a diverse range of needs including those in full-time work and with young families.

As part of our efforts to increase diversity and inclusion – and so that we are more closely in touch with the wider world – we are experimenting by appointing to the Social Justice Committee several people who are 'experts by experience' of Britain's current immigration policies. Only one of these is a Quaker.

The recruitment process for Peaceworkers has been reviewed to enable a more diverse field of participants to apply and be successful.

Helping Quakers in Britain make real the aspirations set out in *Our Faith in the Future*

All of QPSW's work aims to make Quaker values active in the world and most of it involves working collaboratively. A side-effect of the work is to contribute to making Quakers well known and widely understood.

Working with our Sub-committees and Groups

CC has now devised a lighter touch review and reporting system, involving more dialogue with them. We ask our sub-committees and groups to report to us on their theory of change and how they assess the success of the work as well as the opportunities, challenges and risks they see ahead, and where they expect the work to go in the future.

Caroline Kibblewhite & Sue Smith, Co-Clerks; Helen Drewery, Secretary

The members of QPSW Central Committee are:

Robert Almond	Sheffield & Balby AM	1 Jan 2017-31 Dec 2019
Jeff Beatty	Southern Marches AM/CCR y Gororau Deheuol	1 Jan 2017-31 Dec 2019
Ann Bettys	Brighouse West Yorkshire AM	1 Aug 2017-31 Dec 2019
Annie Dickson	Bournemouth Coastal AM,	1 Jan 2018-31 Dec 2020
Adam Drury	South East London AM	18 May 2018-31 Dec 2018
Pete Duckworth	Northumbria AM	1 Jan 2018-31 Dec 2020
Trevor Evans	Luton & Leighton AM	1 Jan 2018-31 Dec 2020
Deirdre Haslam	Mid-Essex AM	1 Jan 2018-31 Dec 2018
Caroline Kibblewhite	Dorset & South Wiltshire AM	1 Jan 2016-31 Dec 2018
Liz Law	South East Scotland AM	1 Jan 2016-31 Dec 2018
Andree Ryan	London West AM	1 Jan 2018-31 Dec 2020
Elize Sakamoto	North West London AM	18 May 2018-31 Dec 2018
Susan Smith	Oxford & Swindon AM	1 Jan 2016-31 Dec 2018
Dick Stockford	Worcestershire & Shropshire AM	1 Jan 2017-31 Dec 2019
Ruth Tod	Mid-Thames AM	1 Jan 2018-31 Dec 2020

Quaker World Relations Committee

Members of Meeting for Sufferings are welcome to comment upon any aspect of QWRC's work, but in particular to respond to the following:

- a. In all the encounters outlined in this paper, we feel that together we are reinforcing our sense of being part of a world family and helping us all to gain from what A&Q 16 calls 'this rich heritage'. But we do not have such connections everywhere in BYM. How can we extend these next year and beyond, perhaps including to some of you? (C1 refers)
- b. QWRC is trying to strengthen the link between BYM's aspiration to become a low carbon sustainable community, and the developing global Quaker movement on this. How important does this seem to MfS? (A7 refers)
- c. We have attempted to interpret OFF in connection with our work. (A6 refers). Do you have any comments on this?

QWRC and its role

A&Q 16: Do you welcome the diversity of culture, language and expressions of faith in your yearly meeting and in the world community of Friends? Seek to increase your understanding and to gain from this rich heritage and wide range of spiritual insights. Uphold your own and other yearly meetings in your prayers.

QWRC's role is to work at BYM level in furtherance of this. Our terms of reference describe this as:

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

We are a small committee of 8 people, with minimal staff support. Valuing the world family as we do, we rejoice that many people the length and breadth of BYM have links with and experience of Friends elsewhere besides ourselves. We seek to work with all such Friends and to increase their numbers.

QWRC's particular contribution is fourfold:

1. Building up a picture of the four FWCC sections of the Quaker world, and British Friends' interaction with them
2. Fostering such interaction by raising awareness, providing briefing information, sending representatives to selected meetings and bringing visitors here
3. Acting on an ongoing process of reflection on QWRC's engagement with British Friends, and British Friends engagement with the world family
4. undertaking several of BYM's formal responsibilities with regard to international links, notably in relation to FWCC (both globally, and within the Europe and Middle East section, to which BYM belongs)

A. How has QWRC strengthened BYM in the past year?

1. **Creating opportunities to encounter Quakers from elsewhere:** feedback from Friends who encounter such visitors tells us that they find it enriching and

broadening. For the last two years, QWRC has significantly increased such opportunities by formally inviting guests to come to YM and also to undertake a programme of visits before and/or afterwards. In 2018 our guests were Melinda Wenner Bradley from the US and Hanningtone Mucherah from Kenya.

Melinda currently works for Philadelphia YM as their Young People's Engagement Coordinator. She is also a highly experienced Faith and Play practitioner/storyteller. She made several significant contributions to BYM – she led the plenary all-age worship session, led an inspiring and crowded storytelling 'special interest group', participated in much enjoyed sessions with the Children and Young People's programme and with JYM, and led an early morning programmed worship session. Before YM she met staff in Friends House, Woodbrooke, EMES and Swarthmoor Hall, and held storytelling sessions with meetings in Sheffield, Milton Keynes and Swarthmoor, and in Friends House.

Hanningtone currently works for AFSC in Kenya and has also set up a small organisation of his own, called Quaker Peace Initiatives. A particular recent focus was election monitoring during the 2017 elections in Kenya. He led an evening programmed worship session during YM, and otherwise participated as led. He had an extensive programme of visits, speaking to Friends in Jordans, Brighton, Durham, Newcastle, Hebden Bridge and Skipton.

2. **Raising awareness of QWRC and the importance of the world family, through talks and residential meetings:** Notable examples in 2018 were participation in a large regional meeting - Quakers in Yorkshire, QWRC's residential meeting as guests of Kingston and Wandsworth AM in February, and our engagement with Central England Friends when QWRC met at Woodbrooke in September. Our weekend in Kingston was a mix of QWRC business sessions, sharing with local Friends in the late afternoon and early evening on the Saturday, and worshipping with them on Sunday morning. In Birmingham we were invited to speak at CEQ AM on Saturday and worshipped at three local meetings on Sunday morning. Both our hosts and QWRC have felt enriched.
3. Exploring **synergies with Woodbrooke:** Woodbrooke has considerable international work and connections and many international visitors. During our residential meeting we looked for ways in which Woodbrooke's and QWRC's international work could be mutually supportive and reinforcing. Several ideas emerged which we will take forward in 2019, including working together on a consultative conference for BYM representatives to EMES YMs.
4. **QWRC Forum on Intervisitation:** QWRC organises a Forum each year, for representatives from different parts of BYM's structure. The 2018 topic was intervisitation, i.e. the value of visiting, and receiving guests from, other parts of the Quaker world. Those present found the day very worthwhile and insightful.
5. **Representing BYM at the annual EMES meeting:** this was in Bergen in June and marked 200 years of Quakerism in Norway. The theme was especially apt, being 'A new heaven and a New Earth: finding new light in turbulent times.' Sustainability was a significant thread, and the SCO described the work she is doing to foster a worldwide Quaker movement. We had a rich discussion of a draft 2020-2030 strategy for EMES, prepared in the light of comments earlier in the year

from ourselves and others. It is good to be able to report that we felt a great unity with our European colleagues, notwithstanding Brexit uncertainties.

6. **Relating Our Faith in the Future (OFF) to interactions with the world family and expressing QWRC’s strategic direction in OFF terms:** Our Faith in the Future expresses BYM’s vision of the future to which we aspire. Is it applicable in whole or in part to Friends worldwide? What does this imply for BYM’s QWRC, charged as it is with facilitating A&Q 16? Can our work enrich, strengthen, help BYM work towards this vision? Is this our main contribution to diversity?

We have given much thought to these questions this year and have begun by formulating QWRC’s broad strategic objectives in terms of the six dimensions of OFF: the outcome is in the table below. We then expressed our workplan for 2018 and 2019 in terms of specific actions in furtherance of these objectives. Everything we have done hitherto is consistent with these objectives, and arguably they were implicit before. But making them explicit has given us a much stronger sense of strategic direction and coherence.

Our Faith in the Future	Broad objectives for QWRC
Meeting for worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker	Deepen understanding of different forms of worship, and engage BYM as opportunities arise
	Share our form of worship with the world family
Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all age	Engage more fully across all ages, especially YAFs, learning from practice elsewhere in the Quaker world
All Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline	Conduct QWRC business in accordance with Quaker Faith and Practice
Quaker values are active in the world	Deepen QWRC understanding of Quaker witness around the globe and engage BYM in this
Quakers work collaboratively	Collaborate with Quakers within BYM with regard to international aspects
	Play a full part in FWCC’s Europe & Middle East Section
	Collaborate with FWCC and the world family
Quakers are well known and widely understood	Work to increase British Friends’ understanding of the world family and the issues of concern to it, through much of the above
	Work to communicate British Friends’ witness across the Quaker world through much of the above

7. **Strengthening the link between BYM’s commitment to becoming a low carbon sustainable community and the developing global Quaker movement:** the two most recent FWCC global meetings (Kabarak, Kenya (2012) and Pisac, Peru (2016) have generated a stronger sense of a worldwide Quaker movement for sustainability. The 2012 *Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice* exhorted Friends worldwide to respond. The 2016 Pisac minute looked at progress in the intervening

four years and called for all yearly meetings to identify two specific actions they would take. BYM's official representatives (i.e. QWRC members) brought this back to Sufferings and BYMSG. In addition, it was clear to us that if FWCC was to build and maintain an effective global movement it was going to need to capture and share local actions, communicate these so as to enable effective ideas to be emulated, and foster collaboration. This led QWRC and FWCC to make a successful proposal for a legacy-funded post of Sustainability Communications Officer (SCO), based in FWCC's World Office. Since QWRC last reported to Sufferings, in April 2017, the SCO has been appointed and has now been in post for just over a year. Strong links have been formed with BYM staff, with BYMSG, with QUNO Geneva's global work (also BYM funded) and with Quaker work around the world. QWRC liaises regularly with the SCO and considers reports on BYM's behalf.

B. What has QWRC laid down, or taken up in 2018?

Most strands of our work are ongoing, but there have been a few changes this year.

Taken up

1. **Programmed worship sessions at YM:** for the first time, QWRC organised programmed worship sessions in the early morning and evening, to give opportunities for experiencing a different form of worship.
2. **Forging a link with Woodbrooke:** referred to above.
3. **Strategy development in terms of OFF:** referred to above.

Laid down

1. **Our attempt to review knowledge of and links with the 3 other FWCC sections every year:** it became obvious that this was unrealistic. In future we will look at one section each year, in a three-year cycle, beginning with the Section of the Americas in 2019.
2. **Our plan to set up a 2018 consultative meeting with BYM representatives to EMES YMs in recent years:** this is now planned for 2019.

C. Challenges anticipated in 2019

1. **Connecting with more BYM Friends:** each year we hold two residential weekend meetings in different parts of the UK. Thus far we have been to York, Kingston and Woodbrooke/Birmingham and in 2019 we will be in Edinburgh and Bristol. In 2017 and 2018 we have hosted international guests and arranged visit programmes for them. We plug into the Quaker Africa Interest Group, the Quaker South Asia Interest Group and the China Interest Group. New members sign up to the QWRC network every time, which means we keep them up to date with our work, and they can post information about theirs.
- 2.

Question for MfS members: In all these encounters we feel that together we are reinforcing our sense of being part of a world family. But we do not have such connections everywhere in BYM. How can we extend these next year and beyond, perhaps including to some of you?

3. **Encouraging more travelling British Friends to contact us if they plan, or would like to, meet local Friends:** from QWRC's perspective, anything we can learn from travellers about Friends elsewhere enriches our understanding, and increases the pool of people we can keep informed about our work, and to whom we can offer opportunities for involvement if they wish. From the travellers' point of view they could get useful background about local Friends and other links there might already be with British Friends. From the local Friends' perspective, they would be able to find out more about BYM from their visitors, and thereby deepen their understanding of us.
4. **Succession planning:** since QWRC was remodelled at the beginning of 2015 we have been a small committee that requires all of us to make significant contributions. We are a committed group, but there is going to be quite a turnover of experienced members in the next two years. If you know of people who might be interested, do encourage them to sign up to the QWRC network (just email qwrc@quaker.org.uk) and come and meet us at events they'll hear about through the network.
5. **Making a success of our focus on the Section of the Americas:** we will shortly be establishing a working group on this, with a view to preparing briefing materials for travelling Friends and ourselves, building on, and in consultation with FWCC. We are sure that there is a great deal of knowledge and experience within BYM – the challenge is to locate and integrate it.

D. QWRC membership and terms of service

Name	AM	Triennium	End date
Barbara Windle	York	second	December 2018
Alick Munro	Kingston & Wandsworth	second	December 2018
Lee Taylor	Luton & Leighton	second	December 2019
Elaine Green	Ipswich and Diss	first	December 2019
Ann Floyd (clerk)	Chilterns	second	December 2020
George Thurley	Sussex East	second	December 2020
Liz Scurfield	York	second	December 2020
Ian Marshall	Lancs Central & North	first	December 2020

Ann Floyd
 Clerk QWRC
 November 2018

Reports from Britain Yearly Meeting representatives attending European Yearly Meetings in 2018

Our representatives to other European Yearly Meetings have sent written reports, which are followed, below, by the epistle from each Yearly Meeting if available.

Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting – Ruth Homer
France Yearly Meeting – Lesley Grahame
German Yearly Meeting – Annette Duensing
Ireland Yearly Meeting – Ruth Clements McQuaid & Marie McCusker
Netherlands Yearly Meeting – Silas Price
Norway Yearly Meeting – Ingrid Greenhow
Sweden Yearly Meeting – Gisela Creed
Switzerland Yearly Meeting – Harry Albright

Belgium and Luxembourg YM - report

Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting (BLYM) took place from the 10-13 May at Maldegem Jeugdhostel in Flanders, with 22 Friends, including Ruth Homer representing Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), and Berne Weiss representing Friends World Committee for Consultation – Europe and Middle East Section (FWCC-EMES). I was actually part of the planning group for the meeting, but I'll try to focus this brief report on the gathering from my point of view as Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) member.

The theme was “Nurturing Seedlings” and the main topic of discussion during the long weekend was eldership and oversight – the members of the YM's Ministry and Oversight Group all either finished their second triennium, or were unwilling to continue at the end of 2017, and the nominations group was unable to find new members for this committee. This has led to a deeper process of reflection and discernment on the meeting, and how it nurtures spiritual growth within individuals and the community.

Much ground was covered on this during the YM, recognising the process as important, and not wishing to rush to a solution that doesn't fit.

This also involved considering how the two worship groups beyond the main meeting in Brussels, in Ghent and Luxembourg, could be supported, and better links built.

Language/translation was an important part of these discussions, as the YM remains majority anglophone, but the Ghent group is entirely Dutch-speaking. In the longer term, I think there may be a need for more discussions about separating Brussels meeting from BLYM, particularly if the Ghent group continues to grow – currently BLYM and Brussels structures are one and the same, which may become problematic/exclusive.

Both Ruth and Berne had very positive reactions to the gathering, and made a positive contribution. I know that Ruth's presence and insight was particularly valued, which reflects well on BYM. Ruth volunteered to draft a report for the Friend (alongside her report to QWRC of course!)

Ruth Homer

Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting Epistle

10 - 13 May 2018

To Friends everywhere,

"Sit up and take notice. There's no time to waste, when there's spiritual work to be done!"

This was the command of a shaman from Papua New Guinea that our guest speaker, Alastair McIntosh, shared with us during his talk on developing community and nurturing seedlings, using the example of his involvement in the land reform movement on the island of Eigg, in the Inner Hebrides, Scotland. Against considerable odds, the whole island community purchased Eigg when it came on to the market in the 1990s. Alastair shared the experiences that the islanders faced in their quest to reclaim their land and heritage and build community.

Alastair's presentation inspired three days of intensive discussions about the future direction of our Quaker community in Belgium and Luxembourg. Ours has traditionally been a relatively small meeting, with a majority of members and attenders coming from outside Belgium. We recognize the important role eldership and oversight play in the life of any meeting. However, recently we have struggled to fill vacancies for these roles. Our three-day residential meeting has given us the time and space to explore the roots of the issue as well as to seek clarity on the way forward, to develop our knowledge and understanding of each other and to enjoy being together. We made considerable progress during this meeting and we also made concrete plans for the rest of the process.

We took the time to reflect on the specific nature of our meeting, recognizing that different people come to us with different needs and expectations, which also vary over time. We seek a harmonious balance between providing a place that is hospitable to the soul, a space where we can just be, and acknowledging the responsibilities that come with being part of a community. We are all responsible for the welfare of each other and of the Meeting.

At the same time, we are encouraged to note a growth in interest in the Quaker way that has led to the setting up of a new worship group in the city of Ghent. We feel both humbled and heartened by these developments, which bring with them new challenges in learning from and supporting each other, including better reflecting the linguistic diversity of our community.

We are called to provide a richer soil in which the seedlings of our gifts, our fellowship with each other and our witness to Quaker values can flourish.

In and on behalf of Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting,

Ruth Harland, Clerk
Phil Gaskell, Assistant Clerk

France Yearly Meeting - report

27-30 October 2018

Impressions from France

The street scene is perfectly set up to meet and eat, with tables and chairs on pavements as the normal. This is great for diners, but I didn't see any mobility scooters or wheelchairs, and wondered how they'd manage all the obstacles

The 15th arrondissement that houses Enclos Rey is far from a clone high street we know all too well, and hosts many small bakeries, greengrocers, butchers, gift shops and even more cafes. Friends I asked about this said that Paris is big enough to keep its independent businesses at ground level, with housing above them. In smaller towns, the supermarkets have been able to undermine the high street just as in UK.

Opening

The theme of emerging 'from despair to confidence' grew from conversations at last year's FYM, and resonates with the moment.

We can be confident in our alternative vision, the awareness of our young people, and our own energy and determination to survive, the necessity of our testimony. There is much to make me feel at home- from lack of confidence in our respective governments, to the data protection workload, difficult decisions about buildings, shyness about music, confidence in Quaker methods, community spirit, and work done on our behalf.

'Quakers in France: Experience and Practice' was newly launched, after only 10 years in the making.

Quakers in France commemorated peace and resistance work done by American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), Norway Quaker Service and individual Friends

French Friends run the Paris Quaker International Centre, which is very welcoming once you've found it, as long as you can manage stairs or find the level entrance. They own a significant part of a building, but the other owners makes life difficult for them. They are not allowed to display any signage outside the building that would allow anyone to find them, and the door is accessed through a locked gate onto the street. Some want to move, others don't, and but a decision has been made, with some misgivings, that it is time to move.

What Quakers in France lack in numbers, they make up in commitment. Of 150 Friends, about 50 came to France Yearly Meeting, some having travelled for hours, including from Toulouse, Congenie and some from Norway, UK, Germany

We were inspired by an early session where Olivia Caeymaux from QCEA described some of the discreet diplomacy work of QUNO, and its quiet campaigning to reduce the suffering of child refugees and those in detention. They have also research and acted on the anti-migrant narrative that perpetrated by and contributing to the rising far right. They note the continuing presence of NATO, and the reducing ethic of multi-lateralism

that is both cause and effect of Brexit. QCEA attempts to influence the EU budget away from militarism towards more socially & environmentally just priorities, and to shift the debate away from getting the most 'defence' towards building peace and security.

Norwegian Friends showed a film demonstrating their reconciliation work in Burundi, with its long slow and painful process towards healing for both victim and offender. Norwegian Friends are few but their work is highly respected, including on peace tax and conscientious objection, support for Palestinian pre-schools, child prisoners and climate action. Quaker Service Norway allows Quakers to let their individual lives speak- collectively. Alternatives to violence projects give voice and value to ourselves and others. They operate in prisons, schools, war zones and post-conflict areas, seeing themselves not as charitable donors but as partners in building a more peaceful world.

Some government funding shows the the high respect in which they are held.

They celebrate the UN and World Bank's recent move recognition of the importance of preventing violent conflict, global acts of descent such at the MeToo movement. They tell us that civil society, church and other faith groups have become more outspoken in positive ways, and that the NGO world is becoming more professional and effective. They have published a practical resource 'Building Peace together' setting out principles, examples and tools to allow everyone to take part in creating a more peaceful world. The role of faith groups in secular France is not always easy, but the importance of building rapport with decision -makers remains similar. Macron has initiated the Paris Peace Forum of which we can be hopeful.

Sunday worship was followed by a round table on current challenges, Quaker responses and sources of hope. Jonathan Woolley (QUNO) Holly Spencer (Stop Fuelling War) and Lee Taylor (FWCC EMES) named their greatest challenges, Quaker responses and sources of hope.

Challenges were many, including the undermining of international bodies that work, the rise of individualism and nationalism, Brexit, the scapegoating of migrants. Quiet diplomacy takes time, and sometimes there is a tension between the needs for silence and for action.

We have no corporate or state funders (apart from in Norway) and rely heavily on the generosity of Friends

Strengths included international systems that work, have reached key agreements (eg Nuclear non-prokliferation Treaty, Paris Climate accord, international humanitarian law. These need sustaining

Our history - Quakers started out in times of cataclysmic unrest, found courage, turned away from violence and found ways to serve humanity.

We enjoy many unities and strengths of purpose, and we have a diverse network of meetings, a body of peacebuilding principles, experience and tools. We nurture enthusiasm in our young people, who see through and challenge injustices, phobias, and soporific consumerism.

We have visions of security that make the world safer, our non-violence is second nature and we are not intimidated by power, but work in the gaps, speaking truth to power. Very rarely, integrity supercedes truth-telling, for example when providing safe

passage in dangerous times.

Our habit of equality doesn't just impel us to help those who suffer most from inequality, but also enables us to connect with and influence those in power, without being seduced or intimidated by it. Paul Parker spoke eloquently of the leadership requirement to be a good servant, when being our face to the world. Our witness is as necessary in today's dark and frightening times as they were in 1642, when we rose to the challenge of seeking right relationship in dangerous times. We are proud to be part of the same tapestry as the Stanstead 15 who stopped a deportation plane from taking off, and now face criminal charges, and those who worked tirelessly for equal marriage. We can all make a difference when we find our path where we are called to witness. Whether we are feeding, funding, worshipping, telling, showing, supporting, upholding, we can have confidence in our purposes.

We have made significant impact on the course of events, from climate talks to campaigns against arms fairs and are working through quiet diplomacy and practical help to change the narrative on migration. Our witness is perhaps reflected in being the only faith group admitted as observers to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

To take care in the world, Quakers also need to sustain ourselves and each other. We heard from Jo Scott how music had been part of making life joyful, and how our early rejection belonged in the specific time. Music is not now a frivolous distraction, but a bonding, building and expressive experience, and sometimes a discerning or campaigning tool.

We shared a deep exploration of what our testimonies meant, for ourselves and as part of the collective discernment of a movement. French Quakers talk of 6 testimonies, or SPICES, Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, Sustainability.

When the world is commemorating WW1, we too have much to offer and remember. Our work for recognition of conscientious objection has come a long way, as have our forms of service, which are not to judge or change people but to help as they wish to be helped.

Our ambassadors are of a new kind, who may offer medical, agricultural, reconstruction, rescue, transport, safe passage, building hospitals, homes and connections. AFSC offers an alternative to the increasing militarisation of the US Red Cross.

As a formerly occupied country, French memories will be different to British ones and stark in different ways. The suffering lasted long after the war ended, for people on both sides, with so many people displaced, disabled, and destitute. In France there were 5 and a half million refugees returning, including some from the Spanish Civil War and 30 000 Poles just in Ardenne. Quaker Aid helped in many ways already mentioned, with some notable additions - building factories to make prosthetics limbs (and work) for without limbs, as well as clothes and presumably shoes for those arriving barefoot.

Oslo Quakers transported 50 000 Jews out of Czechoslovakia, and then had to evacuate them again when occupied. Norway sent 30 Lorries of food and other essentials to Germany.

In conclusion

French Friends are seeking and reflecting on the service they may be led to undertake together. I look forward to hearing about the discernment that will shape French Quaker Service, and to maintaining relationships with our European Friends.

I would like to thank BYM for the privilege of being sent, and FYM for their hospitality and inspiration. As it says in Transition Handbook, if we act alone it may be too little, if we wait for governments it may be too late, but when we act together, we may just turn things around.

Lesley Grahame

Epistle of the Annual Meeting of Quakers of France

October 2018 in Paris

The Quakers of France met this year, from 27 to 31 October 2018, around the theme: "Despair and Confidence" in a haven of peace and greenery that presents the Enclos Rey in the 15th arrondissement of Paris. Friends of various nationalities, as well as the presence of children full of joie de vivre have participated in the excellent atmosphere of the Assembly. A "Crying Wolf" play has emerged from the program's work of children on the truth, Quaker value. The occasion of the Annual Meeting was seized for present a wonderful book just out "Quakers in France: Experience and Pratch",

The result of a collaborative work on the history and practice of Quakers in France.

We find that the times are difficult: climate change, dramas of migration, Brexit and terrorism are just some of the sources of concern in the world around us. There is also a particular context in France, which is a country both secular and therefore unprepared for organizations like ours, and a country in which the army and the armaments industry are very influential.

Through various testimonies, we could see how the Quaker movement does not give in to despair. Quaker culture, on the contrary, develops trust and the means to act. There are in fact a large number of specific means that Quakers have developed to radiate their message of peace and of truth.

Thus, the operation of the discreet diplomat was presented, with emphasis on the importance of providing space for exchange, listening to all parties is essential. Such a framework encourages exchanges undistorted by echoes of media, and it helps to build a relationship of trust, essential for the discreet diplomat. The whole thing is done with a (carefully selected) group over a meal, which contributes to friendliness and emphasises a common humanity. Olivia Caeymex illustrated how discreet diplomat could happen at QCEA in Brussels, and Jonathan Woolley QUNO outlined the influence that meetings at Quaker House in Geneva could have on climate change negotiations within the United Nations.

By listening not only to political actors but also to everyone, the Quakers work in the interstices of the political and civil life, filling important gaps communication. They disseminate the existing experience, through research and compilation professional information. They collect and disseminate the existing experience, enhanced through research and sharing

This is the case for the QCEA publication "Building Peace" together, "which makes it possible to create bridges with other actors in civil life who pursue the same objects as us. This publication presents a resource that we must all radiate disseminate/share/act upon.

All this work requires patience. It is done over several years, in order to create Sustainable transformation. A testimony of the success of this strategy was the Quaker reconciliation initiative between victims and perpetrators in Burundi, which we could see in a short film as an inspiring example.

Any transformation is indeed seen as a process, in which Quakers can intervene strategically and also, through the various institutions, in increasingly professional ways.

Quakers therefore act behind them act to support in the long run, and in a discreet way. Quakers give discreet and long-term support. But there are also more visible actors, such as the "Stop fuelling war", which manifests campaigns/demonstrates at Eurosatory, in addition to instilling dialogue.

These are the testimonials of current actions, but also the History of the Quakers which encouraged us. Thus, it was recalled that the movement was precisely created in a specific moment of great disorder, during the English Civil War of the 1640s. It has developed during all the wars since, as showed by Clothilde Druelle-Korn and Dale Andrew in their presentations on the role of the Quakers in France during the two world wars, and the testimony of Jutta Izumo on the food brought (to Germany) by the Quakers after the bombing of Hamburg.

These experiences have allowed us to be confident in our ability to contribute to the transformation of society into a non-violent alternative vision. In fact, instead of giving way to despair, it is at these moments of crisis that we are needed more than ever. And the results are there: the evidence is not lacking to show that the group of Friends is small, but effective.

The history of Quakers is also our common heritage. Jo Scot gave us a glimpse of it by presenting the Quakers' report on relationship with music and its evolution over time. This intervention was crowned by a beautiful session of singing in canon, symbolic for the harmony which reigns during all this assembly.

How can we act at the individual level and at the level of our (national) groups? These questions were the subject of the evening hosted by Paul Parker and group work on the EPICES, the Quakers testimonies of Equality, Peace, Integrity, Community, Eco-responsibility and Simplicity. A profusion of ideas has emerged; but also the realization that we already do things, sometimes at the individual level. A question to be discussed in the future is that of the creation of a service of the Quakers of France, following the example and perhaps in partnership with the Quakers of Norway. Nevertheless, an important function of the group is the support of each other, which not only allows us to exchange share resources but also to give hope and confidence. Definitely successful for the Annual Meeting.

In conclusion, we wish you the folly of believing that the world can be transformed.

German Yearly Meeting - report

Venusberg, Bonn, 25-28 October 2018

218 Quakers and attenders met for German Yearly Meeting from 25 until 28 October 2018 at the conference centre Venusberg in Bonn, in Northwest Germany. This was very much an all-age community, with a dedicated programme for children and young people running alongside the Meeting, allowing much integration and cross-fertilisation.

Days started with a choice between half an hour of singing or bible work, for those who enjoyed these activities. Next, different forms of morning worship were offered: in addition to the main meeting, there was a story-based and an outdoor walking meeting. There were two main sessions each day, containing business meeting, reports and the Carey lecture. There was also a session each day with a choice of parallel smaller sessions. Days ended with epilogue and a chance to socialise.

The Yearly Carey lecture this time was held by Cho-Nyon Kim, Emeritus professor of Sociology from Korea, exploring the commonalities between Quakerism and Taoism based on examples from his own and his family's life. According to Cho-Nyon Kim both are pragmatic rather than dogmatic, are based on the idea of an inner light, and advocate that religion must inform what we do in our everyday lives.

Reports were received from children and young people, 'Church and Peace', 'Büchel' (see below). A new format was chosen this year for reports from other Yearly Meetings. The main greetings were displayed on a notice board and not read aloud. Instead visiting delegates and those, who had visited, were asked to report briefly what had stood out for them personally. This format was well received and made for an informative and personalised session.

The three concerns raised this year related to the targeted advertising to minors of apprenticeships in the German army, an invitation to redraft advices and queries regarding sustainability and a march for peace between Israel and Palestine organised by a young Friend.

The biggest topic for Business Meeting was like last year the future of the historic Quaker Meeting House in Bad Pyrmont based on the intensive work of a working group during the year. The working group brought forward the question whether they should engage professional help to explore in more detail the possibility to develop the MH into a small conference centre. The issue had to be revisited three times, as opinions differed widely. Finally, it was minuted that the letting of the house in its current form would be professionally explored, but the working group should pause the exploration of the conference centre option. They would reconvene after a break to continue their search for further options.

Twice there were parallel sessions offering a choice of activities including a discussion of the Carey lecture, meditative as well as Playford dancing, several discussions of the role of ethics vs religion, a discussion of non-theism, a presentation on the situation in Palestine, an introduction to Friends World Committee for Consultation/Europe and Middle East Section and further information on Büchel, the only site of atomic weapons on German soil.

One session contained parallel committee meetings, which were run as open sessions

allowing those who wanted to find out about the work of these groups to sit in. These included peace work and children and young people.

I left with a clear impression of a vibrant, warm and close F/friendship community of all ages, who support each other throughout the year and gain great strength from their membership of or connection to the Society.

Annette Duensing, Luton and Leighton Area Meeting
4 November 2018

Ireland Yearly Meeting 2018 - report

'Discerning and Living our Testimonies Together'

I try to avoid stereotypes but when I got off the train in Limerick there were others arriving who I was certain were Quakers. Don't ask how I knew; they just looked Friendly and I was not disappointed. I was welcomed most warmly and soon was stuffed into the back of a small car which was piled high with luggage, five people and a huge, beautiful guide dog who good humouredly crammed himself in to the unfeasibly small space at the feet of the front passenger seat. This sums up Ireland Yearly Meeting for me – welcoming, warm and ambitious with many visitors squeezed in to join the journey.

We did so much; at times it felt like too much. Bible studies, Reports, Spiritual Reflection Groups, Interesting Options, Public Lecture, Business Sessions. A rich and well organised procession of thoughtfulness and worship punctuated by amazing conversations with many interesting people from all over Ireland, Britain and beyond. It was awesome and inspiring!

I was challenged in a presentation about Quaker service to 'seek out nothing but the light in one another' which pushed me way beyond the limits I had placed around 'there is that of God in everyone'. I reflected that this is a challenge - to release my own inner light to shine out and meet the light in others. How can I do this? 'By endeavouring not to be held back by fear' it was suggested in the same presentation. Ben Pink Dandelion in his Public Lecture added to this by talking about how his own local meeting opened itself to fundamental change with more worship, more coffee and cake and a more accessible meeting house. Thought provoking stuff as my own local meeting takes on the challenge of becoming a 'sanctuary meeting'.

Ireland Yearly Meeting itself was not fearful when deciding on new regulations to facilitate same sex marriage in Quaker meetings. There were strong feelings, plain speaking and robust disagreement. No unanimity was found but the sense of the meeting was well tested. I was reminded that we do not look for consensus but are moved together in community with the complexity of our disagreements as part of the fabric of our belonging. I personally am delighted that gay couples in the whole of Ireland will marry within the embrace of their meeting for worship.

On the final evening we widened our perspective and heard from Simon C Lamb current Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) clerk. He talked with passion about the opportunities and responsibilities of his position with particular reference to a visit to Burundi. I always forget how many 'programmed' Quakers there are around the world and was reminded how small in numbers we are in our tradition. The images of churches full to the rafters of people of all ages and Simon's unbridled enthusiasm were infectious and hopeful.

I started coming regularly to Quaker meeting 17 years ago but my ability to attend events like this has been prevented by the business of having a family - I have twins who are 13 years old and another who is 9 years old. I had settled into the belief that it was not possible. I am incredibly grateful to have been asked to attend IYM and stretch myself back out again. It was very good for me and my whole family to have me go away on my own and come back with new ideas, friendships and a fresh sense of myself as having a place within Quakerism beyond my own local meeting. As my older

children attend Shindig and are developing their own networks of Friends it felt good to have my stories to tell too. We move forward together as a family deepening our belonging and sense of identity as Quakers.

Thank you

Ruth Clements McQuaid

I volunteered to serve Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) as a representative to Ireland Yearly Meeting (IYM) because of my Irish connections. I was born in Belfast to Irish parents and moved to England when I was eight. I have maintained links to my Irish connections through family events and regular visits. In the end it was my Irish identity that presented me with most cause for thought at IYM but more of that later.

The event itself was full of blessings and learnings. Foremost were the lovely, loving and interesting people I met and heard. Ireland Yearly Meeting covers the whole of the island of Ireland and consists of 1,495 members, 46% of whom are from the north, Ulster. 200 people participated in IYM, at least 30 of whom were visitors like myself. As well as the two BYM reps and Ben Pink Dandelion, the invited public speaker, 12 other British Friends made their way to IYM along with Friends from the US, Germany, Canada, Belgium and Luxembourg and New Zealand. There were also reps from other churches in Ireland.

The theme of IYM was 'Discerning and Living Our Testimonies Together' and we had much ministry about the good work Irish Quakers are doing. We heard of work on integrity, gambling, sustainability, militarisation, with refugees and with the disadvantaged. A highlight for me was the report by IYM's paid youth development worker and from the young people themselves, some of who I had met in Lancaster when they were here in 2017 on a 1652 pilgrimage.

As an Area Meeting Clerk I found myself observing the Clerking team. There was less formality, possibly because Irish Friends know each other better, lots of humour and a gentleness about the process, especially during the difficult discernment on the wording of the regulations in relation to same-sex marriage. However, there was some confusion for me about process. The Clerk asked the meeting whether they wanted wording suggested by one Friend in the minute. The answer came back strongly as 'No'. Irish Friends saying 'yes' and 'no' rather than 'I hope so'. I was left considering whether that is really how we test the sense of the meeting.

At a Special IYM in May Irish Quakers had already decided that same-sex marriages could take place where this was allowed by law i.e. in the Republic of Ireland. The session at this IYM was to agree the wording of the regulation. One hour was set aside for this!! The regulation allows registering officers and elders to excuse themselves from participation in same-sex marriages but requires them to ensure that the couple can marry in a Meeting for Worship in another local or area meeting. It seems that this is the only way forward for a YM that is so divided on this matter but it does give a lot of power to those elders and registering officers who are not comfortable with same-sex marriages and may be very divisive within meetings.

As well as being less formal than BYM there was also a flexible approach to time

keeping with at least two speakers running over their allotted time forcing changes to the agenda. I enjoyed both talks so am not complaining but felt for the Clerks. One of these Friends, Sean Flynn, suggested the voice of Irish Quakers, in relation to national concerns, was muted to the point of being silent. He suggested that the historical context of Quakers in Ireland, the hopelessness of the times we live in and Quaker practices themselves stifled initiatives.

From an outsider's perspective it seems that Irish Quakers do a lot, especially given their small numbers, but I think he was wanting a larger national profile and voice. I can understand that and am glad that we have the capacity within BYM for this but for such a small Yearly Meeting with maybe only one paid staff member this does seem unrealistic. I really admired Sean's humour and passion and one suggestion I liked was of a yearly 'state of the nation' report by Quakers. In a way I would quite like this to happen within BYM. It would bring the present reality we are living with into our Yearly Meeting and would be invaluable if done by someone who was good at reading 'the signs of the times'. Additionally, this would probably require dialogue with thinkers from outside our tradition, something that we may not do enough of according to Sean.

Since coming home I have read a booklet I was given by an Irish Friend at IYM who had done some independent research, as part of a very active Quaker history group. Its title is 'Quakers and the Enlightenment: the context of schism in the early 1800s. I valued two aspects of this. One is the perspective that the Spirit is at work in our disputes and can help us clarify our faith and focus our actions on the work we are led to do. The other was the information that early Quaker booksellers included books by the mystics on their lists. I realised that looking at such books might help me articulate my experience of the divine. I have been awed by the efforts of those we call non-theists as they seek to articulate their experience and feel that maybe those of us who use the shorthand 'God' might emulate their efforts.

Another aspect of IYM that I valued was presentations given by Andrew Lane of Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary of Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe & Middle East Section (FWCC-EMES). Simon C Lamb the clerk of Friends World Committee for Consultation. This put the connection between Irish Quakers and the wider Quaker family central to the agenda. The presence of Quakers from around the world added to this richness.

The only sessions I attended outside the main programme was the morning Bible study sessions. These were volunteer led by some of those in IYM whose faith is more bible centred. In this, as in the matter of same-sex marriage, Irish Quakers have a spectrum of viewpoints. Sessions were well attended and I was glad to have been there but was as challenged by some of the leaders as were other participants. There were many optional activities that I did not attend as I focused on the main sessions and on getting to know Ruth Clements McQuaid, the other BYM rep and Marisa Johnson, with whom I shared a flat on campus, and other IYM participants.

Now to how attendance at IYM impacted on my sense of Irishness. All my previous trips to Ireland had been to visit family members most of whom are still practicing Catholics. I grew up in Barrow-in-Furness from the age of 8 mainly within its Catholic community though having Methodist and Presbyterian neighbours. At IYM I was amongst Irish Quakers, that is Irish non-conformists, though I did meet several who had grown up within the Catholic tradition.

Our tour of Limerick was of the 'English' town with its King James Castle and tales of the battles with William of Orange. It was confusing as this aspect of Irish history is related to only in the negative by those I previously thought of as 'my community'. In our final worship, at the beautiful Limerick Meeting House, I was overwhelmed by a sense of sadness at the impact sectarianism in the North had had on my life. Previously I had felt more the sense of liberation at not living with a narrow Catholic world view but now for the first time I got in touch with both the sense of loss that the move to England entailed and also the impact that sectarian thinking had had on my thinking. I too can still feel those historic hurts.

So though exhausting and challenging I consider the trip to have been exceeding valuable to me as an individual and as a Quaker. I truly value having been appointed and hope to maintain some of the contacts I made. One of the Fermanagh Worshipping Group will be in Lancaster next week and we will meet. With Lancaster at the heart of 1652 country it is likely that I will meet other Irish Friends without having to move far from my doorstep!

I would like to thank both BYM and IYM for funding this trip for me.

In Friendship
Marie McCusker

Ireland Yearly Meeting Epistle

July 2018

Dear Friends,

We have had an eventful year since our last epistle with our on-going discernment on same sex marriage, including a Special Yearly Meeting held in March 2018, and now our Ireland Yearly Meeting held in Limerick this July. We have all been, and continue to be on, a journey of deep worship, fuelled by a desire to find an outcome acceptable to all.

We cherish the wide range of views and theological approaches held within our Society and we believe that this diversity enriches all of us. We acknowledge that it has been at times bewildering and painful as we try to reconcile our very different views about same sex marriage with the friends that we love and care for. Our primary concern following our discernment to allow same sex marriage where Preparative or Monthly Meetings feel able to witness this, is to ensure that all the members of our society are able to continue their individual faith journeys in a way that they feel brings them closer to God.

We have tested our procedures around discernment and have taken comfort from the soundness of Quaker methods that help us deal with difficult issues that divide us. Our experience reminds us of what others in far more difficult positions of violent conflict have and continue to struggle through, to arrive at peaceful resolutions and increases our admiration and empathy for those on that path.

During our Yearly Meeting held around the theme “Discerning and Living our Testimonies Together” we were blessed to have so many speakers provide us with thought-provoking and nourishing ideas.

Ben Pink Dandelion, our public speaker for this year on the theme of “Living our Faith Daily: the practice of testimony” talked about our “transformed and transforming lives” where our everyday decisions become regular small acts of discernment “winnowed by the Holy Spirit”. It is when we step back from the “Spirit-led line in the middle of meeting where we gather and hold each other in love” that we fall into pride, mistrust and fear.

The meeting identified that it is our Quaker fear; of doing, or being perceived of doing, the wrong thing; fear of our contribution being too small or insignificant in the greater scheme of things; fear of engaging with our community and therefore maintaining our position of being “apart” that needs to be overcome.

We have been challenged to find ways in which Quakers can make their voices louder. Although we are small in numbers, we have been reminded of the courage of past Friends to seek to make a difference in the world - not all endeavours were successful or wise, such as one journey made by Friends in 1658 seeking to convert the Pope! - but they sought to change society rather than just wait and adapt to what was changing around them.

A more recent example of how a small number can make a big impact is our Yearly Meeting here in Limerick. Up to 200 participants have been provided with food, accommodation, love and a very warm welcome by a small Meeting who are re-invigorating a long history of Quaker engagement in the city.

We have incredible people who work with us on Quaker projects, many of whom are not Quakers, but who embody and live our values and testimonies so well that someone in receipt of their services talks about “Love, that’s what you get from Quakers, love”. It is, in fact, Love that has been the dominant message emerging throughout the year. We have a loving God, love our neighbour, love our environment, love ourselves with all our faults and allow ourselves to be courageous and in that way we love and serve God.

“Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.” Isaac Penington 1616-1679

“...that we are to be priests one to another, continually coming forward to each other, washing each other’s feet: if that is the heart of our practice of testimony, our living of daily faith, our inhabitation of being Quaker, shall come all the more easily”. Ben Pink Dandelion

“Finding ways to overcome evil with good is the business of our lives” Charles B Lamb (paraphrased from Romans C12 v 21).

Signed by the Clerking Team of:
E Heather Bewley (Clerk IYM),
Clodagh Davis (Assistant Clerk)
William A Haire (Assistant Clerk)
Rachel Cave.

Netherlands Yearly Meeting - report

25th to 27th May 2018

It was a great honour to attend Netherlands Yearly Meeting (NYM) as the Britain Yearly Meeting representative. The venue, about 4km from Ede train station, was beautiful beyond my expectations. The delightful "Nivon De Bosbeek" was tucked away amidst a large area of mixed forest, surrounded by plentiful fragrant pines, numerous rhododendron in full flower and a plethora of wild flower species. I could not imagine a better setting for NYM to take place in, a backdrop of bird song replacing the usual hum of traffic and urban chaos, the unbidden daily companions for many of us.

Into this paradise stepped 50 or 60 Friends for three days of time together - most from around the Netherlands but with about 10 non-Dutch speaking Friends present. The theme for the Yearly Meeting was "Living the Transformation". During the first evening we explored how we can help to create the change that we want to make happen in the world. We were asked to write down a few ideas on a sheet of paper and then walk around the room discussing our thoughts with each other. Topics included improving the cooperative movement, increasing social justice and, refreshingly, using music to increase love and peace in the world.

During the Saturday morning session, we heard details of the ten years of work that have been put into producing NYM's own Book of Discipline, called "Quaker Geloven en Werken" (translated *Quaker faith & practice*, with a handsome green cover and a delightful illustration of a forget-me-not) which is in Dutch and contains an anthology of quotations from Dutch and non-Dutch Friends over the centuries. This is still a work in progress and a final edition is expected to be ready soon.

Friends were rightly proud of the achievements made so far - a small group have worked with dedication and love to produce the book and a new committee was formed to allow the work to continue. Interestingly, several spoke of the difficult conversations on often emotive subjects that creating the book had triggered. It was felt that these would not have come about without the book and as such it has provided important opportunities for growth and shared understanding amongst Friends. All agreed that the book creates an excellent way of communicating with existing and potential new Friends.

The event that had the most impact over the weekend was the talk given by Kevin Bales, a Nottingham Friend, on the subject of slavery - past and present. Needless to say it was quite harrowing at times but insightful and important. Slavery is one of the most pressing international issues of these times. We heard that there have historically been three anti-slavery movements and we are currently involved in the fourth. Many millions are now enslaved and a world map shown by Kevin revealed approximate levels in each country - up to 4 percent of some populations are considered to be in slavery and all countries have some degree of it. A deeply unsettling thought. We were also reminded that the definition of slavery has remained the same throughout human history - the complete control of one person by another for the purposes of exploitation. Most worryingly of all, the cost of purchasing another human being is now considered to be at its lowest in human history.

Amidst the bleakness we heard of efforts to counteract slavery, including the creation of "Slave-free cities", such as Nottingham, where a concerted effort is being made to educate the population on the nature and signs of slavery in their local community. As

Kevin pointed out, “you can’t solve a problem you don’t understand”. Education is essential. Other advice was to investigate the supply chain of the items that we buy and to support international organisations that fight slavery.

Sunday started with a wonderful early morning group walk during which we enjoyed the songs of birds and the displays of wild flowers. What joy the black cap and the yellow rattle can bring!

Back at the Meeting, we divided into small groups and discussed our personal experiences of transformation. Much of what was shared in my group of six was heartfelt and deeply moving - the presence of the Spirit working within our lives is awe-inspiring and frankly, beyond the power of my words to adequately describe.

The weekend finished with a particularly well gathered Meeting for Worship which featured several truly inspiring pieces of ministry which I will treasure. As I sat on the train afterwards I reflected on how truly blessed I had been to attend and how much I had learnt about myself and others over the course of the three days. I have found myself thinking about the weekend a great deal since. I’m humbled by the friendship and generosity of Dutch Friends. I’m impressed by the strength and fellowship of their Yearly Meeting, despite being small in numbers. I felt the presence of the Spirit amongst us and I left feeling invigorated and without doubt, transformed.

I would like to sincerely thank our Dutch Friends for all their love and hospitality over the course of the weekend. I must also thank them again for providing such wonderful quality translation into English for those of us who were unable to speak Dutch. Upon arrival, my expectation was that we would receive a brief summary of the proceedings after each session. One Friend suggested that we would be huddled around in a group with whispered translations. In actual fact, we were each provided with a headset whilst six Dutch Friends took turns during the three days to patiently and skilfully provide a running translation via a microphone. I don’t think we could have been made to feel more welcome and more a part of the Meeting.

In loving friendship

Silas Price

Netherlands Yearly Meeting Epistle

Held at Natuurvriendenhuis De Bosbeek, Bennekom on 25 – 27 May 2018

To Friends everywhere,

When we headed to Bennekom on Friday afternoon, facing the rush hour traffic, we were grateful to smell the wonderful scent of the forest upon arrival and let the silence descend on us like a cooling balm. The “Nivon Bosbeekhuis”, where we gathered as Dutch Friends for our Annual Meeting, was waiting for us there between the trees. We started our gathering with the assignment to search our inner selves for a heartfelt wish, connected to our ongoing transformation. This wish was written down on a piece of paper, with which you then went to “the market”, to find allies to help you make this dream come true. Ensuing was a funny hive of activity, and quickly small groups were formed of likeminded Friends, who promised each other to get to work. Confronting us with these heartfelt wishes brought us closer together and helped us in our quest for practical solutions.

For several years our Yearly Meeting has not been able to fill the vacancies on our Peace Committee. However, reading the reports of our Monthly Meetings it becomes clear that many members are committed to a great variety of peace initiatives, either at a personal or regional level. This made us realize that sharing our Peace Testimony is not necessarily about forming a committee, but also supporting each other to find God’s guidance in our own lives.

Two years ago we received the working document of Quaker Geloven en Werken (Faith and Practice). Monthly Meetings and members were invited to read this document, discuss its contents and send in feedback. By now a rich harvest of commentary has come in. The process of working through this document as Dutch Quakers has led to many inspiring and open conversations, sometimes about topics that otherwise are rarely discussed, like sexuality and relationships. Now we will progress into the last phase of publishing our own Dutch version of Quaker Faith and Practice. We look forward to put the final version to good use.

Kevin Bales told us about contemporary slavery. He is a professor of sociology and an expert on modern slavery, working together with Free the Slaves to end all forms of human slavery. Although many of us are not aware of it, there are still approximately 40 million slaves worldwide. Slaves are especially used in developing countries, usually in work that is very polluting and produces excessive CO2. Freeing slaves would therefore also be a step forward in the problems around climate change. In every country around the world there are slaves, also in the Netherlands. Forced prostitution is an example of this. Kevin encourages us to learn more about the connections between slavery and our everyday living and which choices we could make in order to free slaves. There are several organizations working towards the goal of ending all forms of human slavery. It is also possible for entire communities, for example the Religious Society of Friends, to become slave-free. We had a lot of questions for Kevin and discussed the subject matter for a long time afterwards in smaller groups. The conversation about modern slavery isn’t over yet.

During the weekend the new booklet ‘102 ideas to enrich my Quaker life’ was presented. It brings us great joy that the German Yearly Meeting took the initiative to design and publish this booklet in memory of Hadewijch Touwen. We will certainly let

ourselves be inspired by it!

We enjoyed this Annual Gathering which, thanks in part to the presence of the children and many foreign guests, had a wonderful atmosphere. Re-energized, we said goodbye to each other and to the birds, who we left singing in the woods.

Marlies Tjallingii

Clerk of Netherlands Yearly Meeting

Norway Yearly Meeting - report

9th to 12th August 2018

“A Society in change”

I attended Norway YM at Solborg Folk High School in Stavanger in mid-August. There were some 60 Friends and a large number of children and young people present, of a total membership of 150. Norwegian Friends are celebrating 200 years of Quakers in Norway this year and much of the Yearly Meeting revolved around this, under the theme of “A Society in Change”, with excellent lectures by Hans Eirik Aarek on the history of Quakers in Norway, and Ben Pink Dandelion on the future of Quakerism and how we need to live up to the claim to be simple, radical and contemporary.

Norway YM in session

These led to small groups working on how to make our meetings welcoming and inclusive, the need to avoid abbreviations and Quaker jargon and whether to change the time of Meeting for Worship, particularly on Monthly Meeting days, to allow time for fellowship and spiritual growth.

The business of the Yearly Meeting was largely confined to the annual report and accounts and the budget, and a consideration of whether Norwegian Friends should adopt a concern about prisons, which was referred back to the Monthly Meetings. It was interesting to hear about the Young Quakers pilgrimage, taking in Friends House and Woodbrooke earlier this year.

As part of the anniversary celebrations, we were treated to an English cream tea in Stavanger Quaker Meeting House, followed (rather too quickly) by a gala dinner with a number of invited guests and then (again rather too soon) by two enormous celebratory cakes and speeches. On one evening, we met for epilogue to celebrate the “confirmation” of one of the younger Quakers. Over 90% of young Norwegians are confirmed, either into the church or in a civil ceremony, and Norwegian Friends recognise a need for some form of affirmation of younger Quakers. This is attracting interest from non-Quaker young people which brings its own challenges.

It was a privilege and a pleasure to be back amongst Norwegian Friends, but perhaps the downside for me of Norway YM was the lack of a list of attendees and name labels and that Norwegian Friends don't give their name when called to speak. The 60 Norwegian Quakers all know each other very well, but this makes it hard for visitors to feel part of the community: this despite me having been a member of Norway YM, speaking Norwegian and knowing perhaps a third of those present, so even harder for the other visitors.

Ingrid Greenhow

Norway Yearly Meeting Epistle

Stavanger, 12. dag i 8. måned, 2018

To Friends Everywhere

Our 200th anniversary was celebrated at our Yearly Meeting gathering in Stavanger, Norway, at the beautiful Solborg (Sun's Dwelling) Folk High School from 9th-12th August, 2018. Norwegian Friends have cause for celebration; we are a small, but active Society. We may be numerically small, but through the years we have gained influence in important areas of society to a greater extent than any other denomination – at least by membership, as the Christian Council of Norway said in their address.

A group of people of many ages, from one year to more than ninety, was gathered. We are proud to have amongst us active children and a “wonderful” youth group, as one of their leaders so pertinently described them. The young people, altogether twelve young Friends between 12 and 18, were divided into three groups. The youngest group “graduated” from children to youth this year, and the other groups provided information to the youngest about their activities. The middle group was responsible for arranging a Meeting for Worship on the Friday night, in which one of them wished to confirm her membership in the Society of Friends. On the Saturday, all the youth groups took part in an exploration of Light in Nature. The young people enjoyed being part of the fellowship across groups and throughout the gathering.

Regardless of age, we have all been grateful to be together and to enjoy the warmth of fellowship. We have experienced deep and nurturing silence during worship, and also play, joy and fun. Play is a way to get to know oneself and gain self-respect and respect for others.

This year we have enjoyed a long and warm summer. At the same time we are deeply concerned about climate change. We believe in that of God in everyone, not only in humans but also in nature. We do not own the world! We will continue to work to maintain diversity, look after the environment and each other. Our concern for nature and the environment was expressed through different contributions and expressions right from the start.

As our Clerk said in her introduction, “The Kingdom of God is within us and also in the trees, the stones and in the air around us. And our task is to take care of it.” In a poem about mountains, Kari Steensberg once said it thus, “Here, up high, where everything is close, one may hear the voice of goodness, a song of praise for life and for the people whom we love.”

Through Hans Eirik Aarek's vivid stories from the history of Quakers in Norway, our pride was strengthened: we belong to a religious society that has stood for and struggled for important values. Ben Pink Dandelion challenged our vision of the future. How do we intend to care for our Society, its fundamental values and our faith? How will we handle new trends and contemporary demands; how will we live up to our own wish for living simply, being radical, and welcoming new development in our Society without losing the values which we want to safeguard?

The themes from the introductions were re-examined in light of our yearly meeting theme, “A Meeting in the process of change”, and in smaller groups and plenary worship sharing. Many were concerned to build bridges between the inner and the

outer, between tradition and renewal. The advice given by Wilhelm Aarek to a young Friend many years ago may serve as a summary of our conversation, “Be open – with substance.”

We will be open to care for all the new flowers, colours and diversity without letting go of the nucleus of our faith, That of God in Everyone. The Light is within us. This is the basis of everything we do. ‘Feel your faith’, as Ben said in his talk.

We have been reminded to value our Quaker traditions but to take care that they do not become empty forms. How may we continue the insight of Early Friends? As Quakers we sometimes need to leave our comfort zone and be a bit stubborn. Friction may be needed to create that spark which may lead to change. The Quaker faith and the testimonies are both simple and radical, but need to be tuned to our own time.

Several concrete examples were mentioned of renewal within the Quaker Society. We need to give priority to the needs of young people, and to use simple and clear language without too many codes to crack. We should be open to renewing our form of worship. We need to welcome people who come to our meetings for worship with interest and positive curiosity, and to care for one another.

A worshipful silence remained through the whole gathering; there were periods of nourishing silence and vocal ministry. We were reminded of Søren Kierkegaard who said that “prayer entails becoming silent and waiting until God may be heard”. In the silence we experienced the light from God.

Hanne Hognestad
Clerk

Sweden Yearly Meeting 2018 - report

10-13 May 2018

What a culture shock coming from our highly charged Britain Yearly Meeting, 4-7May, in busy, noisy London with over 1,000 Friends present a lot of the time, to arriving a few days later in the utter calm of Svartbaecken , the Swedish Friends' retreat centre situated in fields and woods, 60 km north of Stockholm with just 25 Friends! What a place, surrounded by sunshine flooded woods carpeted with giant wood anemones, while busy ant heaps are being constructed and birdsong is heard everywhere.

On arrival, one immediately felt part of a welcoming community of friends who have great pleasure seeing each other's faces and are gathering for a purpose. They have come great distances, mostly by public transport to the end of the road, to review their spiritual wellbeing and Quaker activity over the last year, to make plans for the future and enjoy each other's company. This long established and recently slowly growing community of just over 100 Quakers living in Sweden, needs a lot of commitment and faithfulness to manage and maintain a vibrant presence in their own country and in many places in the world.

I admired their ability to balance formal Quaker discipline with informal, practical ways to conduct their business. I have been impressed by their beautiful way of clerking with a presiding and recording clerk working smoothly hand in hand and agreement being expressed by the meeting not with mumbling "I hope so", but instead with a delicious sounding gentle, positive mhmoooo!. Formal business sessions were harmoniously interspersed with small group work, worship, play, outdoor exploration and even sleep.

Delicious, fresh, homemade food prepared by the kitchen volunteers sustained us all sitting together at long tables inside and outside on the terrace at regular intervals, all without any fuss, even freshly baked cake (a secret Svartbaecken recipe) appeared from time to time, warm out of the oven as if by magic!

The agenda was arranged so that in all sessions this year's theme remained the underlying focus. "How do we walk, as a community and individually, cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone?"

Carefully discerned decisions were made, such as to make application for observer status on the Christian Council of Churches in Sweden and new ways to increase awareness of Quaker presence and opportunity to share educational material through their website and presence on Facebook. Everyone was thrilled to hear that their very much valued programme coordinator is moving into the Friends Centre (Meeting House) in Stockholm to become the warden and a full time Quaker presence.

The long standing strong concern by some members about the desire for more formal and intense involvement of Quaker peace work in Sweden led us to agree to re-establish a new dynamic peace committee, which is charged with developing its own protocol to be endorsed by an interim Yearly Meeting in November.

We heard lively and impressive accounts of the amazingly diverse projects of Kvaerhelpen (Quaker Service Sweden) all over the world including Bangladesh, Palestine, Georgia, Burundi and Ethiopia. Swedish Friends work carefully with local people in these areas on well focused projects, and it was good to hear how much personal and direct contact there is to keep these projects going.

I am deeply grateful to have been given this opportunity to visit Sweden Yearly Meeting and only wish that many more Friends could take up such opportunities to mix with Friends away from their usual meeting places. It has been a great joy to learn something new, to be challenged to cope with different circumstances, and make new friends.

Thank you to BYM for sending me and to Sweden Yearly Meeting for having me.

Gisela Creed

Sweden Yearly Meeting 2018 Epistle

10-13 May 2018

To Friends everywhere

At this year's meeting we considered the question from our theme: Our testimonies – How do we walk, as a community and individually, cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one?

Sweden Yearly Meeting is growing both numerically and spiritually. We note that it is the work that directs the finances, and that our money makes a difference. So too do Quaker Service Sweden's well prepared projects in different parts of the world.

There is an expectation both inside and outside the Religious Society of Friends in Sweden that we should be more visible and active in Swedish society. An important step on the way is the programme coordinator's move to the Friends Centre in Stockholm and being the warden there.

We have applied for observer status with the Christian Council of Sweden, an ecumenical body that gathers all churches in the Christian tradition.

An internal and external educational venture was launched this year. Our presence on social media has increased through the website and Facebook. The question of a logo for the Religious Society of Friends in Sweden was discussed, and will continue to be worked on.

Swedish Quakers have a strong desire to increase their peace work and witness. The result of an online questionnaire for members was considered in a threshing meeting. We agreed once again to form a peace committee.

During the weekend we also listened to stories, poems and learned to dance the Virginia Reel. Everything has been framed by wood anemones and birdsong, beneath a warm May sun.

Sue Glover Frykman - Presiding Clerk
Annika Hollsing - Recording Clerk

Switzerland Yearly Meeting 2018 - Report

Switzerland Yearly Meeting (SYM) took place over a weekend from the 18th to the 21st of May at Herzberg, in the mountains north of Aarau. The theme was "Living our Values in an Uncertain World", and this was explored throughout the weekend.

On Friday evening the meeting began with worship-sharing on the theme, looking at three questions:

1. How does your faith guide you in an uncertain world and which of your Quaker values are challenged most?
2. How do you translate global problems into solutions in your daily life?
3. How do you have difficult conversations about racism without losing your voice or your cool?

The third question was the theme of the keynote address on Saturday evening. Saturday and Sunday were packed with activity. Saturday morning began with a panel discussion on the theme, with four Friends sharing their varied experiences, with contributions from other Friends.

In the afternoon, there were workshops on a variety of subjects including nonviolent communication and mediation, followed by the first business session.

SYM has a clerking team which shares all responsibilities. There was little business as such, beyond the routine financial matters, hearing various reports and decisions about programmes etc. There is a recognition that, as a small YM, there may not be the resources to do everything Friends would wish to do. One example of this was the inability to find Friends to represent SYM on various groups and the acceptance that, for now, they would not be represented.

On Saturday evening, the keynote address was given by Dr Amanda Kemp via a video link from the USA. In a wide-ranging talk, she outlined five steps to take when having difficult conversations about racism:

1. Check in with your "wise self" is this the right time to have this difficult conversation?
2. Hold space for transformation.
3. Ask "tell me more" questions.
4. Ask if the other person would like to hear how it is for you: if not, now is not the time to share.
5. Check in with yourself afterwards.

Sunday began with meeting for worship, followed by small groups on topics that arose from Saturday's panel discussion. The late afternoon session was again given over to business, and in the evening Friends entertained each other during a social evening, demonstrating a wide range of talents and skills.

On Monday, Friends met for a concluding plenary on the theme, followed by a final business session, before dispersing after lunch.

During the weekend there was an active children's programme. Amongst other activities, the children made glitter bottles which they sold to raise money for the school in Ramallah. They also produced their own epistle.

SYM is a small yearly meeting (around 40 people in total attended during the weekend), but it is vibrant and active, and very involved in social, environmental and ecumenical activities.

One of the challenges is the multilingual nature of the meeting. This was dealt with effectively by informal sequential interpretation. Almost everyone present understood at least two of the four languages used (French, German, Italian and English) so it was usually sufficient to interpret the message into one language, as some people would have understood the original and the others would understand the second language. For example, if someone spoke in German, interpreting what was said into English would enable everyone to understand.

The weekend had a very relaxed feel, helped by the fact that it was not dominated by business in the same way that Britain YM is. Being a much smaller gathering, there was plenty of opportunity to mix and get to know people, and the informality helped to create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Walks in the mountains, some silent, others with discussion on the meeting theme, added to the sense of community

For me, attending SYM was a particular pleasure, as this was the YM that I grew up in. It felt like a homecoming. I was very grateful to be given the opportunity to attend.

Harry Albright
Leicester AM

Switzerland Yearly Meeting Epistle

18-21 May 2018

This year's Switzerland Yearly Meeting was held again at the wonderful location of Herzberg where nature is on the doorstep enticing the visitor with sounds, views and smells of the countryside.

The theme for the gathering was "Living our Values in an Uncertain World". This was the focus from the first Gathering for Worship sharing on Friday evening when we were reminded that the Quaker Testimonies are the foundations by which we live.

For many this was also a time for renewing friendships and welcoming newcomers. Conversations were held well into the night!

Each morning began with a short silent walk along one of the many tracks where the sounds of birds and the gentle wind in the trees helped awaken the senses.

We welcomed delegates from Britain Yearly Meeting, Friends World Committee for Consultation European and Middle East Section and German Yearly Meeting and a guest from Moscow.

Over the course of the weekend we explored our theme more deeply. On Saturday morning a panel discussion was led by four Friends sharing how they live their values in an uncertain world. That evening Dr Amanda Kemp joined us via a live link focusing on her work "How to Have Difficult Conversations about Racism without Losing your Voice or your Cool."

Her 5 Steps are: check in with your "wise self": is this the right time to have this difficult conversation? Hold space for transformation. Ask "tell me more" questions. Ask if the other would like to hear how it is for you: if not, now is not the time to share. Check in with yourself afterwards.

Workshops included Médiation de quartier (Michel Mégard) and Non-violent communication (Michel Monod). The flexibility of the programme allowed for additional workshops focusing on specific aspects of the theme, such as "Faith and Action".

The spirit of sharing, patience and respect was reflected in the swirl of languages including German, French and English. Meeting for Worship for Business was held over 3 sessions which allowed for space and renewed concentration. Thorough preparation by the clerking team meant business proceeded smoothly and easily. The Sunday evening social included reports from our delegates, gentle yoga and a celebration of music, poetry and singing.

It was Pentecost weekend which commemorates the Holy Spirit working through the Apostles. We as Quakers directly experience this Spirit or light or love. Indeed, despite our different languages, we are unified through our shared value "that there is that of God in all." This weekend has given us more tools and confidence to respond compassionately and effectively to difficult voices in the wider world.

We send Greetings to Friends everywhere.

Priority-setting for Centrally Managed Work – the relationship between Meeting for Sufferings and BYM Trustees in respect of the work of BYM.

Extract from Qf&p 6.28:

Yearly Meeting delegates to Meeting for Sufferings, as its standing representative body in the intervals between Yearly meetings, deliberation, discernment and the oversight of our corporate religious life.....

Meeting for Sufferings is the body which is entrusted with the general care of matters affecting Yearly meeting in its life and witness. It seeks to discern spiritual values and vision to guide Friends' corporate commitment and actions.

Background

During 2017, Friends in Kingston & Wandsworth Area Meeting (KWAM) minuted their concern that 'The Area meeting does not see that Meeting for Sufferings is effectively fulfilling two particular responsibilities in Qf&p, that is: " to set the priorities for the centrally managed work in its long-term plan, which would interpret the wishes of the Yearly Meeting and the concerns of the area meetings, ..." (Qf&p 7.02a) ... and "to foster communication throughout the Yearly Meeting."

In June 2017, Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) spent time considering this matter and how it was fulfilling its role (minute MfS 17/06/17 is copied below). We noted that we are tasked with giving BYM its key vision and that this had been done in the development of 'Our Faith in the Future' which is being used at both central and local level to enable us to develop and grow as a faith organisation. MfS is also continually discerning which of the myriad current concerns of Friends are appropriate for us, as a whole body, to take up; and MfS also advises BYM Trustees on specific questions that require discernment in the religious sense. These three practices define the way in which MfS sets priorities.

Meanwhile, MfS continually considers communication between our Area Meetings (AMs), from AMs to MfS and from MfS to AMs and we have tried various different practices to improve this.

Current Working

The most recent minute from KWAM was received at our February 2018 meeting. Further to our minute 18/02/06 (also copied below), we have initiated three ways in which MfS may better address its role and function.

- We have experimented with mapping the business of each meeting against the functions listed in Qf&p 7.02 so that members have a clear guide as to the nature of our work.
- Secondly, a section within the MfS Handbook has been developed to describe more accurately how central bodies work with each other and particularly the relationship between BYM trustees and MfS.
- Thirdly, we are looking forward to hearing from all four Central Committees at our residential meeting in late November where MfS will be able to have a more coherent picture of the overall nature of our Centrally Managed Work (CMW) and may be able to discern future aims more succinctly.

The question of 'who sets the priorities for the centrally managed work?' is in some ways too simple a question but a correspondingly simple answer would be that we follow the guidance of God.

However if we are to record precisely how that occurs within our organisation, currently, we see that Meeting for Sufferings sets the long-term vision (currently Our Faith in the Future) which the BYM Trustees use to inform their strategic planning for the centrally-managed work; and Management Meeting (senior staff) then prepare the operational plan which is agreed and owned by Trustees. Central Committees are tasked with oversight of specific areas of work and are accountable to Trustees, as well as linking with MfS through their representative.

MfS is not involved in the degree of detail expected of BYM Trustees or central committees; so it may be that the particular wording used in *Qf&p* 7.02a (i.e. MfS is to set priorities for the CMW in its long-term plan) no longer reflects our practice. We hope that during the revision of our book of discipline, attention will be given to these points, emphasising the fact that MfS is the body which has responsibility, between yearly meetings, to deliberate, discern and maintain the oversight of our corporate religious life in Britain. This is a large enough task for the representative body and we are only able to do this if we continually heed the still small voice of the divine and follow these leadings faithfully.

Conclusions

However, at its root the current issue is one of understanding more clearly how MfS relates and interacts with BYM Trustees who hold responsibility and authority for the CMW. All BYM Trustees are also members of MfS and, first and foremost, are committed Quakers who have been appointed by the Yearly Meeting. We need to recognise the task with which they are entrusted, and, as the 2005 Recast¹ report suggested, concentrate Meeting for Sufferings' attention on the task of setting the vision and general direction for Quakers in Britain, both for CMW and for AMs. To do this, we need to ensure that we are a truly gathered meeting and can recognise, together, the leadings of God. Only by depending on the guidance of the Spirit will we be able to work towards the kingdom of God here on earth. Quakers in Britain need this and so does the world.

Extract from *Qf&p* 3.04:

Our method of conducting our meetings for church affairs is an experience which has been tested over three hundred years. In days of hot contest and bitter controversy the early friends knit together by the glorious experience of the Holy Spirit's guidance in all their affairs, came into the simple understanding of how their corporate decisions should be made.

Anne Ullathorne
Clerk of MfS, 9th Sept 2018

¹ The Working Group On Representation, Communication And Accountability In Our Structures (RECAST) was asked to consult widely amongst Quakers in Britain, and to 'identify the best ways of achieving representation, accountability and communication'. RECAST reported to Yearly Meeting in 2005, and this work led to some significant changes in our structures and processes.

Appendix

MfS/17/06/17 Central decision-making processes in Britain Yearly Meeting

We receive minute 17/05 of Kingston & Wandsworth Area Meeting held on 22 January 2017, and minute 17/20 of Kingston & Wandsworth Area Meeting held on 19 March 2017, regarding concern about central decision-making processes in Britain Yearly Meeting.

A minute of Kingston & Wandsworth Area Meeting held on 21 May 2017 has been tabled today and our clerk has explained the background to these minutes and the dialogue that has occurred between herself and the clerk of the Area Meeting.

In the most recent minute, the Area Meeting challenges Meeting for Sufferings to 'fulfil its governance responsibilities by re-establishing its proactive work in setting, reviewing and reporting on overall priorities'.

We have had a time of threshing this afternoon but have not reached clarity about the way forward.

We have heard of the limitations of words in Quaker faith and practice chapter 7.

Organisations develop over time and organically. We acknowledge that if some Friends feel marginalised and not involved, these feelings need to be addressed.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group to consider this further and report back to us.

MfS/18/02/06 Central decision-making processes in Britain Yearly Meeting

We receive minute 17.73 from Kingston & Wandsworth AM held on 19 November 2017 regarding a concern setting priorities for centrally-managed work.

This minute builds on two minutes previously sent to Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) by Kingston & Wandsworth AM, titled 'Central decision-making processes in Britain Yearly Meeting: a cause for concern?', which were both received in June 2017.

At the June 2017 meeting, a period of threshing did not enable MfS to reach clarity about the way forward; MfS Arrangements Group was asked to consider this further and report back.

We note that the work of MfS during 2017 has been reviewed against the functions listed in *Quaker faith & practice* Chapter 7.02 and that further guidance on central decision-making will be included in the MfS Handbook. We also note that MfS Arrangements Group is planning to set aside time in October 2018 for further consideration of this matter.

BYM Strategic Priorities

BYM Trustees, with Management Meeting, are working to identify strategic priorities for centrally-managed work over the next 5-10 years (BYMT min. 2018/09/13 refers).

We are sharing what we have done so far, asking Meeting for Sufferings to support our developing discernment. Below is some background information explaining about the process and what has informed these headline priorities.

Why do we need strategic priorities?

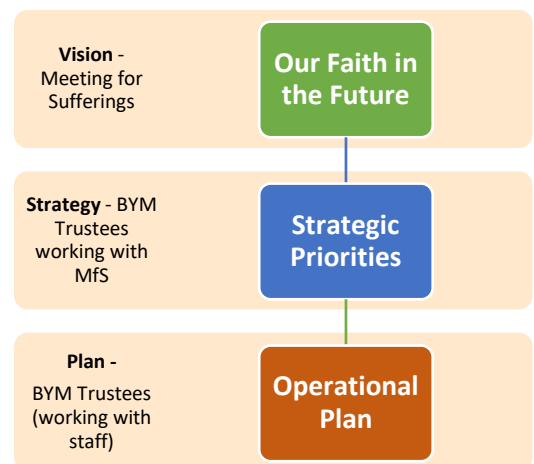
'There is a finite pot of money and time... We have to choose which crops to sow; we have to cultivate and fertilise them, taking out the noxious weeds; we also have to judge the moment for harvest.'

Christine Davis, Minding the Future - Swarthmore Lecture 2008

BYM Trustees are responsible to the yearly meeting for the right stewardship of centrally-managed work, assets and property (Qfp 8.17). Trustees, committees and staff work hard to exercise stewardship; but demands continue to increase, and we can't do everything. Last year, when reviewing Management Meeting, Trustees identified a strategy gap between 'Our Faith in the Future' which sets the vision for our whole Yearly Meeting, and the operational plan, which sets out in detail the work of each team for the coming year.

Trustees hope that clear priorities will help:

- To inform planning, so that committees and staff use resources effectively
- To prioritise work in order to make the most difference with available resource
- To fundraise by letting Quakers and non-Quakers know what their money is needed for
- To enable us to review so that we know our work is making a difference
- To improve two-way communication between Quakers locally and our national structures, strengthening a sense of shared purpose



How has the plan been developed so far?

So far, this has been a joint process involving BYM Trustees and Management Meeting. We have considered:

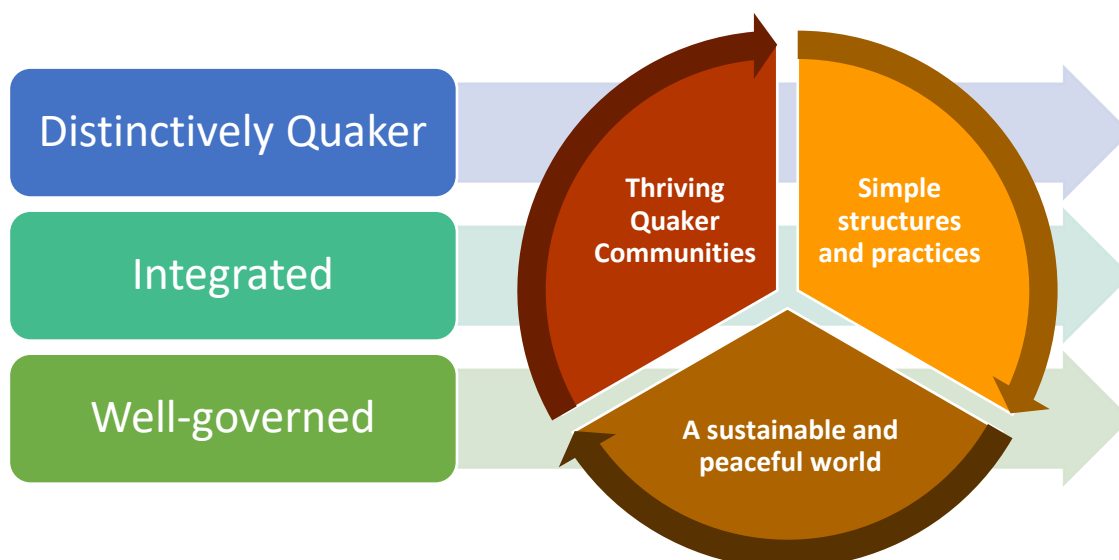
- Yearly Meeting minutes - asking for work on Sustainability (2011 and 2017); Inclusion and Diversity (2017); and to simplify as we revise the Book of Discipline (2018)
- BYM's charitable objectives (see *Quaker faith and practice* 8.03)
- Our Faith In the Future - adopted by MfS to guide the activities of all Quaker Meetings in Britain, to which BYM can contribute
- Strategic plans of Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) and Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC)

- Feedback from meeting role-holders - who tell us they need less administrative burden
- Feedback from staff - who tell us they need to understand the organisation's priorities, and to plan for more than one year at a time
- The BYM risk register
- The history of Quakers in Britain, which inspired our understanding of the need for a 'simple charity supporting a simple church'.

When will we see more detail?

The priorities set out below are only headlines. They have been developed through a lot of careful discernment. We need to develop the details, and to understand what this means in practical terms for all of our work. During the rest of 2018 and 2019 we will work closely with central committees as well as with staff. Some work programmes may see changes; if so, we are committed to carefully-planned transition. We expect to agree priorities in time to inform operational planning for 2020 onwards. The priorities will give shape to the direction core work will take over the next 5-10 years – e.g. testing to what extent it is essentially Quaker, or well communicated, or contributing to simpler structures.

A simple church supported by a simple charity, to reinvigorate Quakerism	
Criteria for all work being sustained or developed	Strands of work - priorities for investment and development
Distinctively Quaker faith-based, tested, Quaker identity, unique role	Thriving Quaker Communities supporting Quaker meetings and other groups to be diverse, to thrive and grow
Integrated between Quakers locally and nationally, and within BYM	A sustainable and peaceful world working with and on behalf of Quakers
Well-governed resourced, impactful and communicated effectively	Simple structures and practices in our local and national organisation



Home Groups

During the weekend there will be opportunities to meet in home groups: on Friday evening, over our evening meal; Saturday afternoon; and Saturday evening.

Each group will have at least one facilitator. All Friends are asked to support the facilitator, and to ensure that each person has an opportunity to contribute and be heard.

On **Friday**, we will arrange for home groups to gather together over our evening meal.

On **Saturday afternoon**, you will be invited to reflect together on what we've heard so far during the weekend. In particular, how do we respond to the reports from central and standing committees, and from BYM Trustees? What have we learned about the breadth and depth of centrally-managed work? How do we balance our many shared concerns? Do we have any guidance for the committees and for our Trustees?

We expect to return to these questions on Sunday morning (time allowing) and also in future meetings.

On **Saturday evening**, as well as the reports heard earlier in the day, we'll also have the prompt of paper **MfS 2018 11 16** Speaking Out. You will be encouraged to share one example of what has been happening in your Area. It could be something related to the work of Quaker Life, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Christian and Interfaith Relations, or Quakers around the world. We hope you'll come prepared with a story to tell, perhaps with a picture, an object, or a short video (on your phone or tablet).

Home Groups

1. London

Kingston & Wandsworth AM – Keith Walton
London West AM – Simon Risley
North East Thames AM – Anne Smith
North London AM – (no representative)
North West London AM – Emily Milner
South East London AM – Rowena Loverance
South London AM – Bob Rogers

2. Midlands and East of England

Cambridgeshire AM – Sue Brock-Hollinshead
Central England AM – Cathy Khurana
Ipswich & Diss AM – Elaine Green
Leicester AM – Chris Myers
Lincolnshire AM – David Howard
Mid-Essex AM – Brian Wardrop
Norfolk & Waveney AM – Jenny Routledge
Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM – Maggie Lightowler Cook
Southern East Anglia AM – Robert Parkes
Staffordshire AM – Win Sutton
Thaxted AM – Sue Moloney
Worcestershire & Shropshire AM – Andrew Jameson
BYM Trustee – Hazel Shellens
BYM Trustee – Nick Eyre

3. North and North West England

Cumberland AM – Bob Pritchard
East Cheshire AM – Jacqui Moore
Hardshaw and Mann AM – Maureen Jackson
Kendal & Sedbergh AM – Chris Bullard
Lancashire Central & North AM – Liz Eddington
Manchester & Warrington AM – Marion McNaughton
Northumbria AM – Barbara Bone
Pendle Hill AM – Gordon Benson
Swarthmoor (SW Cumbria) AM – Sue Tompkins
Teesdale & Cleveland AM – Mary Wilkinson
Wensleydale & Swaledale AM – Edna Rossiter
Wirral & Chester AM – Alan Vernon
BYM Trustee – Sarah Donaldson
BYM Trustee – Alison Breadon
BYM Trustee – James Eddington
BYM Trustee – Steve Pullen

4. Scotland and Wales

East Scotland AM – Robert Thompson
North Scotland AM – Bridgid Hess
South East Scotland AM – Henry Thompson
West Scotland AM – Barbara Robinson

Mid Wales AM – David Jones
North Wales AM – Helen Still
South Wales AM – Julia Lim
Southern Marches AM – Maggie Taylor-Sanders
Meeting of Friends in Wales – Gethin Evans
General Meeting for Scotland – Ann Kerr
BYM Trustee - Alistair Reid
BYM Trustee – Frances Voelcker

5. South Midlands

Banbury & Evesham AM – Susie Tombs
Chilterns AM – Jane Edmonds
Gloucestershire AM – Colin Brown
Hertford & Hitchin AM – Kathy Hindle
Luton & Leighton AM – Jayne Meadows
Mid-Thames AM – Jean Scott-Barr
Northamptonshire AM – Karen Draycott
Oxford & Swindon AM – Bridget Walker

6. South of England

Bournemouth Coastal AM – Anthony Woolhouse
East Kent AM – Danny Chesterman
hampshire & islands am – sarah coote
Surrey & Hampshire Border AM –
Sussex East AM – Peter Aviss
Sussex West AM – Colin Holliday
West Kent AM – Jill Clarke
West Weald AM – Mariu Hurriaga

7. South West England

Devon AM – Jacqui Poole
Bristol AM – Heather Lister
Cornwall AM – Glynis Davies
Dorset & South Wiltshire AM – Jane Fowles
Mid-Somerset AM – Gill Greenfield
North Somerset AM – Shella Parry
West Somerset AM – Fran Hicks
West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM – Jane Stephenson
BYM Trustee – Chris Wilmore

8. Yorkshire

Brighouse West Yorkshire AM – Ann Banks
Central Yorkshire AM – Ruth McTighe
Craven & Keighley AM – Richard Vesey
Leeds AM – Richard Levitt
Pickering & Hull AM – Sam McNair
Sheffield & Balby AM – Rosemary Roberts
York AM – James McCarthy
BYM Trustee – David Olver
BYM Trustee – Roy Love

BYM Trustee – Graham Torr

9. Central Committees

Central Nominations Committee – Gill Reid

QLCC – Roy Stephenson

QPSWCC – Jeff Beatty

QCCIR – Stephanie Grant

QWRC – Barbara Windle

YM Treasurer – Peter Ullathorne

YM clerk – Claire Scott-Booth

YFGM –

BYM Trustees clerk – Ingrid Greenhow

BYM Trustees assistant clerk – Caroline Nursey

Britain Yearly Meeting: speaking out

Introduction

In 2014, MfS adopted the 'Speaking Out' policy. It guides how, and on what issues, BYM speaks out. It also guides local and area meetings – the policy is provided in a shorter version for use by Friends locally.

From time to time, staff report to MfS on what is being communicated. For this meeting, staff have compiled the attached list of activities since Yearly Meeting (the start of our current MfS triennium).

It covers a broad range of activities, including print and broadcast media; online activities; responding to consultations; and some private meetings and correspondence.

We hope this will both inform and inspire you. You may wish to share this with your AM, and perhaps ask Friends to talk with each other about what's being done locally. And please do encourage Friends to share what they are doing with our Advocacy and Public Relations staff – they're always happy to hear and learn from you.

Britain Yearly Meeting: speaking out May to early November 2018

Date	Item	Notes
Crime and community justice		
11 Jun	Letter to Prisons and Probation Minister (Rory Stewart) asking him to reopen the decision to cut funding to local Circles of Support and Accountability	Private letter. A number of individual Friends also wrote in a coordinated campaign in the lead up to Rory Stewart meeting representatives of Circles UK.
22 Jun	Submission to Scottish parliament on prisoner voting rights – blog post explaining why shared on social media	
23 Jul	In response to government backtracking on not seeking extradition guarantees that the US would not seek the death penalty for two former British citizens	Shared on social media
17 Oct	Sharing information about new project at Friends House providing training to people who have a diagnosis of personality disorder and a history of offending or antisocial behaviour.	Blog/social media

Date	Item	Notes
Diversity & inclusion		
26 Apr	Comment about trans inclusion, shared on social media	Responding to increasingly vitriolic conversation on social media about Quakers and trans inclusion (from all sides). Conversation continues but less frequently.
4 Jun	Submission to government consultation on Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper	The submission to this wide-ranging consultation was led by QCCIR and included reference to Quaker experience in relation to the Sanctuary Everywhere programme, the Young Adult Leadership programme and peace education.
2 Aug	Article by Tim Gee in Friends Journal about exclusion and faith community	Shared on social media
4 Sep	Livestreamed bookshop event on 'Trans Britain' – sharing stories from trans people over the last century	Shared via facebook. Reaction carefully monitored by staff.
10 Sep	Hate crime across Europe, article by Martin Leng from QCEA	Following commitment to learn and understand more about the experiences of trans people.
19 Oct	Podcast about what being an ally means today and how it fits with Quaker understanding of the world. Also about how we deal with history when we didn't get it right (re abolition)	Shared on social media Podcast
Economic justice, equality		
3 Jul	Report from young adult Quakers conference	News story on the web and social media
25 Jul	Ride for Equality	Staff supported bikers. 2 x PRs, web news and widely covered for social media. Set up interviews on BBC local radios.
15 Aug	Quakers in Scotland held event on universal basic income. Some comms around it on social media	
3 Sep	Blog post on a social enterprise founded on new economy principles	Shared via social media
10 Sep	Submission to select committee on inter-generational fairness and provision	
11 Sep	Submission to UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights	
2 Jul	Solidarity with Grenfell survivors as Quakers join the silent walk for Grenfell	Blog post shared via social media
14 Sep	Shared news stories from Quaker Social Action being interviewed on BBC	Shared on social media
16 Oct	Blog about food banks and petition around End Hunger campaign	Shared on social media

Date	Item	Notes
Forced migration		
8 May	Windrush articles, linking to sanctuary work	Shared via social media
19 May	What one Quaker is doing to support expectant mothers who have fled war	Shared via social media
14 Jun	Justice for refugees Refugee Week - BYM PR to national and faith press Daily social media posts	Daily social media posts about what Quakers are working on, ways people can be involved and what needs to change about UK immigration system
9 Aug	Joint letter to Home Secretary (Sajid Javid) setting out concerns on the "hostile environment" for asylum seekers	Co-signed a public letter coordinated by JPIT. Joint PR
14 Aug	Joint letter to Home Secretary (Sajid Javid) on reform of immigration and asylum system	Co-ordinated a joint, private letter signed by 23 representatives of Churches and Christian groups.
6 Sep	Submission to the Joint Committee on Human Rights inquiry into immigration detention	Joint submission from QARN and Quakers in Britain
1 Oct	Quakers supporting the Stansted 15, on trial for disrupting a deportation flight.	In line with sanctuary everywhere manifesto about opposing unjust deportations. Shared on social media
24 Oct	Joint letter to the press on lifting the ban on asylum seekers working, ahead of a Westminster Hall debate on the topic	Letter coordinated by the <i>Lift the Ban</i> coalition and signed by 16 representatives of different faiths News story on the web and social media
Housing		
13 Jun	Work of the Quaker Housing Trust	Blog post, shared via social media
24 Aug	Story from Weston-Super-Mare Quakers about providing emergency shelter for local homeless people	Shared via social media
Investments		
7 Jun	BYM PR to report ruling overturned	News story on the web and social media
23 Jul	Financial Times asked for quote on ethical investments	
Peace		
8 Jun	Funding the peace movement – blog post about what peaceworkers do and appeal for funding, shared via social media	
28 Jun	Peaceful prisons project supported by peaceworker at Leap	Blog and social media
10 Jul	Visit of US president to UK: Staff issued PR and social media on the need for leaders with integrity (quoting MfS minute Feb 2018)	Staff prepared deputy recording clerk for interview on Premier Christian Radio
14 Jul	US president visit and defence spending Letter to editor Resurgence magazine. Photos on social media about Quaker presence and reshare of MfS statement from Feb 2017	

Date	Item	Notes
19 Jul	BBC R4 Today programme Thought for the Day - Quakers on conflict resolution	Given by Eleanor Nesbitt. No staff input Shared on social media
13 Aug	Letter to Foreign Secretary (Jeremy Hunt) setting out views on root causes of migration; multilateral institutions; nuclear ban treaty; and Israel Palestine	A private letter sent on the appointment of Jeremy Hunt as Foreign Secretary.
7 Sep	US stops all funding to UNRWA Quakers signed up to joint UK NGOs letter to UK government	News story on the web and social media
16 Sep	Letter and briefing to MSPs for debate in Scottish Parliament on 18 September on UN International Day of Peace	Our briefing was mentioned and quoted from several times in the debate.
19 Sep	Joint letter to Scottish Public Petitions Committee and Deputy First Minister on Scottish government response to petition on militarisation in schools	Joint letter from Forces Watch and Quakers in Scotland
26 Sep	Submission from Quakers in Scotland to Scottish government's consultation on children's rights	
26 Oct	International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons	Shared calls for a nuclear ban on social media
15	Blog post on the moral commitment to refuse to kill	Shared via social media
2 Jul	BBC TV East Midlands presenter filmed story of her family member using FAU records in FH archives	Staff prepared FH Library staff for interview
14 May	On US moving embassy to Jerusalem.	
And 1 Jun	Quaker engagement with Israel and Palestine: 2 BYM PRs: repeat call to UK government to recognise state of Palestine, as it recognises the state of Israel; Quakers call for UN inquiry, appalled at shocking violence suffered by Palestinians in Gaza.	
14 Sep	Signed up to joint letter published in The Times, urging government to recognise the state of Palestine. 25 years on from Oslo Accord	News story on the web and social media
25 May	Recruitment at 16 – on social media supported call for recruitment at 18	
4 Jun	Joint PR with ForcesWatch	PR reported in The Scotsman, Herald, National, Commonsense and BBC R Scotland and on social media
29 Jun	Armed forces day – new poster to encourage conversations about militarism	Shared on blog and via social media
14 Jul	Signed joint letter to Editor Sunday Times on misguided aim of weapons show	
2 Oct	Defence Secretary proposes to expand school cadet units	Staff issued PR News story on the web and social media (significant engagement on social media)

Date	Item	Notes
17 Oct	<i>War School</i> , new film challenges government's attempt to entice children into support for war. Quakers in the film, made with ForcesWatch, Corrymeela and Veterans for Peace.	Staff working on pre-publicity and screenings. Prepared Ellis Brooks for 10 interviews on BBC local radios. News story on the web and social media
6 Aug	Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki	News article shared on social media
9 Aug	Podcast on exploring peace education and nuclear weapons	Podcast and via social media
1 Nov	INSPIRE project engages 20,000+ pupils in remembrance and peace. BYM is a partner with Oasis.	Staff working on event for 1,000 pupils in FH 9 November. News story on the web and social media. 2 podcasts.
5 Nov	Peace at Remembrance Sharing stories of Quaker work for peace then and now	Focus on committing to work for peace in the future and what's involved
5 Nov	BBC R4 had Sarah Donaldson as a panellist on Beyond Belief. This time about remembrance	Staff prepared with Sarah
9 Oct	Peer mediation: Quaker support for children awarded for resolving conflict	Staff issued PR. News story on the web and social media
Late Oct	Peacebuilding in east Africa: Stories of peacebuilding work supported by Quakers and the network of Turning the Tide activists in Kenya, Burundi and Rwanda.	Instagram
Political engagement		
18 Sep	Quakers at party conferences	News article about attending Lib Dem, Labour, Conservative and SNP conferences, meeting with MPs and talking to them about our concerns.
Quaker faith		
13 May	Quakers are not about to drop God BBC One TV Big Questions had Rhiannon Grant and David Boulton as panellists for the question "Can you be a Quaker without God?"	Overall, the misleading headlines suggesting Quakers might 'drop God' in revising Qf&p, prompted much discussion online and positive coverage in the faith press, as well as hundreds of comments online in The Guardian.
7 May	YM agreed to revise Qf&p Following second BYM press release reporting decision to revise, the recording clerk was interviewed by BBC Radio 4, The Times, Canadian Broadcasting Co (40 minutes).	Staff wrote press releases, prepared interviewees, covered decision on social media and recorded a podcast on God which had 2,346 listens
30 Apr	YM consider revising Qf&p Ahead of YM 2018, BYM press release (PR) said time may be right for revision of Qf&p	While Eklesia and faith press accurately reported the BYM press release, Christian Today, The Guardian and The Times ran misleading headlines: "Quakers may cut out God".
26 May	Hay Book Festival: Staff covered on social media and online, reporting Rosie Boycott's interview with Jocelyn Bell Burnell.	Cross department working on/off site
2 Jun	Recording Clerk interview on Canadian radio/podcast about Quakers 'dropping God'	Shared on social media

Date	Item	Notes
6 Jun	Quaker Pride logo, followed sharing stories of Quakers at Pride events over the next few months (mostly via twitter and Instagram)	
16 Jun	Quakers not dropping God The Times interviewed recording clerk	Staff prepared recording clerk for interview
21 Jun	Interview with Tom Shakespeare on his Quakerism, disability activism on The Sacred podcast	No staff input. Shared on social media
13 Aug	Greenbelt festival	Cross department working on/off site. Quaker line up of speakers and sessions reported in social media, online and press release
25 Aug	What to expect from a Quaker wedding blog post	Shared via social media
28 Aug	Ran programme of events covering spirituality and activism to a non-Quaker audience at Greenbelt festival	Shared some stories of discussions on social media and news articles and blog posts on Greenbelt website.
6 Sep	National and faith media reports	Shared on social media
11 Sept	Sharing Jessica Kellgren-Fozard's videos on Quakerism, her gay wedding and acceptance in Quaker community as a gay, disabled woman	Vlogs, shared on social media
12 Sep	Podcast on what different Quakers think about God	Podcast and social media
17 Sep	Third Sector requested contribution to a regular column. Lisa Kiew, BYM head of finance, wrote about her faith and work	
21 Sep	BBC One TV filmed interview at FH on celebrity and her faith. On air in Advent.	Prepared Jennifer Kavanagh and Chloe Scaling for interview
25 Sep	National Quaker Week reported in national and local media	Prepared Quaker musician for BBC R2 interview. On the Week: issued press releases, much social media
5 Oct	repeat from December 2017: BBC Radio 4 had Sarah Donaldson on panel for Beyond Belief, about Swearing oaths	Staff prepared Sarah Donaldson for 2017 programme
Quaker heritage		
7 Jun	Request for archived resources for tv C5 Inside series	Staff prepared FH library staff for interview
7 Jul	World chocolate day – Quaker ethics in business and when it didn't work	
24 Sep	Royal Society requested film of archives on this Quaker mathematician Louis Fry Richardson	Worked with FH library staff
3 Oct	BBC One tv filming at Swarthmoor for Antiques Road Trip	Prepared Jane Pearson for interview
Sustainability		
10	Interfaith anti-fracking action at Preston new Road site	Blog post shared via social media
4 Jul	Social media around supporting legal challenge to government inadequacy on climate change	
13 Jul	Recording clerk wrote reflections on Vatican conference on climate justice	Staff facilitated feature in The Friend

Date	Item	Notes
20 Jul	Blog post on radical transformation needed	Shared via social media and other channels
7 Aug	Mixed messages from government but cause for optimism?	Blog post, shared on social media
15 Sep	Blog on Quakers taking action around plastic waste	Shared on social media
8 Oct	Joint FWCC and Quakers in Britain interfaith celebration of sustainable living and calling for bold national policy	Joint PR
12 Oct	Sustainable future if fossil fuels stay in the ground. Respond to the government consultation	News story on the web and social media Shared on social media
31 Oct	Extinction rebellion – sharing stories from Quakers involved, including Molly Scott Cato	Sharing articles and tweets on social media
Transparency, accountability, integrity		
20 Jul	Joint letter to Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Jeremy Wright) on creating an enabling environment for civil society	Co-signed a letter coordinated by Bond, sent on the appointment of Jeremy Wright as Secretary of State. 23 other signatories including RSPB, Shelter, Migrants Rights Network, ACEVO and Barrow Cadbury Trust. Web/social media
7 Sep	Joint briefing to peers for House of Lords debate on the Lobbying Act on 13 September	Quakers in Britain case study included in briefing coordinated by Bond
16 Oct	Joint letter to the <i>Times</i> responding to article on gagging clauses in government contracts	Initiated and helped ACEVO co-ordinate a joint, public letter signed by 11 civil society organisations including Directory of Social Change, Christian Aid and the Lloyds Bank Foundation. News story on the web and social media
5 Jul	Joint letter to Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Matt Hancock) in National Democracy Week. News story on website. PR picked up by Third Sector	Co-signed letter coordinated by Friends of the Earth, sent to Matt Hancock and signed by 9 other civil society organisations, including War on Want, Medact and Amnesty International. Shared on social media.

Review of Committee on Clerks: report to Meeting for Sufferings

Executive summary

- 1 Background**
- 2 Review Process**
- 3 Findings**
- 4 Recommendations**
- 5 Further Suggestions**

Executive summary

The review group was appointed by Meeting for Sufferings in February 2018 to review the manner of working of Britain Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks and report back to Meeting for Sufferings.

Through consultation with Friends with experience of Committee on Clerks and beyond we found that lots of good work is done within the current system, but we identified a number of issues around transparency, simplicity, communication, and the unequal distribution of power. Our recommendations address these issues.

We recommend that:

- 1: The nominations for the different roles currently handled by Committee on Clerks should no longer be handled by a single body.**
- 2: BYM Trustees should nominate their own clerk and the BYM treasurer, for appointment by Yearly Meeting.**
- 3: Friends should be appointed to serve for three years in each of these roles.**
- 4: BYM Trustees are empowered to appoint an assistant clerk directly if they so wish.**
- 5: The names of clerks for Yearly Meeting should be found by Central Nominations Committee and appointed by Yearly Meeting.**
- 6: The names of clerks for Meeting for Sufferings should be found by Central Nominations Committee and appointed by Meeting for Sufferings.**
- 7: Central Nominations Committee should be strengthened by increasing its membership**
- 8: Committee on Clerks should be laid down.**

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to accept these recommendations and to forward them to Yearly Meeting for approval.

1 Background

The Committee on Clerks is responsible for considering the short-, medium- and long-term clerkship needs of the Yearly Meeting.

The Committee on Clerks acts as the nominating body for clerks of Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees. (qf&p 6.19)

The review of Committee on Clerks (ConC) was requested by ConC itself and approved by Yearly Meeting in 2017. The YM minute's first paragraph reads:

Britain Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks have asked for a review of their manner of working and for a revision of their Terms of Reference. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to take this forward, ensuring that the review includes how to nurture potential Clerks and Treasurer and the relationship between Central Nominations Committee and the Committee on Clerks, bringing new Terms of Reference to Yearly Meeting 2019.

In February 2018 Meeting for Sufferings approved the review group's terms of reference and appointed Julia Gordon (Northumbria AM), Rhiannon Grant (Central England AM) and Ethel Livermore (South London AM) to serve on the review group. The conclusions of the review group, as described in this report, cover the areas requested in the YM minute, although they may go beyond what was anticipated.

2 Review Process

In all aspects of our work we have functioned as a worshipping group. We have met together in person and by telephone conference, and had time with and without supporting staff.

In the review process, we aimed to take a wide perspective on the role of ConC within the life of the yearly meeting. We had formal and informal conversations with people with relevant experience, especially post holders nominated by ConC and the clerks of ConC and Central Nominations Committee (CNC). We ran an online survey to which all were welcome to contribute – and those involved were specifically invited to contribute. Once we had prepared our draft recommendations, we took them to ConC, CNC and BYM Trustees (BYMT) to get detailed feedback. We also consulted the staff who support the relevant bodies. We express our thanks to all those who responded and assisted us in our work.

3 Findings

We found that lots of good work is done within the current system. In particular, we came to appreciate two strengths of the system: the care and attention given by ConC, and the benefits of giving time and space to nominations work.

ConC's current process allows for detailed attention to be given to each nomination. In particular, they have cultivated an approach of long-term thinking and careful discernment which can produce excellent nominations. In our recommendations we have aimed to keep this aspect of the work.

We also identified a number of problems with the current system, around transparency, simplicity, communication, and the unequal distribution of power. The current system is not transparent. It is not easy to explain or well understood within our yearly meeting as a whole. ConC was originally responsible for nominating Yearly Meeting clerks. Meeting for Sufferings clerks and BYM Treasurer and clerks to BYMT have been added to its responsibilities at different times. Steps to streamline and simplify the nominations systems within our central work, as recommended in this report, will make it easier for everyone to understand.

The current system also tends to stifle communication. We identified two key areas where this causes problems: communication between ConC and CNC, and communication with nominees. A lack of communication between nominating bodies causes problems when multiple approaches are made, or a potential nominee's gifts are not found their best use because of competition between nominating bodies. Communication with nominees can be an issue especially where people work closely in clerking teams, but current members of the team are not consulted about – or even informed of the identity of – potential nominees to the team.

The body engaged in this important discernment work needs to be well connected to yearly meeting structures and open to new ideas and questions. We observed that the current situation places ConC out of view of most of the yearly meeting and without significant oversight.

This also relevant to issues of wider power and privilege in our community, as considered at Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2017. Although all our nominating bodies face similar challenges around supporting diversity and breaking down barriers to participation, the current lack of transparency and focus on very long-term planning seems to make this worse rather than better. Our recommendations are intended to support more general moves to draw on a wider pool of potential nominees, such as increasing awareness of the roles involved and making use of systems under which individuals can express interest or suggest names. The terms of reference of CNC already allow for this.

4 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The nominations for the different roles currently handled by Committee on Clerks should no longer be handled by a single body.

At present, ConC finds names for eight roles: Yearly Meeting clerks (including assistant clerks), Meeting for Sufferings clerks, clerks to BYM Trustees, and Yearly Meeting Treasurer. These are very different roles and we recommend that they should no longer be handled by a single body. The following recommendations say how each one could be handled.

Recommendation 2: BYM Trustees should nominate their own clerk and the BYM treasurer, for appointment by Yearly Meeting.

Recommendation 3: Friends should be appointed to serve for three years in each of these roles.

Recommendation 4: BYM Trustees are empowered to appoint an assistant clerk directly if they so wish.

The intended results of these changes are:

- Clerk to BYMT is nominated by those who understand the role best.
- The clerk to BYMT and treasurer to BYM continue to be appointed by Yearly Meeting in session, ensuring that these people are known to the appointing body and giving them full authority to act on behalf of the yearly meeting.
- Those appointed to these complex roles know that they have three years to fully understand them, while preserving what is best in the Quaker commitment to rolling appointments.
- CNC will need to work closely with the BYMT nominating group to ensure that among those nominated to serve as Trustees are some people capable of serving as clerk or treasurer.
- We also expect that Trustees will continue to want an assistant clerk: they will be able to nominate and appoint a trustee to carry out that role.
- BYMT are able to take the responsibility which is legally theirs to ensure that their clerk, effectively the chair of a medium-sized charity, is appropriate to the role.

BYMT already have an internal nominating body so we think that these changes will be relevantly simple.

Recommendation 5: The names of clerks for Yearly Meeting should be found by Central Nominations Committee and appointed by YM.

Recommendation 6: The names of clerks for Meeting for Sufferings should be found by Central Nominations Committee and appointed by MfS.

The intended results of these changes are:

- A reduction in the number of nominating bodies and a corresponding reduction in the complexity of our central work. This makes us more transparent, more open to newcomers, and closer to our commitment to simplicity.
- Oversight of the discernment of names for these important roles is provided by CNC's internal structures, in which search groups report on their discernment to the whole committee.
- CNC gains from the wisdom and experience currently gathered in ConC, especially in regard to taking long term perspectives and gathering information about roles through direct contact with role holders.
- CNC Search groups can take advantage of the wider experience on CNC to draw on a wider pool of potential nominees

Recommendation 7: Central Nominations Committee should be strengthened by increasing its membership.

We expect that the transition process may take until 2020. We recommend that MfS should use the opportunity of the review of CNC terms of reference due in 2019 to ensure that CNC has sufficient resources to carry out this additional work.

Recommendation 8: Committee on Clerks should be laid down.

The intended result of this change is a reduction in the number of nominating bodies and a corresponding reduction in the complexity of our central work:

- This makes us more transparent, more open to newcomers, and closer to our commitment to simplicity.
- This also empowers CNC in its role of overseeing and developing the nominations culture for the yearly meeting.

We do not recommend hurrying the implementation of these proposals. Aiming to introduce these changes by 2020 would allow time to prepare the new systems. Recommendations 2-4 could probably be implemented ahead of the others. The ideas given in Section 5 below could begin at any time.

5 Further Suggestions

1: Reports from nominating bodies could include more detail, especially in the case of highly visible leadership roles.

We have heard from other Yearly Meetings where names are accompanied by one or two sentences explaining the experience and personal and spiritual gifts the Friend brings to the role and think this might form a useful model. Many Friends present at Yearly Meeting will not know the Friends being nominated, and these short introductions have the potential to strengthen our yearly meeting community, as we get to know one another better, and encourage us to value as children of God those who become the servants of our meeting.

2: CNC could review their resources and needs ahead of taking on this extra work, and request further support as required.

This could take the form of extra members, either full members of CNC or people appointed to serve only on a specific search group. Largely for practical reasons CNC has yet to fully implement the recommendation from the 2016 review of CNC to supplement the membership of search groups with Friends not serving on CNC. By one means or another, strengthening CNC to allow them to do their current work well, and take on the extra work of finding YM and MfS clerks, will be important. At present, CNC find over a hundred names a year, with a committee of 17 Friends; ConC find eight names a year, with a committee of 13 Friends. Neither of these positions is ideal and bringing the work of the two committees together is an opportunity to create a better system, which balances effectiveness with thoughtfulness.

During the changeover period, some Friends who have recently served on ConC might be asked to serve on these search groups in order to maintain continuity. We also think that with the expansion of work for CNC, other changes to working patterns – such as different staff support or different times and locations for meetings – would be worth considering.

3: Support for role holders could be provided by structures outside the nominating process.

We have heard about the importance of nominating bodies maintaining contact with those appointed, but also confusion about whether this is really for the benefit of the role holder or the nominating body. We suggest that these two functions should be separated. Nominating bodies can and should maintain contact with the bodies to which they appoint, including with specific role holders where appropriate, in order to have good information about the roles to which they are appointing and what skills and experience are required.

Role holders, however, need support which does not come with anxiety about judgement or the need to educate people about the demands of the role. Depending on the role and the individual, this might be provided through local and area meeting arrangements for pastoral and spiritual care, through the wider body to which service

is offered, or through specially-convened support groups, such as the care committees used in other yearly meetings.

4: Nurturing potential clerks.

There is also a need to support potential nominees and offer opportunities to develop skills. This issue appears especially in relation to clerking, a role where there are relatively few opportunities to gain experience, especially for clerking large Quaker meetings for worship for business. We have no concrete suggestions to address this issue, but note it for future consideration. Possible approaches include strengthening links between CNC and local and area meeting nominations committees, encouraging those with potential to complete Quaker Service Information Forms, and raising awareness of groups such as regional gatherings where there might be an opportunity to clerk a larger meeting of Friends. CNC can also nurture potential future clerks through giving them opportunities for other service to build experience and understanding of our structures.

Group to review the YM Committee on Clerks
Rhiannon Grant
Julia Gordon
Ethel Livermore
29 October 2018

Living up to our Sustainability commitment

1. Introduction

In October, Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) considered four proposals (paper MfS 2018 10 15) designed to ensure every part of BYM integrates environmental sustainability into its thinking and activity - and sees this as integral to our spiritual and practical witness.

The proposals were drawn up from a meeting of committee representatives, held in July, and at the request of Meeting for Sufferings. The paper explained:

We wish to see how each part may co-ordinate and integrate the work on sustainability. We hope Friends will trust each part of the Quaker family to play its part. We look forward to MfS receiving progress reports - with each body seeing this as a core part of its work.

Also in October, MfS received minutes from BYM Sustainability Group, Quaker Life Central Committee and Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee.

2. Building on the proposals

This section of the paper notes what the four proposals were; how MfS responded; and any subsequent developments.

a) Allocation of responsibilities

The paper set out a table showing which parts of BYM's structure take responsibility for areas of sustainability work, together with emerging and possible new work to fill current gaps. Most expanded or new work would require additional funding. BYM Trustees have made a commitment to consider what resources can be made available.

MfS was content with this. MfS noted 'we will need to consider how MfS is able to monitor this and compile an annual report to Yearly Meeting': this is addressed in section 3 below.

b) Similar joint meetings in future

The joint meeting proposed that similar meetings in future will ensure a joined-up approach and provide mutual encouragement – experimenting to see whether these might happen once or twice a year.

MfS welcomed this and minuted: 'MfS would need to hold an overview, identifying gaps and pursuing new ideas but we ask for these to be held regularly'. Again, the need to hold an overview is addressed in section 3 below.

c) Nurturing Friends' ministry

MfS agreed that Woodbrooke be approached to run national and regional face to face gatherings and events to nurture Friends' ministry in the testimony of

sustainability. The minute noted 'MfS may need to hold oversight of these gatherings'. Staff can report that Woodbrooke has welcomed this suggestion and discussions have begun about how it can be implemented.

As well as the 'face-to-face' Sustainability Gatherings, the discussions are exploring how Woodbrooke could work with Friends on the following:

- Exploration/development of our testimony to sustainability as one expression of our Quaker faith
- Strengthening and deepening our understanding of why, how and where we are led to act
- What it means to be a low-carbon sustainable community in practice – how meetings can/should change, including but definitely not limited to greening our meeting houses
- Ways to change our own lifestyles with joy, and encourage similar changes in others
- Envisioning being a net zero carbon community

We would hope to see a mixture of national events held on-site at Woodbrooke, regional events and online events, aiming to reach a wide range of Friends, well beyond those who already have a strong sense of this concern.

Woodbrooke would work in appropriate liaison with relevant Quaker bodies – QPSW, Quaker Life, etc. The need for oversight is addressed in section 3 below.

d) A clear vision

MfS considered the suggestion that the YM *might* commit itself to a bold target of becoming carbon neutral or 'net zero' in carbon. This was a new idea and felt daunting; but the meeting agreed: 'it may be invaluable for us all to reflect and consider what it means for us to be zero carbon: for our meetings and for centrally managed work and we ask for further guidance and advice'. It will take some time to develop proposals on this – so far discussions are at a very early, informal stage. We hope that Woodbrooke will play a part in helping us all to envision what being a 'net zero' meeting might be like and to motivate us to move in that direction. This would be valuable whether or not BYM formally adopts such a target.

3. MfS oversight

Bearing in mind the recommendations of the Review Group (received in April 2018), the report from the joint meeting held in July, and discernment of Meeting for Sufferings in October, the clerks now propose:

a) Currently, Arrangements Group asks committees in their annual report to let MfS know how they're working to take forward our YM commitments to becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community. In future, we should expect committees, and also BYM Trustees and Quaker Stewardship Committee, to report annually on how their work's helping Friends to take forward our sustainability commitment.

b) MfS will have a substantive agenda item about Sustainability every year. Sustainability can also be considered at other meetings during the year.

c) MfS should appoint a small Sustainability Monitoring Group. The group will comprise three members of MfS who will monitor progress. The group will ensure

that reports are sent to MfS, that agreed activities are undertaken, and that MfS pays attention to our sustainability commitment in its meetings.

d) MfS Arrangements Group will continue in its role of discerning the MfS agendas, and will work closely with the Sustainability Monitoring Group.

e) MfS will continue to report annually to Yearly Meeting.

f) The BYM Sustainability Group can be laid down.