

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

Agenda supplement

For additional Yearly Meeting session,
1 July 2023

Includes agenda and papers for
Meeting for Sufferings, 1 July 2023

Word version



1. Introduction and information

2.1 Introduction

For full information about Yearly Meeting 2023 please see the [Agenda & Notes](#) published earlier in the year.

This supplementary document comprises the agenda and notes for sessions of Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings to be held on 1 July 2023.

Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings will be held in blended format, so Friends can participate online as well as in person. They are open to all Friends.

To attend both meetings you first need to register to attend Yearly Meeting. You can do this online at www.quaker.org.uk/events/yearly-meeting-additional-session.

Once your registration has been confirmed you will be sent joining information for attending online or in person.

2.2 Contact details

For enquiries about Yearly Meeting or Meeting for Sufferings

Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee
Quaker Church Affairs team
Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ

Email: ym@quaker.org.uk or sufferings@quaker.org.uk

Telephone: 020 7663 1040

Email: ym@quaker.org.uk

Website: www.quaker.org.uk/ym

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/quakerspace

Twitter: [@bymevent](https://twitter.com/bymevent) [#YM2023](https://twitter.com/hashtag/YM2023)

2. How does Yearly Meeting work?

2.1 Discipline of Yearly Meeting sessions

Community Agreement

All Friends have been asked on registering to agree to our Community Agreement – a copy is available at www.quaker.org.uk/documents/yearly-meeting-2023-our-community-agreement.

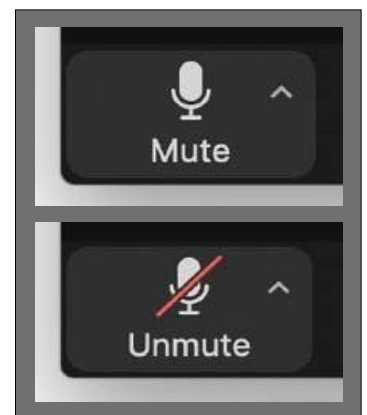
2.2 Spoken ministry and discipline: online participation

Online meetings will be held using Zoom. Sessions will open ten minutes before the start time so that the meeting can gather in silence beforehand. If you are called away from your computer, please turn off your camera.

Please ensure your screen name includes your name and area meeting or worshipping group.

How to indicate that you feel moved to speak

- Use the 'raise hand' feature in Zoom to indicate that you wish to speak or minister. The 'raise hand' feature is usually found by clicking 'Reactions'.
- Wait until you are invited to contribute by a clerk, who will call you by name. If the clerk calls another Friend, all other raised hands will be lowered. If the clerk invites further ministry and you still feel led to minister, you will need to raise your hand again.
- If you are called, you will receive an onscreen message asking you to unmute; click 'unmute' and you may then speak. Please tell everyone who you are and where you worship before you begin your ministry (e.g. 'x area meeting' or 'attending xx local meeting or worshipping community').
- Try to sum up what you have to say in as few words as possible. Speak simply and audibly, but do not speak for effect.
- When you have finished, your microphone will be muted and your hand lowered by technical support staff.
- You will not be able to 'mute/ unmute' your own microphone unless invited by a technical support staff member on instruction from a clerk.



2.3 Spoken ministry and discipline: in-person participation

Please arrive promptly and avoid leaving or entering when the clerk is standing or a Friend is ministering.

Please turn mobile phones to silent. If you feel led to minister, please stand or raise your hand and wait for a microphone. The clerks will discern who to call. If you are not called, please sit down or lower your hand.

Please share your name and where you worship before you begin your ministry (e.g. 'x area meeting' or 'attending xx local meeting or worshipping community'). Try to sum up what you have to say in as few words as possible. Speak simply and audibly, but do not speak for effect.

Each contribution should be heard in silence. Audible indications of approval or disapproval of spoken ministry are not part of the discipline of Britain Yearly Meeting. After each contribution, there will be a pause to allow reflection. Please do not stand at this time.

When the clerk feels the time is right for a further contribution, they will say so. If you have tested your ministry and feel that the meeting needs to hear it in order to reach unity, you should stand at this point.

2.4 How the meeting will agree minutes

When the clerk discerns that the time is right, they will say they are ready to draft a minute. At this point, any Friend standing or has raised their hand should sit down or lower their hand, and hands raised online will be lowered. While the minute is being drafted, please uphold the clerks in prayerful silence.

When the clerk asks if a minute is acceptable, please reflect on whether the minute is good enough. Friends may choose to answer “I hope so” or to remain silent. There is no need to indicate active assent. If, after reflection, you are clear that an amendment is necessary, stand or raise your hand and wait to be called; however, do not present fresh material at this point.

2.5 Elders and pastoral support

Elders

A team of appointed elders will provide a rota of attentive care for our meeting for worship for business during sessions and ensure active support to clerks between these. Elders are available between sessions to Friends who wish to consult them. You can contact Yearly Meeting Elders by emailing ym@quaker.org.uk.

Pastoral support

The Meeting for Sufferings Support Group will be available in person at Friends House. Friends joining online can contact pastoral care Friends by emailing ym@quaker.org.uk or by calling 07856 611 609.

Help desk

For general help about Yearly Meeting, or if you have been unsuccessful using the above contact details, please contact the help desk via email at ym@quaker.org.uk or by calling 020 7663 1040.

2.6 Youth, Children & Families programmes

We are committed to being an all-age worshipping community. A separate youth, children & families programme will run alongside Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings on 1 July 2023. Information about this programme has been sent separately to those registered.

2.7 Friends House opening hours

Friends House will open on Saturday 1 July from 9:00.

Please collect a badge on arrival and wear it at all times. There will be a cloakroom available for those who need to store luggage.

The building will close at 17:30.

3. Yearly Meeting Agenda

Saturday 1 July, 10:00–12:15: Yearly Meeting session 8

1. Receipt of annual report of Quaker Housing Trust

Quaker Housing Trust is the yearly meeting's own national housing charity. It makes grants and loans to social housing projects. Independent of Britain Yearly Meeting funds, its income comes directly from Friends and meetings. We will receive the annual report, which is in section 5 below as Paper A.

2. Report of BYM Trustees

BYM Trustees are responsible to Yearly Meeting for the right stewardship of the centrally managed work and the assets and property of the yearly meeting. Trustees inform us that the annual report and financial statements for the work of Britain Yearly Meeting in 2022 are not yet audited and ready to be presented. Their minute reads:

BYMT/23/06/05 Trustees' report and financial statements

We welcome Judith Miller from Sayer Vincent our external auditors. We have spent part of the session without staff as is good practice.

The 2022 annual report and accounts are not ready for approval this weekend so we regret that we will not be able to present them to Yearly Meeting on 1 July as we had intended.

We are assured by our auditors, and have been given explanations from management, that this is a systems matter, that most of our income and expenditure and assets have been reviewed, and that what remains to be finalised is around debtors and creditors. The auditors are still gathering and reviewing evidence in order to finalise their audit report, but they are clear that there is no issue about the financial health of BYM, and have expressed no concern about wrongdoing. We are able to confirm that the accounts will be prepared on a going concern basis.

Several factors have meant it has taken longer than usual to complete the year-end procedures and produce the accounts: the work involved in installing a new finance system; high staff turnover in the finance team; and the challenges of rapid change in the wake of the pandemic. We recognise that we as trustees could and should have ensured that Management Meeting had in place sufficient resources earlier to produce the accounts this year for both BYM and Quiet Company. We regret the pressure this has put on staff and thank them for all their work.

We have now arranged for additional specialist support and will file the annual report and accounts before the statutory deadline of 31 October.

We will reflect on our governance of key matters like this and how we can spot problems as early as possible, communicate well between and with our committees, and be alerted to emerging issues by staff. We need to use the tools that we already have and develop new ones to ensure that we are monitoring effectively. We ask Management Meeting to reflect on these matters and to bring us proposals.

We will work with YM Agenda Committee to consider how best to bring the annual report and accounts before Friends later in the year.

Our Treasurer will speak to this matter on 1 July and be ready to answer questions from Friends.

We send this minute to Yearly Meeting.

3. Patterns of membership

We will receive the Tabular Statement, the annual collation of membership statistics from across Britain Yearly Meeting. It is published in [Patterns of membership](#) at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

4. Matters arising: Looking at Meeting for Sufferings

On 30 April and 1 May, Yearly Meeting considered findings of a review of the role and purpose of Meeting for Sufferings. Meeting for Sufferings had appointed a group to carry out this review alongside the review of Yearly Meeting itself. Proposals for changes to our structures will come to a future Yearly Meeting. The minute made on 1 May is printed below for reference.

Minute 30: Looking at Meeting for Sufferings – continued

We recognise that a change in the relationship between Yearly Meeting, Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and Meeting for Sufferings is needed to address the overlap in current roles and responsibilities. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to bring to a future Yearly Meeting session proposals for what that change could look like. We are seeking changes that could release energy within our corporate structures, emphasise the importance of spirit-led discernment, allow wider and more diverse participation in decision-making and improve communication between individual Friends, local meetings, area meetings and Meeting for Sufferings.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to work with the Recording Clerk; its Group to Review Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering and Meeting for Sufferings; and BYM Trustees.

We must trust our spirit-led nominations and appointment process and the Friends we have asked to serve on our behalf. Trust within our community and between our different bodies is a vital part of making our structures work.

We will hear a report of work undertaken since 1 May. There will be an opportunity to offer guidance as to whether changes that meet the following criteria would adequately reflect our wishes for the way forward.

Changes need to:

- place spirit-led discernment at the heart of all decision-making across Britain Yearly Meeting
- ensure our structures are capable of translating our discernment into action
- release energy within our Quaker community
- clarify the lines of accountability; explain clearly the roles and responsibilities of different bodies; meet the requirements of charity law and good governance practice
- promote greater diversity and wider participation in our decision-making
- improve communication between Friends involved in different parts of our structures.

Saturday 1 July, 13:30–14:45: Yearly Meeting session 9

5. Matters arising: Looking at central committees

On 29 April, Yearly Meeting considered questions about the future of the committee structure which governs our centrally managed work. This followed several years of consideration by Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, and wide consultation with Friends in local and area meetings through a series of workshops. Yearly Meeting united with the minute below. Yearly Meeting has asked trustees to consult widely and bring proposals to a future Yearly Meeting for further discernment.

Minute 21: Looking at central committees

We are a people of faith forever in transition. To be faithful is to be open to change; to be open to the leadings of the spirit.

When Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees agreed our Strategic Priorities in 2018, they considered the priority of Simple Structures and Practices. It followed that trustees started to look at our central structures to consider whether there were opportunities for simplification.

We recognise that the time has come to look anew at our structures, including our central committees. We ask our trustees to consider what form a new committee structure should take. We ask them to form a group that will consult widely with affected committees, with Meeting for Sufferings, informal groupings of Friends, and Friends more widely. We ask them to bring proposals to a future Yearly Meeting for our discernment.

We need this work to be bold, imaginative, careful, and joyful. We need it to look deeply into how to connect with those Friends who have not yet been involved with service at a national level, some of whom feel excluded or disconnected from that work.

At the heart of our structures is Yearly Meeting, which includes all Quakers in Britain. We are led to create new structures for central work that are more sustainable and more inclusive, and which provide wider opportunities for service, including by Friends who do not have a single, long-term geographical base.

*We ask that this work bears it **all** in mind; the state of where we are, our falling numbers and our ageing membership.*

This may lead us to address some of the problems that we face as we think of the stewardship of our resources between us all. This is one step, with more slow, careful steps to follow.

Today we will hear an overview of the process so far and have an opportunity to offer further guidance to Trustees in this work.

- What do we value about our structures, and what needs to evolve for them to be more responsive to the leadings of the spirit?
- How should our trustees approach and involve Friends in this work?

6. Concluding minute

This concludes the business of Yearly Meeting 2023. The meeting will be followed by an open session of Meeting for Sufferings.

4. Meeting for Sufferings Agenda

Saturday 1 July, 15:00–16:30: Meeting for Sufferings

1. Welcome and introductions

The core purposes of Meeting for Sufferings are set out in [Quaker faith & practice 7.02](#).

Further information is available at [Meeting for Sufferings | Quakers in Britain](#).

The Clerks of Meeting for Sufferings will welcome Friends and offer the agenda for acceptance.

2. Items to be taken on draft minute

The Clerks have not planned for the following business to be given any time at the meeting. A draft minute will be offered to Friends who may raise questions or concerns before it is accepted. The Clerks will open any matter to the meeting if required.

a) Membership

Meeting for Sufferings is the largest central committee of Britain Yearly Meeting. Every Area Meeting, General Meeting and Central Committee appoints a representative or alternate to attend. This item allows us to record changes to our membership as notified to us by these bodies (see [paper MfS 2023 07 01](#) in section 6).

b) Appointments

Meeting for Sufferings has responsibility for making appointments to certain central committees and other groups on the nomination from Central Nominations Committee, Yearly Meeting Nominating Group or its own Nominations Group. Some nominations will be brought to this meeting.

c) Prison and Court Register

Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) was established in 1676, to consider the sufferings experienced by Quakers for their faith. Records were maintained in the Great Book of Sufferings. Today, Meeting for Sufferings maintains the Prison and Court Register. At this meeting, one new entry is brought for possible inclusion ([paper MfS 2023 07 02](#) – see next section).

d) Quaker Recognised Bodies

Meeting for Sufferings provides a point of connection with the many Quaker Recognised Bodies, and is tasked with managing applications for recognised body status, and hearing reviews of existing recognised bodies. A full list of Quaker Recognised Bodies can be found [here](#).

In July, Meeting for Sufferings will consider the registration of the following organisations as Quaker Recognised Bodies:

- Friends of Pardshaw Quaker Centre
- Peace Works Zimbabwe (PWZ)

And will receive reviews of the following Quaker Recognised Bodies:

- Quaker Bolivia Link
- Quaker International Educational Trust
- Quaker Rainbow

Details of these registrations and reviews are set out in [paper MfS 2023 07 03](#) (in section 6).

e) Appeal Group

Quaker faith & practice gives members the right to appeal a decision of their area meeting concerning termination of their membership. Meeting for Sufferings is responsible for hearing appeals through the appointment of a fixed term appeal groups, whose work is necessarily confidential. See paragraph [4.25](#) for further information.

At this meeting, Meeting for Sufferings is asked to note that the work of one such appeal group is completed, and that the group can be laid down.

3. Loyal address on the occasion of the coronation of Charles III

At the last Meeting for Sufferings in March, representatives were told about the invitation for the Britain Yearly Meeting to provide a loyal address to the monarch of the occasion of his coronation and the process involved. Two matters are brought to Meeting for Sufferings at this meeting.

a) the address has now been given and the text is provided in [paper MfS 2023 07 04](#) (see section 6) so it can be recorded in Meeting for Sufferings' minutes.

b) two area meetings and Young Friends General Meeting have sent minutes to Meeting for Sufferings on this matter. The area meetings asked for factual information about the process for drafting the address and this has been provided to area meeting clerks. The minute from Young Friends General Meeting is provided in [paper MfS 2023 07 05](#) (see section 6) for consideration by Meeting for Sufferings.

4. Minutes from area meetings

One function of Meeting for Sufferings is to receive minutes from area meetings (*Quaker faith & practice* [7.02j](#)). At this meeting, Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group brings to you for your discernment minutes from:

a) **Ecocide**: Bristol, Hampshire & Islands, Pickering & Hull, Manchester & Warrington, Cornwall and Devon Area Meetings regarding 'ecocide'

b) **Slavery**: Surrey & Hampshire Border Area Meeting regarding slavery

c) **Sudan**: Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting regarding the situation in Sudan

These minutes are in [paper MfS 2023 07 06](#) (see section 6).

Please note for Meeting for Sufferings in October 2023: In December 2022, Meeting for Sufferings asked area meetings to reflect on the meaning of membership - in particular asking Friends to respond to four questions ([minute MfS/22/12/10](#)). There is an open call for area meetings to send minutes to Meeting for Sufferings in time for discernment at the meeting in October (they will need to be received by early September for inclusion). To date, nine area meetings (out of 70) have submitted minutes.

5. Closing worship

5. Papers for Yearly Meeting session

Yearly Meeting paper A: Quaker Housing Trust annual report

Background

The Quaker Housing Trust (QHT) was set up by Yearly Meeting in 1967 to take forward Friends' concerns on housing and homelessness. With donations from Friends, QHT provides grants and loans for social housing projects for those in genuine housing need. This is typically support to

small and medium-sized charities to provide housing for vulnerable people, particularly those at time of transitions in their lives. QHT supports projects which provide comfortable, secure and long-term homes, built to high energy efficiency standards, both so running costs for tenants are lower, but also fulfilling our sustainability testimony.

Work of the Quaker Housing Trust in 2022

During 2022, the Quaker Housing Trust made awards totalling £171,191. These projects will make a real difference to people experiencing homelessness across England, Scotland and Wales.

Eight projects were funded, providing housing for those at periods of transition in their lives, including refugees and asylum seekers, people experiencing street homelessness and older people.

Street Connect Glasgow were supported to purchase of a two-bedroom flat in Glasgow to be used as Move-On accommodation for individuals affected by drug and alcohol addictions who have successfully completed a period in residential rehabilitation, and who are in a transition to living fully independent lives in the community.

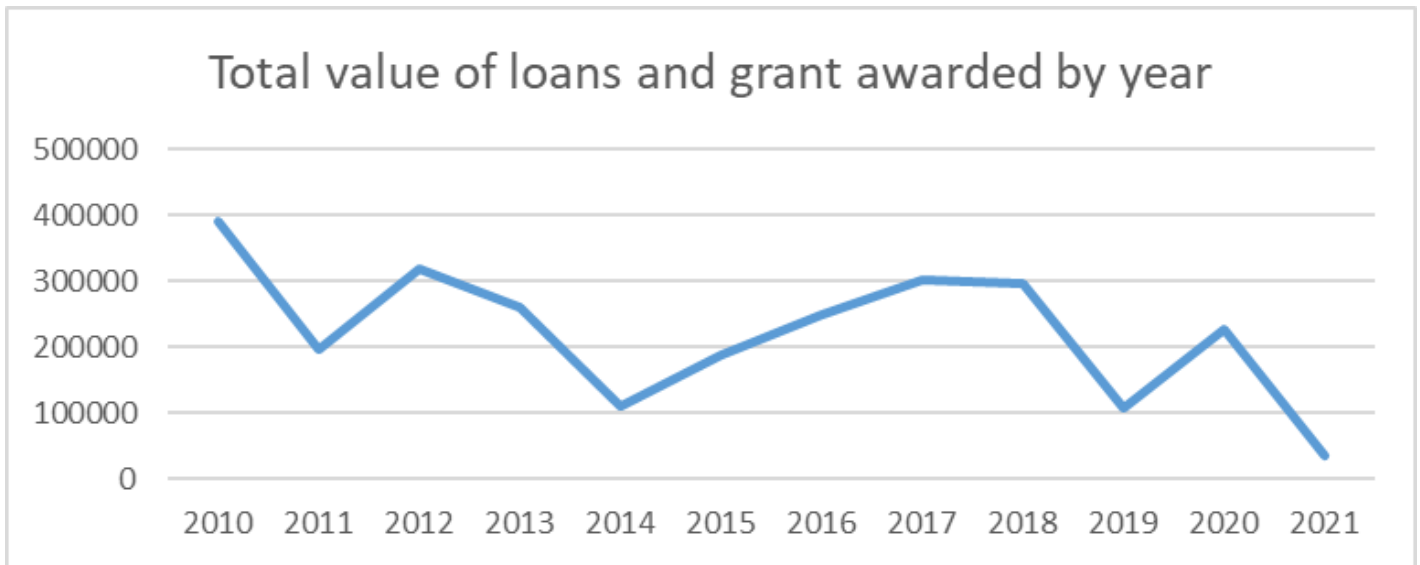
Another example of a funded project is Open Door North East, a charity which houses people seeking asylum and refugees in the Tees Valley Area. An award was made to this organisation to purchase a house in Middlesbrough which will be used as accommodation for a refugee family.

The Quaker Housing Trust has three separate funding programmes. The main programme supports projects for building or refurbishing accommodation to provide long-term homes to people at transition points in their lives. The Audrey Deacon legacy has been used to support similar projects for older people.

Additionally, QHT supports projects at an early stage, working with organisations to strengthen them and prepare them to undertake a project delivering new or refurbished homes. These feasibility grants are limited to £6000 and can focus on environment assessment or financial feasibility.

Our funding programmes are oversubscribed. There are brilliant charities out there creating housing and we would like to support more of them. In recent years, there has been a significant fall in donations made by Meetings and Friends in recent years which severely limits our ability to make awards. Only twelve meetings held collections for Quaker Housing Trust and individual donations amounted to £4000. This means that most of our funds come from repaid loans from earlier awards.

We would like Friends to consider their own housing position and their ability to help those in housing need through donating to QHT. Regular donations would increase the number of projects we can fund. Leaving a legacy to QHT would allow Friends to ensure their fortunate housing position can be used to house people who are less fortunate.



Developing our grant and loan making strategy

QHT is in the process of revising our grant-giving strategy, with regular discernment of our priorities so we can respond more quickly to new and emerging housing needs in Britain due to crises at home and abroad, as well as targeting areas where we receive fewer applications.

We are excited that our new strategy includes having a new strand of work assisting Quaker Meetings and Quaker bodies to repurpose and transform some of their little-used assets into social housing with advice and financial support. We will be consulting with Local Development Workers and other Quaker bodies to help us shape this new strand of work to create maximum impact.

6. Papers for Meeting for Sufferings session

Paper MfS 2023 07 01: Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

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

Release requests received:

- Kerren Davey – Bristol AM alternate
- Sue Horne – North Scotland AM representative
- Faith Lydiard – Northumbria AM alternate
- Paul Mountain – Worcestershire and Shropshire AM alternate
- Robert Pritchard – Cumberland AM representative
- Dawn Snape – Bristol AM representative
- Cathy Urquhart – Brighouse West Yorkshire AM alternate

Nominated:

- Norman Alm – East Scotland AM alternate
- Kerren Davey – Bristol AM representative
- Anne Goggin – Brighouse West Yorkshire AM alternate
- Lex Ryder – North Scotland AM representative
- Mary Savage – Cumberland AM representative

Other visitors:

- Cato Pedder – BYM staff, Media Officer

Paper MfS 2023 07 02: Prison and Court Register

Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) was established in 1676, to consider the sufferings experienced by Quakers for their faith. Gradually the practice of recording Friends' names in the 'Great book of Sufferings' lapsed; but in 1997 MfS decided to maintain a register of Friends before the courts or imprisoned for matters of conscience.

This enables us to record events, as well as to uphold the Friends concerned and to share information about their witness.

The purposes of recording an entry in the register are:

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

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

Under consideration this time:

The Clerk of Cornwall Area Meeting has provided the following details and confirmed the Friend was acting under concern and is content for the matter to be recorded.

Deborah Mitchell, Falmouth Local Meeting, Cornwall Area Meeting

Deborah Mitchell was found guilty and fined £650 at Chelmsford Magistrates Court on 15 February

2023 following a charge of obstructing or disrupting a person engaged in a lawful activity. This relates to Deborah's involvement in Just Stop Oil and peaceful action on 2 and 8 April 2022 outside Purfleet oil refinery in Essex.

Paper MfS 2023 07 03: Quaker Recognised Bodies (QRBs)

The guidelines for groups that would like to be a Quaker recognised body are on the BYM website www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/quaker-groups. That page also contains a list of current QRBs with their contact details and brief description.

A QRB is an independent group where concerned Friends explore a common interest, seek affirmation, or carry out witness. It wishes to be recognised as a Quaker body because its Quaker roots are an important part of its identity or constitution. Each QRB is allocated a BYM link staff member.

A) Applications

Two applications for registration as a Quaker Recognised Body are ready to come to Meeting for Sufferings this time:

- Friends of Pardshaw Quaker Centre
- Peace Works Zimbabwe (PWZ).

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to approve these organisations as Quaker recognised bodies for a period of two years, as they are new groups.

1) Friends of Pardshaw Quaker Centre

Aims: To develop and progress the vision of Pardshaw Quaker Centre as a resource for Quakers, other groups and the local community – a place for worship, relaxation, learning, fun, creative activities, or short breaks in simple, affordable accommodation, in a historical and peaceful setting.

Governance: A CIO in England registered with the Charity Commission and Companies House. Trustees are managing the activities of the charity. CIO registration number: 1193476

Constitution: Furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, by: (1) providing Pardshaw Quaker Centre for the public benefit as a place of Quaker worship, of spiritual retreat and refreshment, and of education and learning that is open to all (2) sharing with others our understanding of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

Type of group: Emergent, External (regulated externally)

Foundation: An adhoc group was formed in 2018 to start work on progressing the organisation. The CIO was registered on 10 February 2021

Publications and activities: The organisation:

- Provides website and regular e-mail newsletters to promote the Pardshaw Quaker Centre.
- Organises work camps to maintain and improve the premises at Pardshaw Quaker Centre (historic Lakeland meeting house).
- Raises funds for the upkeep and improvement of the centre.
- Ensures the burden of a historic set of premisses does not fall unfairly on the local Area Meeting.
- Maintains a list of supporters and ensures supporters receive regular updates.
- Is establishing "Friends of Pardshaw Quaker Centre" side to the activities to build a wide supporter and user base within and beyond Britain Yearly Meeting and The Society of Friends.
- Safeguards the Quaker connections to the historic premisses at Pardshaw Quaker Meeting House.

Membership: 120 supporters and 12 trustees and growing

Finance: The accounts are prepared and examined in accordance with their constitution and charity commission guidelines. and are available on the Charity Commission website.

Winding up: Winding up by General Meeting of Members, assets etc to be vested with similar aims.

Archives: No information about archiving has been given

Current contact: Rowan Langley, info@pardshawquakercentre.org.uk

Website: www.pardshawquakercentre.org.uk

Staff link: Oliver Waterhouse (Quaker Life), oliverw@quaker.org.uk

2) Peace Works Zimbabwe (PWZ)

Aims: PWZ is a voluntary fund-raising committee set up with the aim of ensuring that the two peace-building projects established by Friends of Hlekweni (now closed down) have continuing support because of their timely contribution to a cultural shift away from violence that is in evidence in Zimbabwe. Following the introduction of a new constitution in 2013, corporal punishment has now become forbidden in schools. The two projects are run by Alternatives to Violence Project Zimbabwe (AVPZ) and involve:

- Offering courses in conflict resolution, mediation and non-violent communication to individuals and community groups in Zimbabwe including young people, prison staff, NGO personnel, women who are victims of violence, men, and church personnel.
- Offering AVP training to teachers and promoting the growth of Peace Clubs in Zimbabwe schools. This offers teachers invaluable new approaches to school discipline and the building of a peaceful, more participative, culture in schools.

Governance: Regular minuted meetings; annual report to Milton Keynes Local Meeting and Luton and Leighton Area Meeting (LLAM). Wherever possible and practicable, Quaker methods of decision-making will be used by PWZ.

Constitution: Charity number: 1173865 (This is the number of Luton and Leighton AM, under whose auspices PWZ operate). The PWZ committee is working to procedures laid out in their Governing Document (supplied). PWZ is a 'light touch' committee as opposed to a full-blown charity. It can, however, claim Gift Aid on donations because funds are held by Luton and Leighton AM in a restricted fund.

Type of group: PWZ is a Quaker body, an adopted concern of Milton Keynes Local Meeting, operating under the auspices of the Area Meeting.

Foundation: Friends of Hlekweni, which supported Quaker witness in Zimbabwe for many years, ceased its fund-raising activities at the end of 2021. During 2022 final grants were made to its core activities including feeding schemes, supporting children's learning, and the peace-building projects. A new committee, called Peace Works Zimbabwe, was set up to continue to raise funds for the peace building projects as committee members felt it was not the right time to lay these projects down. The PWZ committee asked Milton Keynes Local Meeting to consider adopting it as a concern. Following a meeting for clearness on 23 January 2022 the Meeting agreed to formally adopt PWZ as a concern of the meeting. This allowed the funds raised by the committee to be held as a restricted fund of the Local Meeting and therefore be regarded as part of the finances of the Area Meeting.

Publications and activities: Publications: 'Ubuntu' : Building Peace in Schools, a manual for secondary teachers, by Dorothy Moyo, Mandlenkosi Moyo, and Don Rowe. Activities: AVP Z will run AVP courses at 3 levels for targeted groups, including teachers, and support the Peace Clubs in a growing number of secondary and primary schools.

Membership: PWZ is a voluntary committee, with supporters (mainly Quaker members and attenders) they do not have members.

Finance: Funds raised through fundraising with individuals, Meetings and Trusts will be held in a restricted line in the Milton Keynes LM account, part of Luton and Leighton AM (LLAM). The committee's financial affairs will be run according to the procedures laid down by LLAM. Annual reports, both management and financial, will be incorporated into the annual accounts of LLAM and examined accordingly.

The target sum is £20,000 p.a. for three years 2022-2024. The money will be transferred, approximately termly, to AVPZ, a registered Zimbabwean NGO.

Winding up: The plan is for three years of activity with a review at the end of 2024. During this time, the two peacebuilding projects will continue to receive a level of funding to enable the work to continue and spread. AVPZ is being encouraged to seek other partners, both to ensure longevity and also to speed up the spread of this kind of peace work across the country.

The committee have experience of having to wind up an organisation (Friends of Hlekweni) and have an MOU with AVPZ. All remaining funds would be transferred to AVP Z as and when Peace Works Zimbabwe winds up.

Archives: The Committee's records will be held by the convenor.

Current contact: Don Rowe, c/o Quaker Centre, 1 Oakley Gardens, Downhead Park MK15 9BH

Email: peaceworkszim@gmail.com

Website: www.peaceworkszimbabwe.net

Staff link: Isabel (Izzy) Cartwright (QPSW), isabelc@quaker.org.uk

B) Reviews

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

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

There are three reviews submitted this time:

- Quaker Bolivia Link
- Quaker International Educational Trust
- Quaker Rainbow.

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to renew the registration of each of these organisations as Quaker recognised bodies to be reviewed during 2028 (that is in five years' time).

1) Quaker Bolivia Link

Initial recognition: November 2018, review due 2023, externally regulated charity.

Staff link: Michael S Booth (Quaker Church Affairs), michaelsb@quaker.org.uk

As staff link, Michael Booth has had very little contact with Quaker Bolivia Link. The group has submitted its accounts to the Charity Commission each year and has worked through the winding up of its partner fundraising organisation in United States. It continues its ministry supporting projects in Bolivia including Fundación Quaker Bolivia Link, a Bolivian charity managed by local Quakers. It produces a regular newsletter which is circulated to all Local Meetings and individual supporters

Email: info@qbl.org

Website: www.qbl.org

2) Quaker International Educational Trust (QUIET)

Initial recognition: November 2018, review due 2023, externally regulated charity.

Staff link: Michael S Booth (Quaker Church Affairs), michaelsb@quaker.org.uk

The Quaker International Educational Trust has close ties with the Friends Foreign Mission Association Trust Corporation. Minutes and reports of both organisations are regularly sent to the staff link. The trust has been in contact with the staff link where appropriate. It continues to hold the ultimate responsibility for Brummana High School in Lebanon as well as raising funds for Brummana High School's and Ramallah Friends School's

bursary scheme.

Email: secretary@quietcharity.co.uk

Website: www.bhs.edu.lb

3) Quaker Rainbow

Quaker Rainbow: Friends' LGBTQ+ Fellowship. This group was previously known as the Quaker Gender and Sexual Diversity Community.

Initial recognition: November 2018, review due 2023, Free-standing group.

Staff link: Michael S Booth (Quaker Church Affairs), michaelsb@quaker.org.uk

Quaker Rainbow continues to be active, and in regular contact with the staff link and other BYM staff who work on matters of equity and diversity. Links have also been made between Quaker Rainbow and the BYM LGBTQ+ staff group.

Email: hello@quaker-rainbow.org.uk

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

Michael S Booth,
Church Government Advisor

Paper MfS 2023 07 04: Loyal address

From time to time, Quakers are invited to present a 'loyal address' to the monarch. This tradition dates back several hundred years. An invitation was received to present an address in March 2023. Twelve Friends attended, and presented the address as follows:

As representatives of Quakers across Britain and Northern Ireland, we give thanks for the grace of God as shown in the life of the late Queen Elizabeth and we offer prayers for you on your accession.

We thank you for speaking out for the environment over many decades. Quakers believe that a just solution to the climate crisis requires interrogating and disrupting our existing economic systems, which are not operating within ecological limits or upholding the wellbeing, dignity and equality of all.

For us, equality means everyone feeling welcomed and valued for who they are, that we see their equal spiritual worth as a child of God. Who are we to reject what God has created? Our differences are a blessing, and we should rejoice in them. When we connect with other people then our differences do not divide us.

We have welcomed trans and gender diverse people within our Quaker worshipping communities. We have committed to being an actively anti-racist church, and to making reparations for our past involvement in slavery. It is a moral imperative on us all to try to repair the harm done, as echoes of that harm are still felt today.

We are grieved to see the harms caused by fighting in Ukraine and the many other armed conflicts throughout the world. Every casualty, civilian or soldier, is a valued human life lost or damaged. We may think wars end through force of arms or negotiation, but peace is maintained by building relationships, mutual dependency and shared prosperity.

We hope and pray that you will be guided by the example of Jesus Christ and serve wisely and lovingly, and can counsel your governments to do the same.

9 March 2023

There is further information on BYM's website [here](#).

Paper MfS 2023 07 05: Loyal address: minute from YFGM

Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM), Held 24–26 February 2023

Minute 2023.02.6.a Loyal address to Charles Mountbatten-Windsor

Our co-clerk Hannah Stranex reported to the meeting on an invitation received by clerks in early February, to send two people from YFGM to be part of a Quaker delegation to give a loyal address to Charles Mountbatten-Windsor, called King, on 9 March.

Quakers in Britain have historically been a privileged body, invited to make such addresses at significant times in the life of the monarch. Around thirty such privileged bodies exist. Quakers in Britain received this invitation sufficiently recently that there has not been the opportunity for discernment on the invitation by Meeting for Sufferings, and will be sending a delegation.

YFGM was invited as a General Meeting within the Yearly Meeting, and to provide representation for young people among the delegation.

Facing a deadline to give a response that fell before YFGM, and after discussion with some YFGMers, clerks declined the invitation, giving the following explanation to Britain Yearly Meeting staff:

“As this could not go to the General Meeting for discernment in time, the clerks have taken the decision after consulting with a range of YFGMers. We heard - and had - objections including that participating legitimises an institution at odds with Quaker values, that making a 'loyal' address would not be truthful, and that our presence would be tokenistic rather than following the movement of the Spirit. In the circumstances, we feel that YFGM could not in good conscience accept this invitation without the opportunity for full discernment.

“We're glad to hear that the planned text will include clear calls for full social and legal equality for trans people, and for the dismantling of racialised privilege throughout society. We hope that in "speaking truth to power", the address focuses on truth without the cushioning of unearned honour or false flattery.”

We thank the clerks for making this decision in difficult circumstances.

2023.02.6.b Loyal address to Charles Mountbatten-Windsor

YFGM's response to this was powerful, and complex. We support and uphold the decision of the clerks. We feel that while there was no time for the question of whether to accept the invitation to be brought to the meeting for discernment, their response was nonetheless spirit-led and reflects the feeling of the meeting well.

Christ taught that “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Both the riches of the monarch and their claim to dominion over the rest of us are intrinsic to the institution of the monarchy; such an institution is incompatible with our testimony to the equality of all.

Quakers have a long tradition of speaking truth to those who hold power, however deserved that power; but if we are truly being led to speak truth to power then our words and our actions will be illuminated by the living spirit. The rising tide of authentic ministry is undeniable, we quake and shake with it; is this what we are doing when we give a carefully curated loyal address, however nicely worded?

The raw unfiltered leadings of the spirit leave no room for curation or royal approval. Our words must be chosen not for their appeal, nor even for how we as individuals agree with their sentiment, but for whether they express the spirit as it moves among the seekers of the light, the friends of truth that we aspire to be.

We hope that there is a path for further discussion within British Quakerism regarding both attitudes to the monarchy, and what it means to speak truth to the institutions of power and privilege in this day and age.

We forward part a and b of this minute to Meeting for Sufferings and the Book of Discipline Revision Committee.

Paper MfS 2023 07 06: Minutes from area meetings

A) Ecocide

Hampshire & Islands Area Meeting, 7 October 2022

Minute 2022/54 Ecocide

We thank Area Meeting Sustainability Action Group (AMSAG) for their work on Ecocide. We have read the background papers provided by AMSAG and heard their draft minute read.

We have agreed the last line to read:

“We ask Britain Yearly Meeting to support the aims and campaign of Stop Ecocide International”.

We have discussed the suggested amendments that are intended to give Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) more information and to say what our Area Meeting is doing, including to send our proposals to other Quaker bodies such as QUNO in Geneva and New York, QCEA and to the online newsletter, “Quake”. We have agreed to forward to MfS the original draft minute (1) submitted by AMSAG with an additional statement (2) of how our Area Meeting sees the way forward.

1. The aim of Stop Ecocide International is to amend the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court by recognising ecocide as a fifth crime against the peace and security of humanity. It is no less serious than war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide or aggression.

In June 2021 the Independent Expert Panel for the Legal Definition of Ecocide convened by the Stop Ecocide Foundation, which is the charitable arm of Stop Ecocide International, produced the following definition.

“Ecocide” means unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts.

We ask Britain Yearly Meeting to support the aims and campaign of Stop Ecocide International.

2. Additional Information from Hampshire and Islands Area Quaker Meeting

Area Meeting to:

- Encourage members and attenders to inform themselves about ecocide;
- to incorporate it into their campaigning activities, and spread information about it to other influential bodies with which they interact;
- forward this minute as a concern to Meeting for Sufferings;

and Meeting for Sufferings to:

- encourage its members and BYM staff involved in Quaker peace and climate justice witness to inform themselves about ecocide;
- to spread information about ecocide and the campaign to other influential bodies with which they interact, in particular the Quaker Council for European Affairs and the Quaker United Nations Offices;
- Investigate the attitude to ecocide in national government and seek avenues to influence this towards support of the objectives of the Stop Ecocide campaign; Use national communications (e.g. “Quake”) to draw other Friends’ and Meetings’ attention to ecocide and the campaign, asking interested AMs to communicate their support of the campaign to Hampshire and Islands Area Quaker Meeting and to Meeting for Sufferings.

We wish to support changing the law to make Ecocide a crime against the peace and security of humanity.

We ask our Clerk to send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Bristol Area Meeting, 13 November 2022

22.81 Stop Ecocide Campaign

Further to our minute 20.26 which was forwarded to MfS in February 2020 our October (page 6) and November (page 4) AM Newsletters have carried articles informing us of Minutes from Hants & Islands Area Meeting on this subject.

Redland LM have given consideration to this topic at their business meeting on 4 November and their minute reads:

22.57 Progress of the Stop Ecocide campaign

At our last Meeting for Business we considered a request from Hilary Saunders to raise this issue again with Bristol Area Meeting.

Hilary has now received an update from David George on the minute from Hants and Islands Area Meeting regarding the Stop Ecocide Campaign, which they are sending to Meeting for Sufferings.

Hants and Islands Area Meeting is using national communications such as Quake! to draw other Friends' and Meetings' attention to ecocide and the campaign, asking interested Area Meetings to communicate their support of the campaign to Hampshire and Islands Area Quaker Meeting and to Meeting for Sufferings.

We note the definition of ecocide in the Hants and Islands Minute. Although there is still some uncertainty as to the exact interpretation of the proposed law, we agree it is an important means of bringing forward the matter of climate and ecological emergency to as wide an audience as possible.

We agree to support the Hants and Islands Minute. We forward this Minute to Area Meeting, hoping that Bristol Quakers as a whole might support this move.

This Area Meeting feels we should give our full support to this minute from Hampshire and Islands AM and ask our clerk to write to them and Meeting for Sufferings to that effect.

Pickering & Hull Area Meeting, 11 March 2023

PHAQM/2023/25 Stop Ecocide Manifesto

Hampshire and Islands Area Quaker Meeting have circulated a Minute in which they ask Britain Yearly Meeting to support the aims and campaign of Stop Ecocide International. They have forwarded their minute as a concern to Meeting for Sufferings and they hope that other Area Meetings will support this concern and also sign the Stop Ecocide Manifesto for the Criminalisation of Ecocide. We have heard this manifesto and agree to sign it as an Area Meeting.

We will communicate our support of this campaign to Hampshire and Islands Area Quaker Meeting and to Meeting for Sufferings.

Manchester & Warrington Area Meeting, February

2023.5 Area Meeting Environment Group: Stop Ecocide

Jonathan Dale has described the Stop Ecocide Campaign and shared the Environment Group's request for Area Meeting to write to Meeting for Sufferings in support of the Hampshire and Islands Area Meeting Minute 22/54 from December 2022. We have also had a chance to read about the campaign in advance. Jonathan has read the international independent expert panel's definition of the crime of Ecocide.

The Hampshire and Islands AM minute asks that Britain Yearly Meeting formally support the aims and campaign of Stop Ecocide International and asks Meeting for Sufferings to encourage Friends and staff to inform themselves about ecocide and makes practical suggestions about sharing information with Friends in Britain and with influential bodies such as Quaker UN Office.

We share the objective of making ecocide a crime against the peace and security of humanity and agree to support the Hampshire and Islands AM Minute. We ask the Clerk to write to Meetings for Sufferings Clerk accordingly. We also ask the Clerk to sign the campaign on behalf of the Area Meeting Directly. We encourage the Environment Group to consider using a showing of a film by David George to help stimulate conversation in our Meeting.

Cornwall Area Meeting 13 May 2023

Minute 7a International Ecocide Bill

Following our last Area Meeting in March, Cornwall Quakers for Climate Justice brought a minute of their meeting of 22nd March to us.

We accept the recommendation of CQCJ that Cornwall Area Meeting sign the International Petition to show our support of an International Ecocide Law and ask today's clerk to further this and to forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings in the hope, shared by several other Area Meetings that Quakers in Britain will act in support.

Devon Area Meeting 20 May 2023

Devon AM Minute 38/2023 Ecocide Manifesto

Further to DAM Minute from March, 22/2023 Ecocide Law, we have received Minutes of support from Exeter, Totnes, and Exmouth Local Meetings.

We are aware of a jigsaw of big and small ways that Friends are led to respond to the climate and biodiversity crisis. All approaches are needed and interlink including an overarching one to address long-term damage and mass destruction of ecosystems and we agree to sign the Manifesto for the Criminalisation of Ecocide. After a time of discernment, we realise that the signing is but one way of signalling our concern for the matter. We ask the Climate Café to examine this further and advise DAM on what practical activities could be undertaken to promote this.

B) Slavery

Surrey & Hampshire Border Area Meeting, March 2023

Minute 23/03/03 Slavery

At our last business meeting we wrote the following minute:

23/01/03 Yearly Meeting minutes 27 & 33

We have considered our response to the Yearly Meeting 2022 minutes 27 & 33.

We do not see a clear way to make any reparations meaningful for the harm done in the past. We find we are concerned about modern day slavery and that our time would be better used looking at present problems and toward the future.

We have had a specific suggestion to write to our local MPs about the current problems of inequality, low wages and modern day slavery. We ask Gregory Valatin to draft a letter for passing to LMs for them to consider sending to their local MPs.

A letter has been drafted and circulated to local meetings for sending to their MPs. Farnham local meeting has asked, by way of LBM Minute 26/2/23, whether AM would consider forwarding a copy of the letter to Meeting for Sufferings, to which we agree.

We note that an important context from which our minute on slavery arose, with its leaning toward modern day slavery, which was not captured in our minute, was that some earlier Friends were slave owners and we did not want to repeat their mistake by being complicit in slavery today.

We have heard how it is hoped that a workshop can be organised to help us understand, not only reparations from harm done in the past but also reparations in terms of trying to put right present problems, e.g. where structural inequality stemming from the past continues to cause problems for individuals and communities in the present day.

We ask our Clerk to forward this minute to MfS. We hope that MfS would consider this further, such as:

- Send a similar letter to the Government on behalf BYM;
- Encourage other AMs to send similar letters to their local MP;
- Whether QPSW could consider not only reparations but also modern day slavery.

Template letter to MPs: **Modern Day Slavery and Corporate Supply Chains**

I am writing to you on behalf of Members of [Local Meeting name] Quaker Meeting (of the Religious Society of Friends) to express concerns about the need for the UK to do more to counter modern day slavery.

Despite the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights article stating “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms”, estimates suggest there are currently around 27 million people worldwide, including in the UK, in conditions of forced labour.

The 2015 Modern Slavery Act, with its Transparency in Supply Chains Clause requiring businesses with an annual global turnover above £36m to publish an annual Modern Slavery Statement, is welcome. However, to date its largely voluntary approach does not appear sufficient to drive the scale of needed change in corporate behaviour.

A legal duty for companies and other entities to conduct due diligence across their operations and supply chains, together with significant penalties for offences (e.g. along similar lines to some of the sanctions for tax evasion or bribery in the UK Criminal Finances Act 2017 and the Bribery Act 2010) is needed if the incidence of slavery in UK supply chains is to be further reduced significantly.

Without stronger controls on global supply chains, the UK may appear complicit in the on-going scandal of modern slavery. Therefore would you support introducing mandatory reporting with strong legal sanctions to ensure that there is no forced labour used by any company operating in the UK within their global supply chains?

Yours sincerely

P.S. Please let me know if it is okay to share your replies with other Quakers interested in the same issues.

2.8 C) Sudan

Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting, 14 May 2023

Minute 8. Situation in Sudan

Balby (Doncaster) Friends have sent a letter of concern from their Meeting for Worship for Business on 7th May. The letter calls on church leaders in their area and beyond to show public support for the large Sudanese Community in Doncaster and as a whole, at this time of conflict in Sudan and around the world. We express our concern for all refugees and asylum seekers and encourage all Friends to recognise their value and humanity. We are glad that this community is here. Balby Doncaster's letter is attached to these minutes and we ask our clerks to send this as an Area Meeting concern also to Meeting for Sufferings.

Attachment: **Balby (Doncaster) Local Meeting From business meeting 7 May 2023**

There is now an established and recognisable exiled Sudanese community in Doncaster. Doncaster, like other 'asylum dispersal areas' across the country, has become a meaningful place for hundreds of Sudanese refugees as they strive to rebuild their social worlds by working and paying taxes, by sending their children to local schools, and by sharing the joys and sorrows of the settled community. This scenario is replicated in many communities across the nation.

As Doncaster approaches the launch of its Be Kind initiative, it would be appropriate for local churches to recognise the presence of this community in Doncaster, who are currently experiencing great pain and suffering as Sudan lurches dangerously close to civil war. We ask that others elsewhere do the same. The world must not look away from what is happening in Sudan. The Sudanese community have shown us how the conflict is not isolated from what is happening in Russia and Ukraine, as Russia seeks to exploit Sudanese gold to finance its war.

We call on church leaders everywhere to publicly show their support for this community at this time, by acknowledging their contribution to community life and the positive values of humanity, resistance to war, resilience and search for justice which they demonstrate to us, and by reassuring them of our continuing welcome: we have been enriched by their coming to live among us.

Sent as a concern by Balby (Doncaster) Quaker Meeting

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Quaker unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship – a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly – internally, in relationships with others, and with the world. Local meetings for worship are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power. The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal.

This leads Quakers to put faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause injustice and violent conflict.

Accessible versions of this document are available. Please contact the publications manager at publications@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1162.

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