

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

At the Yearly Meeting in London at Friends House and online, 28 April to 1 May 2023, confirmed minutes so far.

N.B. Further sessions of Yearly Meeting will be held 1 July, and these minutes will be updated following this.

## Friday 28 April: 19:00–21:00, Yearly Meeting Session 1

### Minute 1: Clerks

Central Nominations Committee nominates the following Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerks for Yearly Meeting 2023, serving until the first session of Yearly Meeting 2024:

Clerk: Adwoa Burnley      East Scotland AM

First Assistant Clerk:      Fred Langridge      Sheffield & Balby AM

Second Assistant Clerk:      Mary Aiston      Kingston & Wandsworth AM

These nominations being acceptable, we appoint the Friends named accordingly.

### Minute 2: Worship

We have met in worship and we have heard read *Quaker faith & practice* paragraph 6.03.

**Minute 3: Welcome to all**

We welcome everyone who is attending any part of Yearly Meeting this year. This year 1,510 adults have registered in advance to attend, of whom 811 have booked to attend online and 699 in person. Of this total number, there are 123 attenders. We welcome 240 Friends attending Yearly Meeting for the first time.

**Minute 4: Youth, children & families programmes**

As well as the Friends gathered in this room and online, we expect eighty-seven children and young people to attend this Yearly Meeting. These comprise:

Fifty-one 0–11 year-olds in four groups participating in the Children's Programmes based in Friends House exploring the theme 'Truth & Joy'.

Thirty-six 11–15 year-olds taking part in the residential Young People's Programme being held at Felden Lodge, on the theme 'Truth & Integrity'.

There are seventeen adult volunteers working across these programmes, supported by three members of BYM staff. All the youth, children and families programmes' themes reflect the theme of the Yearly Meeting and all expect to attend the final session of Yearly Meeting.

We look forward to joining with these Friends during this weekend and to sharing their ministry and contributions during our Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 5: Committee to Examine Minutes**

We appoint the following Friends to examine the minutes of this Yearly Meeting at the close of each session, and to correct any slight inaccuracies:

- Jonathan Lingham London West AM
- Jane-Eve Straughton Norway Yearly Meeting

If substantive alterations appear to be required, they are to be proposed at the next session prior to further business.

**Minute 6: Agenda**

We receive and accept the report of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee in Appendix A of *Agenda & notes* and accept the agenda as listed in section 4.

The clerk of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee has introduced the agenda and outlined the topic for this Yearly Meeting:

- How can we release our energy to follow the leadings of the spirit? How can our organisation's structures best support what God calls us to do?

We give thanks for all the work undertaken by staff and Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee on our behalf.

### **Minute 7: Eldership and pastoral care at Yearly Meeting**

We have heard from Ruth McCarthy (York Area Meeting), one of the co-conveners of Yearly Meeting Elders, and from Yvonne Estop (Thaxted Area Meeting), one of the co-conveners of the Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group, about arrangements for eldership and pastoral care over the period of Yearly Meeting.

### **Minute 8: Report of Central Nominations Committee**

We receive the report from Central Nominations Committee on their work in 2022. The report is at Appendix C in *Agenda & notes* and in the *Schedule of nominations* and has been introduced by the co-clerk of Central Nominations Committee.

Further to minute 8 of Yearly Meeting 2022, Central Nominations Committee brings forward nominations as specified in table 3 of the *Schedule of nominations*, as amended in this meeting and appended to these minutes.

These nominations being acceptable, the Friends named are appointed accordingly. We release the Friend named, with thanks for their service.

We give thanks for the work of Central Nominations Committee on our behalf.

### **Minute 9: Report of Yearly Meeting Nominating Group**

The Nominating Group appointed at Yearly Meeting 2022 brings forward nominations as specified in table 5 of the *Schedule of nominations* as amended in this meeting and appended to these minutes.

These nominations being acceptable, all the Friends named save one (who will serve for one year only, to the end of Yearly Meeting 2024) are appointed for service from 1 May 2023 to the end of Yearly Meeting 2026 (Central Nominations Committee members) and from 1 May 2023 to the end of Yearly Meeting 2024 (Convener of the Nominating Group). We release the Friend named, with thanks for their service.

### **Minute 10: Central Nominations Committee: nominations required**

We ask Central Nominations Committee to bring nominations to Yearly Meeting 2024 as specified in table 4 of the *Schedule of nominations* appended to these minutes.

### **Minute 11: Nominations to the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (2023–2024)**

Friends are asked to consider nominations for the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group 2023–2024.

The nominations process has been explained. We will return to this later in this Yearly Meeting.

### **Minute 12: Appointment of clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees**

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees bring forward the name of Marisa Johnson, a member of Cambridgeshire Area Meeting, to serve as clerk of trustees from 1 January 2024 until 31 December 2026.

This nomination being acceptable, the Friend named is appointed accordingly.

### **Minute 13: Report of Book of Discipline Revision Committee**

We have heard from one of the co-clerks of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, about the progress of their work. We are reminded that the committee is keen to hear from a wide range of Friends, both in reflections on the draft texts that have been shared, and in suggestions of material to be included.

We are glad to hear of the care the committee is taking to consider our different choices of language, so that the text can reflect the truth behind the words.

We give thanks for this committee's work on our behalf.

### **Minute 14: Receipt of letters of greeting**

We have received letters of greeting, from the World Office of Friends World Committee for Consultation; from Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe & Middle East Section; from Ireland Yearly Meeting; and from Australia Yearly Meeting. These letters have been published on our Yearly Meeting website.

We uphold those working on preparations for the Friends World Committee for Consultation World Plenary Meeting which will take place in South Africa and online from 5-12 August 2024.

The annual meeting of Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe & Middle East Section begins next week, and we will hold this gathering in the light.

## **Saturday 29 April: 9:30–12:30, Yearly Meeting Session 2**

### **Minute 15: Worship**

We have gathered together in worship.

### **Minute 16: Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting**

We have heard read the epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting held 1–4 April 2023.

### **Minute 17: Releasing Energy and Revitalising Quaker Communities**

We have heard ministry about changes in our ways of working that have been planned over years, including Symud Ymlaen, the changes in organisation in Wales and the Southern Marches to release Friends' energy to follow our leadings. We have heard too about changes made quickly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We recognise a need, now, to discern what change was just for that time, and what we will carry forward with us.

Change is inevitable. How we respond to change will determine whether our meetings are as full of vitality and welcome as we want them to be, and how we move forward gyda'n gilydd - together, as a community. We need now to be intentional about change, supported by our Quaker disciplines. We are led to work in new ways that are more inclusive and sustainable into the future. We recognise that inclusion means looking at a web of different needs and different gifts, continually listening and improving.

When we serve our meetings in a committee, or by serving coffee in a meeting house, we are doing the work before us; but we are also building community by working together. Working together is a form of Quaker worship and a way in which we can come to know each other in the things that are eternal.

We do need to discern which jobs and committees are still needed. Simpler structures could release energy for following the leadings of the spirit. It can help to think about the actions that are needed, to see what structures best support them. Let us bring creativity to our consideration of governance. Let us turn to a power greater than ourselves that will enable us to ground our work in deep spirituality, work joyfully, and reduce the risk of dutiful Friends becoming burnt out. Working more collaboratively and sharing our learning can enable us to reduce the overall burden of work. Simplifying our structures will enable us to share the gift of our worship and witness more expansively.

We are grateful for all the work that is done on our behalf. Each of us will have times and places where we are actively working, and others where our role is to uphold the Friends doing the work, trusting that they are listening to the leadings of the spirit. All of us must remember to breathe, to give space for the spirit to move.

**Saturday 29 April: 14:30–17:30, Yearly Meeting Session 3**

### **Minute 18: Worship**

We have gathered together in worship.

### **Minute 19: Epistle**

Part of the epistle from Australia Yearly Meeting held 2-10 July 2022 has been read.

### **Minute 20: The work of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees**

The clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees has spoken to the work of Trustees in 2022. We have heard of the collaborative work being overseen by Trustees. There are many examples of this, Local Development Workers being but one.

Further to Minute MfS/23/03/14 of Meeting for Sufferings, we note that Trustees' annual report and financial statements will be received and considered at an additional Yearly Meeting 2023 session to be held at 10am on 1 July. All Friends are welcome to attend.

We give thanks for the work of our Trustees on our behalf.

### **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 who 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.

### **Sunday 30 April: 10:30–13:00, Yearly Meeting Session 4**

#### **Minute 22: All-together worship**

We have worshipped with those participating in the Children’s Programme and Young People’s Programme, and, by video connection, with 82 local meetings registered to join from their meeting houses and Friends in many other locations around Britain and the world.

#### **Minute 23: Truth and Integrity**

We began our discernment by hearing powerful prepared ministry about how Friends in the United States and Canada have taken forward the long standing Quaker commitment to Truth and Integrity in the face of a decline in standards in public life which is reflected around the world.

In our preparation session we heard about the ongoing work of the Quaker Truth and Integrity Group.

Seeking truth is a practice of staying open to what we don’t know and haven’t experienced, and to mistakes we have made or are making. When we open ourselves to this listening we find ourselves on “kinder ground”.

We need to listen widely, including to young Friends for their concerns and advice, and to amplify the voices of people from oppressed groups and seek to “increase the proximity between us”.

How are we hearing prophetic witness today? How might we practise our public presence as Quakers? How can we name and claim our Quaker identity and act as public truth tellers?

We look forward to exploring these questions at a future Yearly Meeting and ask Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to consider how we can continue our exploration of Truth and Integrity at Yearly Meeting 2024.

### **Sunday 30 April, 15:00–18:00: Yearly Meeting Session 5**

#### **Minute 24: Worship**

We have gathered together in worship.

### **Minute 25: Testimony**

Part of the testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Bridget Robson (page 33 of *Testimonies*) has been read.

### **Minute 26: The work of our national representative body: receipt of annual report from Meeting for Sufferings**

We receive the annual report from Meeting for Sufferings on their work in 2022. The report is at Appendix D in *Agenda & notes*, and has been introduced by the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings.

We have heard that Meeting for Sufferings has agreed minor changes to *Quaker faith and practice* on our behalf as a consequence of the laying down of Committee on Clerks and Quaker Stewardship Committee, the redundancy of marriage registers, and the new name for Meeting of Friends in Wales: Crynwyr Cymru - Quakers in Wales.

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

### **Minute 27: Looking at Meeting for Sufferings**

Further to minute 28 of our Yearly Meeting 2021, we have prayerfully considered questions brought to us by Meeting for Sufferings, arising from the work of the group reviewing Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering and Meeting for Sufferings.

We have not reached unity on the way forward. We will return to this matter tomorrow morning.

## **Monday 1 May, 9:30–12:00: Yearly Meeting Session 6**

### **Minute 28: Worship**

We have gathered together in worship.

### **Minute 29 : Testimony**

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Peter Frank Fox (pages 15-16 of *Testimonies*) has been read.



**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.

**Monday 1 May, 14:00–16:00: Yearly Meeting Session 7****Minute 31: Worship**

We have gathered together in worship.

**Minute 32: Agenda**

We agree to defer to our July session of Yearly Meeting the receipt of the Tabular Statement, receipt of the report of Quaker Housing Trust, and offering guidance to our Trustees further to minute 21 of this Yearly Meeting, along with receipt of the BYM Trustees' annual report and financial statements.

**Minute 33: Receipt of the Yearly Meeting Epistle**

The Epistle Drafting Committee appointed by minute 9 has submitted a draft epistle which has been read and accepted after amendment.

**Minute 34: Yearly Meeting Nominating Group: appointment and nominations required**

Further to minute 11, the following nominations are received for service on the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group from 1 May 2023 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2024:

Linda Craig, London West AM

Will Reed, Young Friends General Meeting

Rachel Berger, West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM

Sarah Siddle, Teesdale & Cleveland AM

Robert Straughton, Swarthmoor SW Cumbria AM

Imogen Sewell Risley, North West London AM

Margaret Mortimer, South East Scotland AM

Being acceptable to the meeting, the Friends nominated are appointed to work with their convener, Anne Bennett, who was appointed by our minute 9.

We ask the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group to bring nominations to Yearly Meeting 2024 as follows: 6 Friends to serve on Central Nominations Committee from the end of Yearly Meeting 2024 to the end of Yearly Meeting 2027; and 1 Friend to serve as Convenor of the Nominating Group from the end of Yearly Meeting 2024 to the end of Yearly Meeting 2025.

### **Minute 35: Testimonies**

The following testimonies to the Grace of God as shown in the life of deceased Friends have been received (pages 8–47 of the printed edition of *Testimonies*) in addition to those from which extracts have been read in our sessions.

John Blamires

Geoffrey Brogden

Isobel McCallum Clark

Len Clark

John Michael Gibbs

Alma and John Harding

Brian Kendall

Derek Lawrence

Arthur Ronald Lewis

Pat Lucas

Neil Macdonald

Roger Mattingly

Patricia (Pat) Norman

Eva Pinthus

Ethel Roberts

Kathleen Rodham (née Eddie)

Mary Doreen Rowntree

Ruth Scott  
Rosalee Ross Sinclair (née Norton)  
Brenda McLeod Stokes  
Oscar Wallis  
Geoffrey Weeden  
Michael Woolley

**Minute 36: Visitors from other yearly meetings**

We have welcomed 30 representatives and other visitors from yearly meetings and Friends' groups around the world.

**Minute 37: Inter-church and interfaith and belief visitors**

We have welcomed as visitors to this Yearly Meeting:

Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela, Interfaith Network for the United Kingdom  
Susan Durber, World Council of Churches  
Matthew Smith, Unitarian Church

**Minute 38: Meeting for Sufferings: interim membership changes since Yearly Meeting 2022**

We note that a number of appointments to and releases from the membership of Meeting for Sufferings have occurred since Yearly Meeting 2022. Table 6 of the *Schedule of nominations* appended to these minutes records the membership of Meeting for Sufferings, excluding those who serve ex officio, as advised to the Recording Clerk's Office and appointed by Meeting for Sufferings, as of its meeting on 4 March 2023.

**Minute 39: Thanks**

We record our thanks to all our staff and all those who have served us so well both during this Yearly Meeting and over the past year. We uphold those working on the planning for our Yearly Meeting in 2024.

**Minute 40: Epistles from other Yearly Meetings**

We have received greetings from Friends around the world via epistles from Yearly Meetings and other bodies, available on the website of Friends World Committee for Consultation and listed in Testimonies.

### **Minute 41: Receipt of minutes from the Youth, Children and Families Programmes**

We have received and heard read minutes from the groups of the Youth, Children & Families Programmes of this Yearly Meeting as follows:

#### **New Shoots (0-2 year-olds)**

We enjoyed the theme of truth and joy through sensory exploration and new experiences.

We found it difficult for our parents to leave us with strangers, but our helpers did lots of things to make us feel safe.

We took the toy food in and out of the box, played with playdough and read stories; the story Handa's Surprise let us taste some different fruits.

We enjoyed the magic balloons over the air conditioning unit.

We played on the balcony with the Fox Cubs and found the Light Explorers in the park. We enjoyed bursting bubbles and chasing birds.

We ended our sessions with worship flowers opening in water and light changing bunnies.

#### **Fox Cubs (3-5 year-olds)**

Our theme this weekend has been Truth and Joy.

Our favourite story has been *What We'll Build* by Oliver Jeffers.

After listening to the story we built our own special shed. We put in the shed all the things we love the most.

Over the weekend we have had a wonderful time building love and taking care of each other.

We visited the library and saw books high up on shelves and there was a ladder to reach them. We saw a book made by Quaker children a very long time ago. It was so old we couldn't touch it.

We went to the park, lay on the grass and gazed up at the blue sky through beautiful pink blossom and green leaves.

We read our favourite story again and acted the bit where our enemies were kept outside the wall, but then we let them in for the tea and biscuits. We love them all.

We heard a story about a girl who wore her hijab for the first time. She went to school and some boys said some unkind words. Sometimes hurtful words need to stay with the person who said them.

We worshipped together and then thought about God, using floating paper flowers; lights; singing and candles.

We rested in our shed where we felt safe and were quiet.

Today we go home tired, but with good memories of time with our Quaker Friends. Things we have made and collected in our journal bags will help us remember.

### **Light Explorers (6-8 year-olds)**

We are the Light Explorers. Over the weekend we were thinking about Truth and Joy.

We wanted to have a safe, quiet place so we built quite a big den made from bamboo, rope and fabric. In the den we had boxes, pillows, books and fairy lights. On Saturday afternoon, on a hunt for Truth in nature, we went to the library to look at old drawings of plants and animals and we learnt a lot about books from the past. We coloured in animal pictures and folded animal origami and did some creative writing. Back in our room we made the animals and characters move with stop motion animation. Playing fantastic parachute games with the spiritual adventurers was fun and some of us popped through the middle of the parachute.

On Sunday we went to All-together Worship where we coloured a picture of a house and drew the things that make us feel safe and joyful. In our room we started our session together with reading, drawing, colouring and playing games. We built the things we would like to see from Lego and playdough and worked together. For snack we had biscuits, oranges and loads of apples and juice. After lunch we went to the park and played in the sun. Some played football and some built a den for one Friend's soft bear.

On Monday morning after listening to Giraffes Can't Dance we made our own kind of music with instruments and had a joyful time dancing and drumming.

In our epilogues we danced like circles in the night and blew amazing bubble mountains. We will go home having had lots of fun together and made lots of new friends.

### **The Spiritual Adventurers (9-11 year-olds)**

Over the weekend, 15 Spiritual Adventures came together to explore Truth and Joy and that Quakers do more than just sitting down.

On Saturday morning, we came together for the first time to make new friends and catch up with old friends. We played games to get to know each other and also went and used the parachute with the Light Explorers in the George Fox room. We spent some time exploring the theme of Truth and Joy and heard the story 'The Weight of Nothing' which made us think about how lots of tiny things can have a big impact. In all of our sessions over the weekend, we had lots of snacks, we journalled or crafted what we had been up to and we also worshipped together and did the Quaker Stretch.

In the afternoon, we were joined by a member of the Epistle writing committee while we watched 'The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse' and talked about being able to find joy and love even when you might be feeling lost, lonely or sad. We also thought about how being your true self is much easier than being fake to fit in. As it was going to be May Day on Monday, we learnt a Morris dance that we did to music. We then went to the Library and learnt about all the Quakers that wrote about nature and animals and practised making our own nature sketches or origami flowers and were given wild flower seeds that we could take home to plant.

On Sunday, many of us went to the All-together Worship where we listened to the story 'What We Build' and decorated a sketch of a house with things we like. When we went back to our room we learnt about Elizabeth Fry and watched a dramatisation of her life and work. We then talked about exercising truth to power and how it is never too late to do the right thing. After this, we talked about nominations, selected our nominations committee and we were also visited by the Recording Clerk.

After lunch, we had a meeting for worship for business, where we nominated and appointed writers and readers of this minute. We had fun doing this in the Quaker way. We looked at joy and the different ways there can be joy. We took turns reading the book 'The Jar of Happiness' and talked about how joy can be what you bring for yourself, what you can bring for someone else and what someone can bring for you. We enjoyed a story about Zacchaeus and how kindness can come from unexpected places and can change you as a person.

On Monday morning, we were visited by Ellis Brooks to talk about Peace Education. We then thought about what brings us inner peace, outer peace and global peace and how we can bring about peace when we go home and back to school. One of us is already a peer mediator in school. Later on, we went to Tavistock Square and looked at the Peace Garden.

We have had a really fun weekend full of happiness and truthfulness with some tiredness. We have thought about how to have joyful experiences and not to go round telling lies so that we can be truth filled and life proofed. When we go home, we will take lots of fun memories of new friends in our cosy glows, and with a Quakerly spring in our step.

Thank you 😊

### **Young People's Programme (12-15 year-olds)**

To all Friends everywhere,

This year, 29 young people aged 12-15, with 5 adult helpers met at Felden Lodge in Hemel Hempstead to consider the theme: 'Truth and Integrity'. Over the weekend, several thought-provoking workshops made us think about how we sustain our truth and integrity in an immoral world.

In our first workshop of the weekend, Tanya Hubbard helped us explore how we speak our truths in different situations through the use of drama and movement, along with some silly chicken impressions. After a tasty lunch, Ellis Brooks used animals to help represent different styles of negotiation and conflict, from the forceful shark to the accommodating teddy bear, and many in between. This helped us think about which strategies are most useful in different situations.

On Sunday morning, the TikTok legend @rhiannonbookgeek helped us think about which communities we can feel confident in, and comfortable to share our truths with, along with some smaller group discussions. She then joined us in worship. Our chat rooms helped us explore themes further, hearing experiences of our adult volunteers. Some of the young people attended the Swarthmore lecture via zoom and heard Esther Loukin talk about her experiences with using the law to create change. She came to our final speaker session and we explored different types of activism. She was encouraging about us taking action for ourselves and the importance of taking action together.

Our three base groups gave us the opportunity to reflect on speaker sessions and discuss these issues further. We also used this time to play games and get to know each other better.

We also had lots of opportunities for fun over the weekend, competing in challenges, and group activities outdoors, such as rugby and capture the flag, along with lots running around in the forest. Additionally, we had a quiz involving the creation of some awful Quaker jokes. We were also able to entertain each other on Sunday evening with our very own Quaker talent show which included: dance routines, singing and origami.

We have had a full-on weekend of laughing, talking, playing, eating and reflecting. We worshipped by ourselves and joined the All-together Worship – an all-age national blended meeting for worship on Sunday, ending with an epilogue of affirmations on Sunday evening.

We've had a weekend of reflection on our own integrity and left with a better idea of how to maintain our own truth in trying times.

Signed in and on behalf of YPP

Quinn Breadon, Emily Fuller, Ilana Jones

### **Minute 42: Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting**

We have received the epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting held 1–4 April 2023, which reads as follows:

To all Friends everywhere,

Between the 1st and the 4th of April 2023, 46 participants and 10 adult volunteers gathered at the Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire to consider the theme:

*“Speaking Truth to Power: How can we release this energy to bring light to our worlds?”*

Our weekend was filled with fascinating explorations of truth, power, and integrity. As young Quakers, we experienced the importance of building community and forming meaningful connections. Throughout the weekend, we participated in Base Groups, which provided a familial atmosphere that enabled us to quickly become comfortable with one another. This allowed us to let loose, laugh, and truly be ourselves.

We met daily in worship and felt enriched by the ministry shared, which was a vital part of our community. Through song, movement, and quiet reflection, we strengthened our spiritual connection. Together, we explored the subjectivity of definitions, the importance of discernment, and the balance between faith and practical action. The final epilogue ended with a bonfire, where we shared our gratitude for one another in an incredibly sentimental way.

Our community was further enhanced by a range of activities and events, including a Ceilidh, outdoor activities run by the Frontier Centre, and a quiz. The weather improved as our community strengthened, encouraging us to utilise the outdoors as well as the indoors.

Our theme was introduced by our Arrangements Committee, and their interpretations of it so far were shared. We ended with reflective questions including “How can we create positive change from intense feelings?” We contrasted these thoughts with actions by listening to the adult volunteer team sharing their experiences of speaking truth to power through different lenses. This included restoring historical voices, smashing a Banksy and speaking Truth to Power as part of the trade union movement.

Our guest speakers included Paul Parker, who shared reflections on the work of Margery Post Abbott. This discussed Everyday Prophets, and how young Quakers who are often called ‘the future’ of Quakerism can hold this prophetic role as Quakers now. The session enabled us to appreciate the importance of speaking with love. Jude Acton encouraged the group to explore what speaking truth to power meant to us as individuals as well as members of communities. We shared in groups how we might do this in our everyday lives. This thought-provoking session raised a multitude of questions that the community was very eager to engage with. This contributed to making our Quaker meeting for worship for business so powerful.

As we reflect on our time together, we are filled with gratitude for the connections we formed and the insights we gained. We depart with a renewed sense of purpose and a commitment to speak truth to power in our everyday lives.

We wish to share the final paragraph of our minute, as we leave this community ready to seek the balance between speaking truth and hearing it in our lives.

“To speak truth to power is as much about knowing when to use our voice as it is to use our silence. This balance is quintessential, if we only speak we have no chance to listen inclusively but if we only listen we cannot bring about change. This balance is the answer.”

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Yearly Meeting 2023



Eve Park

Olwyn Lewis-Bowen

**Minute 43: Naming of clerks**

Central Nominations Committee currently expects to bring the following names to serve as clerks for Yearly Meeting in 2024, to be appointed in the first session of that Yearly Meeting:

Adwoa Burnley, East Scotland AM

Fred Langridge, Sheffield & Balby AM

Mary Aiston, Kingston & Wandsworth AM

We ask these Friends to undertake the necessary work to prepare for that Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 44: General Epistle**

We send loving greetings to Friends everywhere.

Cyfleuwn gyfarchion cariadus i Gyfeillion ym mhob man.

Quakers of all ages gathered for Yearly Meeting at Friends House in London, Hemel Hempstead and online. Preparatory sessions took place online in the week before, and Junior Yearly Meeting met earlier in April. An All-together meeting for worship was held with many local meetings and individual Friends joining virtually across Britain and beyond.

We meet at a time when existential issues face us both within our aging and numerically diminishing Society and in the wider world. These require urgent responses. Quakers can show leadership and offer counsel that will help our nations in matters of the degradation of public truth, the climate and ecological crisis, and divisive public commentaries around people's identities and associated rights.

How best can we achieve this? We are a people of faith, always in transition on an exciting path of collective and personal exploration. We seek and follow the eternal Truth of the Spirit, which has many names, remaining open to new leadings and also to the possibility that we are mistaken. Our faith requires us to practise our testimony of truth and integrity in all that we say and do.

Kindness has a powerful impact and we hope to offer caring support to all, including those with whom we may disagree. Speaking from a faith perspective can carry weight. We try to let our lives speak and have a ministry of presence, but can we speak out more as Quakers?

We can be a listening presence, creating a "kinder ground", alongside speaking truth in public places and contexts. We are called to witness truth-telling, accountability, community-building, and to give messages of hope. Speaking truth to power with love is a ministry, and is vital in a time when truth is often corrupted.

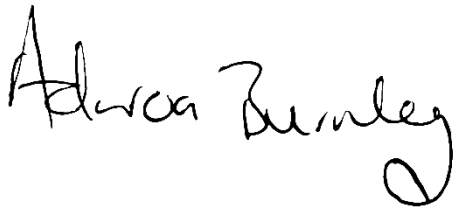
Our Quaker community has many voices, and we are upheld as one by the power of the Spirit. We all have a part to play, need to collaborate and trust those doing work on our behalf. Are we open to all voices, and how can we develop structures to engage all Friends through active listening? Ensuring true access for all in our community is a work of love. This may require us to move outside our own comfort and experience others' frustrations and discomforts.

Yearly Meeting is the all-encompassing body of which we are all a part and where we are most diverse. It takes on the big questions – Who are we as Quakers? Why are we here? What are we led to do? At times we have been mystified, even baffled. However, we discern a need to simplify our structures to make them more transparent, to release energy for practical ministry. We seek intentional change, led by the Spirit, to help our community to thrive as we move into the uncertain futures that dance before us.

Building on our tradition of radical spirituality, we need to be courageous, imaginative, careful, and joyful. We seek corporate structures that are agile, simpler, more inclusive and support equality. Big questions are being asked about how we take the Society forward, with ways of working that meet our practical needs and have spirit-led discernment flowing throughout.

This work will continue into 2024, and ways to involve Friends across Britain Yearly Meeting will be developed, arising from our discernment thus far. As a Society, we must go in whichever direction we are led, so that the Truth may prosper.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adwoa Burnley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative flourish at the end of the name.

Adwoa Burnley  
Clerk

## Schedule of nominations

### Table 2. Report from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Appointed(\*re-appointed):

| Position          | Name           | Meeting           | For service                           |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Clerk of Trustees | Marisa Johnson | Cambridgeshire AM | 1 January 2024 to<br>31 December 2026 |

### Table 3. Report from Central Nominations Committee

#### a) Appointments for this Yearly Meeting:

##### Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee

Appointed:

| Name             | Meeting             | For service            |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Till Geiger      | East Cheshire AM    | at this Yearly Meeting |
| Laurie Michaelis | Oxford & Swindon AM |                        |

##### Yearly Meeting Elders

Appointed (\*re-appointed):

| Name                     | Meeting                     | For service                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Catherine James *</b> | <b>North Wales AM</b>       | <b>during Yearly Meeting 2023</b> |
| <b>Jo Keogh *</b>        | <b>South East London AM</b> |                                   |
| <b>Leasa Lambert *</b>   | <b>North London AM</b>      |                                   |
| <b>Carolyn Sansom *</b>  | <b>South Wales AM</b>       |                                   |
| <b>Patsy Wilson *</b>    | <b>Northumbria AM</b>       |                                   |
|                          |                             |                                   |

Appointed as co-convenor for 2023 (\*re-appointed):

| Name                 | Meeting          | For service                |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Michael Hutchinson * | West Scotland AM | during Yearly Meeting 2023 |
| Ruth McCarthy        | York AM          |                            |

##### Yearly Meeting Elders (cont.)

Appointed:

| Name | Meeting | For service |
|------|---------|-------------|
|      |         |             |

|                  |                                     |                            |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Ruth McCarthy    | York AM                             | during Yearly Meeting 2023 |
| Matt Rosen       | Oxford & Swindon AM                 |                            |
| Terry Winterton  | Swarthmoor South-West<br>Cumbria AM |                            |
| Barbara Sharrock | Devon AM                            |                            |
| David Somervell  | South East Scotland AM              |                            |

### Yearly Meeting Epistle Drafting Committee

Appointed:

| Name                | Meeting              | For service                |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Ian Cook            | Hardshaw & Mann AM   | during Yearly Meeting 2023 |
| Tony D'Souza        | North West London AM |                            |
| Elinor Kershaw      | Bristol AM           |                            |
| Finola O'Sullivan,  | Cambridgeshire AM    |                            |
| Gerald Hewitson     | North Wales AM       |                            |
| Victoria Timberlake | London West AM       |                            |

Appointed as convener:

| Name             | Meeting                        | For service                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mark Kibblewhite | Dorset & South Wiltshire<br>AM | during Yearly Meeting 2023 |

### b) Appointments and other changes to committees and groups for work outside Yearly Meeting in session:

#### Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

Appointed (\*re-appointed):

| Name             | Meeting                | For service  |
|------------------|------------------------|--|
| Andrew Rendle *  | London West AM         | from Yearly Meeting 2023 to<br>Yearly Meeting 2026 |
| Martin Ward *    | South East Scotland AM |  |
| Andrew Backhouse | East Cheshire AM       |  |

|              |                      |  |
|--------------|----------------------|--|
| Eleanor Coss | Northamptonshire AM  |  |
| Sarah Fox    | South East London AM |  |
| Patsy Wilson | Northumbria AM       |  |

Released from service:

| Name       | Meeting                  |
|------------|--------------------------|
| David Amos | Kingston & Wandsworth AM |

### Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Appointed (\*re-appointed):

| Name               | Meeting              | For service                             |
|--------------------|----------------------|---|
| Ursula Fuller      | East Kent AM         | from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2026 |
| Silas Price *      | Norfolk & Waveney AM |   |
| Kit Fotheringham * | Bristol AM           |   |

| Name           | Meeting           | For service                         |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Marisa Johnson | Cambridgeshire AM | from 1 May 2023 to 31 December 2026 |

### Clerks of Central Nominations Committee

Appointed:

| Position | Name        | Meeting              | For service                                     |
|----------|-------------|----------------------|---|
| Co-clerk | Lucy Parker | Norfolk & Waveney AM | from Yearly Meeting 2023 to Yearly Meeting 2024 |
| Co-clerk | David Lewis | Leicester AM         |   |

### Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group

Appointed:

| Position | Name | Meeting | For service |
|----------|------|---------|-------------|
|----------|------|---------|-------------|

|       |            |                                |  |
|-------|------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Clerk | Ade Couper | Worcestershire & Shropshire AM | from the end of Yearly Meeting 2023 to Yearly Meeting 2026 |
|-------|------------|--------------------------------|--|

**Table 4. Central Nominations Committee: nominations required**

Nominations to be brought to Yearly Meeting 2024:

| Committee                                 | Nominations required           | For service   |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee           | 6                              | From the end of Yearly Meeting 2024 to Yearly Meeting 2027          |
| Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee     | 2                              | To serve at Yearly Meeting 2024                                     |
| Yearly Meeting Elders                     | 6 (or to a total of 12 elders) | To serve at Yearly Meeting 2024 and Yearly Meeting 2025             |
| Yearly Meeting Epistle Drafting Committee | 5–7 (1 as convener)            | To serve at Yearly Meeting 2024                                     |
| Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group        | 2                              | To serve from the end of Yearly Meeting 2024 to Yearly Meeting 2025 |
| Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees           | 4                              | 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2027                                  |

**Table 5. Report of the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group**

**Central Nominations Committee**

Appointed:

| Name           | Meeting              | For service  |
|----------------|----------------------|--|
| Sylvia Thomson | North Scotland AM    | from the end of Yearly Meeting 2023 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2026 |
| Ann Gimpel     | Leicester AM         |  |
| Matt Rosen     | Oxford & Swindon AM  |  |
| Eleanor Brooks | East Kent AM         |  |
| Peyton Lee     | North East Thames AM |  |

|                   |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Elsie Whittington | Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM                      |  |
| Yvonne Dickson    | Wirral & Chester AM                                  |  |
| Gordon Benson     | Pendle Hill AM (for one year to Yearly Meeting 2024) |  |

Released from service:

| Name            | Meeting        |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Heather Mellars | Northumbria AM |

### Convener of the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

Appointed:

| Name         | Meeting         | For service   |
|--------------|-----------------|---|
| Anne Bennett | Lincolnshire AM | from Yearly Meeting 2023 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2024 |

### Table 6. Meeting for Sufferings interim membership changes

For information, we record here the membership of Meeting for Sufferings, excluding those who serve ex officio, as advised to the Recording Clerk's Office and appointed by Meeting for Sufferings as at its meeting on 4–6 March 2023.

| Area Meeting                | Representative   | Alternate        |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Banbury & Evesham AM        | Lynne Richardson | Susie Tombs      |
| Bournemouth Coastal AM      |                  | Kate Mellor      |
| Brighouse West Yorkshire AM | Rosemary Daley   | Cathy Urqhart    |
| Bristol AM                  | Dawn Snape       | Kerren Davey     |
| Cambridgeshire AM           | Dorothy Ball     | Hilary Mansfield |
| Central England AM          | Claire Bowman    | Margot Williams  |
| Central Yorkshire AM        | David Bunney     | David Cook       |
| Chilterns AM                | Anthony Philpott | Sheila Stevenson |



|                               |                  |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Cornwall AM                   | Les Hereward     | Andrew Bird            |
| Craven & Keighley AM          | Chris Hart       | Lois Lodge             |
| Crynwyr Cymru –               | Robert Pritchard | Glenn Tomkinson        |
| Quakers in Wales              | Deborah Rowlands | Angela Arnold          |
| Cumberland AM                 | Robert Pritchard | Glenn Tomkinson        |
| Devon AM                      | Judy Thurgood    | Juliet Morton          |
| Dorset & South Wiltshire AM   | Rachel Celia     | Tess James             |
| East Cheshire AM              | Sally Mendham    | Keith Braithwaite      |
| East Kent AM                  | Danny Chesterman | Caroline Howden        |
| East Scotland AM              | Robert Thompson  |                        |
| General Meeting for Scotland  | Ann Kerr         | Mike Shilson           |
| Gloucestershire AM            |                  | Dorothy Jerrome        |
| Hampshire & Islands AM        | Jane Wilde       | Catherine Brown        |
| Hardshaw and Mann AM          | Richard Melling  | Diana Jeater           |
| Hertford & Hitchin AM         | Kathy Hindle     | Ian Chandler           |
| Ipswich & Diss AM             | Sally Sparrow    |                        |
| Kendal & Sedbergh AM          | Ann le Mare      | Ester Sloggett         |
| Kingston & Wandsworth AM      | Keith Walton     | Mark Frankel           |
| Lancashire Central & North AM | Jon Martin       | Helen Rhodes           |
| Leeds AM                      | Veronica O'Mara  | Richard Hawkins        |
| Leicester AM                  | Chris Myers      | Anthony Gimpel         |
| Lincolnshire AM               | David Howard     | Christopher Rose       |
| London West AM                | Charles Phillips | Clare Scott Booth      |
| Luton & Leighton AM           | Neil Morgan      | Simon Colbeck          |
| Manchester & Warrington AM    | Hilary Tucker    | Stephen Johnson        |
| Mid Essex AM                  | Brian Wardrop    | Susan Garratt          |
| Mid Wales AM                  | David Jones      | Carol Satterthwaite    |
| Mid-Somerset AM               | Andy Hall        | Christopher Greenfield |

|                                    |                         |                     |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Mid-Thames AM                      | Jenny Gordon            | Jean Scott-Barr     |
| Norfolk & Waveney AM               |                         | Sarah Bean          |
| North East Thames AM               | Jane Natai              | Jenny Brand         |
| North London AM                    | Arthur Charlton         | Anna Sharman        |
| North Scotland AM                  | Sue Horne               | Mary Dower          |
| North Somerset AM                  | Shella Parry            | Shena Deuchars      |
| North Wales AM                     | Helen Still             | Ros Morley          |
| North West London AM               | Emily Milner            | Tony D'Souza        |
| Northamptonshire AM                | Sue Jenkins             | Magnus Ramage       |
| Northumbria AM                     | Barbara Adshead         | Faith Lydiard       |
| Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM    | Maggie Lightowler-Cook  | Nicky Hoskin-Stone  |
| Oxford & Swindon AM                | Jennifer Barraclough    | Tina Leonard        |
| Pendle Hill AM                     | Pip Swancott            | Ben Pink Dandelion  |
| Pickering & Hull AM                | Paul Wicks              | Chris Fellowes      |
| Sheffield & Balby AM               | Emma Norminton          | Mark Lallemand      |
| South East London AM               | Cherry Simpkin          | Ruth Owens          |
| South East Scotland AM             | Jane Kelly              | Katrina McCrea      |
| South London AM                    | Janet Veitch            | Eva Kalmus          |
| South Wales AM                     | David Harries           | Carole Rakodi       |
| Southern East Anglia AM            | Robert Parkes           | Ann Kurra           |
| Southern Marches AM                | Ann Davison             | Jan Arriens         |
| Staffordshire AM                   | Linda Skellam           | Richard Ashwell     |
| Surrey & Hampshire Border AM       | Ivan Hutnik             | Gregory Valatin     |
| Sussex East AM                     | Peter Aviss             | Susan Walton        |
| Sussex West AM                     | Christine Habgood-Coote |                     |
| Swarthmoor (South West Cumbria) AM | Robert Straughton       | Bill Shaw           |
| Teesdale & Cleveland AM            | Mary Wilkinson          | David Simpson       |
| Thaxted AM                         | Sue Moloney             | Margaret Somerville |

|                                      |                         |                  |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Wensleydale & Swaledale AM           | Edna Rossiter           | Ian Hunter Smart |
| West Kent AM                         | John Spencer            |                  |
| West Scotland AM                     | Michael Hutchinson      | Elaine Millar    |
| West Somerset AM                     | Ali Dominy              | Margaret Stocks  |
| West Weald AM                        | Kim Hope                | Mariu Hurriaga   |
| West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM    | Ruth Cook               | Angela Le Grice  |
| Wirral & Chester AM                  |                         |                  |
| Worcestershire & Shropshire AM       | Penny Osborne-Gajewski  | Paul Mountain    |
| York AM                              | John Bourton            | Teresa Rose      |
| Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) | Alexandra Boliver-Brown | Rachael Booth    |