

# Meeting for Sufferings held in London on Saturday 28 March 2015

## MfS/15/03/01 Opening worship

Section 27.01 of *Quaker faith & practice* has been read in our opening worship, and we have remembered former members of this meeting who have recently died.

## MfS/15/03/02 Apologies

We receive apologies from Banbury and Evesham AM, York AM and Quaker World Relations Committee, which have not been able to send a representative on this occasion.

## MfS/15/03/03 Minutes

The minutes of our meeting held on 7 February 2015 have been signed.

## MfS/15/03/04 Adoption of Agenda

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

## MfS/15/03/05 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 2015:

### Nominated:

East Scotland AM	Representative	Barbara Davey
East Scotland AM	Alternate	Robin Waterston
York AM	Alternate	Sarah Allen

### Release requests received:

Bristol AM	Alternate	Rachel Ayres
Banbury & Evesham AM	Alternate	Susie Tombs
East Scotland AM	Alternate	Barbara Davey
York AM	Alternate	Roger Peirce

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

Visitors invited to represent area meetings in the absence of appointed representative and alternate:

Freya Guy	Devon AM
Denise Graham	Hardshaw and Mann AM
Barbara Bone	Northumbria AM
Judith Roads	NE Thames AM
Colin Holliday	Sussex West AM

**Other visitors:**

Ian Kirk-Smith – The Friend

Tara Craig – The Friend

Julia Gordon (Northumbria AM) – Long Term Framework Working Group

Christopher Gwyntopher (NE Thames AM) - Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network

Stevie Krayner (South Wales AM/CCR De Cymru) – Long Term Framework Working Group

Jane Laxton (Wirral and Chester AM) - Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture

Juliet Morton (Devon AM) - Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture

Sheila Moseley (Leicester AM) - Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network

Peter Sender – BYM staff: Strategy and Development Co-ordinator

Anne van Staveren – BYM staff: Media Relations Officer

**MfS/15/03/06 Report from BYM Trustees**

Jennifer Barraclough, clerk to BYM Trustees, has given us a verbal report of the meeting held on 27 March.

Peter Ullathorne, YM Treasurer, has presented a summary of the 2014 Financial Activities.

**MfS/15/03/07 Long Term Framework**

On behalf of the Long Term Framework Working Group, Peter Christy has spoken to an interim report (paper MfS 2015/03/04).

The group is grateful to all who have responded to the consultation, and have found particular inspiration from the contributions from the young people who responded during the Young People's Participation Day last December.

We generally welcome the direction that the group is taking towards a short paper on our Way Ahead for the next five years, focusing on how we work together. It is important that the details of what we do don't get lost, and the group may need to look more at how that is taken forward.

We thank the group for their work on our behalf, and look forward to receiving their final report later in the year.

**MfS/15/03/08 Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture**

A concern against torture is held on behalf of the Yearly Meeting by Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT), working within the oversight of North Wales, and Wirral and Chester and Central England AMs. It was considered most recently by MfS in 2011 (MfS 2011/02/5/i/c).

Juliet Morton and Jane Laxton of Q-CAT have reported on the work of this group.

We have been reminded that torture is an illegal, immoral and totally unacceptable practice. Torture is not always political and is pervasive within our society. It can affect many, not only the tortured.

Quakers have always understood that each individual is a child of God and the concern against torture has been held and developed by Q-CAT for the past forty years. Q-CAT is a separate trust with its main focus on educating Friends and others about the ban on torture and the realities of the present world situation, upholding the Quaker testimony to peace and equality and working towards healing and reconciliation.

Currently Q-CAT is developing a workshop on 'Quakers and Torture: 10 questions to get us thinking'. This will be run at Yearly Meeting and then Area Meetings will be encouraged to use it. Other initiatives include a revamped website, developing an interactive play and updating the Q-CAT leaflet.

All our Area Meetings are encouraged to take up this concern as they are able and to work with fellow Quakers and local groups.

We thank Q-CAT for bringing this report to us today.

### **MfS/15/03/09 Gender Equality and the Tabular Statement**

We receive minute 15/03 of Gloucestershire AM held on 8 February 2015, regarding gender equality and the Tabular statement. We have already asked the Recording Clerk to develop proposals for changes to the Tabular Statement in future years. We forward this minute to the Recording Clerk, asking him to consider the points made by Gloucestershire AM and to report to us in due course.

### **MfS/15/03/10 Ethical and Sustainable Clothing**

Further to minute MfS 2013/04/03/04, we receive minute 15/09 of North London AM, informing us that it has laid this down as a concern of the Area Meeting. It encourages Friends to continue to respond to the issue in their individual lives and practices.

### **MfS/15/03/11 Church Government Advisory Group: Terms of Reference**

We receive Church Government Advisory Group minute 15/08 from the meeting held on 17 February 2015, along with draft revised Terms of Reference for the Group. We agree to these.



## **MfS/15/03/15 Asylum Seekers: Destitution**

We receive the following minutes from Area Meetings: South East London AM minute 14/102; Pendle Hill AM minute 10; Leeds AM minute AM14/109; North East Thames AM minute 15/36; Leicester AM minute 15/32; South Wales AM minute 14:12:07; and Oxford and Swindon AM minute 16/2015c. These minutes bring to our attention a statement made by Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network about the use of destitution as an instrument of immigration control.

Sheila Moseley of Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network has spoken to the concern. Many Friends are deeply troubled by the situation and we have heard of the work that Friends are doing locally, both as Meetings and as individuals. Many are working with local asylum and refugee groups, the Red Cross and the City of Sanctuary movement.

This is not an issue that is going to go away quickly, and we feel it would be useful to develop a public statement that we can use in working with national and local governments.

We forward this minute to QPSW Central Committee and ask them to bring a draft back to a future meeting.

## **MfS15/03/16 Islamophobia**

Further to minute MfS/2014/12/05/04, we receive minute 15/12d from Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR), responding to minute 14/11/89 from Brighouse West Yorkshire AM. We also receive minutes AM14/110 and AM 15/19 from Southern Marches AM/CCR y Gororau Deheuol. Paper MfS 2015/03/06 has given us some additional background information.

We have heard some examples of how Friends locally are strengthening the bonds of friendship with Muslim communities. In some Meetings these are long-standing relationships and in others it is just a beginning. Friendship can grow from working together. We encourage Friends to continue with this work.

We also encourage QCCIR to continue to work through the Inter Faith Network and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI).

## **MfS/15/03/17 Reports from other European Yearly Meetings in 2014**

We receive reports from Friends who represented us at the following Yearly Meetings in 2014: Belgium and Luxembourg; German; Ireland; Netherlands; Sweden; and Switzerland.

**MfS/15/03/18 Reflections at the end of the current triennium**

At the end of this last meeting of the current triennium, we have valued the opportunity for prayerful reflection and to give thanks for Friends' service over the past three years.

*Ethel Livermore*

Ethel Livermore  
Clerk