

# Meeting for Sufferings held in London on Saturday 5 September 2015

## **Mfs/15/09/01            Opening worship**

During our opening worship we have been joined by members of the Young People's Participation Day taking place alongside Meeting for Sufferings.

Part of section 29.02 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/15/09/02            Apologies**

We receive apologies from Mid Somerset AM, West Weald AM, and Worcestershire and Shropshire AM, which have not been able to send a representative on this occasion.

## **Mfs/15/09/03            Minutes**

The minutes of our meeting held on 4 July 2015 have been signed.

## **Mfs/15/09/04            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 2018:

Nominated:

Dorset & South Wiltshire AM	Alternate	Joan Wright
Norfolk & Waveney AM	Alternate	Teresa Belton

Release requests received:

Thaxted AM	Alternate	Michael Collins
YFGM	Representative	Iwona Luszowicz

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

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

Gethin Evans	Mid-Wales AM
Joycelin Dawes	North London AM
Craig Barnett	Sheffield & Balby AM
Edna Rossiter	Wensleydale & Swaledale AM

Other visitors:

Roger Bartlett – Southern Marches AM  
Marigold Bentley – BYM staff (Secretary to QCCIR)

Sandra Berry – Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Director  
Peter Christy - Long Term Framework Working Group  
Nick Clifford – QCCIR  
Julia Gordon – Long Term Framework Working Group (clerk)  
Peter Higgins – North Wales AM  
Tricia Jones – North Wales AM  
Stevie Krayner - Long Term Framework Working Group  
Peter Sender – BYM staff (Strategy and Development Co-ordinator)  
Charlotte Smith – QPSWCC (clerk)  
Anne van Staveren – BYM staff (Media Relations Officer)  
Seren Wildwood - Long Term Framework Working Group

### **MfS/15/09/05                      Adoption of Agenda**

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

### **MfS/15/09/06                      Court register**

We have learned that Sam Sender, member of London West Area Meeting, was arrested on 13 July at Heathrow Airport, as part of a campaign against a third runway. Along with twelve other members of Plane Stupid, he has been charged with aggravated trespass and entering a security restricted area. A trial date has been set for January 18 at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court and is expected to last two weeks. We hold Sam Sender in the light.

### **MfS/15/09/07                      Long Term Framework**

Julia Gordon, clerk of the Long Term Framework working group, has introduced the draft framework, titled 'Our faith in the future' (paper MfS 2015/09/03 revised).

We agree to adopt this text, to replace A Framework for Action 2009-2014, as a guide for our future discernment and decision-making. We ask staff to prepare appropriate versions for use by a wide variety of Quaker groups. We commend it to Local and Area Meetings. We forward it to BYM Trustees and to central and standing committees, asking them to use it as a template for their work and to reflect on progress with it in their reports to us. We forward it to Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee for information.

We thank the Group for their work and look forward to receiving their final report.

### **MfS/15/09/08                      Quaker Credit Union**

We have received minute 2015/80 of North Wales AM/Cyfarfod Rhanbarth Gogledd Cymru held on 9 May 2015 concerning a national Quaker Credit Union, along with background information (paper MfS 2015/09/04). Tricia Jones has spoken to the concern.

The Area Meeting is concerned that many people in Britain who live in poverty do not have access to financial services. It envisages a national Quaker Credit Union organisation, through which Area Meetings could set up a branch, principally in areas where there is no credit union coverage at present. It hopes to set up a working group to explore this proposal further and to develop details.

We have heard some reservations about this project, particularly about whether we should do this separately as Quakers or whether we should encourage Friends to get more involved within existing structures. We recognise that different areas may need different solutions.

We encourage North Wales AM to continue to work on this, linking with other AMs and central committees where appropriate.

**Mfs/15/09/09                      Memorial to the innocent victims of war at the National Memorial Arboretum**

We receive minute AM15/38 of Southern Marches Area Meeting held on 9 May 2015. Julian Rutherford has spoken to the concern, and asked Meeting for Sufferings to support it in working to create a memorial to the innocent victims of war at the National Memorial Arboretum.

We are glad to hear that the AM is planning to involve non-Quaker groups as well as Friends from other parts of Britain in the project. We have heard reservations about the use of the term 'innocent', but accept this as a working title, at least for the time being.

We support Southern Marches AM in this endeavour and encourage them to take the project forward.

**Mfs/15/09/10                      Transfer of local meeting**

We receive minute 15.53 of Lancashire Central and North Area Meeting held on 11 July 2015, and a minute of Pendle Hill Area Meeting held on 11 July 2015. At the request of Chorley local meeting, both Area Meetings have agreed it should be part of Pendle Hill Area Meeting rather than Lancashire Central and North. We are satisfied that the guidance in section 4.12 of *Quaker faith & practice* has been followed, and we endorse this change.

**Mfs15/09/11                      Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees**

Jennifer Barraclough has spoken to the minutes of the meeting of BYM Trustees held on 29-31 May (paper Mfs2015/09/05, also received at our meeting in July), and has given us a broad overview of the types of work they undertake.

We note that there are Trustees available to visit Area Meetings, and representatives are encouraged to take this offer back to their AMs.

**MfS15/09/12**

## **Appointments**

### **a) Clerks of Meeting for Sufferings**

Committee on Clerks has brought forward the names of the following Friends to serve in 2016:

Meeting for Sufferings Clerk:

Ethel Livermore

South London AM

Meeting for Sufferings Assistant Clerk:

Anne Ullathorne

Central England AM

We appoint the Friends named.

### **b) Committee on Clerks**

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group has brought forward the name of Tony Fitt, Cornwall AM, for service until Yearly Meeting 2016.

We appoint our Friend accordingly.

### **c) Central Nominations Committee**

Brings forward the names of the following Friends for service or release as indicated:

#### Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations

Release:

Geoffrey Johnson

Sussex East AM

Matthew Biggs

London West AM

To serve until 30 April 2018:

Nominated by Meeting of Friends in Wales:

Gethin Evans

Mid-Wales AM

#### Revision of the Book of Discipline: Review Preparation Group

To serve until 31 December 2017:

Caroline Nursey

London West AM

#### Quaker Council for European Affairs

To serve as BYM representative from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018:

Elaine Green

Ipswich & Diss AM

#### BYM Sustainability

To serve from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018:

Gill Westcott

Devon AM (second term)

Martin Mansell                      West Scotland AM

Meeting for Sufferings Church Government Advisory Group

Release:

Janet Quilley                      Wensleydale & Swaledale AM

Extension of term of service to 31 December 2017:

Mark Tod                              Mid-Thames AM

Quaker Life Central Committee

To serve from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018:

Martin Pennock                      Ipswich & Diss AM (second term)

Lizzie Rosewood                      York AM

Jeffrey Dean                          Manchester & Warrington AM

Iain Law                                Northamptonshire AM

The Retreat (York) General Meeting: Members

To serve until December 2016:

Shirley Torrens                      Staffordshire AM (second term)

Alison Mitchell                      Devon AM

To serve until December 2017:

Susan Proudlove                      South Wales AM

Jane Strange                          North London AM

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

**MfS/15/09/13                      The Church: Towards a Common Vision**

Further to minute MfS/2015/02/11 we have received from Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) a revised draft response to the World Council of Churches' Faith and order paper no. 214, 'The Church: Towards a Common Vision'. QCCIR has also shared with us its draft study guide. Nick Clifford, a member of QCCIR, has spoken to this (paper MfS 2015/09/07).

We have received this document earlier than usual and so we have received advice from a number of representatives concerning editorial amendments (dots and commas) and these will be incorporated in the final text.

'In responding to a theological document we are using more highly-wrought language than Quakers would usually deploy. We ask all our readers to bear in mind that religious language is necessarily metaphorical and partial, even as it seeks to express the deepest truths.' This helps us explore issues vital to our faith.

We agree this document as amended in the meeting and support QCCIR in sending it on behalf of the Yearly Meeting to the Faith and Order Committee of the World Council of Churches.

We thank QCCIR for its work on this paper and commend it to be used to help our meetings grow in unity and to articulate what we can say, as Quakers, to the wider Christian church.

We hope it will be used, together with the study guide, within local meetings as is appropriate.

We send this minute, together with the document, to Quaker Life Central Committee who may consider how it may be used within local meetings, and to YM Agenda Committee for their consideration.

### **MfS/15/09/14                      Vibrancy in Meetings**

Our minute MfS/14/02/07 refers. Sandra Berry (Director of Woodbrooke) and Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, have told us about developments with the Vibrancy in Meetings initiative (paper MfS 2015/09/08). They have explained that it is a joint project, setting out to help BYM and Woodbrooke support local Quaker meetings to be stronger, more connected, confident and sustainable, and to develop a vibrant Britain Yearly Meeting. We have been able to ask for some additional clarification today. Later in the month, BYM and Woodbrooke Trustees will be asked to consider a proposal for a pilot project, employing locally-based staff in a small number of areas.

We note that BYM Trustees are considering allocating legacy income to support the three year pilot scheme and that there will be a Vibrancy Project Steering Group appointed.

We hope for more information on progress at our next meeting.

### **MfS/15/09/15                      Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

Further to minute MfS15/07/10 we have received an update from Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) regarding work relating to refugees and asylum seekers. We have also heard of the work of Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) on this issue.

QPSW and the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) have prepared a short draft statement with particular reference to the current Europe refugee crisis. We feel the need for an urgent statement, but want the draft text to be strengthened before it is released. We ask staff to work on this to be able to release a statement as soon as possible.

We ask for this statement to be circulated widely and made available to Friends locally to use in speaking out.

We forward this minute to Quaker World Relations Committee and ask it to circulate the statement to Quakers in other parts of Europe. We also forward this minute to Quaker Council for European Affairs and Quaker United Nations Office Geneva.

**MfS/15/09/16                      QPSW Central Committee**

Charlotte Seymour Smith, clerk of Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) has presented its report (paper MfS 2015/09/09).

We thank the Committee for their clear report, giving both an overview of their activities and details of how they are responding to the Call for Equality. We are deeply grateful for all the work that is being done, and pass on our thanks to both the committee and staff.

**MfS/15/09/17                      Meeting for Sufferings Handbook Group**

We have received recommendations from the Meeting for Sufferings Handbook and Arrangements Groups, advising us that having a separate Handbook Group is no longer a sensible use of time or resources (paper MfS 2015/09/10). We agree to lay down the Handbook Group and to ask Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group and Support Group to ensure that appropriate information is provided to members of Meeting for Sufferings as needed.

We thank members of the Handbook Group for their service.

**MfS/15/09/18                      MfS Arrangements Group and MfS Support  
Group: Terms of Reference**

Further to minute MfS/15/09/17, we agree to amend the MfS Arrangements Group and Support Group Terms of Reference.

The following paragraph is to be inserted in MfS Arrangements Group Terms of Reference:

*Oversee the information provided to members of Meeting for Sufferings, to assist their full participation in the meeting; including keeping the Meeting for Sufferings Handbook under review, revising and updating it as required.*

The following paragraph is to be inserted in MfS Support Group Terms of Reference.

*Liaise with MfS Arrangements Group and staff in relation to the information provided to members of Meeting for Sufferings, to assist their full participation*

*in the meeting; including helping to review and revise the Meeting for Sufferings Handbook.*

We also agree to the inclusion of the following paragraph in the Arrangements Group Terms of Reference, so they can be consistent with the Support Group Terms of Reference.

*The Group's meetings and work are conducted in faithfully waiting on the spirit, in the expectation of being guided. We cannot constrain the spirit. If the Group's leadings would take it out of the area outlined in these terms of reference it should record its leading in a minute to Meeting for Sufferings who may discern the way forward or seek the guidance of Britain Yearly meeting as appropriate.*

**MfS/15/09/19                      Joseph Rowntree Foundation / Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust**

Further to minute MfS 2014/09/06 we have received a paper from Paul Parker, Recording Clerk and Julia Unwin, Chief Executive of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (paper MfS 2015/09/12). They have set out three ways in which JRF and the various structures which make up BYM can usefully work together: by sharing information, opportunities and activities.

We support this approach, and hope the relationship continues to be meaningful.

**MfS/15/09/20                      Dates of meetings in 2017**

We agree the following dates for meetings in 2017:

- 4 February
- 1 April
- 3 June
- 7 October
- 2 December

**MfS/15/09/21                      Close**

We close, hoping to meet again at Woodbrooke, 4-6 December 2015.

Ethel Livermore  
Clerk