

Meeting for Sufferings held in London on Saturday 7 February 2015

MfS/15/02/01 Opening worship

Section 10.01 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/15/02/02 Apologies

We receive apologies from Swarthmoor (SW Cumbria) AM, London West AM, and Young Friends General Meeting, which have not been able to send a representative on this occasion.

MfS/15/02/03 Minutes

The minutes of our meeting held on 6 December 2014 have been signed.

MfS/15/02/04 Adoption of Agenda

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

MfS/15/02/05 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:

Bournemouth Coastal AM	Alternate	Ruth Bush
Cumberland AM	Representative	David Day
Cumberland AM	Alternate	David Beale
QLCC	Representative	Patsy Wilson
QLCC	Alternate	Isobel Dunbar

Release requests received:

North Cumbria AM	Representative	David Beale
North Cumbria AM	Alternate	Glenn Tomkinson
QLCC	Representative	Sue Proudlove
QLCC	Alternate	Patsy Wilson
West Cumbria AM	Alternate	David Day
West Cumbria AM	Representative	Tricia Jagger

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:

Sarah Allen	York AM
Martin Ford	Leeds AM
Michael Hutchinson	West Scotland AM

Other visitors:

Marigold Bentley – Secretary to Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

Tara Craig – The Friend

Jane Dawson - Advocacy & Public Relationships Leader

Catherine James – Church Government Advisory Group convenor

Rowena Lovrance – Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

Anne Watson – Quaker Values in Education Group

Ben Wood - Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

MfS/15/02/06 Yearly Meeting 2015 Agenda

Chris Skidmore, clerk to Yearly Meeting, has told us about the planned agenda for Yearly Meeting 2015.

We look forward to meeting in the newly-refurbished Large Meeting House and considering ‘Living out our faith in the world’.

Yearly Meeting this year is close to the time of the General Election but we will be able to worship together, to turn towards our Inward Teacher and consider what we may be called to do in the world.

We have been reminded of the document that is available to help us to prepare for Yearly Meeting in each of our local Meetings.

MfS/15/02/07 Quaker Values in Education

In December 2013, Meeting for Sufferings considered Quaker Values in Education, prompted by the concern of West Cumbria AM about state education in England and Wales (minute MfS/13/12/10). Subsequently, in August 2014, Friends from West Cumbria and other Area Meetings held a ‘threshing gathering’. A statement drawn up during this event was forwarded to Meeting for Sufferings by Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC); we noted the statement and

encouraged Friends to take it to their Meetings, for consideration locally (MfS/2014/10/05).

A new group, Quaker Values in Education (QVinE), is being formed. Today we have heard from two of its members, David Day (Cumberland AM) and Anne Watson (Oxford and Swindon AM).

We have heard about the work the group has done and their future plans including participation in a conference for Quaker governors of schools; the development of a post-graduate qualification in Quaker pedagogy and the publication of an anthology of Quaker writings. Friends interested in this work are encouraged to join the group and the online forum of Quaker Values in Education.

We have also heard from Friends about experiences in various educational settings and the importance of emphasising the positive – problems are not necessarily universal nor insoluble.

We welcome the work the group has done, including its statement ‘Every person is precious – a foundation for Quaker action on education’ that was agreed at the threshing conference in August 2014, focussing on schools in the maintained sector in England.

We uphold the QVinE group in its future work.

We are at an early stage in consideration of this issue, knowing that our spiritual values can underpin a vision for the long-term.

MfS/15/02/08 Membership

In 2014, Yearly Meeting concluded its three-year arc of consideration of ‘What it means to be a Quaker today’. Minute YM2014/40 asked Meeting for Sufferings to consider how to respond to a call for a yet more flexible approach to membership for some people, including particularly young adult Friends. Yearly Meeting asked us to work with Quaker Life Central Committee and to seek the views of those concerned on this matter.

The Recording Clerk has spoken to paper MfS/2015/02/05. We remind AMs of the flexibility around membership procedures already outlined in chapter 11 of Quaker faith and practice. We feel it would be helpful to have an opportunity to share experiences from AMs on this at a future Meeting for Sufferings.

We have considered how we can respond to the question of a more flexible approach to membership for those whose journeys may preclude them from committing to a local or area meeting. We have been reminded that membership is about a relationship between an individual and the Quaker community, and that there are responsibilities on both sides.

We feel it would be useful to look into how Friends and meetings can best provide pastoral and spiritual support to those people (whether in membership or not) who are not able to regularly attend local meetings. We forward this to Quaker Life Central Committee for advice.

Mfs15/02/09 Appointments

a) Yearly Meeting Nominating Group brings forward the following nomination:

Central Nominations Committee

To serve until Yearly Meeting 2016 to fill a vacancy:

John Cockcroft Central England AM

b) Central Nominations Committee brings forward the names of the following Friends for service:

Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations

To serve from 1 May 2015 to 30 April 2018

Peter Rivers Southern Marches AM

Quaker Life Central Committee

To serve from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2017

Emma Roberts Leeds AM

Quaker Housing Trust

To serve from 1 May 2015 – 30 April 2018

Barbara Potter West Scotland AM

Malcolm Bowker York AM

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)

To serve from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015

Huw Still York AM

Representatives to European Yearly Meetings

To serve as representative to the following Yearly Meetings:

Belgium & Luxembourg YM (8-10 May 2015)

Arthur Pritchard Central Yorkshire AM

France YM (16-19 July 2015)

Rose Oliver Young Friends General Meeting Member, attends in
Northumbria AM

German YM (22-25 October 2015)

Jonathon Hodgkin Mid-Essex AM

Ireland YM: 1 from BYM and 1 from GM for Scotland (9 – 12 April 2015)

Alastair Reid West Scotland AM

Ann Floyd Chilterns AM

Netherlands YM (29-31 May 2015)

Anne Bennett Lincolnshire AM

Aidan Whittington Teesdale & Cleveland AM

Norway YM (25-28 June 2015)

Alick Munro Kingston & Wandsworth AM

Sweden YM (25-28 June 2015)

Jennifer Maclennan Lancashire Central & North AM

Switzerland YM (22-15 May 2015)

Barbara Windle York AM

We appoint the Friends named.

c) Loughborough University Court

Central Nominations Committee has been informed that the University no longer has a court and asks Meeting for Sufferings to lay down this role. We agree to this. Our representative was David Walker of Leicester AM and we thank him for his service.

MfS/15/02/10

**Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith
Relations**

Rowena Loverance, Assistant Clerk of Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) has presented a report on its work (paper MfS/2015/02/07/a).

MfS/15/02/11

World Council of Churches Consultation Paper The Church: Towards a Common Vision

Douglas Butterfield and Ben Wood, members of Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR), have presented a briefing on the World Council of Churches' paper Towards a Common Vision (Geneva 2013) (paper MfS/2015/02/07/b).

We welcome the briefing paper on the draft response to the WCC paper and are happy that it reflects our view. We feel that this could usefully form the basis of a study guide for use by Friends.

Many of us have not read the full draft response, but some who have have expressed some hesitations over the language it is expressed in. The tradition of plain speaking is one of our treasures to share.

We encourage QCCIR to revise their response, in the light of feedback received, and to bring a revised draft to Meeting for Sufferings in the autumn.

MfS/15/02/12

Drilling for Natural Gas in the UK

Further to minute MfS/2014/06/05/a/1, we receive minute QPSWCC 14/108/b/a responding to Pendle Hill AM's concern about fracking. We note that this minute has helped Quaker Peace & Social Witness to clarify its advocacy work on this issue, and that Quaker Peace & Social Witness is working to support Friends who wish to take action against fracking.

MfS/15/02/13

Sustainability

Further to minute MfS/2014/06/05/a/2, we receive minute QPSWCC 14/108/b/b responding to a minute from Wensleydale and Swaledale about sustainability. We note Quaker Peace & Social Witness's clear message that, whilst Friends want to continue to speak out against practices that uphold our dependency on fossil fuels, it is also right to advocate for a sustainable and just alternative. Short briefings on energy justice and climate policy are being prepared, ahead of this year's General Election.

MfS/15/02/14

Report from BYM Trustees

We receive the minutes of the Trustees' meetings held on 30 and 31 January 2015, and Jennifer Barraclough, clerk to Trustees, has spoken to us about their work.

MfS/15/02/15

**Proposed revision of *Quaker faith & practice* Chapter
16**

Catherine James, convenor of Church Government Advisory Group, has presented a draft revision of chapter 16, Quaker marriage procedures, to reflect legislation permitting same sex marriage in in England and Wales from March 2014 and in Scotland from December 2014. The draft revision also reflects the decision of Meeting for Sufferings not to offer couples an option of civil partnership if a marriage can be recorded by the state (MfS/2014/04/12). Papers MfS/2015/02/10a and b refer.

In response to questions asked in paper MfS/2015/02/10a, we agree with the suggestion that all new registering officers should be expected to fulfil their responsibilities at all marriages authorised by the AM; and also with the proposed gender neutral option for the marriage declaration.

We approve the text, as amended, to be forwarded to YM 2015, and authorise Church Government Advisory Group to make further minor amendments if necessary.

We forward this minute to Yearly Meeting.

MfS/15/02/16

**Proposed revision of *Quaker faith & practice* section
3.27**

Further to minute MfS/14/02/05, Church Government Advisory Group has prepared revision to section 3.27, regarding our Speaking Out policy (paper MfS/2015/02/10/c).

We agree the revised text and forward this minute to Yearly Meeting.

Ethel Livermore
Clerk