

Minutes of Meeting for Sufferings 6 September 2014

MfS 2014 09 01 Worship

During our opening worship we have heard read section 23.04 of *Quaker faith & practice*, and we have remembered former members of this meeting who have recently died.

MfS 2014 09 02 Apologies

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

MfS 2014 09 03 Minutes

The minutes of our meeting held on 7 June 2014 have been signed.

MfS 2014 09 04 Adoption of agenda

We have reflected on issues to be considered during our meeting and have agreed the agenda.

MfS 2014 09 05 Minutes received not taken elsewhere

a) From Area Meetings

1 Norfolk & Waveney AM and Central England AM regarding Government cuts and welfare benefits

We receive minute 12/5/14 of Norfolk and Waveney AM held on 18 May 2014, and minute 2014.089 of Central England AM held on 12 July 2014, regarding the Statement on Economic Inequality (MfS 2014 04 07). Norfolk and Waveney AM welcomes the statement and encourages local Meetings to take action. Central England AM is organising a one-day national conference in November, to consider Quaker perspectives on ethics and economics.

We forward these minutes to Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee for information.

2 Central England AM regarding Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture

We receive minute 2014.088 of Central England AM held on 12 July 2014 recording its agreement to become an upholding Area Meeting for Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture.

b) From Central Committees and other bodies

1 Quaker Life Central Committee

We receive minutes QL 14.33.a and QL 14.33.c, regarding QLCC's terms of reference and its reports to Trustees. We note that QLCC hopes to engage constructively and have an ongoing consultative relationship with Meeting for Sufferings.

2 Long Term Framework Working Group

We receive part of minute LTF/14/9/03, regarding Area Meeting Consultations. We note that the revised consultation letter is now being circulated. We are glad to know that Area Meetings are already keen to engage with the process. Where possible, members of Meeting for Sufferings will help facilitate discernment in the areas or committees we represent.

MfS 2014 09 06 Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust

Tony Stoller, chair of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) has spoken to paper MfS 2014 09 04, proposing changes to the relationship between those bodies and Meeting for Sufferings.

We agree that the Joint Search Group for JRF/JRHT trustees should be laid down, but feel that work is needed to look at how future discernment can best be done. We ask our Recording Clerk to continue the dialogue with JRF/JRHT and to report back on this in due course.

We are keen to develop a dynamic, co-operative relationship between BYM and JRF/JRHT, with staff and committees working together on areas of mutual concern.

We forward this minute to our Review Group on the Relationship with Listed Informal Groups to be included in their consideration, and to Central Nominations Committee and JRF/JRHT.

MfS 2014 09 07 Yearly Meeting 2014

We note the minutes of Yearly Meeting held 2-9 August 2014 at the University of Bath.

a) Membership, commitment and belonging

Yearly Meeting minutes 10 and 40 record discernment relating to the nature of membership.

Meeting for Sufferings has been asked to work with Quaker Life Central Committee to seek the views of Friends, particularly young adult Friends, whose life journeys may preclude them committing to a local or area meeting, and to consider how to

respond to the call for a more flexible approach to membership in such cases. We will return to this matter at a future meeting.

b) Revision of the book of discipline

Further to MfS 2014 04 05 we note that Yearly Meeting has encouraged Meeting for Sufferings in its plan to engage the yearly meeting in a period of preparation and threshing. We will consider Terms of Reference for our Revision Preparation Group later today. We note that Central Nominations Committee expects to bring names for appointment to us in October. Yearly Meeting will return to the question of revising the book of discipline when Meeting for Sufferings feels the time is right to appoint a revision committee. Yearly Meeting minutes 20 and 42 refer.

c) Tabular Statement

Further to minute S/13/12/07, we note that the document Patterns of Membership produced for Yearly Meeting 2014 included some additional analysis of the data (YM minute 24). The information presented may be helpful in provoking further discussion of membership changes in recent years at area meeting level.

d) Call for nominations for the next triennium of Meeting for Sufferings

In minute 26, Yearly Meeting calls for area meetings and other relevant bodies to bring forward names for Meeting for Sufferings representatives for the next triennium from YM 2015 to YM 2018. The Recording Clerk will draw this to their attention in the autumn. Names should be received by the Recording Clerk's office by 31 March 2015.

e) Report of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Yearly Meeting received the Trustees' Annual Report & Financial Statements, and watched the film Celebrating Quaker Work (YM minute 30). There was discussion of the right balance between centrally- and locally-managed and resourced work, and of the importance of work with children, young people and families at local meetings. We ask our Long Term Framework Working Group to take this minute into consideration.

f) Report of Meeting for Sufferings

Further to minute MfS 2014 06 11, Yearly Meeting heard the final report from the Minute 36 (Canterbury) Commitment Group, and reaffirmed the importance of this commitment in the life of our Religious Society. Yearly Meeting also received the full report of Meeting for Sufferings. YM minutes 31 & 36 refer.

g) BYM Governing document

Yearly Meeting approved the revised Governing Document (YM minute 34). Meeting for Sufferings is authorised to make minor amendments if called for by the Charity Commission.

h) YM Statement on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

During YMG, it was agreed to release a statement on the situation in Israel-Palestine. Advice on using the statement has been sent to all meetings. Yearly Meeting minute 41 refers.

MfS 2014 09 08 Yearly Meeting 2014: reflections

We began our session by each sharing with our neighbour one key experience or impression that we have had about the 2014 residential Yearly Meeting in Bath.

Ursula Fuller (Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group) has told us of some of her personal reflections about the Yearly Meeting Gathering and we have had time, together in worship, to consider the event and any implications for Friends both individually and corporately.

There have been over 2000 separate experiences of the Gathering and we are grateful for the organisation that went into the practical running of the event – making things happen.

We are thankful for staff and helpers running the Children and Young People's programme, enabling parents and carers to attend and young participants to engage with things of the Spirit.

There remains some tension between the ordering of business sessions running alongside gathering activities. Has the event become too complicated?

Yet we appreciated the fact that space was found to uphold our concern for those in Israel/Palestine and the holding of additional meetings where the presence of the Spirit was felt.

We have reflected on the power of reporting back – we do not have to have been there to be inspired. How can we be transformed, transforming our meetings and acting as agents of transformation in the world?

MfS 2014 09 09 Yearly Meeting 2015 Agenda

Ethel Livermore has presented a paper with suggestions for Yearly Meeting 2015 agenda. It explains the matters that have been considered by Meeting for Sufferings over the last year, and particularly minutes received from Area Meetings. We hope this will be of use in planning the agenda for Yearly Meeting 2015. We suggest one amendment and forward the paper to Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee.

a) 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:

Central Nominations Committee	Representative	Val Major
Central Nominations Committee	Alternate	Catherine Putz
Central Yorkshire AM	Alternate	Ruth McTighe
North West London AM	Representative	Elize Sakamoto
North West London AM	Alternate	Claire Farrier
Pendle Hill AM	Representative	Wendy Hampton
Quaker Life Central Committee	Representative	Sue Proudlove
Quaker Life Central Committee	Alternate	Patsy Wilson
South Wales AM	Alternate	Ann Boot
West Wilts & East Somerset AM	Representative	Linda Patterson
West Wilts & East Somerset AM	Alternate	Margaret Williams

Release requests received:

Central Nominations Committee	Representative	Patricia Cockrell
North Wales AM	Alternate	Mary Hill
North West London AM	Representative	Nick Rendle
North West London AM	Alternate	Elize Sakamoto
Quaker Life Central Committee	Representative	Linda Murgatroyd
Quaker Life Central Committee	Alternate	Sue Proudlove
South Wales AM	Alternate	Stevie Kraye
West Wilts & East Somerset AM	Representative	Margaret Williams
West Wilts & East Somerset AM	Alternate	Linda Patterson

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:

Sussex West AM Chris Bemrose

Other visitors:

Rhiannon Rees - QPSWCC

Peter Sender - Strategy & Development Coordinator

Tony Stoller –Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust

Anne van Staveren - Media Relations Officer

Tara Craig – the Friend

b) Meeting for Sufferings Nominating Group

brings forward the names of the following Friends to serve on the Review Group for the Terms of Reference of the Central Nominations Committee:

To serve from: September 2014 and during 2015

Alison Breadon	Chilterns AM
Margaret Mortimer	South East Scotland AM
Gerald Hewitson	North Wales AM
Rhiannon Grant	Leeds AM

We appoint the Friends named. We thank the Friends who served on the nominating Group, and now lay the Group down.

c) Central Nominations Committee

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

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Due to changes in the terms of service members whose service was due to end on 31 December 2014 will now end September 2015

Peter Christy	West Scotland AM
Janet Harland	Oxford & Swindon AM

Meeting for Sufferings Church Government Advisory Group

To serve from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2017

Re-nominated:

Janet Quilley	Wensleydale & Swaledale AM
Richard Porter	Mid-Somerset AM

Nominated:

Michael Long	Northumbria AM
Peter Speirs	Wirral & Chester AM

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

To serve from: 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2017

Re-nominated:

Julia Bush	Northamptonshire AM
Rachel Berger	Wiltshire & East Somerset AM

Nominated:

Ruth Tod	Mid-Thames AM
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Quaker Life Central Committee

To serve from: 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2017

Nominated:

Mark Lockwood	Sussex West AM
Rupert Price	North London AM

Released:

Simon Pollitt	West Cumbria AM (service ends 31/12/14)
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We appoint the Friends named and thank the Friend released for his service.

MfS 2014 09 11 Quaker Peace and Social Witness

Charlotte Seymour Smith, clerk of Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Central Committee, has presented a report from the Committee to Meeting for Sufferings (paper MfS 2014 09 10). We have been interested to hear the summary of work undertaken by QPSW with and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting.

Friends have shared some of their experiences of working locally, and are grateful for the support and resources provided by QPSW.

Friends can sometimes feel the work is 'too big' and need help in knowing where to start. We have heard of a General Election Pack which is being produced and also of an Activist Day which is taking place in November.

We need to remember that "being and doing are one". We have particularly spoken of the importance of emphasising that this is faith-based work and we need to talk of what impels us to do this work.

It is important to be willing to speak out when appropriate, both locally and nationally, but much of the work is long-term or 'quiet' work that does not fit the 'news agenda'.

We have heard how QPSW is deliberately increasing the ways in which it engages with Friends and local meetings.

The different ways of communicating with Friends is increasing, but this can mean that things 'get lost'. We have affirmed the importance of the role of the local meeting correspondent. QPSW is experimenting with how it organises the correspondents' mailings, and would welcome feedback. Personal reports, in particular from people attending QPSW conferences, are often the best way of enthusing Friends.

We thank QPSWCC for its report and its ongoing work on our behalf.

MfS 2014 09 12 Review Group for Terms of Reference of Central Nominations Committee

We approve Terms of Reference for the Review Group for Terms of Reference of Central Nominations Committee, as amended in the meeting (paper MfS 2014 09 11).

MfS 214 09 13 Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group

We approve Terms of Reference for the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group, as amended in the meeting (paper MfS 2014 09 12).

MfS 2014 09 14 Sustainability Group

We have received Terms of Reference for a Sustainability Group (paper MfS 2014 09 13). We are not ready to agree these yet and ask for a briefing paper to be prepared for our next meeting.

MfS 2014 09 15 Review Group on the Relationship with Listed Informal Groups

We approve Terms of Reference for the Review Group on BYM's Relationship with Listed Informal Groups, as amended in the meeting (paper MfS 2014 09 14).

MfS 2014 09 16 Preparing for October 2014 Meeting for Sufferings

Our clerk has outlined plans for the October 2014 Meeting for Sufferings, which will include consideration of Meeting for Sufferings as a worshipping community, reports from Arrangements Group and Support Group, and time for open worship and reflection.

Ethel Livermore
Clerk