



Yearly Meeting of
the Religious Society
of Friends in Britain

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

7 December 2016

Meeting for Sufferings 3 December 2016

Dear Friends

Thank you for your support and discipline during the meeting. We had a long agenda and managed to finish on time – I think the use of draft minutes helped with some of this. The only item that I feel we struggled with was the registration of the first batch of Quaker Recognised Bodies. In retrospect, we should probably have included a link to the original paper agreed by Meeting for Sufferings a year ago in the papers. I'm sure Meeting for Sufferings Arrangement Group will take this on board for future agendas! If you have any feedback – on the use of draft minutes or anything else, please contact them using the sufferings@quaker.org.uk email address.

It was good to have the Young Friends join us for the opening worship and also for us to share a little at the end. I hope those of you from the same area meetings managed to spend time together and have useful conversations. I spoke to some of the Young Friends after the meeting and it sounds as though they had a good day!

There was one item that Area Meetings are encouraged to consider, which is the request from Luton & Leighton Area Meeting around WW1 memorial meetings: meetings are encouraged to consider working with others to ensure these are multi-national and focussing on reconciliation and peace-building.

Given the time that Friends around the country have given to the consideration of both the minutes from Cornwall Area Meeting on the Decriminalisation of the possession of drugs for personal use, and the vision for a criminal justice system from Quaker Peace & Social Witness, I am sure they will want to hear where we got to on those two items. Cornwall AM will receive a copy of all the minutes we received and may well be in touch with the Area Meetings that united with the concern and others to take this further. The Crime, Community and Justice Sub-committee of QPSW will also receive all the minutes of the consideration of their vision paper, and these will feed in to their work.

I am sure Friends will be interested to hear about the report from the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group and the direction they are moving in. Do encourage relevant Friends in your meetings to complete the Church Government survey (see the link below), and also look out for the feedback request for the reading

Quaker faith & practice exercise which will be circulated in the new year.

I hope Friends will be interested to hear in of new focus to the work programmes for QCEA around peace and human rights, and to know that as a Yearly Meeting we continue to be committed to working together with Friends from around Europe. Linked to that are the reports from European Yearly Meetings, which make inspiring reading.

Although we didn't focus on the work of Quaker Life when we considered the report from Quaker Life Central Committee it is always good to remind Friends of the work that is being done, and I think Friends will be also be interested to hear that we are going to be looking at how we can work more effectively together.

It's hard to believe that this is my last letter to you – time clearly flies when you are enjoying yourself, and I have enjoyed my service as clerk. I'd like to end by thanking you all for your support over the last four years. I have always felt supported and upheld in my service as your Clerk and I am sure you will continue to support Anne Ullathorne and Margaret Bryan as they take on their new roles as Clerk and Assistant Clerk next year.

Yours in Friendship



Ethel Livermore,
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

Useful links:

Church Government questionnaire – www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ChurchGov
The closing date is 12 January 2017. Any queries to: Michael S Booth, Church Government Officer - 020 7663 1023, gfp@quaker.org.uk

Quaker Council for European Affairs - www.qcea.org

The following papers are also included in this mailing:

- December 2016 MfS Minutes

Meeting for Sufferings held at Friends House, Saturday 3 December 2016

MfS/16/12/01 Opening worship

During our opening worship we have been joined by members of the Young People's Participation Day.

We have heard read section 23.94 of *Quaker faith & practice*. We have also remembered former members of this meeting who have recently died.

MfS/16/12/02 Minutes

The minutes of our meeting held on 1 October 2016 have been signed.

MfS/16/12/03 Apologies

We receive apologies from Dorset and South Wiltshire, and West Kent AM's, which have not been able to send a representative on this occasion.

MfS/16/12/04 Adoption of Agenda

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

MfS/16/12/05 Court and prison register

Further to minute **MfS/16/07/06**, we have been told that a trial will be held on 14th – 16th December at Reading Magistrates Court for Gillian Lawrence and Quakers Sam Donaldson, Hannah Brock, Ellis Brooks and John Lynes. They are charged with aggravated trespass for blockading one of the entrances to the nuclear warhead facility of AWE Burghfield during the Faith Day of Action on 27th June.

Jo Frew, an attender at Tottenham Meeting, who was arrested on the same day will be tried for obstruction of the highway in the week of 23rd January alongside four others from a group called 'Put Down the Sword'.

We agree to add the names of these Friends to our court and prison register. We hold all of those concerned in the Light.

MfS/16/12/06 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:

Deceased:

Stella Clark – Northumbria AM representative

Nominated:

Gordon Benson – Pendle Hill AM representative

Ingrid Ellis – Dorset & South Wiltshire AM alternate

Ann Floyd – Quaker World Relations Committee alternate

Julia Lim – South Wales AM representative

Carole Rakodi – South Wales AM alternate

Lynne Richardson – Banbury & Evesham AM alternate

Alan Vernon – Wirral & Chester AM alternate

Barbara Windle – Quaker World Relations Committee representative

Release requests received:

Jennie Barnsley – Hardshaw & Mann AM representative
Anne Bennett – Quaker World Relations Committee representative
Denise Graham – Hardshaw & Mann AM alternate
Barbara Windle – Quaker World Relations Committee alternate
Joan Wright – Dorset & South Wiltshire AM alternate

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:

Neil MacDonald – Sussex West AM
Alan York – South Wales AM

Other visitors:

Jocelyn Bell Burnell – Co-clerk, Quaker Life Central Committee
Michael S Booth – BYM staff, Church Government Support Officer
Margaret Bryan – Incoming MfS Assistant Clerk
Douglas Butterfield – Co-clerk, Quaker Life Central Committee
Helena Chambers – Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs
Tony Faragher – Cornwall AM
Elaine Green – BYM representative to Quaker Council for European Affairs
Jon Lyon – Deputy Clerk, Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs
Lesley Richards – Clerk, Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group
Anne van Staveren – BYM staff, Media Relations Officer

MfS/16/12/07 Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees' Report

Ingrid Greenhow, clerk of BYM Trustees, has spoken to the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2016, highlighting the work of Quaker World Relations Committee and Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations. Ingrid has also presented a summary of the 2017 operational plan, and Peter Ullathorne, Yearly Meeting Treasurer, presented the 2017 budget.

We thank the Trustees for their work.

MfS/16/12/08 Quaker Council for European Affairs

Elaine Green, BYM's representative to Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) has reported on recent changes to QCEA's governance structure.

We are glad to hear that the programme work of QCEA will focus on peace and human rights.

We agree in future to nominate two Friends to represent BYM at the General Assembly. If these Friends are prevented from attending the General Assembly, the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings can propose a name to attend on behalf of BYM on that occasion.

We ask our representative(s) to compile the triennial report to Meeting for Sufferings on the life of QCEA.

We also ask our representative(s) to report to QPSWCC, annually if possible, regarding issues of common concern.

We hope that our representatives and any Friends from BYM who are appointed to QCEA's Executive Committee will all be available from time to time to talk to groups or meetings of British Quakers about QCEA and to support fund-raising.

We recommend that matters related to funding and property should in future be managed between the QCEA Executive Committee, BYM Trustees and the Recording Clerk.

We forward this minute to Central Nominations Committee, QPSWCC and BYM Trustees.

MfS/16/12/09 Reports from other European Yearly Meetings

We receive reports from Friends who represented us at the following Yearly Meetings in 2016: Belgium and Luxembourg; France; German; Ireland; Netherlands; Norway; Sweden; and Switzerland.

We thank the Friends who represented us.

MfS/16/12/10 Decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs

Further to minute **MfS/16/04/14**, we have returned to consideration of minute of Cornwall AM, held on 12th September 2015 regarding the decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs.

We receive minutes from the following Area Meetings:

Area Meeting	Held on	Minute number
Bournemouth Coastal	21/11/2015	15.11.3
Bristol	17/09/2015	<i>(not provided)</i>
Cambridgeshire	10/07/2016	16.07.29
Chilterns	17/06/2016	17.6.16
East Cheshire	08/05/2016	16.05.09
East Kent	09/07/2016	17.6.16
East Scotland	20/08/2016	16.37
Hampshire & Islands	11/11/2016	10
Hertford & Hitchin	17/09/2016	43.16
Kendal & Sedburgh	12/11/2016	16.11.12
Kingston & Wandsworth	17/07/2016	16.61
Leicester	10/07/2016	16.54
Lincolnshire	17/09/2016	16.09.71
London West	16/10/2016	2016.128
Mid Essex	18/09/2016	16.97
Mid-Somerset	11/11/2016	39.16
Norfolk & Waveney	17/09/2016	9.09.2016
North London	19/03/2016	16.17
North Somerset	14/08/2016	25.16
North West London	16/09/2016	16.05.09
Northamptonshire	11/11/2016	16.66
Northumbria	11/11/2016	5
Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire	17/11/2016	49.16.a

Pendle Hill	11/06/2016	5
Sheffield & Balby	11/11/2016	5
South East London	23/10/2016	16.104
South East Scotland	23/07/2016	2016.07.10
South Wales	05/09/2016	n/a
Southern East Anglia	11/11/2016	2016.52
Staffordshire	14/02/2016	5a
Sussex West	09/07/2016	16.17
Thaxted	08/12/2013	13.12.09
West Somerset	17/09/2016	16.68
West Wiltshire & East Somerset	19/03/2016	16/26b
Wirral & Chester	13/07/2016	16.18
Worcestershire and Shropshire	19/11/2016	72.16
York	12/11/2016	2016.11.59

We are grateful for the depth of engagement by Friends on this issue.

As we have heard, it is a very complex issue and many Friends therefore don't feel able to unite with the concern. We do however agree that we need to seek a humane and compassionate response to drug users.

We have heard an appetite from Friends to learn more about the issue. There is a lot of support for Cornwall AM in taking this forward with other AMS that have expressed an interest, working with Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs (QAAD) and other organisations where appropriate.

MfS/16/12/11 Appointments

a) Meeting for Sufferings Search Group

Brings forward the following names for service:

Meeting for Sufferings Support Group

To serve from December 2016 until Yearly Meeting 2018 to fill a vacancy

Chris Bullard – Kendal & Sedbergh AM

We appoint this Friend.

b) Central Nominations Committee

Brings forwards the following names for service or release

Appeal to Meeting for Sufferings

To serve from 3 December until a decision is made and passed on to the parties involved

Julia Aspden – North Wales AM

Andrew Clark – Chilterns AM

Gloria Dobbin – Luton & Leighton AM

Peter Eccles – East Cheshire AM

Charles West – Worcestershire & Shropshire AM

Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group

Release with immediate effect:

Andrew Williams – South East Scotland AM

Central Nominations Committee

Release with immediate effect:

Michael Long – Northumbria AM

Jane Lewis – Hampshire & Islands AM

Friends Trusts Ltd

To serve from 1 June 2016 – 31 May 2019

Nigel Barnes – Northumbria AM

Groups to Review the Appeals Procedure (Qf&p 4.25 and 4.26)

To serve from 1 December until 31 December 2017;

Val Ferguson – Oxford and Swindon AM

Michael Hutchinson – West Scotland AM

Beryl Milner – Leeds AM

Michael Phipps – Chilterns AM

Pendle Hill Quaker Study Centre

1 or 2 friends to serve from September to December 2017

Maggie and Melvyn Freake – North East Thames AM

Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations

To serve from 1 May 2017 to 30 April 2020,

Renominated for a third term:

Nicola Hoskin-Stone – Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM (only served 7 months of first term)

Release with immediate effect:

Peter Rivers – Southern Marches AM

Quaker Housing Trust

To serve from ARM 2017 until the end of ARM 2020

Mary Hammond – Cornwall AM

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

Nominated to serve from August 2017 to December 2019

Ann Bettys – Brighouse West Yorkshire AM

Release from July 2017;

Camilla Oelman – Thaxted AM

The Retreat (York) General Meeting: Members

Release with immediate effect:

Stephen Kirby – Northumbria AM

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

MfS/16/12/12 Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group report

Lesley Richards, clerk of the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group, has spoken to its report (paper **(MfS 2016 12 11)**).

At this stage, the group has reached the view that the church government part of *Quaker faith & practice* should be comprehensively revised, rather than simply updated. This is seen as an integral part of a wider revision of the Book of Discipline; a revision which might start with church government, but may not be confined to this area.

The group welcomes healthy take-up of the 'Reading Quaker Faith and Practice' project, which aimed to get Friends talking and listening to each other about all aspects of our life together.

The Group is now expecting to bring a final report to Meeting for Sufferings in a year's time, enabling any recommendations to be forwarded to Yearly Meeting 2018.

We agree to extend the period of service of current members of the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group by 12 months until 31 December 2018.

MfS/16/12/13 Leeds Quaker-Jewish Dialogue

Further to **MfS/16/07/08**, we receive minute **2016/74** of Leeds AM, confirming that it has received a report from the Leeds Quaker Jewish Dialogue Group. The historically positive relationship between Quakers and the Jewish Community in Leeds has been affected by Meeting for Sufferings' decision to support the boycott of settlement goods (minute **MfS/2013/10/06** refers). Leeds AM encourages all parties to refrain from using inflammatory language that divides rather than builds bridges of understanding; and welcomes steps to draw attention to the work of Peace Groups and individuals in Palestine and Israel.

We also receive minute **16/72** of Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR), responding to Leeds AM's earlier minute. We note that a copy of the report under consideration has already been sent to the Secretary of QCCIR.

MfS/16/12/14 Cadet Forces in State Schools

Further to minute **MfS/16/10/14**, we receive minute **09/10/16** of Staffordshire AM, expressing concern about the Government sponsorship of cadet forces in state schools. We forward this minute to QPSWCC, to be considered alongside the minute of General Meeting for Scotland we forwarded in October, regarding cadet forces in state schools in Scotland.

MfS/16/12/15 Quaker faith & practice: proposed revision to section 13.19

Further to minute **MfS/15/12/17** Review of BYM's relationship with Listed Informal Groups, we have received from Church Government Advisory Group, proposed revisions to section 13.19 of *Quaker faith & practice*. The Group also suggests that the phrase 'Listed informal group' is replaced by Quaker recognised body in sections 11.05 and 11.11. The recommendations are set out in paper **MfS 2016 11 12b**.

We forward these recommendations to Yearly Meeting.

MfS/16/12/16 Quaker Faith and Practice: proposed revisions to sections 8.21 and 14.40

In July, having heard from BYM Trustees about changes to Management Meeting, we asked Church Government Advisory Group (CGAG) to consider any implications for *Quaker faith & practice* (**MfS/16/07/07**). CGAG has advised that section 8.22 does not appear to need to be changed, but has proposed minor amendments to 14.40 and 8.21, which are set out in paper **CGAG 16 09 08c**.

We forward these recommendations to Yearly Meeting.

MfS/16/12/17 WW1 Memorial Meetings for Reconciliation

Further to minute **MfS 2015/07/13**, we receive minute **16/72** of Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations. Last year, Luton and Leighton AM sent a minute to Meeting for Sufferings, expressing the hope that meetings to commemorate World War 1 are multi-national, focusing on reconciliation and committing participants to peace-building. We forwarded the minute to QCCIR for advice.

QCCIR encourages all Area Meetings to be active in their local Churches Together and Interfaith networks, as well as relevant national organisations such as the Royal British Legion, to influence commemoration services towards reconciliation. Friends are encouraged to use the QCCIR e-cluster for discussion and to learn about available resources. Luton and Leighton AM encourages Friends to consider in advance services happening, particularly in 2018.

MfS/16/12/18 Towards a vision of a criminal justice system

At the end of 2015 Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) commended to Meeting for Sufferings a paper called 'Towards a vision of a criminal justice system', written by its Crime Community and Justice Sub-Committee. QPSWCC felt it would be helpful to know whether the paper represented the views of Quakers throughout Britain. Meeting for Sufferings asked Area Meetings to consider the paper, before it was brought back to us (**MfS/16/04/17**).

We receive the following minutes from Area Meetings:

Area Meeting	Held on	Minute number
Bournemouth Coastal	22/07/2016	16.7.7
Bristol	17/09/2016	<i>(not provided)</i>
East Kent	09/06/2016	10b
East Scotland	20/08/2016	16.36
Gloucestershire	11/09/2016	16.55 & 16.61
Hertford & Hitchin	17/09/2016	16.54
Kendal & Sedburgh	12/11/2016	16.11.22
Kingston & Wandsworth	24/09/2016	16.79
Leicester	10/07/2016	16.55
Lincolnshire	17/09/2016	16.09.71
Mid Thames	09/10/2016	16.10.11
Mid-Somerset	11/09/2016	45.16
Norfolk & Waveney	16/07/2016	6.7.2016
North London	24/09/2016	16.78
Northumbria	11/11/2016	9.9.16

Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire	17/09/2016	49.16
Pendle Hill	09/07/2016	6
Sheffield & Balby	11/09/2016	6
South Wales	11/06/2016	16.06.04
Southern East Anglia	27/11/2016	2016.61
Sussex East	09/10/2016	58.16
Sussex West	10/09/2016	16.85
West Somerset	17/09/2017	16.67
West Wiltshire & East Somerset	02/11/2016	16.47
Wirral & Chester	13/07/2016	16.88
Worcestershire and Shropshire	19/11/2016	71.16
York	12/11/2016	2016.11.59

We have also been sent responses from Forest Hill local meeting (South East London AM), Central Yorkshire AM, and Luton and Leighton AM.

We note the key statements in the paper from the Crime, Community and Justice Sub-Committee that state: 'Justice should be compassionate, forgiving and healing – restorative, not retributive. We want to change attitudes and encourage the criminal justice system to move towards this vision of justice.'

We value this document as a tool to help those in our meetings thinking about our view of what the criminal justice system should be and as a resource when raising specific concerns in a local context.

We have also been reminded of the importance of others working in the probation sector, legal aid and other services.

It has been helpful for the document to be brought more widely to the attention of Friends, and many Area Meetings have reflected deeply on it. The minutes from AMs will be sent to the CCJ Sub-Committee to aid its further deliberation.

We encourage QPSWCC to continue working on these issues, and to consider what may be done next, continuing to work with others as appropriate.

We send this minute to QPSWCC.

MfS16/07/19 Quaker Recognised Bodies

Further to minute MfS/15/12/1, we receive paper MfS 2016/12/14 recommending four groups for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies.

We agree to register the following groups for five years, with registration to be reviewed before the end of 2021:

Free-standing:

- Quaker Disability Equality Group
- Quaker Values in Education

External:

- Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs (charity registered in England and Wales)
- Living Witness (charity registered in England and Wales)

We are glad that the process for recognition is now established, and expect to register more groups at forthcoming meetings.

MfS/16/12/20 Quaker Life Central Committee

Jocelyn Burnell, co-clerk of Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC), has spoken to its report (paper MfS 2016 12 15).

The committee are in the process of reviewing their strategic objectives and vision. Although this is time-consuming for them it is proving to be a valuable exercise. We have heard of the positive relationship which has been developed between QLCC and BYM Trustees and have been challenged to consider how we as Meeting for Sufferings can work more effectively with QLCC.

We recognise that this is an area that needs more work and ask our Arrangements Group to do some initial thinking on this, liaising with QLCC as appropriate, and to report back to us.

We are, as ever, encouraged to hear of all of the work done by Quaker Life and thank the Central Committee for their work.

MfS 16/12/21

We have been re-joined by members of the Young People's Participation Day. We have shared with each other a flavour of what we have been doing during the day.

MfS/16/12/22 Thanks

We thank Ethel Livermore for her work as clerk to Meeting for Sufferings during the last three years.

MfS/16/12/23 Close

We close, intending to meet again, God willing, on 4 February 2017.

Ethel Livermore
Clerk