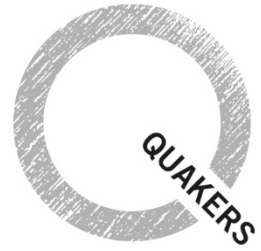


Calling Letter



Yearly Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends (Quakers) in
Britain

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

3 June 2017

Dear Friends,

We look forward to meeting at Friends House on Saturday 3 June at 10am. The agenda and papers are attached and you will see that we have a range of topics this time. There are four particular items for which you may wish to prepare:

- 1) QCCIR's annual meeting with us: what interfaith or ecumenical work is going on in your area meeting? How can we present Quakers to other people of faith and learn from them too? The member of QCCIR who presents their report will be keen to hear from representatives.
- 2) BYM trustees report to us and we have their annual report and accounts for 2016 which covers the centrally managed work of BYM. We can see how this work lines up with our long-term framework 'Our Faith in the Future', and then we want to consider how this framework is being used around the yearly meeting. It would be good to know how it has been received in your area meetings and whether it has prompted any action or reaction. Jude Acton from Leeds Area Meeting will share experiences with us and we hope to learn from each other.
- 3) We will hear from Young Friends General Meeting in the afternoon – their report will be tabled on this occasion. Do young friends in your area meeting participate in YFGM? How can their profile be raised or what would encourage young adults in their spiritual lives?
- 4) MfS Arrangements Group have wondered about our practice of remembering Friends who have died. The current custom is to be advised and read their names in opening worship but what do you think about this? A paper explains the current dilemma and asks whether we want to continue with this – it would be useful to have feedback but we don't want to spend inappropriate time on this.

We also have minutes from Area meetings, epistles from Ireland Yearly Meeting and Quaker Committee for European Affairs for our information and other regular business.

Over lunchtime there will be plenty of opportunity to talk with Friends in more detail about agenda items – members of QCCIR and CNC, and Trustees. The Library will be open too, so please visit if you can, to find out more about the collections and how the Library can support local Meetings.

So a varied meeting, Friends, and I look forward to seeing you all as we come to worship with hearts and minds prepared.

May peace be with you.



Anne Ullathorne,
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

MfS Forward Agenda

MfSAG April 2017 meeting minutes

Announcements of former MfS members deaths– should it continue?

MfS 2017 06 05 QCCIR Annual Report

MfS 2017 06 06a Review of financial activities for 2016

MfS 2017 06 06b BYM Trustees March 2017 meeting minutes

MfS 2017 06 07 Our Faith in the Future

MfS 2017 06 09 Central Nominations Committee review

MfS 2017 06 11a Minutes received from AM's not tabled elsewhere

MfS 2017 06 11b Minutes received from other bodies not tabled elsewhere

MfS 2017 06 12 The Retreat – changes to their constitution

MfS 2017 06 13 Quaker Recognised Bodies

MfS 2017 06 14 Request from The group to review appeals procedures

MfS 2017 06 15 QCEA General Assembly Epistle 2017

n.b. paper MfS 2017 06 10 will be available on the day of the meeting.



Yearly Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends
(Quakers) in Britain

Agenda information

Meeting for Sufferings 3 June 2017

George Fox room, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

	Item	Paper
09.00	Arrivals	
10.00	Session starts	
1	Opening worship	
2	Welcome and introductions	
3	Membership (Tabled paper)	MfS 2017 06 04 (to note)
4	Agenda Adoption and acceptance of the agenda	
5	Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations annual report Stephanie Grant, the QCCIR representative to MfS, will speak to this report.	MfS 2017 06 05 (for information)
11.25	Break	
6	BYM Trustees report Peter Ullathorne, Treasurer of BYM Trustees, will speak to the summary Review of financial activities for 2016 and also to the minutes of the Trustees meeting on 31 March.	MfS 2017 06 06a and 06b (for information)
7	Our Faith in the Future An opportunity to reflect on how Friends locally are using our long-term framework document. Jude Acton (Leeds AM) will speak from the perspective of one area meeting.	MfS 2017 06 07 (for discussion)
12.30	Lunch in the restaurant	

	Informal lunchtime gatherings in the William Penn suite: Come and meet members of QCCIR, and Jude Acton (Leeds AM). BYM Trustees will also be available. The Friends House Library will be open during the lunch break – visitors are very welcome.	
8 14.00	Appointments (Tabled paper)	MfS 2017 06 08 (for approval)
9	Central Nominations Committee Christine Habgood-Coote and Terry Faull will update on the committee's new ways of working	MfS 2017 06 09 (for information)
10	Young Friends General Meeting A representative of YFGM will speak to their report (the paper will be tabled)	MfS 2017 06 10 (for information)
15.00	Break	
11	Minutes received from Area Meetings Thaxted AM minute 2017 03 06 of the meeting held 12 March 2017 regarding concern over sustainability and the Quaker response to the international situation. Kingston & Wandsworth AM minute 17/20 of the meeting held 19 March 2017 and minute 17/05 of the meeting held 22 January 2016, regarding concern over central decision-making processes in Britain Yearly Meeting. Bristol AM Minute of the meeting held 25 March 2017 regarding concern over fracking Minutes received from Other Bodies Minute of a meeting between representatives of Britain Yearly Meeting and Ireland Yearly Meeting held on 6 May 2017 at Quaker House, Dublin.	MfS 2017 06 11a (to note) MfS 2017 06 11b (to note)
12	The Retreat To note changes to the constitution of The Retreat, and therefore release Friends appointed as representatives to the Retreat General Meeting	MfS 2017 06 12 (for approval)
13	Quaker Recognised Bodies To register some further Quaker Recognised Bodies	MfS 2017 06 13 (for approval)
14	Appeals The Group to review appeals procedures has requested its term of service be extended to the end of May 2018.	MfS 2017 06 14 (for approval)
15	QCEA General Assembly Epistle 2017 To receive the Epistle from the Quaker Council for European Affairs General Assembly meeting this April.	MfS 2017 06 15 (for information)
15.45	Closing worship	
16.00	Close. Tea, coffee and departures	

Forward Agenda - May 2017

The following items are currently proposed or being considered by Arrangements Group for meetings in 2017. These plans may change.

Oct '17 (Manchester)	Yearly Meeting 2017 – reflections and follow-up Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) annual report BYM Communications – including our Speaking Out policy
Dec '17	Young People's Participation Day QLCC annual report Meeting of Friends in Wales report General Meeting for Scotland report BYM Sustainability Group review report

Matters expected to return in due course

- **Gender Equality and the Tabular Statement** – sent to Recording Clerk March 2015
- **Pastoral and spiritual support to people who are not able to regularly attend local meetings** – sent to Quaker Life for advice in February 2015
- **Use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain'** - forwarded to BYMT for advice in April 2016 (expected to return in October 2017)
- **Review of the Appeal process** – report from the review group
- **Government sponsorship of Cadet Forces in Scottish State Schools** – forwarded to QPSWCC in October 2016
- **Integrity, accountability and truth in public affairs** – QPSWCC has indicated it is considering this and may wish to come back



Yearly Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends (Quakers) in
Britain

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Held at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

Date 28th April 2017

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group Minutes

Present: Margaret Bryan (convenor), Ursula Fuller, Jane Pearn, Anne Ullathorne Juliet Prager and James Johnson

Prevented: Sue Goodson

1. Welcomes and Introductions

We welcomed James Johnson, the newly appointed assistant to Friends House management team.

2. Reflections on MfS April 2017

i) We noted positive feedback from Meeting for Sufferings Group and discussed ways of communicating to Area Meetings via film clips as well as in written form. We will explore this further.

ii) We agree to review the practice of remembering during ministry past members of Meetings for Sufferings who have died.

3. Clerks' meetings

i) Anne and Margaret met with Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee clerks on 31st March. We discussed the format of the Meeting for Sufferings report to Yearly Meeting Gathering, which includes input from the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group and Britain Yearly Meeting Sustainability Group, and agreed to offer a 'what is Meeting for Sufferings?' session during the week.

ii) Anne attended the Quaker Life Central Committee representative council at Woodbrooke on 21st-23rd April. The theme was 'Helping seekers find Quakers-being worth the finding'.

iii) Paul, Juliet and Anne met with Gillian Ashmore (Area Meeting clerk Kingston and Wandsworth) to discuss the minutes they have sent, which will be taken at our June meeting.

4. Forward Agenda

We have reviewed our forward agenda which informs our planning.

5. Agenda planning for the next meeting

We have planned the agenda for our June meeting.

6. Meeting for Sufferings representatives & alternates

i) We discussed the calling letter for Sufferings representatives and alternates for the next triennium, and agree to send it, with minor alterations, to Area Meetings after Yearly Meeting Gathering.

There has been some review (in 2014) of representatives and alternates, and we will look at this again in September.

7. Further ahead

Manchester: arrangements are in hand.

8. Date and time of next meetings

Monday 4th September, Friday 3rd November

Margaret Bryan

Convenor

Announcement of deaths

Should we continue to read out the names of former members of Meeting for Sufferings who have recently died? Arrangements Group is interested to hear the views of members of Meeting for Sufferings.

Please send any reflections –

- By email – sufferings@quaker.org.uk
- In writing – in the 'feedback' box or to James Johnson at Friends House

What happens now?

In the opening worship of each Meeting for Sufferings, the assistant clerk reads out the names of Friends who previously served as a member of the meeting who have recently died. A minute records the fact that the names have been read out, but not the names themselves.

This practice has been in place since September 2008.

The list of names is compiled by a member of Library staff. The work takes some time, although this does vary: the current staff member reckons it takes between one and two hours per meeting, but in the past it took at least a day's work.

There are some problems with this system:

- The BYM database shows members of Sufferings back to 2000: the list of previous members is in a Word document, but it was copied from the previous printed/handwritten version, which may not have been fully accurate.
- Researching an individual's history can be time-consuming, especially when they've changed names or area/monthly meeting.
- Staff don't necessarily learn of all deaths. They check the small ads in The Friend, and any information sent by local Quakers, but can easily miss names, when information isn't passed on.

Arrangements Group recognises that some Friends find the practice helpful. At the same time, it might be a disproportionate use of staff time, and creates a sort of 'ritual' in our opening worship.

So Arrangements Group is considering different options:

- a) To maintain the practice, as now;
- b) To maintain the practice, but restricted to Friends who have served on Meeting for Sufferings in the current or previous triennium;
- c) To discontinue the practice.

Please let us know what you think.

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations Annual Report to Meeting for Sufferings

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) is a relatively large committee (17 members as at YM 2016) with a rolling membership and a limited allocation of staff time at Friends House. The committee meets for three residential weekends per year. A lot of the work of the committee is done by small groups of committee members who are appointed by the Committee, between meetings. Being aware that we represent three nations (England, Scotland and Wales), in different ways, in relationship to external bodies (especially inter-church bodies), it is the current policy of the committee to meet once in Wales and once in Scotland in each triennium. We also welcome the gift of having a representative from Ireland Yearly Meeting. Grounding all our work in worship, the committee aims to be visible, to be engaged and to communicate on behalf of and within Britain Yearly Meeting.

In June 2016 the committee met in Wales using Cardiff meeting house. We took the opportunity of being in Wales to hear about interfaith and inter-church activity in Wales at the present time. Reverend Sally Thomas, the United Reformed Church's national Ecumenical Officer for Wales and member of the Interfaith Council for Wales and the Churches Forum for Inter Religious Relations joined us for part of our meeting and gave us a full account of the interfaith scene in Wales. Christine Trevett was also with us and offered some statistics about faith groups in Wales and their locations. She was able to comment on Quaker involvement in inter-church and interfaith activities in Wales, which is limited by the lack of sufficient Quaker representatives.

We heard from Rachel Matthews, who is based in Wales, about the Vibrancy project which was then at the stage of recruiting four regional development workers. Rachel encouraged us that we might contribute through our experience of partnership work with churches and other faiths. We have since appointed one of our members as a link person and that link is active.

Most of us worshipped with Cardiff Friends on Sunday morning and those who were able to stay for conversation over a shared lunch.

Our project proposal 'The Changing Face of Faith in Britain' was authorised by Management Meeting for legacy funding in January. This aims to look at the challenges and opportunities for Quakers in Britain today that arise from the growth of 'secular society' with value systems that do not have a religious base.

Management Meeting decided that Britain Yearly Meeting would commission Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre to deliver the work. This method of working is a first for Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) so there is a measure of 'living adventurously' accompanied by a delay due to details needing to be worked out. The research fellowship was advertised by Woodbrooke in early April; hopefully the work will have begun by the time you read this report. We have hopes that initial findings can be disseminated at Yearly Meeting Gathering. Further dissemination opportunities will include our Woodbrooke Conference 16-18 March 2018. All AQMs are encouraged to appoint Friends to

attend this event in order to maximise participation. A different topic - looking at diversity in other faith groups - had been planned for this conference, but sensing a movement of the Spirit we decided to go forward in faith with 'The Changing Face of Faith in Britain'.

A second possible project 'How can we live with diversity?' which might offer a 'tool-kit' to Friends to help them engage with other faith communities is not being taken forward at this time. However, QCCIR does direct Friends to the valuable work of the Interfaith Network for any guidance they might need on interfaith work. We intend to continue to reflect on the issues of terrorism and faith-based violence and the impact in the UK of the Israel-Palestine situation that had led to our developing this proposal.

We hosted two visitors to BYM in May 2016: Billy Kennedy, fourth President of Churches Together in England and Jagbir Jhutti-Johal, Senior Lecturer in Sikh studies at the University of Birmingham, both of whom spoke to well attended lunchtime special interest groups.

Four inter-church/interfaith visitors have agreed to join us at Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017 at the University of Warwick and formal invitations have been sent. The visitors are Bernard Longley, Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham (Sunday); Mehru Fitter, Zoroastrian (Monday); Jatinder Birdi, Sikh and incoming co-chair of the Interfaith Network (Tuesday); Abdullah Sahin, Muslim, University of Warwick. We hope that each guest will have the opportunity to address YM for a few minutes and to speak at one of the afternoon sessions.

Following engagement with Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee we welcomed the suggestion that there may be opportunities to visit other places of worship during the week. A Faith Walk is in preparation for the Wednesday of Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG). We hope that the YMG programme will also include an opportunity to share 'A Spirit Led Church' with Friends. QCCIR anticipate having a stall at the groups fair on Wednesday evening. With so much to offer we are pleased that at least 8 of our number expect to be present.

We held a day conference 'Spirituality and end-of-life' on March 4 at Friargate Meeting House, York. It looked at how other faiths deal with end-of-life issues and addressed the question 'How does your view of death shape your view of life?'

We were disappointed when relatively few AMs appointed representatives to this conference. In general we hope that by having AM reps who then report back to their AMs the issues raised at our conferences are disseminated widely through our Society. We had hoped that hosting an event in York rather than London would make it more accessible for some Friends. In the event, having offered open booking for places, the event was well attended and much appreciated.

The role of QCCIR includes responding to other churches and communities of faith and being aware of what is going on in those communities. Examples of the sort of activity this involves currently include:

- considering the possibility of a response to the World Council of Churches Statement on Religion and Violence issued in June 2016. A small group has been appointed to look at this further.
- noting the possibility that churches in the UK might bid to host the next World Council of Churches General Assembly in 2021 in Glasgow. Having considered some of the possible

implications of this we feel positive about this possibility and expect to support it through Churches Together in Britain & Ireland.

- noticing that 2017 is the 500th anniversary of the beginning the Lutheran Reformation, one of our members has prepared a possible statement of the Quaker position. We have requested other Friends with knowledge of these matters to review the statement and, subject to their comments, suggested that it be sent to Meeting for Sufferings for information; to the Lutheran Council of Great Britain and the Evangelical Lutherans; to the Friends Quarterly for possible publication.

As well as activities that we organise, we are keen to encourage Friends to get involved in inter-church and interfaith activities locally and nationally. The following are examples of this.

A national (even international) inter-church opportunity that came to our attention was 'Thy Kingdom Come' (see <http://www.thykingdom.co.uk/> & <https://vimeo.com/181913904> an initiative of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York taking place from 25 May to 4 June 2017 (Ascension to Pentecost). The call to prayer is expressed in 'Christian' language, but noting the diversity of views and the openness of Friends about the meaning of prayer, and that the initiative encourages individual expression, we felt that this period of prayer would fit well with the local work of Friends in their inter-church relationships. An article was prepared by our clerk and submitted to the Friend for possible publication. The article was also circulated through the QCCIR e-cluster.

On the interfaith front, 2017 saw the third annual 'visit my mosque' day (see <http://www.mcb.org.uk/visitmymosque/>) with mosques all around the country opening their doors on 6 February 2017. Information was shared via the cluster group as soon as it was available, encouraging Friends to take this opportunity to meet their Muslim neighbours and learn a little bit about Islam. Interfaith week from 12 to 19 November 2017 will offer opportunities in most areas to engage with other faith communities at a local level. More information is available at: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/>

Many events are only announced at short notice – any ideas as to how we can get the information to Friends quickly?

Hopefully this report gives a sense of how, in the words of our vision statement:

'Quakers work gladly with other religious, faith, spiritual and human values groups in the pursuit of common goals. QCCIR works to assist this process by reflecting on Quaker insights and values and by entering imaginatively into the life and witness of other faith, spiritual and human values groups to create bonds of friendship and mutual understanding and appreciation.'

Stephanie Grant

QCCIR committee members

Kate Arnot, Kim Ashcroft, Marigold Bentley (Committee Secretary), Douglas Butterfield, Gillian Court, Gethin Evans, Stephanie Grant, Nicola Hoskin-Stone, Marisa Johnson (FWCC-EMES Executive Secretary, Mark Lilley, Rowena Loverance (clerk), Evelyn Shire, Eoin Stephenson, Bessie White, Ben Wood.

Review of financial activities for 2016



Introduction

We would like to thank Friends for financially supporting Quaker work in 2016. It has enabled us to carry out our plans, and respond to leadings. This support, from meetings, individuals and trusts directly connects to our work, and we hope Friends will feel engaged with our operations around the world as well as the support and resources offered to meetings throughout Britain.

Apart from contributions from individuals and Quaker meetings, our income derives from five other principal sources: legacies, grants, the surplus from our trading subsidiary, investment income, and revenue from our charitable activities. Our revenue from all these sources in 2016 was £10.9 million (2015: £11.6 million).

Over the past few years legacy income has varied from less than £1 million to over £5 million; in 2016 the amount totalled £2.3 million (2015: £3.8 million). As explained last year, the Trustees are allocating legacy funds to time limited projects, beyond what is necessary to support our regular work. Since 2014, £3.7 million has been designated for this purpose. Projects using £2.2 million of that have already been approved, and £0.9 million has been spent on them. This leaves a fund of £2.8 million as at 31 December, of which £1.5 million has still to be allocated to new projects.

Most contributions reach us in the last three months of the year. Contributions in 2016 were just over £2.1 million (exceeding the 2015 total slightly, by £114,000). However, this includes a sum of £149,000, which was previously granted as interest-free loans, being converted to outright gifts. Contributions are absolutely necessary for our work, and we continue to stress the need to raise them by £1 million over the next few years to sustain present levels of activity.

In 2016 we continued with our redevelopment of Friends House with refurbishment of the first-floor meeting rooms. This has extended our capacity and ability to generate income. The garden project also concluded, attracting praise from Friends and the wider community for the sympathetic and welcoming environment created.

Friends House (London) Hospitality Limited continues to take opportunities for raising income from conferences, meetings and catering provision at Friends House. The company also manages Swarthmoor Hall at Ulverston in Cumbria and, at the end of 2016, took over the management of the Quaker Bookshop. The company's trading income funds the bulk of the buildings' running costs and, after paying these and its operating costs, a surplus of £816,670 was available as a contribution towards our charitable work, the highest figure achieved in the company's ten-year history.

The market value of our investment portfolio at the end of 2016 was £22.4 million. Despite some investments being liquidated to fund refurbishment work on the first floor at Friends House, the portfolio continues to perform well, with a net gain of £0.9 million. Where the surpluses on investments relate to long-term designated and restricted funds, amounts are allocated to these funds as appropriate to maintain their purchasing power. The investment policy, together with a full listing of our investments as at 31 December 2016, is published on our website at www.quaker.org.uk. We have been working with QPSW staff and others to engage with the issue of tax justice in relation to the companies in which we hold shares. This work is ongoing.

The overall surplus of £1.4 million for the year arose mainly from net gains on listed investments, and the unrealised gains on revaluation of a number of our investment and functional properties. Our general reserves as at 31 December 2016 amount to £10.8 million. The trustees regard this as a reasonable level required for the prudent stewardship of Yearly Meeting affairs. The trustees continue to review the reserves policy to ensure that free reserves are at an appropriate level for future planned activity, linked to an assessment of the risk environment we operate within.

Free reserves

	2016 (£000)	2015 (£000)
Total Funds as per Group balance sheet	58,643	57,235
Exclude:		
Endowment funds	5,590	5,475
Restricted funds	6,257	6,272
Designated funds tied up in fixed and heritage assets	26,888	26,763
Designated funds	9,047	7,540
Subtotal	10,861	11,185

Financial position

The overall position as at 31 December 2016 remains stable, despite the difficulties in the wider economy. Our net current assets (short-term bank deposits, monies owed to us, less monies owed by us and payable within one year) stood at £2.8 million. These should provide a suitable level of cash resources for our activities and enable us to meet the cost of capital projects throughout the year, without the need to reduce our long-term investments to any great extent.

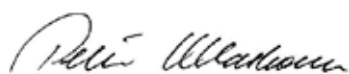
Looking forward

Our financial position at the year-end was sufficient to accommodate fluctuations which may be caused by shortfalls in income or unexpected expenditure in the short- to medium-term. Although the income derived from any single source varies from year to year, the spread of income is sufficiently broad that we can plan our programmes of continuing work with confidence. As ever, we continue to monitor carefully both income and expenditure, and cash requirements.

Support of Friends

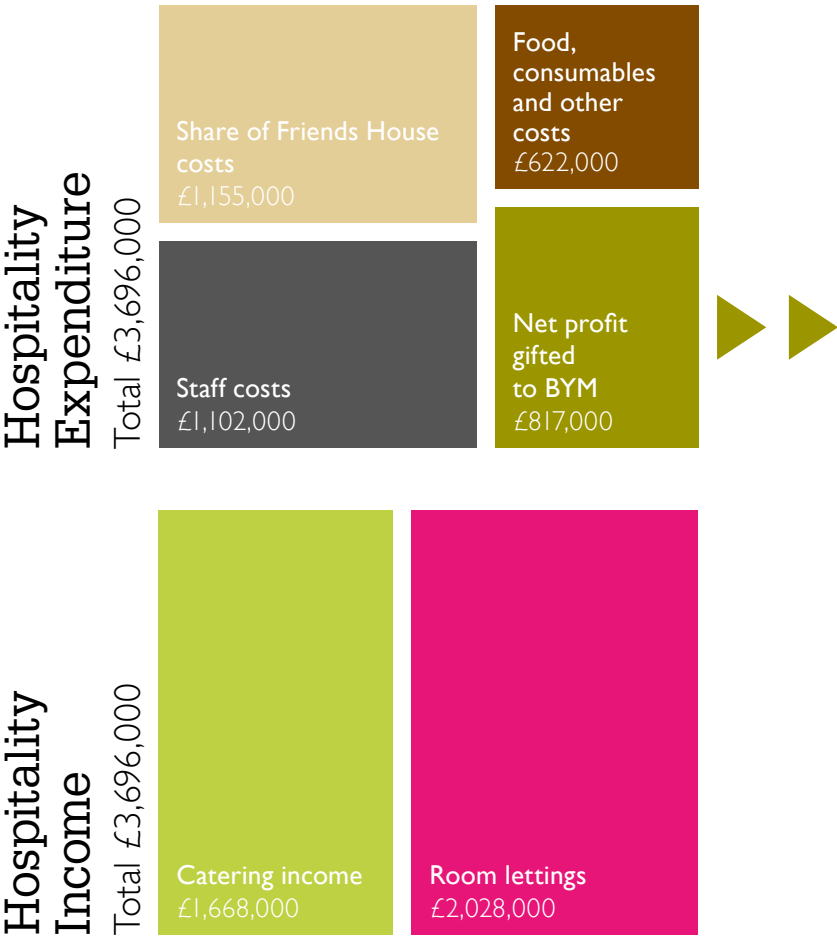
Our work is the result of discernment by many generations of Friends of the priorities for the work in the world that we are called to do. We continue to refine the ways we work, and the needs that we can meet. Meeting for Sufferings, our national representative council, has defined the current broad priorities through its document *Our Faith in the Future*, and the central committees and Trustees supervise this being translated into practice. All our work aims to further the kingdom of God on earth. We continue to believe that regular prayerful giving to support our work is part of our personal Quaker witness, and we look to Friends for financial support of the Society's work in the future as in the past.

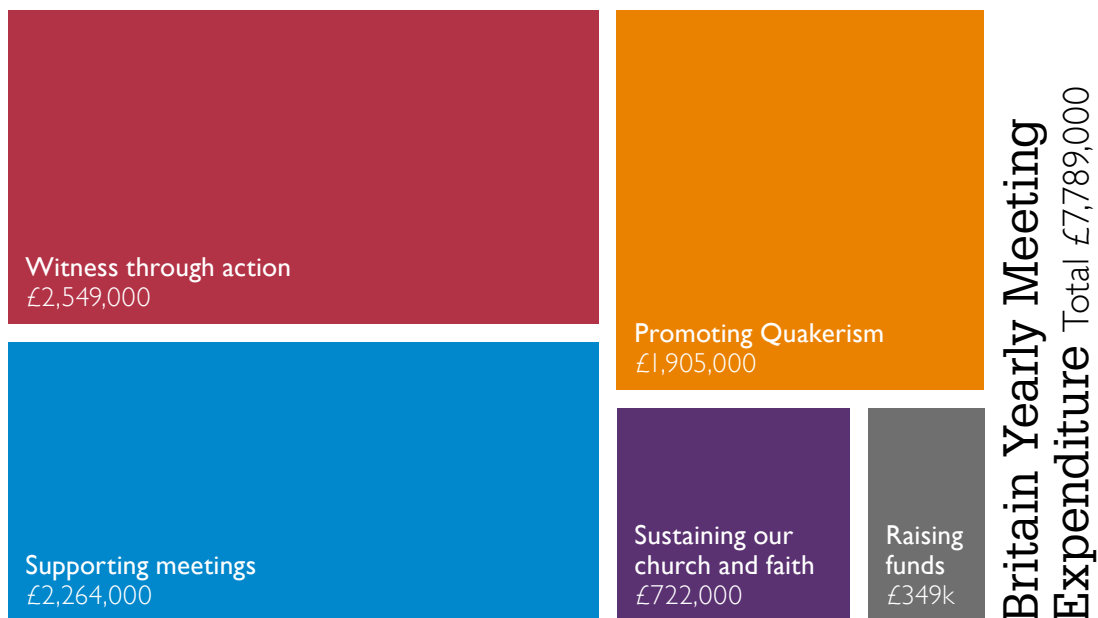
Approved by the Trustees of Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) on 1 April, 2017 and signed on their behalf by:



Peter Ullathorne, Treasurer

2016 financials at a glance





Group assets and liabilities



Average giving by member, by area meeting 2016

£200+	Craven & Keighley AM	Manchester & Warrington AM
	Devon AM	Mid-Thames AM
	East Cheshire AM	North West London AM
	Ipswich & Diss AM	Northamptonshire AM
	Leeds AM	Sussex West AM
£150–200	Cambridgeshire AM	Norfolk & Waveney AM
	Central England AM	North Scotland AM
	Cumberland AM	Oxford & Swindon AM
	East Kent AM	South East Scotland AM
	East Scotland AM	Surrey & Hampshire Border AM
	Hertford & Hitchin AM	West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM
	Kendal & Sedbergh AM	Wirral & Chester AM
	Luton & Leighton AM	Worcestershire & Shropshire AM
£100–150	Bournemouth Coastal AM	North Wales AM / CCR Gogledd Cymru
	Brighouse West Yorkshire AM	Northumbria AM
	Chilterns AM	Pendle Hill AM
	Dorset & South Wiltshire AM	South East London AM
	Gloucestershire AM	South London AM
	Hampshire & Islands AM	South Wales AM / CCR De Cymru
	Lancashire Central & North AM	Southern Marches AM / CCR y Gororau Deheuol
	Leicester AM	Teesdale & Cleveland AM
	London West AM	West Scotland AM
	Mid-Essex AM	West Somerset AM
	North Somerset AM	York AM
£50–100	Banbury & Evesham AM	North London AM
	Bristol AM	Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM
	Central Yorkshire AM	Pickering & Hull AM
	Cornwall AM	Southern East Anglia AM
	Kingston & Wandsworth AM	Staffordshire AM
	Mid-Somerset AM	Thaxted AM
	North East Thames AM	West Weald AM
£0–50	Hardshaw & Mann AM	West Kent AM
	Lincolnshire AM	Sussex East AM
	Mid-Wales AM / CCR Canolbarth Cymru	Swarthmoor (SW Cumbria) AM
	Sheffield & Balby AM	Wensleydale & Swaledale AM

These figures are calculated using membership information from the 2016 tabular statement and all contributions to Britain Yearly Meeting funds received during the 2016 calendar year. Some contributions given via meetings in 2016 but received by us in 2017 are therefore not included in the figures above.



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www.quaker.org.uk

At a meeting of BYM Trustees

Friday 31 March 2017 at Friends House

BYMT-2017-03-01 Trustees' annual report and financial statements 2016

We receive the draft Trustees' annual report and financial statements for 2016 and BYMT Finance & Property Committee minute FP17/16. We note that all the required information is now contained in a single document. We approve this subject to any proofreading corrections required and authorise the Clerk and Treasurer to sign them on our behalf. We send them to Meeting for Sufferings for information, and to Yearly Meeting so that it may accept them.

We authorise the Treasurer to sign the letter of representation to the auditors.

The appointed Trustees, Virginia Pawlyn and David Burnell, have guided preparation of a new document, the Annual Review, which this year will have the title *Our Faith in Action: Quaker work in 2016*. They have encouraged a much shorter, simpler and more accessible document, which informs and encourages Quakers and non-Quakers, donors and volunteers. It uses 'Our Faith in the Future' as the framework and where possible focuses on reporting impact, rather than process. We welcome this publication.

We thank staff and others for their work in producing these documents and record our appreciation of the range and substance of the activities described.

BYMT-2017-03-02 Nominations

We receive the following request for release and nomination from BYMT Nominations Group, which we accept:

BYMT HS2 Monitoring Group (Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd representative)

Release: Val Brittin (Worcestershire & Shropshire)

Appoint: Elizabeth Redfern (Northamptonshire)

BYMT-2017-03-03 Bank account

We have heard that a review of BYM's banking arrangements is in progress.

We agree that should it be necessary to open a current account before our next meeting, we will, exceptionally, arrange to agree a minute by email between meetings to authorise this.

Ingrid Greenhow
Clerk

Our Faith in the Future

Our faith in the future is a word picture of what Quakers in Britain today would like the Society to be like in the future. It is based on contributions from Quakers throughout Britain, and was approved by Meeting for Sufferings in September 2015.

The document is our long-term framework. It intentionally broad and not detailed. This leaves each individual, meeting or committee free to discern where they are today and then decide on what actions they need to take to move their part of Yearly Meeting towards this vision.

We hope Friends in local Meetings are aware of the document, and its purpose. Copies were sent to local and area meetings in early 2016, and there have been opportunities to talk about it at special interest sessions during Yearly Meeting. Copies were provided for members of Sufferings to share locally.

Nearly two years after adopting 'Our Faith in the Future', Meeting for Sufferings has an opportunity to consider how we are moving towards it.

'Our Faith in the Future' is by and for all Quakers in Britain. In the following pages, there is some information about how centrally-managed work supports the aspirations. However, the focus for us at this Meeting for Sufferings is to explore how the document is being used locally.

Some Meetings have used Our Faith in the Future as a framework for exploring their ministry and current priorities. For example, Vibrancy workers are using it to help meetings understand where they are and where the next step might be (they have done this when a need has been found by the meeting rather than as something imposed).

At Meeting for Sufferings we will hear from Jude Acton, who will tell us how Leeds Area Meeting has used 'Our Faith in the Future' to focus its thinking about ministry and resources.

Here are some prompt questions for this session:

- In what ways have we, as representatives, been able to disseminate Our Faith in the Future through our area meetings and committees?
- How are we, in our local and area meetings, using Our Faith in the Future'?
- Have Quaker meetings spent time discerning their current priorities?
- What actions have local and area meetings decided to take as a result?



A future where... Quakers work collaboratively

We are well aware that we can't put the world to rights all by ourselves. We value the important work of others. By engaging with them we are already changing the world. We want to break down barriers; we refuse to prejudice who is or is not an ally.



A future where... Quakers are well known and widely understood

We are active in our local communities, reaching out in friendship, making more use of our meeting houses for events and for renting or lending out. All members are ready and equipped to explain our Quaker way confidently and clearly to anyone who asks, as well as to speak publicly on issues of concern. We share our practices as appropriate and make full use of relevant media to reach out widely. In an increasingly divided world, we try to offer 'patterns and examples' of a caring community.

A future where we let our lives speak.

Our faith in the future is a word picture of what Quakers in Britain today would like the Society to be like in the future; leaving each individual, meeting or committee free to discern where they are today and then decide on what actions they need to take to move their part of the yearly meeting towards this vision.

It is based on contributions from Quakers throughout Britain, and was approved by Meeting for Sufferings in September 2015.

To find out more go to

www.quaker.org.uk/future or ask the clerk of your Quaker meeting.

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Our faith in the future

Facing turbulent times, Quakers in Britain seek a future where...





A future where... **Meeting for worship** **is the bedrock of** **living as a Quaker**

In worship we become one with the Spirit, with each other and with our true selves. The Spirit is the source of strength and guidance for all we are and do. Our way of worship is open to all, and we are making it more widely known.



A future where... **Quaker communities** **are loving, inclusive** **and all-age**

All are heard, valued and supported both in our needs and our leadings. Everyone's contribution is accepted according to their gifts and resources. All are welcomed and included. There are clear and effective ways of working together on shared concerns. Fellowship and fun strengthen the bonds between us, enhancing a loving community.



A future where... **All Friends** **understand and live** **by Quaker discipline**

Our discipline is actually 'Letting go and letting God'; not 'Thou shalt' nor 'I will' but 'What does Love require of us?' It works when we understand it and practise it. Because we understand it, we can share it with others. Our testimony guides us, but we have to work on what it means for each of us personally.



A future where... **Quaker values are** **active in the world**

Our lives speak peace, equality, respect for the earth and all its inhabitants. We offer friendship to all and solidarity to the marginalised. We speak truth to power with love. We hold those in power in the Light. We find creative and nonviolent ways to get our message across. We are in this for the long haul; we're not afraid to take risks. We are called to live in the place where our 'deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet'.

How does centrally-managed work support Our Faith in the Future?

The standing committees appointed by Meeting for Sufferings are required to formulate and present policy for their areas of work in accordance with this long-term framework (Qfp 8.07). They are accountable to BYM Trustees; but they also report to Meeting for Sufferings, and are asked to tell us on what they are doing to help support 'Our Faith in the Future'.

All BYM Trustees are members of Meeting for Sufferings: it is their role to oversee the work of the charity. They recognise and listen carefully to the discernment of Meeting for Sufferings (and Yearly Meeting and the Committees) and ensure that it is followed (Qfp 8.17). They report to Sufferings through their minutes, in person, and through the Annual Report.

Management Meeting (BYM's senior staff team) co-ordinates the management and oversees the implementation of the work of Britain Yearly Meeting. It works to the vision and policies discerned by Meeting for Sufferings (Qfp 8.22).

The Annual Review – Our Faith in Action: Quaker Work in 2016 – highlights ways in which centrally-managed work is supporting Our Faith in the Future.

Staff have reviewed the Operational Plan against the six priority areas of Our Faith in the Future. It is good to report that all the work is taking forward one or more of the areas. We can't list them all in this paper, but here are some of the ways in which centrally-managed work is text here

Meeting for worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker

BYM's role in particular is to:

- Support the right holding of Yearly Meeting (including Yearly Meeting Gathering) and Junior Yearly Meeting
- Support and encourage Quaker meetings for worship wherever possible

Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all-age

At the moment BYM is investing in:

- Supporting Meetings which experience negative effects of conflict
- Strengthening the Children and Young People's Team through an internship programme
- A Young Adult Engagement Officer
- The Vibrancy in Meetings pilot programme

All Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline

Quaker discipline – our faith and practice – informs all of our work. We aim to help Quakers in Britain understand and live by Quaker discipline, through:

- Training and support for Quaker role-holders (often provided in partnership with Woodbrooke) – including clerks, treasurers, trustees, elders and overseers
- The bookshop which disseminates information about Quaker faith and practice
- Information and resources for enquirers, Quakers and partners which are clear and accessible
- Being Friends Together, a resource to help Meetings learn and grow together

Quaker values are active in the world

This aspiration underpins all of our work for peace and social justice. Our faith informs how we speak out, and our encouragement to Quakers during elections. Currently, overseen by Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC), BYM works in different ways, focusing on:

- Campaigning against war and for disarmament
- Peace education
- Support for peacebuilding and peace builders, internationally
- Training for nonviolent social change
- Advocating social justice in Britain – housing and homelessness; crime and community justice; and forced migration
- Promoting sustainability
- Developing economic justice based on equality and environmental sustainability

Quakers work collaboratively

BYM has many active and effective partnerships, including with:

Quaker organisations in Britain

- Woodbrooke - formal shared projects (Being Friends Together, Vibrancy in Meetings and the Joint Libraries Development project); commissions (for example, Woodbrooke conducts research and trains staff for BYM); and as a venue for many events.
- Young Friends General Meeting – a joint internship

Quakers around the world

- Friends World Committee for Consultation – a joint sustainability project

Other faith groups and NGOs

- The World Council of Churches, and 16 churches and NGOs in Britain and Ireland – we co-ordinate the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) in Britain and Ireland on their behalf
- British peace organisations – where we place peaceworkers every year
- Housing Justice – which hosts a BYM intern
- Douglas House Project – supporting ex-offenders through placements at Friends House

Schools

- Helping schools to deliver peace education

Quakers are well known and widely understood

BYM's current priorities are:

- Accessible information about Quakers and Quaker work, available in different forms: on our website, via social media and in print
- Providing outreach materials for Meetings to use locally
- A presence at the Hay and Greenbelt Festivals
- Dialogue with government - elected representatives and civil servants – in Scotland, Westminster
- Promoting Quakers in the mass media
- Support for Quaker dialogue in the European Union and United Nations
- Events for children and young people growing up in Quaker families

Report to Meeting for Sufferings on the first year of the new terms of reference for Central nominations Committee

The new terms of reference for Central Nominations Committee were agreed by Yearly Meeting in session in May 2016. Some of the changes will be implemented gradually but for practical reasons some have immediately been put into effect. Reviewing the key proposals of the review we are able to make some comments but would ask that Meeting for Sufferings be aware that CNC is constantly reviewing the effect of every change:

The number serving directly on CNC Committee to be reduced to fifteen members, plus Clerking Team of two. Due to requests for early release the size of CNC dropped more quickly than anticipated and now stands at 13 plus two co-clerks. These mid-term requests to be released have been due to:

- Changed personal circumstances
- Friends' difficulties balancing their responsibilities in their Local and Area Meetings alongside the work of CNC
- Considerable workload required of CNC members

CNC meetings to be more reflective, with greater stress on observation, scrutinising process, evaluation and reporting. CNC meetings since June 2016 have been carried out with this in mind. The task of searching for a name to be undertaken to search groups of 2-4 Friends.

Search groups are now usually 3 CNC members, sometimes including a fourth from the "pool". Search groups to include, alongside CNC members, Friends not currently serving on CNC, drawn from a larger pool. It has been more difficult than anticipated to find Friends to serve as a "pool". Most of the Friends completing their term of service on CNC were relieved to do so, and did not wish to undertake any further searches. Friends without experience of central nominations practice have found it difficult to engage in the task, though it has been very useful to have insights into the ways of working of the committee for which names are sought.

Search Groups empowered to carry out meaningful discernment of names themselves, outside CNC meetings. Search groups have changed their ways of working so that they now usually bring to CNC one name for each position. Those Friends being recommended have already indicated that, if approached, they will be willing to serve. The discernment of names is time-consuming and we are recognising that we need to allow more time between setting up a search group and expecting it to report to CNC.

Search groups to normally contact potential nominees directly, listening to and nurturing their journeys. Search group members develop a clear understanding of the role they are discussing and they have taken great care over these conversations. It is our early impression that this more personal approach is valued by the Friends being approached and we hope that their experience will be that they feel as if their gifts are being identified and valued.

The search groups find ways of working which suit them, whilst not ignoring opportunities such as telephone conferencing and Skype. It will take time to identify the best ways for search groups to undertake their discernment. The co-clerks are of the view that we should experiment with allowing time during the day meetings of CNC for search groups to spend time in face-to-face discussion.

A wider range of routes available to be chosen by search groups for finding names, varying according to each role – such as advertising. We are using a number of ways to identify Friends whose names could be considered, including reviewing and searching the Quaker Service Information forms, using our own local contacts, and accessing the networks of Friends with particular interests. Using QSIFs alone is insufficient.

A communications sub-group to be appointed from within CNC to ensure clarity of communication with the wider Society, and to nurture the relationship with those Friends on the QSIF database. The work of our sub-group is ongoing. We are aware that CNC needs to work closely with the other BYM nominating groups, the secretaries of those groups and Friends House communications staff. Our subgroup continues to work on ways to highlight to individual Friends and to LM/AM nominations committees the opportunities for central service and this will require further consideration by CNC.

The role of Supporting Friend to be more clearly defined on the Quaker Service Information Form, with alternative routes to the same information. We have yet to address this issue but we are aware that the role needs clarification.

No necessity for the historical overlap in membership with MfS, and MfS to take on responsibility for internal appointments apart from Arrangements Committee. Appointment to CNC is a matter for YM nominating group. MfS internal appointments are no longer attended to by CNC.

CNC to be encouraged to be open and brave in challenging itself and the rest of YM to face difficult truths and fears, bringing these into the light. 2016 has been a challenging year for CNC. Whilst much of our focus has been inward-facing as we adjust to new ways of working, we do anticipate that in due course we may find it appropriate to comment to Britain Yearly Meeting about the challenges we face in finding Friends to undertake our work:

- Helping younger Friends, those with disabilities, those in paid employment or with other commitments identify and use their gifts
- Finding a balance between the need to serve local and area meetings whilst also using Friends' gifts in BYM central work
- Supporting Friends so that they do not become over-burdened by the tasks we ask them to undertake

CNC has been very well supported by Friends House staff, who are looking for ways they can provide more support to CNC members with the large number of nominations required.

Central Nominations Committee
May 2017

AM minutes received

Thaxted AM Minute 2017 03 06 from the meeting held 12 March 2017 regarding concern over sustainability and the Quaker response to the international situation.

Kingston & Wandsworth AM Minute from the meeting held 19 March 2017 regarding concern over a letter received from the clerk of MfS.

Bristol AM Minute from the meeting held 25 March 2017 regarding concern over fracking.

Minute of Thaxted AM held on 12 March 2017

2017 03 06 Report of Meeting for Sufferings

Angela Pivac has reported on the Meeting for Sufferings held on 6 February 2017.

Sustainability

We ask our members and attenders and our local Meeting communities to continue to consider ways for making our AM a low carbon, sustainable community.

Response to international situation.

Our representative has reminded us of the minute from MfS as regards the international situation. The statement has been circulated and was well received by our Local Meetings and wider faith groups.

We encourage MfS to be bold in making timely statements. We send this minute to MfS.

Gill Parker
Clerk to Thaxted Area Meeting

Additional note:

Arrangements Group hope the Meeting will welcome this encouragement from Thaxted AM.

Minute of Kingston and Wandsworth AM held on 19 March 2017

17/20 Response to our January minute 17/05

Our clerk has received the attached letter from the Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings explaining why she has not placed our minute 17/05 before Meeting for Sufferings.

We appreciate the work being done by Meeting for Sufferings to improve communication with area meetings and will seek ourselves to better inform ourselves of its business and to support our representatives before their meetings.

However, we do not feel that the letter addressed Meeting for Suffering's responsibility to set priorities for the centrally –managed work and to create a long term plan. This is not a matter of supporting area meeting concerns item by item or just of responding to central committees but of setting the overall balance of activities over the long term.

We ask our clerks to speak to the Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings and for this and minute 17/05 to be considered by Meeting for Sufferings in session.

We send this part- minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Gillian Ashmore Clerk

Additional note:

The following pages contain:

- A minute of Kingston and Wandsworth AM held in January (17/05) which Arrangements Group considered and did not include in the agenda
- the letter sent to the AM by the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, responding to the minute and explaining Arrangements Group's decision.

Anne Ullathorne (clerk of Meeting for Sufferings) Paul Parker (Recording Clerk) and Juliet Prager (Deputy Recording Clerk) have met with Gillian Ashmore (clerk of Kingston and Wandsworth AM) to talk about the concerns expressed by the AM and how to take this forward. Anne and Paul have offered to visit the AM, to listen further and to talk about how the issues raised can be addressed. By the time Meeting for Sufferings meets, the AM will have been able to consider this offer.

Minute of Kingston & Wandsworth AM held on 22 January 2017

17/05 Central decision-making processes in Britain Yearly Meeting: a cause for concern?

In our minute 16/85 we noted as a vital characteristic of our Society the wide participation of Friends in the central work. This is expressed in the complex structures of Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings, trustees, central and other committees.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings, as the link between members and the central work, to consider how best to strengthen the connection and hence the quality of their discernment. A short paper to all meetings which explains the various roles in a simple way would be a welcome start.

We are reminded that when the Yearly Meeting set up the current arrangements in 2006 it considered the elements now in Qf&p 7.03 to be 'critical'. For the structure to work as designed, each part has to fulfil its responsibilities, including area meetings. This Area meeting does not see that Meeting for Sufferings is effectively fulfilling two particular responsibilities in Qf&p, that is:

“ to set the priorities for the centrally managed work in its long-term plan, which would interpret the wishes of the Yearly Meeting and the concerns of the area meetings, taking into account its knowledge of the detailed aspirations and plans of the central and other standing committees, the advice of the Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and the funds available.” (Qf&p 7.05a)

And

“to foster communication throughout the Yearly Meeting.”

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to gather itself and be more active and energetic in carrying out these responsibilities, continuing to consult widely in whatever way seems best, so that the membership, through Meeting for Sufferings, can clearly set the priorities as foreseen in Qf&p. We ask for senior staff support to enable that process.

We forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Gillian Ashmore, Clerk
Kingston and Wandsworth Area Meeting

Letter from the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings to the clerk of Kingston and Wandsworth AM

16 March 2017

Dear Gillian Ashmore

Thank you very much for forwarding minute 17/05 of Kingston and Wandsworth Area Meeting, held on 22nd January 2017, regarding central decision-making processes in BYM.

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group met this week, to plan our next agenda, including considering minutes sent by Area Meetings.

Arrangements Group is very grateful to Kingston and Wandsworth AM for its consideration of Meeting for Sufferings, and its ways of working. Meeting for Sufferings has a pivotal role within our yearly meeting structures, and it is always good to know that Quakers locally are interested in Sufferings as a body, and in the work it does.

Your Area Meeting has encouraged Meeting for Sufferings to be more active and energetic in carrying out its responsibilities. I hope the AM will be reassured to know that Arrangements Group, and perhaps particularly the clerks, are always mindful of the responsibilities laid on the meeting, and seeking ways to ensure they're carried out actively and energetically. In fact at our last meeting (on 4th February just two weeks after your Area Meeting), Meeting for Sufferings approved its 2016 annual report which does address how we have met the responsibilities laid upon us.

Following this we spent time, both in Home Groups and in plenary, on a 'mid-triennium check-in'. We reflected on how Meeting for Sufferings is working; reminded ourselves of the purpose of Meeting for Sufferings; considered practicalities; and asked ourselves what we might do better. Representatives were posed with two questions: Are we doing the things that Meeting for Sufferings is asked to do? And secondly, what would help us to do this better? These questions resonate with Kingston and Wandsworth AM's request that Meeting for Sufferings 'gather itself and be more active and energetic in carrying out these responsibilities.'

The minute records that Friends were able to articulate how Meeting for Sufferings is broadly fulfilling many of the requirements of Quaker faith and practice Chapter 7 Section 2. We also noted that representatives feel the work of Meeting for Sufferings would be improved by stronger engagement by Area Meetings and Local Meetings; and that we need to keep working on our understanding of the processes within Britain Yearly Meeting (authority, communication etc.). (The relevant minute, if you'd like to refer to it in full, is MfS/17/02/10 – you can find it on the BYM website, www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes)

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group was asked to take these, and other matters, forward. Some changes will include: referring specifically, after each meeting, to which function Meeting for Sufferings has addressed (from the list in Qfp section 7.2); monitoring whether there are gaps; and improving the reports presented by central and standing committees, so that they facilitate genuine dialogue.

Arrangements Group also reflected on the two particular responsibilities highlighted in your minute, which your AM feels Meeting for Sufferings is not doing well.

1). Regarding the requirement to set the priorities for centrally-managed work, we wonder whether some Friends have assumed that this function (Qfp section 7.02.a) requires an annual 'all-or-nothing' decision, setting priorities which are then handed to Trustees. If so, I hope it will be helpful for them to know that we see this as a continual process: with Meeting for Sufferings constantly testing emerging and current concerns, and engaging with the bodies which have been delegated to take forward particular areas of work by our Yearly Meeting.

Concerns can emerge from Area Meetings, central and standing committees, or BYM Trustees. This hasn't always worked well, but we continue to work towards open, constructive engagement.

A good recent example Meeting for Sufferings setting priorities for the church as a whole is our concern for refugees and asylum seekers. Several AMs sent minutes; and strong minutes from Meeting for Sufferings have influenced QPSWCC's discernment. Last year, Meeting for Sufferings explicitly discouraged QPSWCC from pursuing one proposal, but sent the message that something was needed; we now have a Forced Migration development project. I know London Quakers have been working hard on this issue (I believe fairly closely with Tim Gee, the Forced Migration Programme Developer). It's been heartening to see how this issue is moving forward, with parallel and inter-connected work locally and nationally.

Of course, another part of this incremental process takes place when Area Meetings send minutes of their local concern and Meeting for Sufferings discerns that further central action is not the right way forward but may still encourage local Friends in their work.

Kingston and Wandsworth AM will also be aware of the document 'Our Faith in the Future' which was adopted as a vision for Quakers in Britain, in September 2015 by Meeting for Sufferings, following extensive consultation with all Area meetings. All our central committees are looking at the balance of their work in the context of this vision and indeed the 2017 operational plan, agreed by trustees and shared with Meeting for Sufferings, has been prepared in alignment with this aspiration.

2) Your minute also highlights the importance of fostering communication throughout the Yearly Meeting (Qfp section 7.2.i). This is also something we work hard on. Last year, Meeting for Sufferings described itself as a hub and we endeavour to encourage all sorts of networking between Quakers in all parts of Britain. The need for good communication underpinned our 'Meeting for Sufferings Roadshows' in 2014 and 2015, and questions about how to make it work better were raised by Friends at each of the events. We provide guidance for representatives, to help them share their AMs' concerns with Meeting for Sufferings, and Meeting for Sufferings' concerns with Friends in their AMs. When circulating the minutes, I send a follow-up letter, written to help representatives bring matters back to their AMs.

Agenda papers are circulated two weeks before every meeting. We're aware that the timing and frequency of some Area Meetings and committees mean it usually isn't possible for them to consider Meeting for Sufferings agenda items in advance. At least one AM deals with this by having an open 'support group' for the representative and alternate, and we

gather this has really helped both the representative and the AM generally to be better informed.

I do hope that these explanations will enable Kingston and Wandsworth AM to appreciate what work Meeting for Sufferings is already doing and

So, although the clerks feel strengthened and heartened by your encouragement, we don't feel that bringing the minute to Meeting for Sufferings at this time would be a particularly helpful way to address Kingston and Wandsworth's concerns. I hope that your representative and alternate will be able to update the Area Meeting about how Meeting for Sufferings continues to work in the future.

Peace be with you.

Anne Ullathorne
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

Minute of Bristol Area Meeting held on 25 March 2017

17/34 Conference on Fracking and Divestment from Fossil Fuels

This Area Meeting conference was held earlier today. We were informed by the two speakers, Louise Somerville and Nikki Jones, of the urgent need to prevent fracking and to pursue divestment from fossil fuels. We were encouraged to hear of the early divestment by Britain Yearly Meeting and the recent decision by Bristol University to divest. We were all encouraged to look at ways in which we can personally divest and encourage others to do so. There is a lot we can do locally in choosing what we buy, how we use energy and ways of working with others.

We fully support the February 2017 minute of Meeting for Sufferings on the dangers of fracking and the need to pursue energy solutions which do not contribute to climate change.

Heather Lister
Clerk

Additional note:

Arrangements Group hopes Meeting for Sufferings will welcome this news about how one AM is taking forward a concern which was considered by Meeting for Sufferings. The minute could be forwarded for information to Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC).

AM minutes received

Kingston & Wandsworth AM Minute from the meeting held 21 May 2017 regarding concern over a letter received from the clerk of MfS.

Minute of Kingston and Wandsworth AM held on 21 May 2017

(b) Response to our January and March minutes 17/05 and 17/20 b)

Our clerk has reported on her meeting with the Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, the Recording clerk and Deputy Recording Clerk to discuss the role of Meeting for Sufferings in setting priorities for the central work and associated matters as set out in Quaker faith and practice (7.02a). We have heard that Our Faith in the Future is proving a valuable stimulus to new work and we welcome that but it does not address the question of who sets priorities for the central work.

We welcome the clerks' offer to come and talk with the whole AM but feel the imperative is not a further meeting here but rather that Meeting for Sufferings should grasp the nettle and fulfil its governance responsibilities by re-establishing its proactive work in setting, reviewing and reporting on overall priorities from time to time on behalf of members throughout Britain.

We are glad that our previous minutes have now been circulated to MfS and understand that this minute will be tabled on June 3rd.

We also welcome and accept the MfS Clerk's offer for KWAM to send both the representative and the alternate in recognition of Joan Bulmer's role on the MfS support group.

We send this minute to the clerk of MfS.

Gillian Ashmore Clerk

Minutes received from other Bodies

Britain Yearly Meeting and Ireland Yearly Meeting

Background

Each year, Meeting for Sufferings appoints two representatives to Ireland Yearly Meeting (IYM), and approves a letter to be sent by the clerk to IYM. In February 2014, a joint meeting was held in London to consider forming a closer relationship between the two YMs – and the minute recorded was received by Meeting for Sufferings. In early May a similar meeting was held in Dublin; this is the minute recorded.

Minute of a meeting between representatives of Britain Yearly Meeting and Ireland Yearly Meeting held on 6 May 2017 at Quaker House Dublin

Present: E Heather Bewley, clerk Ireland YM; Rachel Bewley-Bateman, clerk Dublin MM; Rosemary Castagner, recording clerk, Ireland YM; Clodagh Davis, assistant clerk Ireland YM; Denise Gabuzda, clerk Ireland YM Purposes & Priorities Working Group; Ingrid Greenhow, clerk, Britain YM Trustees; Bairbre Nic Aongusa, assistant clerk Ireland YM; Paul Parker, recording clerk, Britain YM; Patricia Quigley, treasurer Ireland YM; Deborah Rowlands, clerk Britain YM; Anne Ullathorne, clerk Britain YM Meeting for Sufferings; Peter Ullathorne, treasurer Britain YM

Prevented: William D Haire, incoming assistant clerk Ireland YM; Rachel Kirk Smith, clerk Ireland YM Committee

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness, and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand. [Isaac Penington]

We have met together as representatives of our two neighbouring yearly meetings to worship together, share our experiences of the life of our Quaker communities, explore common issues and support one another. Our meeting has been both spiritually nourishing and practically helpful for us in the roles we hold. In talking with one another about our experience of Quaker service we have come to recognise the importance of sharing with others in our community the joy which comes from service.

Our discussions have been wide ranging; we have discovered much common ground and many concerns which are shared across our two yearly meetings. In considering the life of our Quaker meetings, we have shared a sense of the importance of finding ways to be open and welcoming to all, including families with young children, and young adults. Both our yearly meetings are grappling with what membership means today, and how to support attenders in their journey.

We have shared our experiences of working across multiple jurisdictions – national and international – and the importance of remaining true to our Quaker principles and values in our interactions with the state. Our experiences of working with state bodies to allow Quaker work to continue, whether in our governance structures, our marriages, or our support and welcome for newcomers to our countries. In our worship we have been aware of the witness of many Friends, such as the meeting for worship the same day on Pendle Hill to protest against fracking for shale

gas in that area, a reminder of our yearly meetings' shared commitment to protecting our environment and society from the effects of climate change.

We reaffirm that we are a single Quaker community even as national and international governments and institutions change around us, and commit to maintaining good contacts with one another and working together to witness for peace in this time of change. We affirm once again the value of meeting one another face to face from time to time, hoping that another meeting can take place in early 2019.

The Retreat

Introduction

Following changes to the constitution of The Retreat, Meeting for Sufferings is asked to release the people appointed as representatives to the Retreat General Meeting.

This is because the Retreat has changed its Company articles and laid down its General Meeting.

As well as the information set out in this paper, The Retreat has also sent a minute of The Retreat (York) Extraordinary General Meeting held on 24 November 2016, regarding amendments to the Company Articles of Association; and a copy of the new Articles of Association (27 pages). Copies are available on request – please contact James Johnson, by email jamesj@quaker.org.uk or phone 0207 663 1190.

Background

The Retreat is an independent, charitable and not-for-profit provider of specialist mental health care, based in York. It was established by Quakers over 200 years ago.

www.theretreatyork.org.uk

In the past, Meeting for Sufferings appointed some representatives to the Retreat's General Meeting, and in recent years has received a report from The Retreat every three years. The last report came in 2014, when Meeting for Sufferings was made aware that a governance review was underway and that changes to governance were anticipated (minute MfS 2014/12/11).

Changes to the constitution of The Retreat

Following the governance review, The Retreat has changed its constitution. Jennifer Barraclough, clerk of the Retreat, has written to explain the changes.

1. The Retreat Company Articles

Changes to governance at The Retreat have been under consideration since 2014 and a decision was made to proceed at the company AGM last June. There has been a long-standing arrangement for Meeting for Sufferings and other Quaker bodies to appoint Quaker governors at the Retreat, who latterly – since 2001 – were Members of The Retreat York company. This requirement has now been removed in the interests of simplifying governance and clarifying lines of accountability.

Amendments to the company Articles of Association, which are the primary governing document, were adopted at a specially convened EGM on 24 November 2016. I enclose a copy of the minute recording this decision and the revised company Articles for reference purposes.

2. Laying down of The Retreat General Meeting

One consequence of the amendments is that appointments by Meeting for Sufferings of company Members are no longer required. The Retreat General Meeting has been laid down and those Friends who Meeting for Sufferings appointed as Members can now be released. Trustee Directors wish to place on record our deep appreciation to all Friends who, over the years, have served The Retreat as Members or governors. A few Friends have agreed to continue in a voluntary capacity where there are specific responsibilities, and we are grateful to them for that.

Jennifer Barraclough has also confirmed Friends will be welcome to attend the Company Annual General Meeting. She writes:

In a spirit of openness as part of our commitment to maintaining The Retreat as a Quaker body, Trustee Directors have decided that in future the notice of the company AGM will be placed in The Friend to advertise the date and time. The public part of the meeting will be open to anyone to attend, to hear reports and receive the annual review. This invitation is not limited to the former Members though, of course, they will be most welcome.

Strengthening Friends' concern for mental health

The Retreat is keen to support moves to establish a Quaker Forum on Mental Health. This will be much more than a reconstituted General Meeting, with a very different remit to progress Friends' concerns on mental health issues nationally. A planning group has been formed that includes some former Members of The Retreat and proposals will be available for Friends in July at Yearly Meeting gathering. The inaugural meeting is provisionally fixed for Saturday, 9 December 2017 at Friargate Meeting House, York.

Quaker Recognised Body

Finally, Trustee Directors of The Retreat have confirmed their wish to continue to use the Quaker name and it is their intention to progress with registering The Retreat as a Quaker Recognised Body. This is dealt with in a separate agenda item.

Juliet Prager
Deputy Recording Clerk
May 2017

Quaker Recognised Bodies

Request for recognition

We bring forward proposals from the following organisations to become Quaker Recognised Bodies.

1. The China Group
2. Friends Historical Society
3. Quaker Esperanto Society / Kvakera Esperantisto-Societo
4. Quaker Universalist Group (QUG)
5. The Retreat
6. Northern Friends Peace Board
7. Friends with Jewish Connections

Groups 1-6 are listed in the 2016 Book of Meetings as listed informal groups or affiliated organisations. Friends with Jewish Connections has formed more recently, and as such is not in the Book of Meetings, so should be considered as an emerging group.

Staff have looked at the documentation provided by each of the 7 organisations and consider that the criteria for listing them as Quaker Recognised Bodies have been met.

The notes below give some of the details that have been included in the completed applications.

The China Group

Constitution: The China Interest Group has a formal constitution and is formally registered as a charity, number 1079096. The constitution has been supplied.

Governance: the group is administered and managed in accordance with the constitution by the steering group

Type of Group: External

Foundation: group established 02/02/1993. The China group was part of the Asia Committee of QPS for many years, and when this central work was laid down, an independent China group was formed with a wider membership.

Aims: to support the development of education in China and to be a place of sharing of interest in knowledge of China among Quakers and others

Publications and activities: the group meets twice a year to share information and foster friendships

Membership: Approx. 35, and any member or attender of BYM may join

Finance: For 2016- income £280, expenditure £1070 (to reduce reserves)

Winding up: Para 13 of constitution – remaining funds will be transferred to a group or charitable institution with similar aims to the China Group.

Archives: Documents kept by Ruth Baker on history of the group

Current contact details: Ruth Baker (group convener), Ludwell, Faringdon Road, Abingdon, OXON, OX14 1BQ

Email: ruthvbaker@btinternet.com

Phone: 01235 520447

Website: n/a

Staff link: Helen Drewery, Head of Witness and Worship

Friends Historical Society

Constitution: The Friends Historical Society have a governing document, which they have provided us with

Governance: the group is administered and managed in accordance with the governance document by the executive committee

Type of Group: Free-standing

Foundation: 1903

Aims: To promote the study of Quaker history and to further the religious beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends through an understanding of its history

Publications and activities: Journal published annually. Newsletter usually twice a year. Usually two regional meetings a year when papers are read. Annual AGM with presidential address.

Membership: approx. size of group 250

Finance: Expenditure approximately £5000 per annum. Reserves are held to facilitate special projects when expenditure would increase.

Winding up: as stated under number 16 in the governing document

Archives: Journals including back copies are held at Friends House Library. Journal is digitalised and available to the public.

Current contact details: Howard F Gregg (Clerk), 6 Kenlay Close, New Earswick, York, YO32 4DW

Email: h-fg@hotmail.co.uk Phone: 01904 750 366

Website: www.f-h-s.org.uk

Staff link: Libby Adams, Head of Library and Archives.

Quaker Esperanto Society / Kvakera Esperanto-Societo

Constitution: A formal constitution has been agreed.

Governance: There will be at least three curators at any time, namely the Treasurer and two others. The curators are responsible for the activities of KES and its finances. Anyone appointed to serve KES in any capacity should be a member of the Religious Society of Friends and should also be competent in Esperanto. If necessary the curators have the right to ask anyone so appointed who is not functioning to the required standard to relinquish their appointment.

Type of Group: Freestanding

Foundation: 1921

Aims: i) To inform Esperanto speakers about the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and to forward the aims of Quakers throughout the world through the use of Esperanto, through correspondence, literature, gatherings and meetings. ii) To encourage the use of Esperanto amongst Quakers.

Publications and activities: Various publications have been published in Esperanto. Members of the group aim to meet up during meetings of the International Congress of Esperanto.

Membership: About 20

Finance: The group has a UK bank account. There are minimal transactions on it.

Winding up: No specific provision.

Archives: The Library in Friends House has some publications in Esperanto

Current contact details: Peter Bolwell, 19 Priory Close, Hastings, East Sussex TN34 1UJ
piffkin@gmail.com

Website: www.noos.ch/kes/index.php?pg=0&lg=en

Staff link: Marleen Schepers, Secretary to Quaker World Relations Committee

Quaker Universalist Group (QUG)

Constitution: There is no written constitution. There is an agreed governance structure.

Governance: There is an annual general meeting held at its annual conference, open to all who attend the conference. This receives reports on the previous year from officers on the committee. There is a QUG committee which usually meets four times per year – at present there are 11 members of the committee.

Type of Group: Free-standing

Foundation: 1979

Aims: To delight in the diversity of spiritual awareness. The Quaker Universalist Group believes that spiritual awareness is accessible to everyone of any religion or none, and no one person and no one faith has the final revelation or monopoly of truth. Such awareness may be expressed in many different ways. We delight in this diversity. (See Quaker faith & practice Fifth Edition 27.04)

Publications and activities: Since 1979 it has published 36 pamphlets and 3 books. An annual conference is held in Woodbrooke (in 2016, 68 people attended and a similar number are due to attend in May this year); The journal Universalist is published three times per year; and a newsletter is sent by email and post to over 500 people c. 4 times per year.

Membership: 180 members, and 502 people receive the newsletter

Finance: Annual budget c. £16000, reserves of c. £10000.

Winding up: passing assets to the Society of Friends

Archives: At least one copy of each publication is kept in hard copy by the Publications Editor. All the pamphlets are placed on the website when the hard copies are sold out (at present 27 pamphlets are on the website)

Current contact details: Anthony Philpott, 2 Willow Rise, Haddenham, Aylesbury, HP17 8JR

Email: contact@qug.org.uk tel: 01844 292 664

Website: <http://qug.org.uk/>

Staff link: Alistair Fuller, Head of Ministry and Outreach

The Retreat

Constitution: The Retreat has a formal constitution and is registered as a charity, number 1089826.

Governance: Its governance arrangements are set out in its Articles of Association, and the charity is currently governed by a board of 7 Trustees

Type of Group: External

Foundation: 1796

Aims: To relieve suffering from mental illness. The Retreat is a not-for-profit provider of specialist mental health services, working closely with the NHS to provide services for people with complex and challenging needs in an open, calming environment designed to enable recovery and independence.

Publications and activities: main activities revolve around the day-to-day service provisions and operations at The Retreat. The group also maintain a blog and participate in research

Membership: n/a

Finance: income £11.9m, expenditure £12.0m (2015 figures)

Winding up: As set out in the Articles of Association

Archives: The directors shall comply with the requirements of the Act as to maintaining a members' register, keeping financial records and the audit or examination of accounts

Current contact details: Rob Griffiths (Deputy Clerk), The Retreat, Heslington Road, York, YO10 5BN info@theretreatyork.org.uk

Website: www.theretreatyork.org.uk/

Staff link: Oliver Waterhouse, Quaker Life Network Development Officer

Northern Friends Peace Board (NFBP)

Constitution: The Northern Friends Peace Board has a formal constitution, which was last reviewed in 1999.

Governance: Each member area meeting is able to appoint up to two representatives, and the board can also invite others to serve. There is also an executive committee which consists of office holders and between three to eight additional members.

Type of Group: A registered charity in Scotland SC 024632

Foundation: 1913 following a peace conference of Northern Quarterly Meetings.

Aims: Northern Friends Peace Board was set up with the following remit, which remains our core purpose: "To advise and encourage Friends in the North, and through them their fellow Christians and citizens generally, in the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth"

The area of operation covered by the Board shall be primarily that covered by the Area Meetings of Britain Yearly Meeting in Scotland, North Wales and Northern England.

Publications and activities: The NFPB organises workshops, conferences, acts of witness and promote a wide range of other peace action, networking and learning. Newsletters, email lists and website are used publish information for Friends and others. NFPB produces occasional other printed written and audio-visual material, both on its own and with other Quaker and non-Quaker bodies.

Membership: 60 members – representatives of Area Meetings in the North, with some co-opted Friends and representatives from YFGM and QPSW.

Finance: NFPB appoints a treasurer and it has a bank account. Its accounts are published on its website. The Core of NFPB's funding comes from Area Meetings in the North, with some individual donations and grant funding for specific projects. Funds arising from legacies have been invested in an ethical portfolio, generating additional income. Budgeted expenditure for 2017 is £61,500.

Winding up: The constitution makes provision for winding up the Board, including the distribution of any remaining funds.

Archives: Records archived with West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds.

Current contact details: Philip Austin, Northern Friends Peace Board, Victoria Hall, Knowsley Street, Bolton, BL1 2AS 01204 382330 nfpb@gn.apc.org

Website: www.nfpb.org.uk

Staff link: Marigold Bentley, Head of Peace Programmes

Emerging Groups

Friends with Jewish Connections

Constitution: None

Governance: Informal, notes are made of meetings held.

Type of Group: Emerging

Foundation: 2014

Aims: To provide support to members and attenders who have Jewish connections as they discern how they can best help Quaker/Jewish dialogue.

Publications and activities: Have had meetings of the group and have been in contact with Marigold Bentley and other BYM staff.

Membership: 25

Finance: The group has no finances, members pay for their own participation.

Winding up: None

Archives: The convener has notes of meetings and activities.

Current contact details: Convener: Harvey Gillman, Cherry Tree House, 28 Military Road, Rye TN31 7NY harveygillman@gmail.com

Website: none

Staff link: Marigold Bentley, Head of Peace Programmes

Group to review appeals procedures – extension of term of service

Last July, on the recommendation of Church Government Advisory Group, Meeting for Sufferings set up a group to review our appeals procedures (as set out in as described in sections 4.25 and 4.26 of Quaker faith & practice) – minute MfS/16/07/11. According to the Terms of Reference (also agreed in July 2016) the members are ‘initially be appointed to serve until the end of 2017’.

Members of the Group were appointed in December 2016, to serve from 1 December 2016 until 31 December 2017. Having started, they have realised they will need longer to complete the task, and have asked for the term of service to be extended.

The members are: Val Ferguson (Oxford and Swindon AM); Michael Hutchinson (West Scotland AM); Beryl Milner (Leeds AM); Michael Phipps (Chilterns AM).

Minute 3 of a meeting of the Group to review appeals procedures, held at Friends House on 19 April 2017: Request for extension of time.

We have assessed the scale of our task and outlined the time we will need to fulfil it.

We foresee bringing an initial report to Meeting for Sufferings in December 2017, and a final report in April 2018.

We therefore ask Meeting for Sufferings to extend our term of service from end December 2017 to end May 2018.

We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Beryl Milner, Clerk
Michael S Booth, Secretary

Epistle of QCEA General Assembly April 2017

Introduction

Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), based in Brussels, is an independent Quaker organisation working to bring a Quaker vision of just relationships to European institutions - www.qcea.org.

Last December Elaine Green, our representative to QCEA, reported to Meeting for Sufferings on recent changes to QCEA's governance structure (MfS/16/12/08). It was agreed then that BYM should have a second representative, and Joshua Habgood-Coote was appointed in April. QCEA's General Assembly met in April, and for the first time has sent an epistle.

Epistle of QCEA General Assembly April 2017

To all Friends everywhere

We met in Brussels on 7-8 April 2017 as the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA's) General Assembly of European Yearly Meeting representatives. Building on forty years of experience and support from Yearly Meetings, this was our first gathering since we changed our constitution and direction last October. This new era for QCEA comes just at the right time to live out our witness in newly focused workstreams of peace and human rights, giving a new context to Quaker traditions of advocacy, quiet diplomacy, bridge-building and networking across Europe.

As we complete our transition programme, we have confidence and hope that by this new approach we can really make an effective contribution to peacebuilding and dialogue in present-day Europe. With our staff, we have found the courage to continue speaking with decision-makers who have approaches profoundly at odds with our own and find new ways to move away from militarised solutions. In 2017, QCEA will also be examining immigration detention, in particular by shining a light on detention of children in Europe.

We are developing a comprehensive strategic plan which underpins the programme of work for our staff team, and hope to finalise that at our October meeting this year. We believe we are better able to articulate what QCEA does and is inspired to achieve. In our discernment on our funding and financial planning, we see the need to identify additional new funding sources, and we reach out enthusiastically to Friends everywhere to sponsor our project work in whatever way they feel they can.

We received and considered documents from two organisations: a declaration from a conference on faith and peace held in Croatia, and the draft Quaker response to the Conference of European Churches' open letter on the future of Europe.

We look forward to engaging with the wider family of Friends at this year's QCEA Study Tour of European institutions (24 June–1 July), as well as our events with Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (9-11 February 2018) and our conference with Quaker Peace & Social Witness in Brussels on 1-3 December 2017, entitled Sanctuary Everywhere (see www.qcea.org/events).

In and on behalf of QCEA General Assembly

Oliver Robertson
Clerk