



Yearly Meeting of
the Religious Society
of Friends in Britain

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

18 March 2016

Meeting for Sufferings will be held on Saturday 2 April 2016

Dear Friends,

When we meet in April we will hear from our Trustees, and then spend the rest of the morning considering the Call to Equality/Living out our Faith/Quaker Values active in the world (all related, but phrases coming out of the 2015 YM minute/YM three year arch/Our Faith in the Future).

Thank you to those of you who either completed the questionnaire we circulated or passed it on to someone else in your Area Meeting to complete. As you will see, in just two weeks we received over 100 responses, from 48 AMs. This has provided a lot of information, which we have tried to summarise in the papers. It will also feed in to some of the YM planning.

As you will see from the papers, as well as the detail of the individual stories we are hoping to look at the bigger picture and have posed some fairly broad questions - I'm sure it will aid our discernment if you have the chance to reflect on these questions, in advance of the meeting! I'm not expecting us to be able to come up with definitive answers, but hope that the process of considering them will help inform our future discernment on issues, and can also feed back into Area Meetings.

During the lunch break there will be an opportunity to meet with Trustees and with members of Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC), and also some form of networking around witness and the issues raised in the morning.

In the afternoon we will hear from QWRC about their work. This will include receiving a minute on Sustainability from the Friends World Committee for Consultation World Plenary Meeting held in January in Peru, and noting the letter of greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting.

We will end the day receiving various minutes from Area Meetings, central committees and working groups.

Some of these are particularly relevant to our main topic for this meeting. We may not spend much time on the specific issues, as several need to be forwarded to other bodies for information or asking for advice – but it's helpful to see some of the concerns which continue to exercise Friends throughout our Yearly Meeting.

Yours in Friendship

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ethel Livermore". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Ethel" and last name "Livermore" clearly distinguishable.

Ethel Livermore,
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

News and Views/Practicalities

MfS Forward Agenda

MfS Arrangements Group minutes 2016 10 22

MfS 2016 04 03 Court and Prison register

MfS 2016 04 04a BYM Trustees Minutes from their February 2016 meeting

MfS 2016 04 04b Review of financial activities for 2015 summary

MfS 2016 04 05 Call to Equality/Living out our Faith paper

MfS 2016 04 07 QWRC Annual Report

MfS 2016 04 08 QWRC Separated Minute and FWCC World Plenary meeting
minute on sustainability

MfS 2016 04 09 Britain YM Letter of Greeting to Ireland YM 2016

MfS 2016 04 10a Minutes from Area Meetings not taken elsewhere.

MfS 2016 04 10b Minutes from Central Committees and other bodies not taken
elsewhere.

Meeting for Sufferings

2 April 2016

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



Agenda

09:00 Arrivals

10:00 Session starts
Opening Worship

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Membership
(MfS 2016 04 02 – tabled paper)
Adoption and acceptance of the agenda

3. Court and Prison register
(MfS 2016 04 03)

4. Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees report
Ingrid Greenhow, clerk of BYM Trustees, and Peter Ullathorne, BYM Treasurer, will speak to the minutes of the BYM Trustees meeting held on 19-21 February and to the summary review of financial activities for 2015.
(MfS 2016 04 04a and b)

Break

5. Living out our faith
An opportunity to help shape our current calling and priorities.
(MfS 2016 04 05)

12.45 – 14.00 Lunch in the Restaurant
Informal lunchtime gatherings (details and venues to be announced):
- Meet the Trustees
- Meet the Quaker World Relations Committee clerk
- Living out our faith: clusters

6. Appointments
(MfS 2016 04 06 – tabled paper)

7. Quaker World Relations Committee
Anne Bennett, clerk of Quaker World Relations Committee, will speak to the committee's Annual Report.
(MfS 2016 04 07)

8. FWCC International Representatives Meeting World Plenary Minute on sustainability

To receive the International Representatives Meeting minute **IRM 16-20 Sustainability: Living Sustainably and Sustaining Life on Earth.**
(MfS 2016 04 08)

9. Letter of greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting

To note the letter of greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting 2016.
(MfS 2016 04 09)

Break

10. Minutes sent to MfS from Area Meetings, Central Committees and other bodies not taken elsewhere:

Area Meeting Minutes (MfS 2016 04 10a)

Cambridgeshire AM minute 15.11.77 from the AM held on 12 November 2015 regarding the use of the phrase Quakers in Britain by the Communications Department at Friends House. Also attached is a response from Paul Parker, Recording Clerk.

Cornwall AM minute 7a from the AM held on 9 March 2013 regarding decriminalising the drug-user. Also attached is a briefing paper from Cornwall AM regarding the decriminalisation of the possession for personal use of all drugs.

North West London AM minute 16/07 from the AM held on 13 January 2016, and **Ipswich & Diss AM minute 5/16** from the AM held on 23 January 2016, both regarding the UK's arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

Dorset and South Wiltshire AM minute 16.18.2 from the AM held on 13th March 2016 regarding conscientious objection to military taxation.

Central Committee Minutes (MfS 2016 04 10b)

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee minute QPSWCC 15/121 from the meeting held over the weekend of 20 – 22 November 2015 regarding Crime, Community & Justice. Also attached is a copy of the revised paper 'Vision for a criminal justice system'

BYM Sustainability Group minute 8 from the meeting held on 13 November 2015 regarding **Wensleydale & Swaledale AM minute 15/20** from the AM held on 8 March 2015 regarding sustainability & new energy technologies.

16:00 Close
 Tea, coffee and departures

News & views – April 2016

The newsletter of the MfS Support Group

Welcome Friends, to the fifth meeting of this triennium.

Please remember that the Support Group is here to help and to act as Meeting for Sufferings Elders and Overseers during our Meeting for Worship for Business. We welcome any comments and enquiries and you will know us by our yellow-topped name badges.

Ipad? computer? Please use these for agenda documents only because...

Right ordering and the use of electronic devices

The Quaker business method is a discipline in which **all present should be focusing on worship and discernment of the matter at hand.** Any activity that detracts from the focus on Meeting for Sufferings is not compatible with our business method. This includes activities such as knitting and unsuitable use of electronic devices. Friends are increasingly using electronic devices to access Meeting for Sufferings documents, and this is to be encouraged as it reduces the need for printing. Resist the temptation to check or post to social networking sites or emails during sessions and endeavour to **ensure that your use of such devices does not disturb your neighbours.**

Contacting us

Ann Banks, (Convenor) Brighouse West Yorkshire AM - annbanks101@gmail.com

Sylvia Boyes, Craven & Keighley AM - robinandsylvia@aol.com

Joan Bulmer, Kingston & Wandsworth AM - bulmer.leapfrog@ntlworld.com

Debbie Cates, Cambridgeshire AM - debzcates@hotmail.co.uk

Judith Mason, Banbury & Evesham AM - judithmason@talktalk.net

Angela Pivac, Thaxted AM - angelapivac@gmail.com

Gillian Turner, South London AM - gillianturner033@gmail.com

- You will find members of the Support Group at the welcome desk, (where the name badges are laid out for collection), until 9.50am. They will be looking for volunteer microphone stewards, as usual.
- Other members of the Group will be collating the extra papers at a table in the landing by the George Fox room – you will also find spare copies of the mailed papers – and hole-punches, staplers and expense forms there.
- Two of the group will be in Elizabeth Fry 1 (up to 9.50 am), and are always glad to meet with other members of Meeting for Sufferings, especially if this is your first time.

Staying overnight? Please join us for a meal!

Usually, on the Friday evening before Sufferings, a few of us go out for a meal, such as an Italian or a curry, and we would welcome extra company if any Friends would care to join us.

We meet in the Friends House Lobby at about 6.45 pm. If you want to find out more, please contact one of the Support Group members

During the meeting

You will see that some of us sit in the front row, to the right (as we face it) of the clerks' table. This is the nearest thing we have to an "elders' bench".

At Meeting for Sufferings we start our Opening Worship by gathering in silence, so that the worship starts as soon as the first Friend settles down. After 10:00, any Friends who arrive late will be able to worship in the Margaret Fell room until the doorkeepers open the doors of the George Fox room to admit any latecomers at 10:30.

We trust that Friends will continue to work to strengthen the discipline of our meetings; we remind ourselves of the useful advice in *Quaker faith & practice* 3.01 to 3.11. We recognise that there is little time during the day to socialise, but nevertheless ask that shuffle breaks are for shuffling not chatting; paper rustling is kept to a minimum; and conversation in the Large Meeting House at lunchtime ceases 5 minutes before the session begins so that we are worshipping together when the clerks enter.

Practicalities

As usual, you will be asked to register for the meeting in advance. Please visit forms.quaker.org.uk/sufferings and input your details. This will help us make sure the correct badges are available, provide sufficient refreshments as well as checking all members of Meeting for Sufferings are represented. When you arrive and collect your badge, if you have not registered online please 'sign in' by ticking your name on the sheet.

For this meeting, we are in the George Fox room which is on the Second Floor – South wing of Friends House. We have the William Penn Suite for the refreshment room which is on the Second Floor – North, and on the north side of the landing from the George Fox room. The cloakroom will be in Elizabeth Fry 2 which is at the end of the Second floor – South wing corridor.

The Support Group will be based in Elizabeth Fry 1 which is the penultimate room on the Second Floor – South wing on both Friday and Saturday.

The restaurant in the Basement will be open at lunchtime as usual to buy hot food and the Quaker Centre Café on the Ground Floor – North wing will also be open along with the Bookshop. Please be aware that the restaurant is currently 'meat free', only vegetarian or vegan food will be available. Meat or fish sandwiches will still be available from the café.

Access to Friends House for MfS on 2 April

Due to the ongoing work in the Friends House garden, the Side (Garden) Entrance to Friends House **will be open for emergency access/egress only** on Saturday 2 April. The main portico (Large Meeting House) entrance on Euston Road will be used as the main reception.

Step free access will be provided via the Endsleigh Gardens entrance. There is a small lip at that entrance so it's not completely flat. There is an intercom at the Endsleigh Gardens entrance which goes straight to the reception desk. Reception will then open the entrance door remotely. If required, a member of the reception team will come to assist anyone that requires it. They can then use the back lift to get up to the Ground Floor or directly to the Second Floor if required.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused, this will only be a temporary measure. The work on Friends House garden is due to be completed in mid-April.

Wi-Fi at Friends House

The best Wi-Fi for you to use is the FH Conferencing Wi-Fi. The code for this is **@BritishQuakers**

Hampstead meeting Bed & Breakfast scheme

Members of Hampstead Meeting offer Bed and Breakfast for Friends attending Meeting for Sufferings. They charge £15, which covers costs and also contributes to Meeting funds.

For more information please contact Mary Barnes by telephone 0207 485 3850 or marybarneslineone@btinternet.com

Agenda mailing

Volunteers are always needed to help with the Meeting for Sufferings agenda mailing.

We would appreciate any offers of help in preparing the Meeting for Sufferings agenda mailings (collating and envelope-stuffing) on mornings of the following Fridays (all travel expenses are paid and a free three course lunch in the Restaurant is provided):

17 June 2016

16 September 2016

If you are within easy reach of Friends House and would like to offer some help, please contact Graham Spackman on grahams@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1021.

MfS 2016 04 Additional information

Meeting for Sufferings Forward Agenda (2016)

Arrangements Group hopes members will find it helpful to know that the following items are currently proposed or being considered by Arrangements Group for remaining meetings in 2016. It is possible that these plans will change.

April	Living out our faith: Follow-up from Yearly Meeting 2014 (with particular reference to YM2015 minute 36) and preparation for Yearly Meeting 2016 Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) report (following the International Representative Meeting in Peru, January 2016) Trustees: financial report
July	Reflections following Yearly Meeting Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) report Appointment of Meeting for Sufferings clerks 2017
September	Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) report
December	Young People's Participation Day Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) report Quaker Housing Trust (QHT) report Reports from other European YMs

Matters expected to return in due course

- **Gender Equality and the Tabular Statement** – sent to Recording Clerk March 2015
- **Memorial meetings for reconciliation** – sent to QCCIR for advice in July 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
- **Asylum Seekers: destitution** – sent to QPSWCC in March 2015
- **Quaker Recognised Bodies** (changes to Quaker faith and practice) – sent to Church Government Advisory Group in December 2015

Other items to be timetabled

- **Vibrancy in Meetings** – an introduction from the national co-ordinator
- **Quaker Recognised Bodies** – approval of proposals

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Minutes of Meeting on 22nd February 2016

Present: Ursula Fuller, Sue Goodson, Ethel Livermore, Jane Pearn, Anne Ullathorne (convenor), and Juliet Prager.

1. Reflections on MfS held on 6th February 2016

We have reflected on the meeting held in February and have heard that representatives were pleased to have had more time to reflect and to feel that there was more space within the meeting.

Some Home Groups were lively but this was not reflected in the plenary after lunch. We may need more direction in terms of appointing facilitators and having feedback rather than an open plenary. The focus was on using Our Faith in the Future in our local meetings and we hope that representatives will help with this; the task of moving forward is hard and we may have needed more time. We will return to this at a future meeting.

We are also concerned about reports of individual representatives not adhering to discipline within the meeting and in particular by using electronic devices inappropriately. We ask the Support Group to do more to encourage proper attention to the Meeting for Worship for Business.

2. Forward agenda

We have considered the forward agenda which helps our planning.

3. Yearly Meeting 2016

We have heard details of the timing of sessions at YM in May 2016. There will be a preparation session on Saturday afternoon and the annual report will be received by the YM in session later in that same afternoon. We have also heard that MSAG have been invited to a Threshing Meeting in November to consider issues to come to YM after 2017. A purpose of this is to make sure that the agendas are aligned.

4. Agenda planning for Meeting for Sufferings on 2nd April 2016

We have considered the items due to come before MfS in April and have planned the agenda.

Anne Ullathorne
Convenor

Court & Prison Register

Introduction

Meeting for Sufferings was established in 1676, to consider the sufferings of Quakers. The practice of recording Friends' names in the 'Great book of Sufferings' eventually lapsed; but in 1997 Meeting for Sufferings revived the practice of maintaining a register of Friends before the courts or imprisoned for matters of conscience.

In December 2015 and again in February, Meeting for Sufferings recorded entries in the Court and Prison Register regarding Sam Sender (London West AM). On 24 February 2016 Sam Sender was given a six weeks' custodial sentence, suspended for 12 months, plus 120 hours' community service.

On the same day, BYM issued a notice regarding the sentence (copied below).

The minute from London West AM (below) was sent to Sufferings before sentencing.

Meeting for Sufferings may wish to make a further entry in the Register.

Minute 2016/30 of London West AM held in February 2016

2016/30 Witness and court appearance

We have received minute 16/3 from Hammersmith LM and minute 14/2016 from Ealing LM informing us of the anticipated sentencing of our Friend Sam Sender for taking part in Plane Stupid protests.

Hammersmith Meeting: 16/3 Sam Sender and others sentencing

'Friends are concerned at the disproportionate anticipated sentence to be handed down to the PLANE STUPID demonstrators, including our Friend Sam Sender. We invite Friends to attend the sentencing on February 24, 2016, at Willesden Magistrates Court to show our support for Sam and his fellow protesters. We also wish to bring our concerns about Sam to the notice of Area Meeting in the hope that they can be forwarded to Meeting for Sufferings.

We hold Sam and his family, Wendy, Peter and Kate in the Light'.

Ealing Meeting: 14/2016 Heathrow 13 - Minutes of support and preparation for action

MfS met on 6 Feb. They updated their court and prison register, recording the verdict and that sentencing was expected take place on 24 Feb. They minuted that they were holding our Friend Sam Sender in the Light.

We have heard the minute made last week by Hammersmith Local Business Meeting, as follows. [here follows the text of minute 16/3 as above]

We have been surprised to learn that the PLANE STUPID activists, including Sam, have been told to expect custodial sentences, never before given for aggravated trespass, an offence under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994. We know they acted out of deeply held conviction that air pollution from air travel is damaging to the planet, injurious to many and fatal to some. Sam's action is consistent with our yearly meeting's commitment to becoming a low carbon community for the sake of environmental sustainability.

If Area Meeting is so minded it could invite Meeting for Sufferings to consider the situation the activists are in and to respond.

Once the sentencing is known we at Ealing Meeting can make known our corporate objection as Quakers to moves such as airport expansion that add to air pollution and climate chaos.

We will take our banner to the demonstration of support for the activists planned at 9am at Willesden Magistrates Court before sentencing on 24 February'.

We believe Sam Sender's witness to be in line with our testimony and, in particular, BYM's concern for climate change. Airport expansion is likely to make it impossible for the UK to meet its commitments on climate change.

We echo the minutes from Ealing and Hammersmith and encourage Friends who are able to attend the demonstration ahead of the sentencing of the protestors at 9.00 AM on 24th March at Willesden Magistrate's Court. Those attending are encouraged to wear something red.

Our Clerk will forward information about 24th February to LM clerks to forward to Friends. Ealing LM has set up an e mail address through which the latest details can be obtained. Send a blank email to feb24@ealingquakers.org.uk to receive updates.

We are concerned that the judge has suggested that she will impose a custodial sentence and costs. We consider such a sentence to be disproportionate.

We note that Plane Stupid is seeking funding to pay legal costs and that donations can be made through their web site.

We hold the protestors and the judge in the light.

We uphold Sam and his family. We are pleased to know that, should Sam be imprisoned, our chaplain at Wormwood Scrubs will continue the contact with Sam that has already started.

We forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings and ask that, should a custodial sentence be imposed, Meeting for Sufferings should consider responding on behalf of BYM.

BYM Statement, 24/02/2016

Sentenced for following conscience in Plane Stupid action

Quaker activist Sam Sender of Ealing Quaker Meeting said he had been following his conscience when he protested against the expansion of Heathrow Airport.

He was given a six weeks sentence, suspended for 12 months, plus 120 hours' community service, at Willesden Magistrates Court on Wednesday 24 February. He is one of thirteen activists found guilty of aggravated trespass and entering a security restricted area at Heathrow airport during an action carried out by members of the independent grassroots pressure group, Plane Stupid.

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk for Quakers in Britain, said

"The Quaker community has a long tradition of supporting members who feel impelled by their faith to break the law. We uphold Sam Sender whom we know to be acting from personal conviction.

"His action is consistent with the commitment of British Quakers to become a low-carbon community for the sake of environmental sustainability. Quakers' representative body recorded his name in their court and prison register; we are praying for Sam Sender and his family."

Quakers turn to Quaker faith & practice for advice. Advice 35 says this: 'Respect the laws of the state but first let your loyalty be to God's purposes. If you feel impelled by strong conviction to break the law, search your conscience deeply. Ask your meeting for prayerful support which will give you strength as a right way becomes clear.'

At a meeting of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Held Friday 19 to Saturday 20 February 2016 at Friends House

Present: David Burnell, Sarah Donaldson, James Eddington, Nick Francis (Assistant Clerk), Ingrid Greenhow (Clerk), Alison Ironside, Roy Love, Lynn Moseley, David Olver, Virginia Pawlyn, Steve Pullan, Alastair Reid (except minute 06), Tim Southall, Graham Taylor, Peter Ullathorne (Treasurer), Chris Willmore, Elaine Green, Clerk BYM Trustees Employment Committee (Minutes 01-05), Charlotte Seymour-Smith, Clerk Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee, (Minutes 07-08), members of Quaker Life Central Committee for minute 21-25, (Jocelyn Burnell (Acting Clerk), Douglas Butterfield (Acting Assistant Clerk) , Barbara Davey, Jeffrey Dean, Isobel Dunbar, Jane Harries, Iain Law, Linda Murgatroyd, Rupert Price, Emma Roberts, Lizzie Rosewood, Roy Stephenson)

In attendance: Helen Drewery, General Secretary Quaker Peace and Social Witness, (minutes 01-05, 07- and 21-25); Paul Grey, Head of Facilities, (minutes 01-12), Lisa Kiew, General Secretary Quaker Finance & Property, (minutes 01-16); Ric Moore, HR & Training Manager, (minutes 01-05) Paul Parker, Recording Clerk; (except minute 20); Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk, (except minutes 05 and 20), Richard Summers, General Secretary, Quaker Life, Simon Best, Head of Learning, Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Alistair Fuller, Howard Nurden, Michael Booth and Libby Adams (all minutes 21-25)

BYMT-2016-02-01 Welcome, agenda check, conflicts of interest check, minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2015 have been signed by the clerk and placed in the minute book.

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest.

We confirm our agenda.

We welcome our new Trustees: David Burnell, Steve Pullan and Chris Willmore to this meeting.

We welcome Elaine Green, Clerk of BYMT Employment Committee, to our meeting.

We will be attending Richard Summers' farewell tea this afternoon. We ask Alastair Reid to attend Richard's farewell meeting for worship at 3 pm. We will be joining with Quaker Life Central Committee for supper tonight, a session on Saturday morning and for lunch on Saturday.

Part of "Being Together: our corporate life in the Religious Society of Friends" by Margaret Heathfield (1994) was read during our opening worship.

BYMT-2016-02-02 Consent agenda

We record the receipt of the following:

- Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd minutes 25-26 November 2016
(**BYMT-2016-02-03a**)

- Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations minutes 29-31 January 2016 (**BYMT-2016-02-03b**)
- Woodbrooke Trustees minute **2015.62** “Vibrancy in Meetings initiative” (**BYMT-2016-02-03c**)
- Meeting for Sufferings minute **MfS/15/12/07** “*Quaker faith & practice: draft amendments*” (**BYMT-2016-02-03d**)
- Operational Plan: status update (**BYMT-2016-002-03e**)

BYMT-2016-02-03 Recording Clerk’s report

We receive the report of the Recording Clerk (**BYMT-2016-02-04**) covering:

- Overview
- News and updates (Scottish Advocacy project, Centenary of the ‘conscience clause’, High Speed 2 and Crossrail 2, Submissions to Parliament, Goddard inquiry, Yearly Meeting 2016, Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017, Vibrancy in Meetings, Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine/Israel)
- Strategy developments (Communications strategy, Communication & Services departmental review, Leadership & management, Quaker Life strategic review)
- Staff matters (Management Meeting changes, Changes in Quaker Life and QPSW, Being a Quaker workplace: All-staff conference and survey, Zero-hours contracts, Objections to taxation for military purposes)
- Relationships with other organisations (Leaveners, Quaker Centres, Quaker Schools, Association of Church Accountants & Treasurers, General Meeting for Scotland & Meeting of Friends in Wales, Grant-making trusts)
- Visits

Appendices to the Recording Clerk’s report were: Scottish Advocacy Project end of year review, confidential staffing update, Vibrancy in Meetings update, Communications strategy development overview, draft Britain Yearly Meeting managers’ commitment, draft Quaker Life strategy statement.

Since our last meeting we have received the minutes of Management Meeting for their meetings on 24 November, 8 December, 12 and 26 January and their away days on 9 & 10 February.

BYMT-2016-02-04 Report of Clerks’ and Trustees’ activities since last meeting

We have received the report of Clerks’ and Trustees’ activities since last meeting (**BYMT-2016-02-05**).

BYMT-2016-02-05 Employment Committee

- (a) Minutes of Employment Committee meeting
We receive the minutes of the meeting of BYMT Employment Committee held 4 December 2015 (**BYMT-2016-02-06a**).
- (b) Employment Committee annual report
We receive the annual report of BYMT Employment Committee covering the reporting period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (**BYMT-2016-02-06b**).

Elaine Green has reported that the committee is moving towards holding 3 meetings a year. We are encouraged to hear that communication with staff has improved considerably over the last 12 months.

We thank Elaine Green for her report and Employment Committee for their work.

BYMT-2106-02-06 Supporting area meetings with property

We receive a clear report arising from initial scoping enquiries on improving property support for meetings (**BYMT-2016-02-07**), written by Sarah Griffith, RCO Project Developer.

The paper supplies a clear outline of the problems surrounding property support, and advice for Area Meetings and Local Meetings which is not readily identifiable or comprehensive.

Various bodies provide help, but the question before us is whether BYM should offer much more focused advice, drawing on regionally identified professional expertise as required.

We have offered guidance on how to pursue these proposals, and our Recording Clerk, our Finance Secretary and our Head of Facilities have taken notes on how to carry these ideas forward.

We look forward to receiving a further report at our next meeting and we ask our Recording Clerk to consult further with Quaker Stewardship Committee.

BYMT-2016-02-07 Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

We are joined by Charlotte Seymour Smith (Clerk to Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee).

(a) Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee Annual report

We receive the annual report of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (**BYMT-2016-02-08a**).

(b) Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee: planning and monitoring

We receive Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee minute **QPSWCC 15/111** "Planning and Monitoring" (**BYMT-2016-02-08b**).

The annual report covers the wide range of activities in the areas of peace and economic and social justice carried out by QPSW in Britain and abroad. We are pleased to hear that the new approach to legacy funding is having a positive impact and that the committee is focusing on growing programmes where the work is deemed to benefit more than proportionately from the extra resources. We have been reminded of the difficulty in trying to balance immediate concerns against long-term commitments. We are encouraged to hear of the committee's work to engage more directly with Friends and Meetings and across programme and departmental boundaries.

Progress is being made in QPSWCC's strategic planning work and we hope that this work will be aligned with the areas laid out in Our Faith in the Future. QPSWCC works in a context of three nations and devolution may have implications for their planning.

We agree to the request for information about the operational planning cycle and the Trustees' work plan for 2016 and ask the Recording Clerk to send this to QPSWCC.

We thank our staff in QPSW for their hard work on our behalf and QPSWCC for this informative report.

BYMT-2016-02-08 Quaker United Nations Office Geneva: review

We receive **BYMT-2016-02-09** covering the review report of Quaker United Nations Office Geneva (QUNO), Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee minute **QPSWCC 15/92**, and the staff and committee response to the report. We warmly welcome the report, and are glad to know of the positive impact of the financial contribution made by BYM.

Most of the recommendations made by the reviewers are for consideration by the Quaker United Nations Committee, but we note the one for our attention is about the level of our annual grant to QUNO.

We refer this to our Finance and Property Committee for their consideration and advice in co-operation with our staff and QUNO.

BYMT-2016-02-09 QPSW Grants Group

(a) Fund Finances

We receive QPSW Grants Group minute **GG15/43 "Fund Finances"** which includes fund balances as at 30 September 2015 (**BYMT-2016-02-10a**).

In November 2014 QPSW Grants Group noted their understanding that in the future the staffing and administrative costs would not be removed from individual funds for which it was responsible. It asks for clarification from ourselves and our Finance & Property Committee. We ask our Finance and Property Committee to provide the necessary clarification to the QPSW Grants Group.

(b) QPSW Grants Group report to Trustees

We receive QPSW Grants Group minute **GG15/50b** which is their report to us (**BYMT-2016-02-10b**).

BYMT-2016-02-10 Quaker Meeting Houses Heritage Project: report

We receive a report from our clerk who is also clerk to the Quaker Meeting Houses Heritage Project (**BYMT-2016-02-11**), and Minute **QSC 2016 02 05** Property Support for information.

We are glad to hear of the positive response the implementing consultants are having from the Area Meetings they have visited and are impressed at the progress being made, plus the various associated activities which have arisen as a result of the project.

We look forward to the final report, which is expected at the end of this year.

BYMT-2016-02-11 Health and safety policy: update

We receive a paper on the revised health and safety policy (**BYMT-2016-02-12**) covering the work done and still to be done following the recommendations laid out in the health and safety audit, and we approve the revised Health and Safety Statement of Intent and the revised Roles and Responsibilities with the addition of “and volunteers” in the heading of section 6.

We note that the Statement should be signed annually by the Clerk of Trustees.

BYMT-2016-02-12 Swarthmoor Hall: outreach and spiritual activities

Further to minutes **BYMT/13/10/8** and **BYMT-2014-05/06-04**, we receive a report on the outreach and spiritual activities taking place at Swarthmoor Hall (**BYMT-2016-02-13**).

It is sent to us for forwarding to Quaker Life Central Committee who are asked, if felt appropriate, to offer guidance on the future direction of the spiritual activities.

We are pleased to see the range of courses and pilgrimages and other events held in 2015 and planned for 2016. The café has brought new visitors to the Hall. There are regular meetings for worship at the Hall, including an extended, 2-hour meeting each month, and a weekly discussion group. We forward this report to Quaker Life Central Committee for their consideration.

BYMT-2016-02-13 Finance

(a) Finance & Property Committee: minutes of meeting 28 January

We have received the minutes of BYMT Finance & Property Committee held 28 January (**BYMT-2016-02-14a**).

(b) Financial reports

We have received the financial reports covering period 10 (October) and 11 (November) (**BYMT-2016-02-14b, c**).

(c) HS2 & Cross Rail 2

We have received Finance & Property Committee minute **FP16.09a (BYMT-2016-02-14d)**. The Committee suggests the formation of a special group to monitor HS2 developments and Cross Rail 2, and for it to work with staff and interested external bodies on planning and mitigating the risks involved.

We agree to set up such a group, asking the Recording Clerk to issue terms of reference and we ask our Trustees Nominations Group to bring forward names to serve in co-operation with the Recording Clerk.

We ask for a summary of progress so far on the HS2 matter to be brought to a future Trustees meeting

(d) Meeting with Richard Murphy

We receive minute **T15-68** of Friends Trusts Ltd together with Finance & Property Committee Minute **FP16/11** which suggests that we convene a meeting with Richard Murphy to hear his views on company tax avoidance.

We have considered this and feel that the time is not right to arrange such a meeting. We encourage our Finance & Property Committee to continue to pursue the issue of company tax avoidance including with our investment managers.

BYMT-2016-02-14 Data Safety Group: annual report

We receive the annual report of the Data Safety Group (**BYMT-2016-02-15**) and record that we are compliant on matters of Data Safety.

BYMT-2016-02-15 Insurance report

We have received the annual insurance report from the General Secretary, Quaker Finance & Property (**BYMT-2016-02-16**) and we confirm we are content with the levels and categories of our insurance cover, and we ask our Finance Secretary to keep the sums involved under constant review.

BYMT-2016-02-16 Reputational risk

We have received a reputational risk update from the Recording Clerk (**BYMT-2016-02-17** plus supplement).

(a) Listed Informal Groups

Further to minute **BYMT BYMT/13/04/7**, Meeting for Sufferings has agreed the recommendations of the review of Listed Informal Groups, leading to the establishment of a new category of Quaker Recognised Bodies (QRBs) to replace the previous listed informal group status. The new arrangements are designed to strengthen the relationship between BYM and such groups. It is likely to take some time for BYM staff to contact and support all the interested groups through the recognition process.

(b) Use of the “Q” logo and protection of the Quaker ‘brand’

We have been concerned about the protection of our “Q” logo and whether we have sufficient protection against possible misuse by others (minute **BYMT-2015-09-18** and BYMT Finance & Property Committee minute **FP15/25** refer). The Recording Clerk has discussed this issue with the Advocacy and Public Relationships team.

As part of the work on the new website, the advice and templates we provide to meetings (and to individuals working on behalf of meetings) are to be reviewed in April/May 2016. This provides an opportunity to refresh the guidance, which many Friends may well not previously have seen, and to ensure we are clear about the terms of use.

The logo is a piece of original artwork commissioned by BYM so it seems we already own the copyright on it and can, in principle, control its use. A Friend with publishing law experience recommends registering the Quaker Q as a registered trademark if we can since ownership of a trademark is a considerably stronger form of legal protection than ownership of copyright.

We agree to the registration of the Quaker Q as a trademark.

BYMT-2016-02-17 Strategic management: progress

Further to **BYMT-2015-11-14**, we are aware of the changes in Management Meeting and have been informed of the current arrangements for line management following the retirement of Richard Summers.

We are glad to hear that attention is being paid to the needs of Quaker Life staff and Quaker Life Central Committee, and how they are supported.

We note Management Meeting minute **MtM-2016-02-01** which records the discussion that Management Meeting has been having, and the Recording Clerk has updated us on progress.

We warmly support and encourage Management Meeting in these changes.

BYMT-2016-02-18 Follow-up from Nominations Conference

We receive Central Nominations Committee's minute 2016 "Follow up from Nominations Conference", together with the minute agreed at the BYM-wide Nominations Conference held 31 July-2 August 2015, CNC is disappointed by the slow implementation of the ideas and suggested actions arising from this conference. We would welcome a dialogue between our Nominations Group and Central Nominations Committee to explore their ideas.

We forward this minute to Central Nominations Committee.

BYMT-2016-02-29 Vibrancy in Meetings Steering Group

Further to minute **BYMT-2015-11-15**, we note the between-meetings appointment of the following Friends:

Helen Chambers (Bristol AM)
Roger Clarke (Notts & Derby AM) (Clerk)
Lizz Roe (South Wales)
Martin Ford (Leeds AM)
Peter Varney (Norfolk & Waveney AM)

BYMT-2016-02-20 Time without staff

We have spent time without staff.

Joint Session with Quaker Life Central Committee

(minutes BYMT-2016-02-21to24)

We welcome the opportunity to meet jointly with QLCC.

BYMT-2016-02-21 Quaker Life Central Committee minutes

We receive the minutes of Quaker Life Central Committee's meeting held 27 to 29 November 2015 (**BYMT-2016-02-22a**).

BYMT-2016-02-22 Quaker Life Central Committee annual report

We receive Quaker Life Central Committee's annual report (**BYMT-2016-02-22b**) which has been prepared by the committee's acting clerk. We are pleased to hear of the work being done with Children and People, including 12 CYP workshops which attracted 117 participants; and 300 young people took part in compiling "Living our beliefs" (a young persons' version of *Quaker faith & practice*). The Library is working to raise its profile and accessibility and has made a number of loans to external bodies.

An outreach conference has just been held. Over 1,000 copies of the new book aimed at Elders and Overseers have been sold. We are encouraged to hear of the high number of volunteers involved in the work of Quaker Life.

We are encouraged to hear of progress in developing a strategic plan, including the recent away day for staff, committee members and others. We ask that QLCC aligns its strategic planning with *Our Faith in the Future*.

We have heard of the value of engaging face to face with each other, and intend to continue this close working relationship with Quaker Life Central Committee.

We acknowledge that this is a time of change for QLCC and for Quaker Life. We hope that change will also bring growth and renewal. We thank the staff of Quaker Life for their hard work and QLCC for this report. We also thank Richard Summers for his loyal service as General Secretary of Quaker Life.

BYMT-2016-02-23 Library development work

We receive a report on Library development work from the Deputy Recording Clerk covering Joint Libraries development with Woodbrooke, Library space, using the rest of Friends House, and staffing (**BYMT-2016-02-22c**).

We note that a Developer is to be appointed, initially for two years, to guide the development process, and that preliminary designs have been commissioned to make Friends House library more visible and accessible. Work on hanging pictures from the library collection around Friends House is underway, together with a display about World War I

BYMT-2016-02-24 Ageing & declining membership

Both BYM Trustees and Quaker Life Central Committee are concerned about the implication of Britain Yearly Meeting's evident aging and declining membership. We have received paper **BYMT-2016-02-22d**.

We have found this joint consideration very helpful. Our discussion has focused largely, but not entirely, on the need for more data, such as what is happening to national population figures; what is happening in other churches; what is happening in other liberal Yearly Meetings, Woodbrooke has some data which may be useful. It would also be helpful to know what brings people into Britain Yearly Meeting.

We need to recognise the different shapes of belonging and affiliation and other relevant societal changes around commitment, which may impinge upon the Religious Society of Friends positively or negatively.

We ask Quaker Life to draw up a paper summarising the data already available and ask Quaker Life Central Committee to determine what the next steps might be; and to keep Trustees informed.

BYMT-2016-02-25 Meeting for Sufferings: preparing for the April meeting

We have discussed our participation at Meeting for Sufferings on 2 April.

BYMT-2016-02-26 Reviewing the meeting

We have reviewed the meeting.

BYMT-2016-02-27 Dates of future meetings

- Friday 1 April – Training day and brief business session to agreed Annual Report and Financial Statements (Friends House)
- Friday 17 to Sunday 19 June (Birmingham)
- Friday 9 to Saturday 10 September (Friends House)
- Friday 18 November (Friends House)

Ingrid Greenhow
Clerk

Review of financial activities for 2015

Financial activities explained

We would like to thank Friends for their financial support of Quaker work in 2015. This support, from meetings, individuals and trusts, makes a connection to the work, and we hope that Friends will feel engaged with this, both in our work in the world and the support and resources offered to meetings.

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 2015 was £11.6 million (2014 £11.3 million). Although the income derived from any single source varies from year to year, the spread of income is sufficiently broad that we are able confidently to plan our programmes of continuing work.

The area where we have experienced a good deal of volatility has been legacy receipts. Over the past few years legacies have varied from less than £1 million to over £5 million; in 2015 the amount totalled some £3.8 million (2014 £3.7 million). Trustees have designated funds arising from above-average legacy years that honours the intentions of testators and makes a difference to the level of work we can undertake, without committing to long-term obligations that may not be sustainable. We continue to work with central committees and others in 2016 to discern the projects that our legacy funds should support.

The majority of contributions from Quaker meetings reach us in the last three months of the year. Contributions were just over £2 million, slightly exceeding 2014 total by £4,000. We are greatly encouraged by this; it indicates Friends' continuing support for the work done in their name.

A full programme of work was able to be completed in accordance with budget. In 2015 we continued with our redevelopment of Friends House with improvements to accessibility at the garden entrance, a redesign of the garden and an upgrade to our power supply. We also began refurbishing our accommodation at Swarthmoor Hall and in July launched the Barn Café.

Friends House Hospitality Limited continues to make the most of the opportunities for raising income from

conferences, meetings and catering provision at Friends House, and in 2015 has achieved the highest level of revenue since its inception. At the beginning of the year, the company took over the management of Swarthmoor Hall at Ulverston in Cumbria. The company's trading income funds the bulk of the two buildings' running costs, and after paying these, a surplus of £455,388 will be available as a contribution towards our charitable work.

The market value of our investment portfolio at the end of 2015 was £22.8 million. Despite some investments being liquidated in order to fund buy-out of the pension scheme deficit, the portfolio continues to perform well with a net gain of £1.5 million. Much of the surpluses on investments relates to designated and restricted funds, and amounts have therefore been 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 2015, is published on our website at www.quaker.org.uk. In 2016 we will continue to engage with the issue of tax justice in relation to the companies in which we hold shares, both through engagement by our brokers and research on some of the companies' affairs.

The total deficit for the year of £4 million arose mainly from paying off BYM's share of the deficit in the Pension Trust Growth Plan. The payment of £5.9 million is shown as an exceptional item on the statement of financial activities, and releases BYM from any further liability. Trustees planned for this expenditure in 2014 and a fund was set aside for the purpose.

Our general (or free) reserves as at 31 December 2015 amount to some £11 million. Trustees regard this as a reasonable level for the prudent stewardship of the yearly meeting's affairs. Trustees continue to review the reserves policy in order to ensure that free reserves are at an appropriate level for future planned activity and take account of future risks and opportunities.

Financial position

As at 31 December 2015 our net current assets (short-term bank deposits, monies owed to us, less monies owed by us and payable within one year) stood at £2.3 million. These 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 sell any of our long-term investments.

Looking forward

Although the resolution of the pension deficit and the capital works on the garden have reduced our liquid assets, our financial position at the year-end was sufficient to accommodate fluctuations which may be caused by shortfalls in income or unexpected expenditure. As ever, we continue to monitor carefully both income and expenditure, and short-term cash flow.

Support of Friends

At Yearly Meeting last May, we heard impassioned ministry urging us to demonstrate our backing for the work that is being done on our behalf by increasing our financial contributions. Part of minute 36 reads "We ask Friends and meetings to engage with the evil of social and economic injustice which creates a world in which the wrong things are valued. To do this requires owning and upholding the work that is already being done by Friends and in our name; helping to fund that work as generously as possible." Contributions make the vital link between faith and action, and uphold our staff and committees as they labour on our behalf in building God's kingdom.

Approved by the Trustees of Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) on 1 April 2016 and signed on their behalf by:

Peter Ullathorne, Treasurer

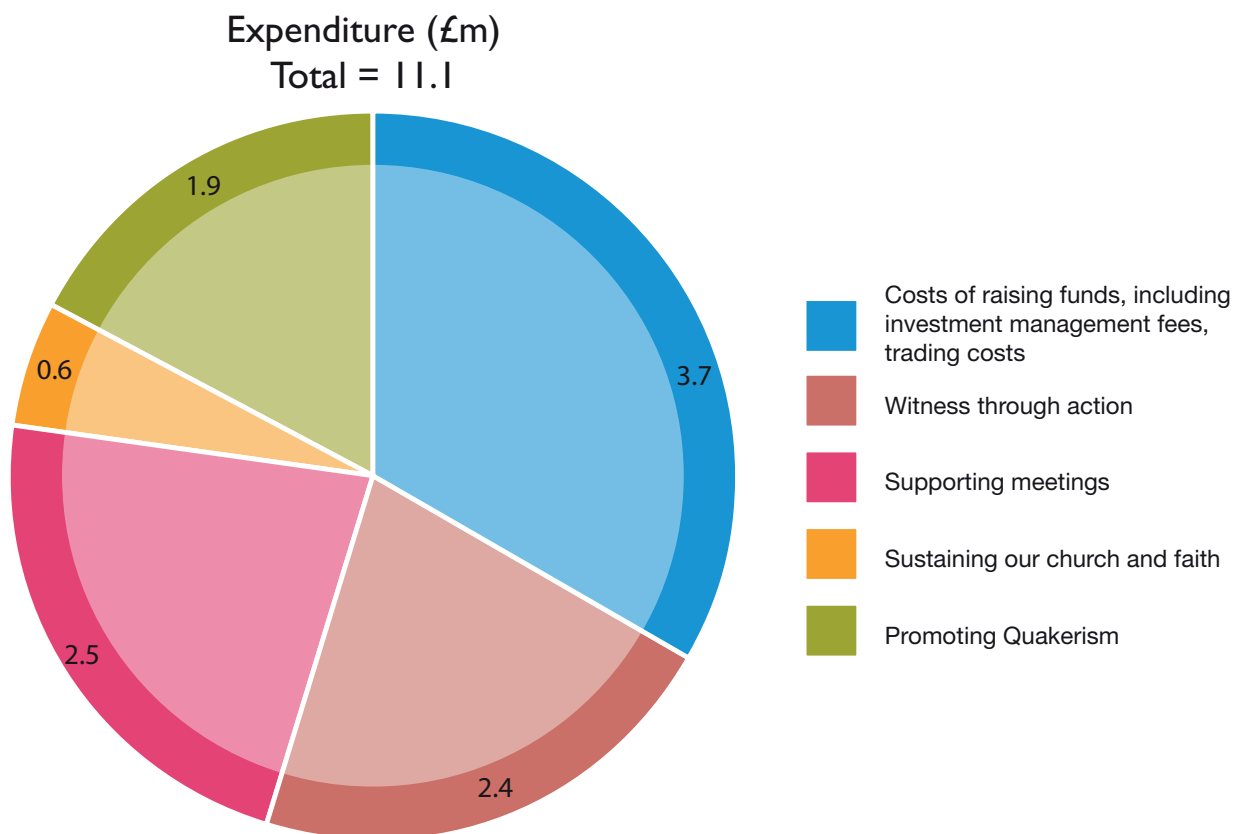
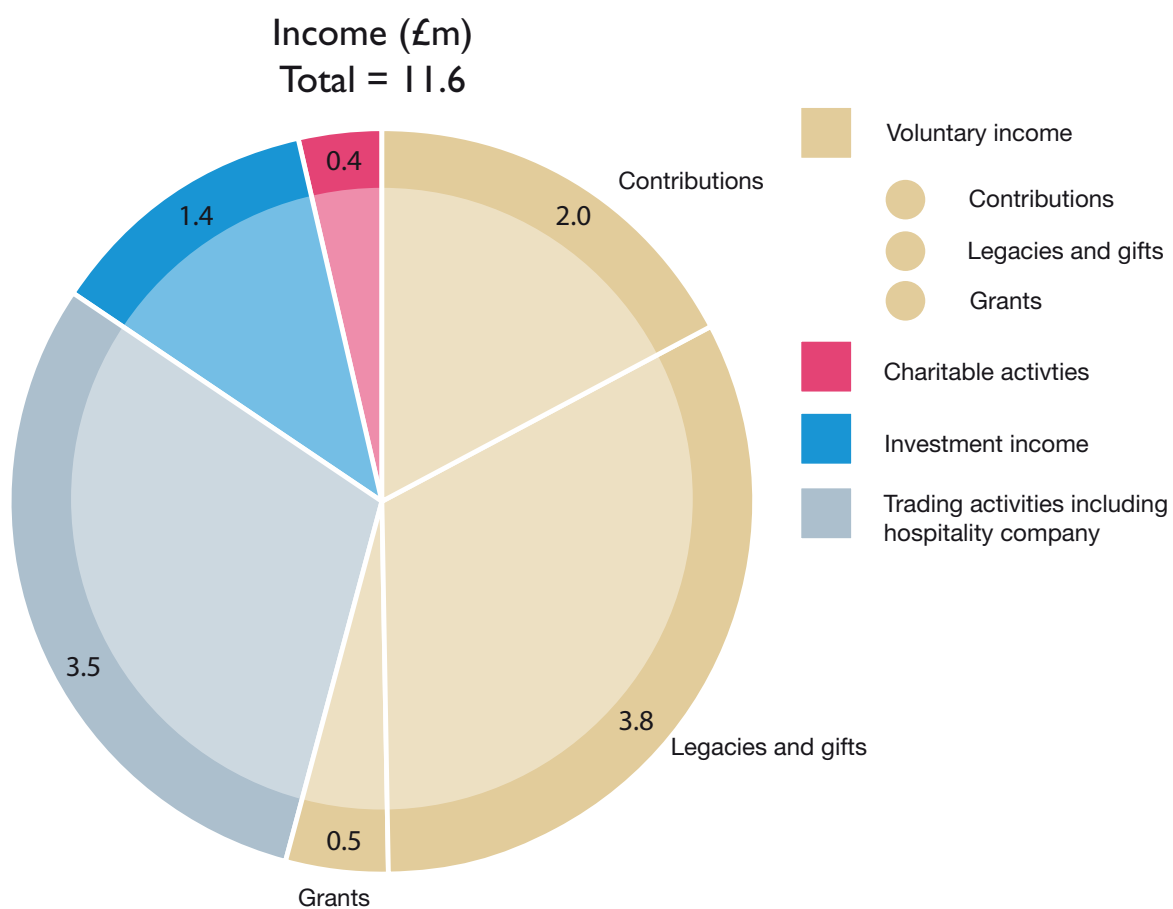


Peter Ullathorne

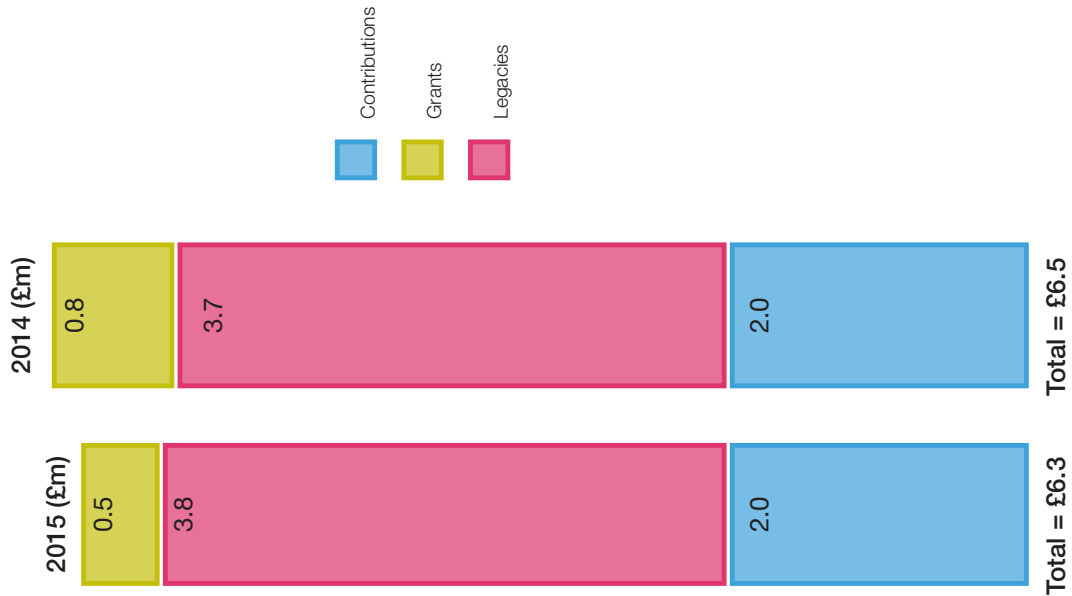
Treasurer

1 April 2016

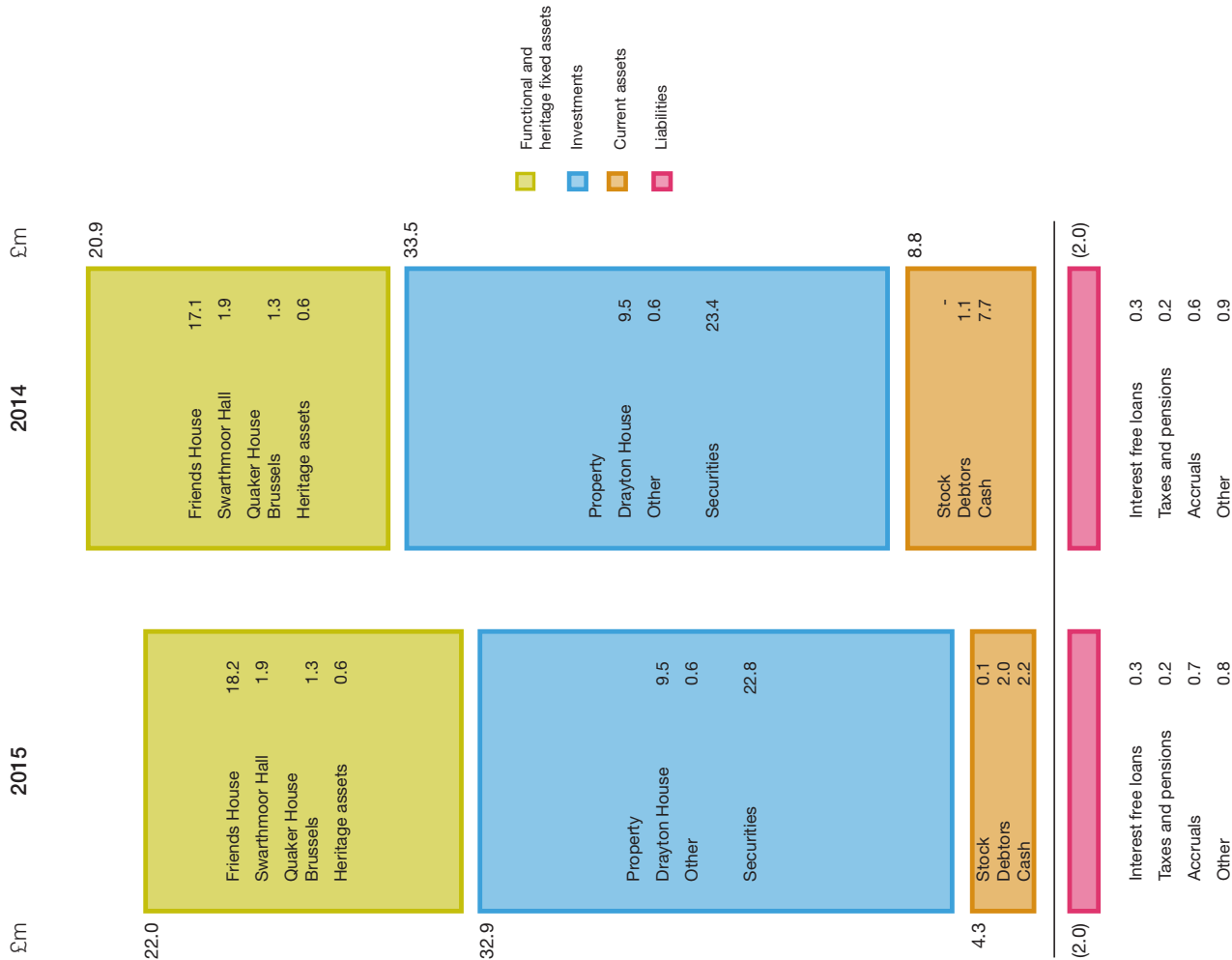
2015 at a glance



2015 / 2014 comparison of voluntary income



Assets and liabilities



Living out our faith (call for equality)

Introduction

Yearly Meeting is currently moving through a three-year arc, 'Living out our faith'.

In 2015, the key theme was a 'Call for Equality'. The full YM 2015 minute 36 is copied at the end of this paper. Meeting for Sufferings was given a particular task:

We ask Friends and meetings to engage with the evil of social and economic injustice which creates a world in which the wrong things are valued. To do this requires owning and upholding the work that is already being done by Friends and in our name; helping to fund that work as generously as possible; and becoming involved in however small a way. For ourselves we need to find some action however simple to do now.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to take the work on social and economic injustice forward, co-ordinating the work of local and area meetings who might wish to become more deeply involved, and encouraging the deep spiritual and intellectual searching that could underpin a 'true social order' for our age.

At this, our April 2016 meeting, we are taking time to focus on the implications of this request. We will reflect on Yearly Meeting 2015: what is already being done and what more might need to be done? The session will also help to prepare for Yearly Meeting 2016.

Broad as well as deep

YM 2015 considered 'social and economic injustice' within the overall arc 'Living out our faith'. Arrangements Group have reflected that it's not really possible to disentangle 'peace', 'sustainability' and other current concerns from questions of social and economic justice. Reviewing the subject of minutes sent to Meeting for Sufferings in recent years, they have identified some broad clusters:

- Economic injustice
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Housing and homelessness
- Criminal Justice
- Education
- Peace
- Sustainability

Questions for Meeting for Sufferings

The clerks suggest three sets of questions for our session in April.

1. Responding to Yearly Meeting 2015 minute 36

Yearly Meeting asked us to: "co-ordinate the work of local and area meetings; and encourage the deep spiritual and intellectual searching that could underpin a 'true social order' for our age".

- From the perspective of Friends in your area and local meetings, what does this mean?
- What would help to co-ordinate your work with others'?
- What would help your searching?

2. Testing concerns

'Achieving clarity about a concern is a particular exercise in discernment.' – *Qf&p* 13.05.

One of the responsibilities of Area Meetings is to provide mutual support, through shared testing of concerns (*Qfap* 4.02). When Area Meetings or Committees send concerns to Meeting for Sufferings, they are asked to make the faith basis of the concern explicit.

- In what ways do Area Meetings support individuals and local meetings to test concerns?
- How can Friends help each other to articulate the faith basis of a concern?
- What would help?

3. Balancing and prioritising

One of Meeting for Sufferings' functions is 'to set the priorities for the centrally managed work' (*Qf&p* 7.02a).

As Quakers we live in the world, and we are influenced by world events and the media. When called, we must respond. At the same time, Quaker work is often characterised by taking the long view, seeing the bigger picture, seeking root causes, persistence and 'undaunted patience' (*Qf&p* 23.13).

- Are Friends and Meetings sometimes too reactive?
- What should the balance be between long-term work and being responsive?
- Where is the Spirit leading us – so that we use our individual and shared resources (time, energies, skills and money) to make the difference we yearn for?

The rest of this paper includes:

- Survey feedback – information drawn from the recent survey of what actions local and area meetings are taking.
- Addressing economic injustice – what are Quakers doing now and what more might be done? This is in a table, prepared with the help of QPSW's Economics, Sustainability and Peace (ESP) sub-committee and staff.
- Minutes sent to Sufferings - a table showing the minutes sent by Area Meetings to Sufferings over the past two years, and what has happened since.
- Yearly Meeting minute - YM 2015 minute 36.

Living out our faith - What are Quakers in Britain doing now?

Introduction

Many thanks to everyone who responded so quickly and helpfully. Between 25th February and 10th March – just two weeks - we had 109 responses from Friends in 48 Area Meetings. (More responses have come in since then, and will inform further work.) The responses paint an impressive and inspiring picture of Quaker witness in Britain today.

These notes can't cover everything in detail; and we know that more will be happening in the 22 AMs which did not respond by 10th March. But we hope it will give a snapshot, to help Meeting for Sufferings in its consideration.

The responses are set out in seven sections, reflecting clusters of issues which have been considered by Meeting for Sufferings in recent years: Economic injustice, inequality, welfare benefits; Housing and homelessness; Refugees and asylum seekers; Criminal justice; Sustainability; Peace; and Other.

In each section we have added a little information about relevant centrally-managed work, and about work being done by other Quaker groups. Again, this can't be comprehensive, but we hope it will help anyone who wishes to learn more.

Some comments about 'tested concerns'

We asked for information about 'corporate witness' - concerns which had been tested and adopted by Quaker Meetings. Certainly, many individuals act under concern; but gathering information from thousands of Quakers would have been impossible in this short survey.

Several respondents commented about this.

- One Friend said that, although the AM had tested concerns, they were being actively pursued by only a small number of Friends
- Five explained that although individuals or local meetings were doing a lot of work, their concerns had not been tested corporately.
- Three Friends wrote that they did not understand the term 'tested concern'.

Economic injustice, inequality, welfare benefits

Local and area meeting witness

The survey told us:

- 12 AMs are taking action
- In 17 AMs, LMs are taking action
- In 21 AMs, individuals are taking action

Some ways in which local and area meetings are taking action

- Support for Quaker Homeless Action and mobile library
- Organising a Churches Together public meeting, and meeting with the local MP, George Osborne, at the Meeting House
- Questionnaire to candidates before General election; Meeting with and lobbying of MP after the election
- support for food banks
- Local action to support those on low incomes and to draw attention to the effects of austerity
- Use of a house bequeathed to the LM for the benefit of local residents in economic need.
- Relief of individual cases of hardship.
- Fairtrade products.
- Involvement in a Mental Health march
- Involvement in a local Peoples Parliament
- Statement to local Council
- When council grants were cut off for mother and toddler groups we opened one of our own totally funded by Local and Area Meeting, and later by a Quaker trust

Centrally-managed work and other Quaker groups

Please see the table in the next section of this paper.

Housing and homelessness

Local and area meeting witness

The survey told us:

- 4 AMs are taking action
- In 17 AMs, local meetings are taking action
- In 18 AMs, individuals are taking action

Some ways in which local and area meetings are taking action

- Active involvement in local night shelter and street pastors
- Collect clothing and food for the homeless shelter and also donate money from LM funds.
- Work with a local Homelink organisation to assist those with low incomes into housing
- Offer free accommodation to a local charity that feeds and provides other support to homeless people every night.

Centrally-managed work

Quaker Housing Trust is Britain Yearly Meeting's own housing charity: a practical response to a spiritual concern. Through loans, grants and advice, the Quaker Housing Trust supports projects that meet the housing needs of people who are often overlooked.

www.qht.org.uk

BYM is addressing the Housing and Planning Bill currently going through Parliament, focusing on the proposals to reform right to buy.

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/social-justice-2/housing>

Other Quaker organisations

There are at least 25 Quaker-run accommodation schemes for older people. More information is available from the Quaker Housing Trust www.qht.org.uk

Quaker Homeless Action runs various projects including a Christmas Shelter, mobile libraries for the homeless and befriending

www.qha.org.uk

Refugees and asylum seekers

Local and area meeting witness

The survey told us that at least:

- 11 AMs are taking action
- In 28 AMs, local meetings are taking action
- In 18 AMs, individuals are taking action

Some ways in which local and area meetings are taking action:

- An AM Asylum Group, which campaigns on these issues and has made representations to government
- Financial and practical support for local groups helping asylum seekers
- Membership of City of Sanctuary
- A project to store and transport goods to refugee camps; sending money and clothes to Calais
- Through Churches Together, lobbying the local council
- Visiting people held in a local prison that has recently been turned into an immigration removal centre and a number of individuals from the LMs nearby are involved here.
- Helping to set up a Welcome Syrian Families charity
- Co-ordinating care for 8 refugees living locally
- Writing to MPs about indefinite detention
- Hosting refugee groups and an advice service in the Meeting House
- Families welcoming refugees into their homes
- Befriending newly-arrived refugees
- Offering 2 to 4 people a hot meal and a bed for the night on Sundays

Centrally-managed work

BYM has spoken out nationally about the plight of people seeking safe haven, and the treatment of refugees in Britain. Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) is currently considering the best way of taking action, nationally.

Other Quaker Groups

Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) helps Quakers actively involved in supporting refugees to support each other; seeks to inform other Quakers; and campaigns.

www.qarn.org.uk

Criminal Justice

Local and area meeting witness

- The survey told us that at least:
- 11 AMs are taking action
- In 10 AMs, LMs are taking action
- In 17 AMs, individuals are taking action

Some ways in which local and area meetings are taking action:

- An AM Criminal Justice Group, which has held several open meetings to involve both AM Friends and others
- Support for 2 prison chaplains, 1 appointed by the AM
- Quaker Chaplains working in prisons in the AM area.
- A prison minister and a support group have set up 'Quiet Space in a local Prison.
- Support for Friends Therapeutic Community (Glebe House) including by individuals serving as trustees.
- Active in a local Ecumenical Justice group
- Supporting newly-released prisoners to resettle in the community.
- Helping to set up a 'Circles of Support' group.

Centrally-managed work

Through QPSW's Crime, Community and Justice programme, Quakers seek to address government policy; and inform Quakers and Meetings – this includes briefings and 'Why Prison?' workshops.

www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/social-justice-2/crime-community-and-justice-2

Other Quaker groups

Quakers in Criminal Justice is an informal network of Quakers who are involved in the criminal justice system. It offers mutual support for Quakers working in various branches of the system and helps to inform them (and thereby their Meetings) about current penal issues.

www.qicj.org

Sustainability

Local and area meeting witness

The survey told us that at least:

- 14 AMs are taking action
- In 18 AMs, LMs are taking action
- In 19 AMs, individuals are taking action

Some ways in which local and area meetings are taking action:

- We have an active Low Carbon Commitment Forum. Northfield Eco Centre provides services and advice in a deprived area of Birmingham.
- AM sustainability group (currently in abeyance)
- AM has disinvested from companies using fossil fuels.
- Offering free use of premises to local Transition group
- Belong to a local sustainability group
- Some updates and discussion to promote individual action plus some car-sharing and public or are sustainable transport by individuals
- Supporting individual Friends to run a 'Footpaths' course
- Workshops and meetings, joining climate change demos
- Property reviews and improvements: Insulation; solar panels; better heating systems; planting fruit trees; installing cycle racks

Centrally-managed work

In 2011 Quakers in Britain made a corporate commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community and we support each other to live out this commitment. We campaign for climate and energy justice, and to build a fairer economy which is not powered by fossil fuels.

www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/sustainability

For an overview of work being done, and what more might be done, please see the BYM Sustainability Group report to Meeting for Sufferings in February 2016 (**paper MfS 2016/02/07**).

Other Quaker groups

Living Witness works to support the development of Quaker corporate witness to sustainable living and explore ways of taking it to the wider community in Britain and elsewhere.

www.livingwitness.org.uk

Peace

Local and area meeting witness

The survey told us at least:

- 15 AMs are taking action
- 25 AMs, LMs are taking action
- In 15 AMs, individuals are taking action

Some ways in which local and area meetings are taking action

- A speaker from 'The Drones Network, organised by a Local Meeting, was followed by a letter-writing campaign and two 'Fly Kites, not Drones' events - plus associated press releases.
- Link to local peace action group
- Organise peace vigils
- An exhibition about local conscientious objectors drawing in the public and schools
- Working to get peace packs into schools; assemblies and careers fairs
- Meeting or corresponding with MPs
- White poppies laid at local memorial
- Organised a public event to mark 100 years of peace-making and remembrance of WW1.
- Peace witness at military bases
- Public witness at/ around Armed Forces day
- Dialogue with local council around project funding
- Wool against weapons

Centrally-managed work

Quaker Peace and Social Witness: challenges militarism; campaigns for nuclear disarmament; opposes armed drones; campaigns for exemption to military taxation; and promotes peace education. The Peacemaker scheme places workers in British peace groups.

www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace

Internationally, Quaker Peace and Social Witness co-ordinates the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel; and promotes active nonviolence in East Africa. Experience from international work informs national advocacy.

www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/international-work

Other Quaker Groups

Central England AM has two peace projects:

- Peace Hub in Central Birmingham
- West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project works in schools in the West Midlands

Northern Friends Peace Board has been working since 1913 'to advise and encourage Friends, and through them their fellow citizens, in the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth'.

<http://nfpb.org.uk>

Other

Local and area meeting witness

The survey told us that at least:

- 9 AMs are taking action
- In 10 AMs, LMs are taking action
- In 8 AMs, individuals are taking action

Some ways in which local and area meetings are taking action

- The AM is an upholding meeting for Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT), appointing two trustees.
- Support of education at local Friends School
- Correspondence with political figures in the US, in Russia and in Ukraine in relation to the Ukraine crisis
- Support a literacy project called ReadWriteClick - providing tuition for adult learners who have very low levels of literacy and are unable to access other provision
- Supporting a junior school in Kenya

Call for Equality: Response so far & potential for future work

What	What has already happened	Suggestions for future work
<p>Get our own house in order Live out Our testimony to equality, including recognising when we are part of the problem. Being prepared to give up our privileges.</p>	<p><u>Centrally-managed work</u> BYM has recently reviewed employment, investment and procurement policies.</p> <p>QPSW's <i>Your Faith Your Finance</i> Project encouraged Friends and meetings to consider financial resources and investments in relation to all aspects of Quaker testimony.</p> <p><u>Local and area meetings</u> Some meetings have gained or are seeking accreditation as Living Wage employers.</p> <p>Lancaster Meeting is encouraging more meetings to take this step and to campaign for greater adoption of living wage locally.</p> <p>North Wales Friends are exploring possibilities for Quakers to better support credit union movement.</p> <p><u>Other Quaker groups</u> Quaker Housing Trust is encouraging Friends and others to 'recycle' excess housing wealth.</p>	<p><u>Centrally-managed work</u> BYM Trustees and the Recording Clerk could be asked to review organisation policies in the light of the Call for Equality.</p> <p>BYM could proactively share information about what it's doing well: celebrate Living Wage status during Living Wage Week; share BYM's low pay ratio (e.g. through the 'Pay Compare' website).</p> <p>BYM could provide clearer advice to meetings about the living wage.</p> <p><u>Local and area meetings</u> Meetings might look at how they deal with inequalities in their own meetings – such as tiered pricing for events/activities, bursaries/hardship funds etc.</p> <p>AM trustees might consider the potential, in cooperation with investment managers for more vocal 'engagement'/ shareholder activism on pay and potentially other inequality issues.</p>

What	What has already happened	Suggestions for future work
<p>More spiritual work Encourage 'the deep spiritual & intellectual searching that could underpin a true social order for our age.'</p> <p>Be more faithful. The Spirit will push us towards a better world. Listening from within.</p>	<p><u>Centrally-managed work</u> QPSW's Economics, Sustainability and Peace (ESP) Sub-committee is beginning to articulate how economic inequality undermines Quaker testimony.</p> <p><i>Being Friends Together</i> contains resources to help Meetings explore these issues, and their spiritual underpinning.</p> <p><u>Other Quaker groups</u> The George Gorman Lecture (2014) given by Jessica Metheringham during Yearly Meeting in Bath encouraged Friends to reflect on what they mean by 'equality'</p> <p>Courses at Woodbrooke – this year, for example: 'Testimony: Fruit of the Spirit'; 'The Theology of Quaker Testimony'; 'Threshing, Consultation, Discernment'.</p>	<p><u>Local and area meetings</u> Meetings may wish to hold 'threshing' processes, drawing on personal experiences and using resources and materials provided by QPSW and other organisations.</p> <p>Meetings may wish to encourage Friends to participate in courses at Woodbroke, and to bring insights back.</p>
<p>Unite around this concern Be a community. Push towards the important things we can only do together. Fund work and get involved in it.</p> <p>Engage with evil of social and economic justice in which the wrong things are valued. Find some action however small. Make connections in communities and across the globe</p>	<p><u>Centrally-managed work</u> The website is a way of sharing stories about Quaker work, locally. www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories</p> <p>The Quakeronomics blog helps Friends who want to explore issues together http://www.quakerweb.org.uk/blog</p> <p><u>Local and area meetings</u> Quaker Equality Week enabled many meetings</p>	<p><u>Centrally-managed work</u> QPSW's ESP team is planning new information for meetings: this may be in the form of suggestions for ways to respond to the call for equality'; and providing information about potential partnerships.</p>

What	What has already happened	Suggestions for future work
	<p>to come together to take action on inequality.</p> <p>Many meetings are working with other organisations, seeking to meet local needs, engaging with elected representatives etc.</p> <p><u>Other Quaker groups</u></p> <p>Quakers are tackling inequality through groups such as Quaker Social Action; Quaker Homeless Action.</p>	<p><u>Local and area meetings</u></p> <p>Might send their stories to QPSW staff, who can share them on the website and in advocacy.</p>
<p>Structural/Process Administrative work</p> <p>Coordinate work of local and area meetings (MfS)</p> <p>Keep the issue before the YM for the next two years (YMAC)</p>	<p><u>Centrally-managed work</u></p> <p>QPSW staff are building up knowledge of LM & AM work, sharing and celebrating this through newsletters, stories of witness and elsewhere.</p>	<p><u>Local and area meetings</u></p> <p>Through relevant conferences and events (e.g. QPSW conference, QL Rep Council) Friends can learn from and support each other specifically around the issue of inequality</p>
<p>Advocacy towards political decision makers</p> <p>Make our concern known as widely as possible. Challenge the incoming UK government to adopt policies that decrease inequality & value the contribution each can make to developing a more just and sustainable society (Recording Clerk & staff)</p>	<p><u>Centrally-managed work</u></p> <p>QPSW is working with other churches & groups to influence the Welfare Reform and work Bill and in supporting Friends to engage with MPs.</p> <p>BYM organised a roundtable with Parliamentarians and wider parliamentarians aimed at influencing Housing Bill.</p> <p>Scottish Parliamentary programme (jointly between BYM and General Meeting for Scotland) is exploring potential for work to encourage wider conversations about function and value of</p>	<p><u>Centrally-managed work, and local/area meetings</u></p> <p>Continue to seek opportunities to speak out and to work collaboratively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty & Inequality are likely to increase over next few years as social security cuts are implemented. • Other opportunities for political engagement are likely to emerge in relation to secondary legislation supporting the

What	What has already happened	Suggestions for future work
	taxation.	<p>Welfare Reform & Work Bill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's unclear how far UK government commitments on tax dodging will be honoured. • Although there are some constraints, there may be scope to do more directed at Local Authorities.

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS - MONITORING OF AREA MEETING MINUTES RECEIVED RELATING TO LIVING OUT OUR FAITH IN THE WORLD

This paper explains what happened next to minutes sent by Area Meetings. It focuses on minutes about our expression of faith in the world that were dealt with in 2014 and 2015 but refers earlier if appropriate.

Minute	Date	Issue	From	Progress notes
Economic injustice, inequality, welfare cuts				
S/14/04/07	April 2014	Government cuts: welfare benefits		Meeting for Sufferings approved a statement on Economic Inequality.
S14/06/05a	June 2014	Education	Cambridgeshire AM Oxford & Swindon AM	Supporting moving forward on the values in education issue
S14/09/05	Sep 2014	Economic inequality	Norfolk & Waveney AM Central England AM	Norfolk and Waveney AM welcomes the statement and encourages local Meetings to take action. Central England AM is organising a one-day national conference in November, to consider Quaker perspectives on ethics and economics.
S14/10/05	Oct 2014	Education		We welcome the establishment of a Quaker Life Network cluster to support interested Friends, and note the statement drawn up during a threshing conference held at Woodbrooke in August. Representatives are encouraged to take it to their Meetings, for consideration locally.
S14/12/05c	Dec 2014	Tax justice	Cambridge AM	We are encouraged to hear of the work that has already been done on this issue by Finance and Property Committee and also that Quaker Peace and Social Witness is considering signing up to a Christian Aid co-ordinated campaign on tax justice. We recognise the importance of this issue and that while some tax practice 'may be legal it is not necessarily right'. We support Finance and Property Committee and Quaker Peace and Social Witness in this work. We also encourage AMs to consider how they can get involved, possibly through the Christian Aid Campaign or with other groups as appropriate. We also need to question our own personal practices.

Minute	Date	Issue	From	Progress notes
S15/02/07	Feb 2015	Education		A new group, Quaker Values in Education (QVine), is being formed. We are at an early stage in consideration of this issue, knowing that our spiritual values can underpin a vision for the long-term.
S15/03/10	Mar 2015	Ethical clothing	North London AM	North London AM has laid this down as a formal concern of the Area Meeting. It encourages Friends to continue to respond to the issue in their individual lives and practices.
S15/07/13	July 2015	TTIP	Pickering & Hull AM	We have learned that Quakers in Britain are working on this issue through QPSW's Economics, Sustainability and Peace programme, nationally, and that QCEA and QUNO also have a role internationally. We support them in this work and encourage Friends locally to engage with these issues, including taking the matter to their MPs and MEPs where appropriate.
S15/09/08	Sep 2015	Credit union	North Wales AM/Cyfarfod Rhanbarth Gogledd Cymru	The Area Meeting is concerned that many people in Britain who live in poverty do not have access to financial services. It envisages a national Quaker Credit Union organisation, through which Area Meetings could set up a branch, principally in areas where there is no credit union coverage at present..... We encourage North Wales AM to continue to work on this, linking with other AMs and central committees where appropriate.
S15/12/15	Dec 2015	TTIP	West Somerset AM	We have been reminded of the deep concerns... forward to QPSW and ask staff to take this to Government in the most appropriate way.
Housing and Homelessness				
S15/12/19	Dec 2015	Housing		We note a minute from the threshing event held in September.

Minute	Date	Issue	From	Progress notes
Refugees and asylum seekers				
S14/12/05d	Dec 2014	Search and rescue	Sussex West AM	<p>Regarding the announcement that the British Government will not support planned EU search and rescue operations to save migrants from drowning in the Mediterranean Sea as they try to reach Europe.</p> <p>We note that the Deputy Recording Clerk has signed a letter to David Cameron, calling on the Government to work with the rest of Europe to ensure that no asylum seekers are left to drown in the Mediterranean and to organise safe routes for these people to find shelter and security.</p> <p>We forward this minute to QPSW for advice.</p>
S15/03/15	Mar 2015	Immigration control	SE London AM, Pendle Hill AM, Leeds AM, NE Thames AM, Leicester AM, South Wales AM, Oxford & Swindon AM	<p>Minutes bring to our attention a statement made by Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network about the use of destitution as an instrument of immigration control.</p> <p>This is not an issue that is going to go away quickly, and we feel it would be useful to develop a public statement that we can use in working with national and local governments.</p> <p>We forward this minute to Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee and ask them to bring a draft back to a future meeting.</p>
S15/07/10	July 2015	Asylum seekers	East Kent AM, QPSWCC	<p>We have heard a short briefing from Helen Drewery, General Secretary of QPSW, which is available in writing to share with Friends.</p> <p>We are glad to hear that QPSW is exploring with Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) how they can work together more closely.</p> <p>This is a European-wide issue. We welcome the papers we have received from European churches. We have heard that</p>

Minute	Date	Issue	From	Progress notes
				<p>Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) is looking at these issues and encourage them in this work.</p> <p>We note that other faith groups as well as NGOs are actively campaigning on these matters, and urge Friends to work alongside and support such initiatives and to challenge the rhetoric where possible and appropriate.</p>
S15/09/15	Sep 2015	Asylum seekers	QPSW	<p>QPSW and the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) have prepared a short draft statement with particular reference to the current Europe refugee crisis. We feel the need for an urgent statement, but want the draft text to be strengthened before it is released. We ask staff to work on this to be able to release a statement as soon as possible.</p> <p>We ask for this statement to be circulated widely and made available to Friends locally to use in speaking out.</p>
Criminal Justice				
S/11/06/10	Jun 2011	Decriminalisation of drugs	Cornwall AM 7 of May 2011	<p>The minute was sent to QPSW, which consulted and then responded in October 2011 (S/11/10/12/ii/d). QPSW is currently supporting Cornwall AM at this stage of their testing this concern. Recently, a face-to-face meeting took place between Cornwall Friends, Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs and other Friends in our Yearly Meeting who have relevant expertise. The AM expects to return to Meeting for Sufferings in due course.</p>
S/14/02/15/a/1	Feb 2014	Decriminalisation of drugs	Thaxted AM	<p>Thaxted AM expressed its support for Cornwall AM's concern.</p>
S/14/06/05b	June 2014	Probation		<p>Minute CCJS/2014/09 of QPSW's Crime, Community and Justice Sub-Committee meeting held on 31 January 2014. This responds to a concern from Worcestershire and Shropshire AM about the privatisation of probation work. We note that the Committee fears the changes may result in a fragmented and less effective service, and is maintaining a watching brief.</p>

Minute	Date	Issue	From	Progress notes
Sustainability				
S14/06/05a	June 2014	Drilling for natural gas	Pendle Hill AM	Expressing concern about drilling for natural gas
S14/06/05a	June 2014	Moving forward on sustainability	Wensleydale & Swaledale AM	Expressing concern about moving forward. (See below: QPSW staff and members of the BYM Sustainability Group remain in contact with Friends in the AM.)
S14/06/11	June 2014	Minute 36 commitment		Minute 36 (Canterbury) Commitment Group has brought its strategy document, 'Recommendations for Action – becoming a low carbon sustainable community' (MfS 2014 06 11).
S14/10/05	Oct 2014	Saving the planet	Devon AM	'Courage to Save the Planet' initiative. We note this initiative, and representatives may wish to share information about it with Friends locally.
S14/10/10	Oct 2014	BYM Sustainability group		We agree these (terms of reference) as amended in the meeting. We offer the group our support as they take on this new role, while reminding ourselves that we are all responsible for implementing the recommendations in the report of the Minute 36 Group.
S15/02/12	Feb 2015	Fracking	QPSW, responding to Pendle Hill AM	Responding to Pendle Hill AM's concern about fracking. We note that this minute has helped Quaker Peace & Social Witness to clarify its advocacy work on this issue, and that Quaker Peace & Social Witness is working to support Friends who wish to take action against fracking.
S15/02/13	Feb 2015	Fossil fuel dependency	QPSW, responding to Wensleydale & Swaledale AM	Responding to a minute from Wensleydale and Swaledale about sustainability. We note Quaker Peace & Social Witness's clear message that, whilst Friends want to continue to speak out against practices that uphold our dependency on fossil fuels, it is also right to advocate for a sustainable and just alternative. Short briefings on energy justice and climate policy are being prepared, ahead of this year's General Election.

Minute	Date	Issue	From	Progress notes
S15/07/11	July 2015	Climate change	Wensleydale and Swaledale AM	<p>That Friends need to put more emphasis on adapting to inevitable climate change. The Area Meeting also urges Friends to speak out more decisively and urgently about climate change, and particularly to ask the Government to divert funds from the manufacture of arms to investment in new forms of energy.</p> <p>We forward this minute to BYM Sustainability Group and ask for advice. We also send the minute for information to QPSW Central Committee.</p> <p>(BYM Sustainability Group has responded and a minute will come to MfS shortly.)</p>
Peace				
S14/06/05a	June 2014	Ukraine	Gloucestershire AM	Expressing concern about the situation in the Ukraine
S14/09/07h	Sep 2014	Israel/Palestine	YM	During YMG, it was agreed to release a statement on the situation in Israel-Palestine. Advice on using the statement has been sent to all meetings. Yearly Meeting minute 41 refers.
S14/12/05e	Dec 2014	Islamophobia	Brighouse West Yorkshire AM	<p>We join with Brighouse West Yorkshire AM in urging Friends locally, regionally and nationally to strengthen the bonds of friendship with the Muslim community through the values we share.</p> <p>We forward this minute to Quaker Committee on Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR), asking it for advice.</p> <p>.... We encourage Friends to continue with this work.</p> <p>We also encourage QCCIR to continue to work through the Inter Faith Network and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI).</p>
S15/03/16	Mar 2015	Islamophobia	Southern Marches AM QCCIR	

Living out our faith in the world - are we ready to meet the challenge?

How are we led to live out our faith in a world where we see systemic injustice and increasing inequality?

We have been reminded that God's work is where our deep gladness meets the deep suffering in the world, as in Psalm 85:

'Mercy and truth are met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other,
truth shall spring out of the earth;
And righteousness shall look down from heaven.'

We are all activists and we are all worshippers. Our worship and action spring from the same spiritual source. The light not only illumines us but pushes us to seek change.

We recognise the problems in the world and the urgency of acting on them. Our current political and (especially) economic systems only recognise and encourage part of the human condition, the selfish, competitive, greedy part. So much of what is good and beautiful and true in the world is being trashed. The model of power as domination needs to be challenged and replaced with a model of power as service to the community; in doing this, we need to live our testimony and hold firm to its source in faith.

The damage of the present systems, like the benefits, are not shared equally. We need to recognise how many of us benefit through the possessions we hold and the houses we live in, and to consider when we are part of the problem. In living out our faith in the world, we may be called to give up our privileges, but if we do so our voice and our lives will be all the more authentic and powerful. We can be at our most powerful when we are vulnerable.

The damaged and damaging structures of the world are not the only influence on our lives: there is also the power of faith and the leadings of the Spirit, which if followed will lead us, will push us, towards a better world. That, then, may be the first action we need to take: to be more faithful.

What are the changes which are needed to the systemic injustice and inequality that we see in society? We need to go deeper to find the roots of our social ills, and how we might uproot the powers that maintain them. We should rethink what needs to grow in this world and what does not. Can we transform the way the world is going and recognise that everyone and everything on the planet matters and can be thought of as a divine commonwealth, or kingdom? Quakerism is all about putting our faith in a power which transforms us.

Many of us have spoken of the anger we feel about the current injustices of the world, and sometimes our hearts are heavy with all the things we cannot do. Anger can be a spur to action, but we need Light and guidance to use it wisely and sparingly. We already have a way of finding this wisdom in our corporate discipline and our testing in worship of leadings. Through these our righteous anger and passion can be transformed in order to tackle the root causes of injustice and inequality. Our action begins in worship, in seeking and reflecting before we act. Our practices of listening

within and being open to what comes to us from without are rarer than we think, and are a precious gift that we should both use and share.

We are called to consider what we each can do and also make and build on connections in our communities and across the globe.

We are also called to be a community of Friends as a yearly meeting, pushed towards the important things we can only do together. We have a body of experience we can draw on and maintain. We are in this for the long haul.

As a yearly meeting we are restless to take corporate action to change the unequal, unjust world in which we live.

We ask Friends and meetings to engage with the evil of social and economic injustice which creates a world in which the wrong things are valued. To do this requires owning and upholding the work that is already being done by Friends and in our name; helping to fund that work as generously as possible; and becoming involved in however small a way. For ourselves we need to find some action however simple to do now.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to take the work on social and economic injustice forward, co-ordinating the work of local and area meetings who might wish to become more deeply involved, and encouraging the deep spiritual and intellectual searching that could underpin a 'true social order' for our age.

We ask Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to align their work with that of Meeting for Sufferings and to keep this issue before the Yearly Meeting for further consideration over the next two years. Between Yearly Meetings we should all try to share our experience.

We ask our Recording Clerk and staff to make our concern about social and economic inequality known as widely as possible and in particular to challenge the incoming UK government to adopt policies which decrease inequality and value equally the contribution which all can make to developing a more just and sustainable society.

We must remember that what makes the real difference is not adding further to the words in the world but being and living out the new social order, testing our leadings together and trusting to our Quaker processes, 'opening ourselves to the Light to guide us in each small step'.

Quaker World Relations Committee report to Meeting for Sufferings

Committee Purpose: Enriching understanding between Friends worldwide and engaging Quakers in Britain in Quaker issues and concerns around the globe.

1. Key Points

- Building a new committee on the footprint of its predecessor
- Establishing processes in order to be more effective in the future
- Preparing those going to FWCC World Plenary in Peru In January 2016 and ensuring that the learning is fed back into BYM
- How do we engage local Friends with Quakers worldwide?
- How do we extend our understanding of different forms of Quaker worship and share it with local Friends?

2. Programme

The newly formed Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) came into being in January 2015 with new Terms of Reference and five of its six members appointed. It was tasked with building a new structure on the footprint of the earlier committee with its prime focus being to form a two way conduit between BYM and Quakers worldwide. Four members of the old committee had volunteered to undertake some preliminary thinking in late 2014, to help with the process of transition. This was invaluable as it enabled the work to move forward in early 2015.

The newly formed committee, once up to full strength, bonded quickly with everyone bringing considerable energy and creativity to their new role. There was commitment to the committee's purpose, acceptance of its heavy workload and a willingness to engage with and identify the priorities both short and long term. Being such a small committee it was essential that the tasks should be shared and effective use made of between meetings communication. These processes worked extremely well and enabled the work of the committee to move forward.

QWRC also has responsibility for establishing and supporting the newly formed Network and Forum. After a careful discernment process the co-clerks of the Network and Forum were appointed and became full members of QWRC.

Alongside our need to act as a conduit between Quakers worldwide and BYM we are also conscious, as Representatives of this Yearly Meeting to FWCC, of the importance of having a good understanding of the concerns and challenges facing BYM centrally and locally.

A major event impacting on our workload this year has been preparations for the FWCC World Plenary Meeting in Peru in January 2016. The six members of QWRC are also BYM's Representatives to FWCC and prepared themselves for this important event as individuals and as the official Representatives of BYM. The committee also encouraged individuals within BYM to apply for 'open' places, offered ways in which they could be supported personally and financially including a day's preparation where they explored the opportunities and challenges of the event.

The World Gathering was a powerful and challenging experience for all participants. At a meeting following the event the Committee was able to consider the learning and the key messages we wished to pass on to members of BYM which are:

Key messages from the FWCC Plenary in Pisac, Peru 2016

- All YMs are asked to commit to concrete sustainability actions in 2016 and also to promote sustainability at every level from individual to YM. We urge BYM Friends to develop our 2011 commitment further and share it more widely.
- The energy, passion and value of our younger adults is a huge resource, underused in BYM.
- Difference sets us an uncomfortable challenge, but we welcome the fact that it calls us to deep and loving listening and sharing. Through this we can move beyond labels to meet God in one another.
- Continuing our mutual engagement with world Quakerism demands creative thinking and solutions. We must find ways to grow Quaker understanding and increase virtual and actual intervisitation sustainably.

The newly formed QWRC inherited a number of tasks which were taken forward, often at short notice, including, preparing the BYM report for the FWCC European Section (EMES), sending out the letter of appeal for funding for FWCC to local meetings, drafting letters of greeting to European Yearly Meetings, updating information about QWRC within BYM leaflets and website, sending letters of support to France and Burundi Yearly Meetings and updating the packs for those representing BYM at European Yearly Meetings. QWRC also continued a number of activities relating to the Yearly Meeting; including the 'Overseas Visitors Tea' and having fulfilled our responsibilities in 2015 we are reviewing our experiences and exploring alternative approaches.

3. Our work

a. As a committee:

As indicated in the opening paragraph of this report, this was a newly formed committee and not all its members were known to each other but they bonded quickly and have engaged with their tasks with enthusiasm and energy. We were fortunate that although consisting of members heavily committed to other activities, it has been possible to find appropriate days to meet, to function effectively through the delegation of its work to individuals and small groups, to circulate papers for consultation, correspondence by email and when needed, discussions by Skype. We have been greatly assisted by our staff support; initially Paul Parker and later with the successful appointment of Marleen Schepers for one day a week. The co-clerks of the Forum are fully integrated members of QWRC and there is a strong sense of joint ownership of all the elements which make up the work of QWRC. The meetings are focussed and held as Quaker Meetings for Worship for Business and all that entails.

b. Network and Forum:

The co-clerks of the Network and Forum shared their thinking and planning with the full committee and moved the work forward. They established the Network (working with Marleen Schepers and members of the Quaker Life team) and it was launched at Britain Yearly Meeting in May 2015. There has been a slow but gradual engagement by local Friends and we are pleased with the progress of the Network.

The Forum is a newly established process which will meet annually and bring together committees within BYM in order to share work that is within this Yearly Meeting but is wider than BYM in its focus; to enable information and cross-organisational links. We were aware that the first meeting of the Forum was important and would set its shape for the future. After lengthy discussions within the committee about its focus, format and timing the co-clerks have taken the process forward and it will take place in Friends House on 23rd April 2016. The theme of the first meeting of the Forum will be 'Working together in the world: what do we do best and where do we go next'. Diane Randall of the Friends Committee on National Legislation in Washington DC (FCNL) will deliver the keynote speech. This has been a very effective process with priorities and criteria discussed with the full committee and detailed work and planning carried out by the co-clerks.

c. FWCC:

As the General Secretary of FWCC and the Executive Secretary of EMES are no longer members of the new QWRC it was felt important that we should ensure that an effective mechanism for the exchange of concerns, opportunities and information should be established. This has happened formally and informally, enabling us to have a better understanding of the challenges (especially financial) facing FWCC globally and regionally. The annual FWCC request for funding from BYM was passed to Trustees via this committee and with our support. QWRC felt that previously, because of close links with EMES, the focus had been on the concerns of European Friends. We decided to widen our knowledge and as a first step, individual members of QWRC prepared papers on the issues facing Quakers in each of the FWCC sections. We are planning to strengthen these links in the coming years as a means of fulfilling this aspect of our role more effectively.

d. With partners:

QWRC offers a special interest group and has a stall about our work with Quakers worldwide at Britain Yearly Meeting. In addition to our annual letter to Local Meetings concerning FWCC and its financial needs we have been promoting our willingness to speak with Local and Area Meetings about the work of FWCC and our role as representatives of BYM. This offer has been taken up by several Meetings and it is an area we would like to develop.

We have an active relationship with Woodbrooke and are planning a conference 16-18 September 'Living the Transformation'. It will be based on the learning from the FWCC World Plenary in Peru and ways in which it can be integrated into our own lives.

e. Future work

We have had a full agenda and concentrated on short and medium term priorities. We have identified and engaged with a number of opportunities in 2016 including the first meeting of the Forum and the follow up to Peru. In addition, we have identified a number of activities including, a new approach to our participation in Yearly Meeting in 2016; disseminating information about the world wide family of Friends post Peru through articles, speakers etc; reviewing the preparation and follow up for Friends from BYM attending European Yearly Meetings; extending our knowledge of the concerns of Yearly Meetings within the other three sections of FWCC; engaging other BYM Friends with international experience in our work and strengthening our links with CCIR.

The Committee has also identified a number of areas we wish to explore in the future which may or may not become part of our work. These include, deepening our knowledge of the different traditions within Quakers worldwide, engaging with them and trying to build bridges with members of BYM and encouraging intervisitation with Yearly Meetings beyond Europe from liberal and other traditions. We wish to consolidate our work to date so that we are in a good position to go forward.

4. Queries

As we focus on our purpose which is 'enriching understanding between Friends worldwide and engaging Quakers in Britain in Quaker issues and concerns around the globe' we try to concentrate our energies into:

- How do we engage local Friends with Quakers worldwide?
- How do we extend our understanding of different forms of Quaker worship and share it with local Friends?

Anne Bennett
Clerk
On behalf of QWRC

**Minute of a meeting of Quaker World Relations Committee
held 25 – 26 February 2016 at Woodbrooke Quaker Study
Centre, Birmingham.**

QWRC 16/02/10 Minute on Sustainability.

Six members of Quaker World Relations Committee have represented Britain Yearly Meeting at the Friends World Committee for Consultation World Plenary in Peru from 19 to 27 January 2016 and forward the International Representatives Meeting minute **IRM 16-20 Sustainability: Living Sustainably and Sustaining Life on Earth** to Meeting for Sufferings.



Marleen Schepers
Secretary, Quaker World Relations Committee

To: Meeting for Sufferings

IRM 16-20. Sustainability.

The Consultation on Sustainability, facilitated by Jonathan Woolley (Mexico City MM/Pacific YM; Staff, QUNO-Geneva), Rachel Madenyika (Staff, QUNO-NY), and Charlotte Gordon (Aotearoa/New Zealand YM) have presented a minute for our consideration:

Living Sustainably and Sustaining Life on Earth

The Light of Christ has inspired Quakers throughout the generations. As we gather together in Pisac, Peru in 2016, we feel this light stronger than ever in our calling to care for the Earth on which we live. It is calling us from all traditions: programmed, unprogrammed, liberal, and evangelical. It calls us to preserve this Earth for our children, our grandchildren and all future generations to come, working as though life were to continue for 10,000 years to come.

Be ready for action with your robes hitched up and your lamps alight. (Luke 12:35, Revised English Bible)

Our faith as Quakers is inseparable from our care for the health of our planet Earth. We see that our misuse of the Earth's resources creates inequality, destroys community, affects health and well-being, leads to war and erodes our integrity. We are all responsible for stewardship of our natural world. We love this world as God's gift to us all. Our hearts are crying for our beloved mother Earth, who is sick and in need of our care.

We are at a historical turning point. Internationally, the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals oblige governments to take action. Faith groups and other civil society are playing a major role. As Quakers, we are part of this movement. The FWCC World Conference approved the Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice in April 2012, while the FWCC World Office was a signatory to the Quaker statement on climate change in 2014 and divested from fossil fuels in June 2015.

We recognise that the environmental crisis is a symptom of a wider crisis in our political and economic systems. Our loving and well informed environmental actions as Friends, consistent with our spiritual values, must therefore work to transform these systems.

Many of us all over the Quaker world are taking practical actions as individuals and communities. At this Plenary, a consultation of more than sixty Friends from all over the world worked to build on these leadings with further practical action. The Annex attached to these minutes shows examples of what Friends are doing already or propose to do.

We must redouble our efforts right now. We must move beyond our individual and collective comfort zones and involve the worldwide Quaker community and others of like mind. Just as Jesus showed us, real change requires us to challenge ourselves to be effective instruments of change. We can do more.

On recommendation of this Consultation, and after some discussion, we adopt the following minute:

In this effort for sustainability, and mindful of the urgency of this work, this Plenary asks the FWCC World Office and Central Executive Committee to:

- **Invest FWCC World funds ethically.**
- **Share Quaker experiences with other faith groups** to inspire them to action, especially through the World Council of Churches.
- **Seek ways of connecting Friends worldwide that are sustainable.**
- **Facilitate dissemination of training materials on sustainability issues** for Quaker leaders, pastors and teachers.

This FWCC Plenary Meeting also asks all Yearly Meetings to:

- **Initiate at least two concrete actions** on sustainability within the next 12 months. These may build on existing projects of individuals or monthly meetings or they may be new initiatives. We ask that they encourage Young Friends to play key roles. We ask that meetings minute the progress and results, so as to share them with FWCC and Quaker meetings.
- **Support individuals and groups in their meetings** who feel called to take action on sustainability.
- **Support the work done by Quaker organisations** such as the Quaker United Nations Office and the Quaker Council for European Affairs to ensure that international agreements and their implementation support sustainability.

This FWCC Plenary Meeting asks individual Friends and groups (such as Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups and ad hoc groups within Meetings) to **Share inspiring experiences of living sustainably** on the new “sustainability webpage” of the Quakers in the World Website (<http://www.quakersintheworld.org/>). This webpage can be used as a source of ideas, inspiration and action.

Annex to the Minute: Possibilities for practical sustainability action from the Pisac consultation

Individuals can:

- Dedicate personal time to nature.
- Reduce consumption and use your consumer buying power to create change.
- Cut down on meat consumption, be aware of energy costs in production and transport of all foods and methane from ruminant animals, support sustainable agriculture.
- Travel – cycle, walk, use public transport or alternatives to private cars, keep air travel to a minimum.
- Grow your own food and plant trees.
- Be politically active in promoting sustainability concerns.
- Share environmental concerns through books, publications, conversations, electronic media
- Reduce energy use.
- Use less water and harvest water.
- Make time for spiritual connection with God.

Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups and small groups within Meetings can:

- Live in a community, share housing, participate in a transition town movement.

- Educate yourself and others.
- Share transport and equipment.
- Develop urban agriculture, community gardens, community supported agriculture, tree planting.
- Love nature and encourage others to do so: we protect the things we love; get children out in nature; take care of nature around your meeting house (e.g., picking up trash/litter).
- Invest ethically and divest from fossil fuels.
- Ensure meeting houses are carbon neutral.
- Build alliances, seek visibility, and approach legislators.
- Share sustainability skills.

Yearly Meetings can:

- Support the sustainability actions of Monthly Meetings.
- Build solidarity with local people.
- Support Quakers in politics and international work.
- Form support networks and alliances to make more impact – we can only do so much on our own.
- Invest ethically, including on sustainability issues.
- Practice what we preach.
- Discern and move concerns to action.
- Set targets for increased sustainability.
- Connect and share with other YMs, direct or via FWCC Sections and World Office

We recognise that different actions are relevant to different Quaker meetings in different parts of the world.

Letter of Greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting

Introduction

Each year, Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) sends representatives to other Yearly Meetings in Europe. We also send a letter of greetings, signed by the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings. Recently it has been our practice for Sufferings to approve the letter to Ireland Yearly Meeting (IYM), recognising that BYM and IYM have a particular relationship. This is usually done at the April meeting, and we'd scheduled that to happen this year. However, IYM will be meeting over the same weekend. So the clerk has already signed the letter, and it has been sent. It's copied here, for information.

15 March 2016

Dear Friends,

We send our loving greetings to Friends in Ireland as you meet together for your yearly meeting this year. We hold you in the Light, and offer prayerful support as you meet together. We are always inspired by the strength of your community, together with Britain Yearly Meeting representing the continuance of Quaker worship and witness stretching back to the time of George Fox and William Edmundson.

When Britain Yearly Meeting comes together in May at Friends House London, with the continuing theme of "Living out our faith in the world" it will be good to have among us our own – and other - FWCC representatives, filled by the transformative experience they shared in January with Friends from all Sections at the FWCC World Plenary Meeting in Pisac, Peru. Their message inspires us all to develop further our commitment to sustainability and to foster keener awareness of Friends as a world family in which every Yearly Meeting has a role to play in building community and sharing our values. We look forward to welcoming Friends from Ireland to explore our role in the world together.

In 2015 we, along with many other Quaker groups including your own yearly meeting, signed a shared statement on climate change and hoped significant results might come from the Paris talks in December. Progress towards a truly sustainable and just world remains agonisingly slow, but as we commemorate 100 years of the right to conscientious objection in the UK, we strive to discern in dark places the living seeds of change and remember that deep change is slow; making slavery illegal was the work of centuries not decades. Better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.

During the past year we have been struck by the development of the refugee crisis across Europe, and have called for safe passage for refugees across the continent. We are deeply aware of how our islands have experienced this crisis in a profoundly different way from much of mainland Europe. We hope we can continue a dialogue about how Quakers in Britain and Ireland can help make "refugees welcome" not just a sentiment, but a reality.

At our yearly meeting in 2015, we were called to work to understand the root causes of social and economic justice on our threatened planet, recognising the need "to turn the world the right way up again" This included revisiting our concern for housing, driven by our experience that a home is essential for spiritual well-being as well as physical and mental health.

We are also concerned by the potential for political changes to our social security system to impact the poorest in society the hardest, exacerbating economic inequality. We continue to work to address these problems and rebalance our society, trusting the light to lead us to a new social order.

So we draw strength from two 2015 initiatives whose spiritual depth grounds and sustains us. First, Our faith in the future is a very short document for all Quakers in Britain, giving us vision of what the Yearly meeting can become in the future and providing a simple, clear touchstone that can help us to decide our way forward when discerning Quaker work. It challenges us to act collaboratively, to make Quakers much more widely known and understood, and to be ready to articulate our values and help make them more active in the world. Second, we are all revisiting Quaker faith & practice as part of our preparation for any revision of our book of discipline. To read the book through, knowing that when we consider specific chapters, Friends in meetings all over the YM are doing the same is very exciting. We have a rich resource and are upheld in hope and spirit and community by this exercise.

Our representatives to your meeting have told us of its warmth and the strong sense of community. We pray that your Yearly Meeting this year will strengthen your spiritual life together, and your actions, living out your faith in the wider world.

In Friendship,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ethel Luemore". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "In Friendship," line.

Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings 2016 04 02 – minutes received from Area Meetings

1. Use of the phrase ‘Quakers in Britain’

Cambridgeshire AM minute 15.11.77 from the AM held on 12 November 2015 regarding the use of the phrase *Quakers in Britain* by the Communications Department at Friends House.

2. Decriminalisation of the possession for personal use of all drugs

Cornwall AM minute 7a from the AM held on 9 March 2013 regarding decriminalising the drug-user. Also attached is a briefing paper from Cornwall AM regarding the decriminalisation of the possession for personal use of all drugs.

3. Arms trade: UK sales to Saudi Arabia

North West London AM minute 16/07 **from the AM held on 13 January 2016 regarding the UK’s current relationship with Saudi Arabia.**

Ipswich & Diss AM minute 5/16 from the AM held on 23 January 2016 regarding the UK’s arms sales.

4. Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation

Dorset and South Wiltshire AM minute 16.18.2 from the AM held on 13th March 2016.

1. Use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain'

Cambridgeshire AM held 12 November 2015

Minute 15.11.77 – regarding the phrase Quakers in Britain

Further to minute 15.10.70 Trish Carn, Janet Scott and the Area Meeting Clerks have corresponded together to prepare a paper that outlines our concern regarding the use of the phrase Quakers in Britain by the Communications Department at Friends House. This paper has been read and is reproduced below:

Trish Carn has brought a concern to our Area Meeting regarding the apparently recurring use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain' for official and public declarations issuing from central office, rather than our official and registered title of Britain Yearly Meeting.

On further research this would seem to be used primarily by the Communications department, located in Friends House, for press releases.

We note that staff are also signing themselves as Quakers in Britain rather than using the name of their employer, Britain Yearly Meeting.

We are puzzled and perturbed that the title Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), which is the name of our Religious Society as registered with the Charity Commission and laid out in our governing document appears to be being dropped and replaced with this rather cosy phrase which means nothing and has no official standing. What is more, we would agree with our Friend Trish Carn that this phrase "Quakers in Britain" is misleading.

We play with words at our peril. We have already ceased to be 'Friends of Truth' always a high order of course, maybe the challenge was too great (!) and we frequently drop the 'religious' a further hidden danger that could lead those unfamiliar with our organisation to think we are just a friendly society. Please can rather more discipline be applied when we are speaking out to the public or to official bodies?

This Area Meeting sends this minute to Meeting for Sufferings hoping that it will endorse this concern and consider how best to progress it.

J. Jane Wheatley
Clerk

Notes from the Recording Clerk

Minute 15.11.77 of Cambridgeshire AM raises some interesting questions about BYM's use of the term "Quakers in Britain" in statements, printed materials and publications.

It is correct in stating that BYM's registered name is "Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)"; however, "Britain Yearly Meeting", "Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain" and "Quakers in Britain" are all in current usage.

In particular, the BYM website (www.quaker.org.uk) has used the heading "Quakers in Britain" for at least the last decade. More recently, "Quakers in Britain" has indeed become more prevalent, including in telephone answering protocols and email sign-offs.

An internal house style guide, prepared some years ago, and updated periodically by staff, sets out guidelines on usage, although these are not always applied consistently.

The matter is not straightforward, however; and for example, the following issues are worth considering:

- The term "Quakers in Britain" is readily understood by the wider public, whereas Britain Yearly Meeting (and its variants) are opaque to non-Friends. Integrity includes transparency as well as accuracy.
- Changing the usage, and particularly rebadging the website, would have major implications for the organisation. Meeting for Sufferings has been urging BYM to speak out on behalf of Quakers, and a change of 'branding' might well damage our ability to do this and lead to us being less recognised in the public square. From my understanding of discussions with Friends in Cambridgeshire AM, I do not believe this is their intention.
- It is not unusual for organisations to have a formal name which is longer or different from the name by which they are commonly known. However, we should be transparent in doing so, to be clear what is referred to. This might require some policy development, and revision of the style guidelines.
- Public statements released on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting or Meeting for Sufferings commonly start with the words 'Quakers in Britain...'. This is based on a recognition that these bodies can speak for the whole Quaker community in BYM. This is explained in the book of discipline, and provided for in the Speaking Out policy approved in February 2014 by Meeting for Sufferings (**MfS 2014/02/05**), and the guidelines. To what extent should we regard "Britain Yearly Meeting" and "Quakers in Britain" as synonymous?
- The term "Quakers in Britain" can lead to some odd grammatical constructions when used to describe the organisation; singular or plural?

Communications matters and associated policies, including on reputational issues, are the responsibility of BYM Trustees. I recommend referring this matter to BYM

Trustees in the first instance, before returning to it again, probably in the second half of 2016.

Paul Parker
Recording Clerk

2. Decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs

Introduction

The minute sent by Cornwall Area Meeting – which is copied below – is relatively long. Since it was written, the AM's concern has developed. Juliet Prager met with a group from the AM on 27th February, at Marazion Friends Meeting House; this introductory paper has been prepared with their agreement.

Background

The minute gives some background describing the history of the concern. The discussion on 27th February helped to clarify some misunderstandings which had arisen. At this stage, it may be more helpful to focus on the request which is now put to Meeting for Sufferings.

Requests to Meeting for Sufferings

The AM's minute asks two things:

- For BYM to encourage the UK Government to back a policy at the UN General Assembly Special Session "World Drug Problem" in April 2016.
- To test the AM's concern.

As explained below, Meeting for Sufferings is now asked to take forward only the second request.

UN General Assembly Special Session, April 2016

This request originated with Nicholas McGeorge, a member of Bournemouth and Coastal Area Meeting, who has long experience of engaging with UN bodies on behalf of Quakers, in relation to criminal justice issues. Quakers worldwide have an agreement to approach the UN alongside other Quaker bodies (rather than unilaterally).

Accordingly, Nicholas McGeorge has now drafted a statement which might be made on behalf of Quakers at the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) in April. Through an established process, this is being considered by the five relevant Quaker bodies (Friends World Committee for Consultation; Quaker Peace and Social Witness within BYM; QUNO Geneva; QUNO New York; and American Friends Service Council). If they are content that the statement is in accord with Friends' views and can be made on our behalf, Nicholas McGeorge will attend the UNGASS.

Testing the concern

Cornwall AM asks: '... that MfS test our concern and conduct a process of discernment regarding the decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs. We ask that MfS representatives raise the concern with their Area Meetings'.

Although some AMs have already given this matter consideration, not all have. Arrangements Group propose to bring this back to a later meeting (October or December 2016). In the meantime, other Area Meetings are encouraged to consider the concern in whatever way is right for them. This will allow time for AMs to send minutes, if they wish, and for representatives to be well-informed.

To help the testing process, Friends in Cornwall AM have prepared a briefing paper: a one-page executive summary is copied below, and the full paper (32 pages) will be

made available to AMs. They suggest focusing on three questions, which will also be circulated to AMs:

1. The majority of problematic drug users have experienced abuse or trauma as children and are therefore vulnerable. Which is right – punishment or compassionate health and social support for them?
2. In countries where decriminalisation has been implemented the prevalence of drug use has not increased. Criminalising drug users, whether they are ‘recreational’ or ‘problematic’, stigmatises, socially and economically excludes them – it causes them harm. What then is the purpose of criminalising the possession of drugs for personal use?
3. If a young person from your family got caught experimenting with drugs would you want them to have a criminal record which would spoil their life chances?

An emerging Quaker Recognised Body

Friends in Cornwall have already established a small group, currently called ‘Quaker Decriminalisation Network’. The group has a presence on Facebook -

www.facebook.com/groups/630116713798054/?fref=ts

This Network would welcome members from other parts of Britain. As and when it is ready, a proposal will come to Meeting for Sufferings for it to become a Quaker Recognised Body through the process agreed last December (**MfS 2015/12/17**).

Cornwall AM, held 12th September 2015

Decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs

The concern of Cornwall Area Meeting regards the decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all controlled drugs. We advocate the decriminalisation of all drugs. We ask for the support of MfS to test this concern in the hope that BYM will adopt this concern.

Our Quaker concern relates solely to the decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use of all drugs. It does not relate to the issues of supplying and selling drugs, producing drugs or trafficking drugs. The concern, also, does not relate to drug-related crime i.e. inquisitional crime committed in order to purchase drugs.

Background information / history of our concern

For more than five years Cornwall Area Meeting has been examining and discussing current drugs policy.

The concern was initially raised in the autumn of 2009 when a Member from Marazion Local Meeting brought the issue to our attention. He said that it was wrong that there was a war on drugs which was treating people who are drug dependent as criminals who must be punished, rather than human beings who need help. He had himself been dependent on heroin for many years and now runs an organisation to support people who are recovering from dependency. On 30 January 2010 Cornwall Area Meeting received a minute from Marazion Local Meeting and materials were circulated to local Meetings with a request that consideration be undertaken and written minutes be sent to the next Area Meeting. After discussion at Area Meeting on 13 March 2010 the Crime, Community and Justice Group was asked to assist in setting up a day conference which was held on 4 December 2010. This conference was attended by senior officers from the criminal justice systems and social care systems who all agreed with our premise that decriminalisation was the most rational and humane response to this issue. At Area Meeting on 8 January 2011 the minute from the conference was heard and three Friends were appointed to draft a minute for Meeting for Sufferings. On 7 May 2011 the minute was read and approved and the concern was adopted by Cornwall Area Meeting (see below). The minute was received in June 2011 by Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) and was forwarded to Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) on 9 July 2011. QPSW forwarded the minute to the Crime, Community and Justice Sub-Committee for their advice. The sub-committee asked for contact with Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs (QAAD) and requested that QAAD provide a briefing paper by September 2011 so that the sub-committee could provide MfS with information to help their testing of this concern.

Cornwall Area Meeting subsequently organised a workshop and agreed a working party to take this issue forward. The working party discussed an alternative approach to the criminalisation of drug use. A workshop took place on 26 January 2013 with representatives from QPSW and QAAD. Several recommendations were made at this workshop and the working party undertook work accordingly and drafted a further paper entitled, 'Reform of illegal drugs policy' together with a discussion paper entitled "how current law affects drug users and where changes are needed in the criminal justice system to shift the focus" and a two page summary of this paper which was published in The Friend on 14 November 2013. The original minute was amended as suggested and agreed at Cornwall Area Meeting on 9 March 2013 (see below). On

May 2013 the amended minute was sent to the Clerk of MfS. A response was received from the Deputy Recording Clerk which required consideration and discussion.

A response was returned to the Deputy Recording Clerk in June 2013 which detailed the history of our concern, the practical steps being taken by the Area Meeting and what specific action was being asked of MfS, what makes this a Quaker concern and detailed points about procedure. The response explained that QPSW had already looked at our concern as had QAAD (which had held a discussion on decriminalisation but had not been led to take a position). The response to the Deputy Recording Clerk explained that the matter had already been to MfS but had been the last item on the agenda when members were already leaving to catch trains.

On 22 July 2013 the Clerk of Cornwall Area Meeting circulated the amended minute to Area Meeting Clerks' Network. We received a number of supportive emails in return. However, the email used the phrase, "we have been asked by QPSW and QAAD to gather support" which we were told was not in the right ordering and should instead have been more on the lines of "sharing and testing our concern". We accepted that a misunderstanding had taken place regarding the outcomes of the workshop with QPSW and QAAD in January. The Deputy Recording Clerk circulated the QAAD briefing paper to Area Meeting Clerks.

In September 2013 Cornwall Area Meeting agreed a minute to the Convenor of the Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) for the BYM Agenda Committee which detailed the history of our concern, actions taken and information regarding the concern itself. We asked the Agenda Committee to consider the topic for the 2014 BYM agenda. On 2 January 2014 another article about decriminalisation by a member of our working party (Nicholas McGeorge from Bournemouth Meeting) was published by The Friend. The Friend recently published a further article about decriminalisation in Portugal by members of the working party.

After a period of respite the Cornwall Area Meeting working party resumed its work several months ago and has prepared a briefing paper to accompany this minute.

Planned work to test our concern further

It is time to test again this concern among Friends. It is now Cornwall Area Meeting's wish to email our concern again to the Area Meeting Clerks' Network and also to set up a national network of Friends concerned about this and to use this network to take this issue forward and advocate change.

The concern

In the UK many people use illicit drugs: some use drugs for pleasure or for other reasons and suffer few consequences while others become dependent on drugs and suffer serious consequences.

In the 18th century in England, Quakers established the first modern hospital for the treatment of mental disorders – the Retreat at York. Previously, the method was to imprison the mentally ill, often chained to walls and living in appalling conditions. Today, people are still punished and imprisoned for using illegal drugs.

It is time for Quakers speak out for change, believing in a healing rather than a punitive approach to dependent drug use and believing in a rational response to recreational

drug use. We believe that all drug policy should be evaluated on how effectively it reduces harm to individuals, families and communities.

We are deeply aware of the devastating impact of the current UK drugs policy in that it criminalises all sectors of the community for personal drug use. In 2011/12 there were 229,103 drug offences¹ of which 86% related to drug possession. 1,247 people were imprisoned for having possession of a controlled drug, 655 were given a suspended sentence and 21,862 were fined.

Having a criminal record prevents people from fulfilling their personal potential. In addition, are the significant related issues of social and economic exclusion and inequality, particularly in relation to young people from Black and Ethnic Minority communities, poor people, vulnerable people and people from Black and Ethnic Minority communities. There is a huge racial disparity in rates of stop and search, arrest, prosecution and sentencing outcomes.

It is accepted that prevalence is influenced in the main by social, economic and cultural factors. Decriminalisation with concurrent investment in treatment and harm reduction services can lead to a number of very positive outcomes. Evidence from Portugal which decriminalised the personal use of all drugs in 2001 shows the following gains: personal drug use no longer attracts a criminal record and so drug users are no longer damaged by this; voluntary access to and uptake of treatment and prevention services has improved; HIV infection rates are down and drug related deaths have markedly decreased; the criminal justice system is able to concentrate on drug trafficking. Importantly, there has been no substantial increase in the prevalence of drug use. Portugal shows small variations in trends and numbers in common with its European neighbours.

¹ A Fresh Approach to Drugs. The final report of the UK Drug Policy Commission. (2012)

What we ask of MfS

1. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2010 published a report, 'From Coercion to Cohesion: Treating drug dependence through health care, not punishment'. It uses research evidence to show that a health-based approach results in both less restriction of liberty and better prospects for the future of the individual and society. We support UNODC in urging a more humane policy to drug users and their problems. We ask Britain Yearly Meeting to encourage the UK Government to back this policy at the UN General Assembly Special Session "World Drug Problem" in April 2016.
2. We ask that MfS test our concern and conduct a process of discernment regarding the decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs. We ask that MfS representatives raise the concern with their Area Meetings. We hope that a process of testing and discernment will lead to BYM agreeing to support decriminalisation and issuing a statement to that effect.

We attach a briefing paper from Cornwall Area Meeting which provides information we consider relevant to exploring this concern.

Linking concerns to faith

The concern stems from the negative and discriminatory effects of criminalisation on individuals in terms of inequality, poverty and social exclusion.

Referring to the Quaker testimonies, Chris Lawson wrote: "Finding ways of expressing the testimonies that are relevant to present times is a continuing challenge. Such expressions will not necessarily seem practical, tactful, sensible, and expedient or in line with some current vogue of thinking, for they are based on what seems right in an absolute sense of inner conviction." (QF&P 20.17) Cornish Quakers wish to share their sense of inner conviction with the Society of Friends as a whole and to speak truth to power.

Cornwall Area Meeting 12th September 2015 held at Bude Local Meeting Clerk – Marion Coleman

Cornwall AM Briefing paper - Executive summary

Cornwall Area Meeting has raised a concern about the negative consequences of criminalising personal drug use. This concern focusses on the need to decriminalise the possession of all drugs for personal use. The concern does not address the production, importing or selling of drugs, nor does it address drug related crime (crimes committed to enable the purchase of drugs).

Criminalising personal drug use exacerbates the social exclusion of vulnerable individuals, as it impacts negatively on educational attainment, employment, travel and generally on life chances and future wellbeing.

Substantial numbers of people are criminalised in the UK for their drug use. In the years 2011/12, 42,067 people were sentenced for the possession of an illegal drug: 1,247 people were sentenced to immediate custody; 655 were given a suspended sentence; 8,136 were sentenced to community service, 21,862 were fined; 10,167 received other disposals. All received a criminal record. Recent studies show that people from BAME communities are disproportionately affected at all stages of the criminal justice process, from arrest to sentencing.

A good minority of the UK population uses, or has used, drugs recreationally. For a much smaller group of people recreational use may develop into problematic use. This latter group of people are the ones who are in need of support. The major determinants of drug use becoming problematic are deprivation and childhood abuse or trauma. In 2013 – 2014 there were estimated to be over 293,000 opiate and crack cocaine users in England. Of these 193,000 were in contact with treatment services.

A range of international studies conclude there is little or no relationship between the legal status of drug use of a country and the rate of drug use within it. Removing penalties for drug use does not result in an increase in overall drug use. It is accepted by many analysts that the prevalence of drug use tends to rise and fall in line with broader cultural, social or economic trends. Portugal is perhaps the clearest and most relevant demonstration that decriminalisation does not increase the prevalence drug use. The whole administration addressing drug use is under the healthcare sphere with a consistent and coherent policy which has been functioning since 2001.

A decriminalisation approach coupled with investment in harm reduction and treatment services can have a positive impact on both individual drug users and society as a whole.

Decriminalisation does appear to direct more drug users into treatment, reduce criminal justice costs and shield many drug users from the devastating impact of a criminal conviction.

Calls for reform to the drugs policy framework have come from a number of eminent sources. They include the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, the Global Commission on Drug Policy, the UK Drug Policy Commission, the UK Advisory Committee on the Misuse of Drugs, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Human Rights Watch and eminent medics. Many authoritative voices call for the end of the criminalisation of drug users.

We raise this concern as Quakers because it is not ethical to punish people for their vulnerability and we feel deep concern and compassion for those harmed by criminalisation.

By advocating for this concern we are expressing our love in action.

3 Arms trade: UK sales to Saudi Arabia

Introduction

Two Area Meetings have sent minutes on the same topic. One of the minutes was also sent to Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW).

The two minutes are copied below, followed by a response from Quaker Peace and Social Witness staff. Arrangements Group suggest that the two minutes could be forwarded to QPSW Central Committee, for any further advice.

North West London AM held on 13 January 2016

Minute 16.01.07 - Concern about the UK's relationship with Saudi Arabia

Friends House Meeting have sent us the following minute:

Minute 16/07 - Concern about focusing the UK's relationship with Saudi Arabia

QPSW has issued statements regularly against arming the sides in the Syrian conflict and also against capital punishment around the world, but have not specifically focused on Saudi Arabia. We realise that singling out for public criticism the UK's relationship with Saudi Arabia at this time is a rather trickier judgement.

We are particularly concerned at the executions of those who campaigned for reform in Saudi Arabia, and the UK's subsidized arms trade with the regime, but we are also concerned not to muddle the work QPSW is already taking forward. However, we feel it would be appropriate to test this concern and also take forward pressure on our own politicians, but be careful not to appear to take sides in the conflict in the Middle East.

We would like QPSW to re-evaluate the UK relationship with Saudi Arabia and take forward any action that would then seem to them appropriate.

We bring this minute to Area Meeting on 13 January for their discernment."

Tristan Jovanovic of Friends House Meeting presented this concern. We agree to send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings and QPSW.

Dugan Cummings
Clerk, NW London Area Quaker Meeting

Ipswich & Diss AM held on 23 January 2016

Minute 5/16 - Concern regarding arms sales to Yemen

We have heard details of the appalling conditions in Yemen and the part that reckless sales of arms from Britain has played in fuelling these.

We feel that Quakers in Britain should call on David Cameron to stop arms sales to Yemen. We agree to send our concern to Meeting for Sufferings, with a request that a statement is made by BYM and/or a letter written to the government. We also ask Friends to consider supporting those organisations which have been campaigning in this area, such as Campaign Against Arms Trade and Amnesty International'.

Jen Lerner
Clerk, Ipswich and Diss AM

Contribution from QPSW staff

North West London AM referred in its minute to statements made regarding the Syrian conflict. A statement titled 'Quakers respond to terrorism' was issued in November 2015, as Parliament prepared to debate next steps in Syria.

www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/quakers-responding-to-terrorism

Sam Walton, QPSW Programme Manager: Peace & Disarmament, writes:

We initially discussed including Saudi Arabia indirectly in the statement, as we considered mentioning Yemen in the second paragraph. It was a finely balanced decision for us not to. It ended up reading:

"It is human nature that the closer suffering comes to us, the more acutely we feel the pain and grief. But that experience should sensitise us to the suffering caused repeatedly by acts of war and violent crime in more distant places, including Beirut, Sinai, Bamako and Aleppo. It should strengthen our determination to build a safer world together."

I completely agree with the AM's emphasis on the arms trade with Saudi Arabia. The British arms trade is out of control all over the world, but nowhere is this more evident in our trade with Saudi Arabia. British military and arms company personnel are currently actively involved in a war in Yemen which is being waged largely with weapons we have sold. I'm not even going to start on their human rights record or their oppression of Bahrain. For me, by campaigning against the arms trade we necessarily will criticise Saudi Arabia and our overly close relationship with it.

We are actively involved in opposing the arms trade. Because of the quiet nature of our work and the security which I am given in not needing to 'brand' the work and take credit, the work done by QPSW is not always evident. One example is that in July we are hosting the European Network Against Arms Trade in Friends House in multiple rooms over three days – and of course arms exports to Saudi are a avital element of what the meeting will focus on. We have hosted all the big training & organising meetings for Stop the Arms Fair Coalition since we initiated it in 2016 and will continue to do so for as long as the world's largest arms fair happens in London.

I am aware that this of course does not directly address your concerns around “re-evaluate the UK relationship with Saudi Arabia”. Ultimately, government has to do that. But I can assure that we are working will allies in the peace movement to do this, as much as we can. I think your AM minute shows your concern well – I will put it before the clerk of the Peace, Education, Campaigning & Networking Sub-Committee for further consideration.

As Jo Vallentine put it in *Quaker faith & practice* 29.09:

“We have to take responsibility in our own countries for the trade in weapons, which will continue unless we intensify our actions against it. Let us do this together as an international body. Let us picture where Jesus Christ would be in this matter. What would he be saying about the trade in weapons? I often have to remind myself of this, and I even try to remind some of my colleagues in the Australian Senate – well, what would Jesus be saying about this or that – and it pulls them up a bit short, I can tell you.

He would be there, he would be working with us, he would be arguing and doing everything in his power to ensure that this trade, which is totally immoral, was stopped as soon as possible. It’s a big job, Friends, but Quakers have often taken on a prophetic role in the past. We should be glad of the example of the slave abolitionists and remember their strength, their courage, their witness, and do likewise now.”

If Friends want to take action on arms sales to Saudi Arabia Campaign Against Arms Trade’s main campaign focuses on this. At time of writing there are under 5,000 signatures – I know from experience that Friends can get at least a couple of thousand signatures if they focus on a petition – so we can really contribute to this campaign. (It is worth noting that this campaign was launched after these two minutes were written.)

4 Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation

Dorset and South Wiltshire Area Meeting held on 13th March 2016

16.18.2 Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation.

David Milner spoke to us of the concern from Dorchester Meeting about Conscientious Objection to Military Taxation. Quakers have a history of refusing first to fight, and secondly to contribute via taxation to the funding of war. Taxes for Peace, a 10 Minute Bill is planned to be heard in the Houses of Parliament on 18th May, introduced by Ruth Cadbury MP. Area Meeting supports this concern and would like to draw the attention of Meeting for Sufferings to this Bill and asks what action the Society of Friends will take in support of it.

The clerks suggest this minute could be forwarded to Quaker Peace and Social Witness, asking it to take action and to report back to our next meeting.

Meeting for Sufferings 2016 04 02 – minutes received from Central Committees and other bodies

1. **Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee** minute QPSWCC 15/121 from the meeting held over the weekend of 20 – 22 November 2015 regarding Crime, Community & Justice. This is accompanied by **the paper 'Vision for a criminal justice system'**.
2. **BYM Sustainability Group** minute 8 from the meeting held on 15 November 2015 responding to Wensleydale & Swaledale AM minute 15/20 from the AM held on 8 March 2015 regarding sustainability & new energy technologies.

1. Vision for a criminal justice system: a view from the Quaker Peace & Social Witness Crime, Community & Justice Sub-committee

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee minute QPSWCC 15/121

from the meeting held over the weekend of 20 – 22 November 2015 regarding Crime, Community & Justice. Also attached is a copy of the revised paper 'Vision for a criminal justice system'.

QPSWCC 15/121 Crime, Community & Justice:

CCJS/2015/36 - Vision statement on justice – including paper 'Vision for a criminal justice system'

We welcome this minute and the revised paper 'Vision for a criminal justice system' and commend it to Meeting for Sufferings for their consideration.

We send this part minute to CCJS and MfS.

Charlotte Seymour-Smith
Clerk

Vision for a criminal justice system: a view from the Quaker Peace & Social Witness Crime, Community & Justice Sub-committee

As Quakers we believe in that of God in everyone, no matter what they have done. We are not for names, nor men, nor titles of Government, nor are we for this party nor against the other ... but we are for justice and mercy and truth and peace and true freedom, that these may be exalted in our nation, and that goodness, righteousness, meekness, temperance, peace and unity with God, and with one another, that these things may abound.

Edward Burrough, 1659. *Quaker faith & practice** 23.11

Quakers have a long tradition of concern with crime, community and justice and we believe this gives our voice particular value which may fruitfully be added to others saying similar things. Arising from a long and careful process of discernment we, the Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) Crime, Community and Justice Sub-committee (CCJS) have encapsulated our own view of a criminal justice system in these two sentences:

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.

QPSW Crime, Community and Justice Sub-committee, 2009

Following the example of Edward Burrough, we now articulate for ourselves what we 'are for' and what we 'are against' in the British criminal justice system for adults as measured against this vision.

Victims

We are for giving care and support to the victims of crime, making sure their needs are met so that their equilibrium can be restored. We are for helping the people around both victims and offenders to support them so that healthy relationships can be restored.

Offenders

We are against the simplistic concept of good victims and bad criminals. We are for treating offenders as people who need help to take responsibility for themselves and their actions. We are for helping offenders understand their actions and move into a useful, happy and constructive life. We are for recognising that many offenders are also victims.

Vulnerable' adults

We are against provisions and practices that act as a barrier to vulnerable adults being properly heard. We are against attitudes and behaviour towards people with mental illness, emotional disturbance, Specific Learning Difficulties, physical disabilities or addictive behaviour which prejudice their right to fair and respectful treatment.

We are for appropriate professional assessment and diagnosis of the mental and emotional state of people caught up in the criminal justice system.

We are for appropriate support being available to all vulnerable people in the criminal justice system whether as victim, offender, witness, or family member. We are for both the assessment and the support being initiated as early as possible in the process.

We are for good quality training to make police, courts and judiciary aware of the variety of ways in which a person can be 'vulnerable' and how their specific needs can be met.

Punishment

We are against punishment for its own sake: Jesus taught us to forgive and try to help the wrongdoer. We are against a criminal justice system based primarily on deterrence and retribution. We are against an assumption that only a punitive outcome matters. We are against criminal sentences which disengage people further from the society which imposes them.

We are for holding offenders accountable for their actions and for balancing wrongdoing by reparation. We are for a response to crime based on making things better for the victim and the offender, and thus for society. Punishment alone disengages people further from the society that imposes it. We are for offenders attaining reintegration and acceptance.

Sentencing

We are against sentencing being based on the principles of retribution or reflection of public anger. We are against the assumption that further crime is prevented through punishment. A criminal sentence should have a positive purpose, and is more likely to be effective if the expected outcome is clearly identified.

We are for measures to help sentencers be aware of the effect of their decisions upon everyone affected: the offender, their family (particularly any dependent children or others for whom the offender is the primary carer), the victim and their family, and the wider community. We are for all sentencing saying clearly what its purpose is and the actions needed to achieve that purpose.

We are for a criminal justice system that allows for a variety of ways of responding to criminal behaviour to be considered. We are for measures which aim to persuade and enable offenders to reflect on their acts and change their future behaviour. We are for the availability of restorative justice processes throughout our criminal justice system.

Use of prison

We are against the use of prison as a default response to offending when other penalties have not been adequately explored and properly rejected. We are against a prison system that seeks to detain people for longer than necessary, whether this be for profit or political expediency: either motive is morally repugnant.

We are for the use of prison only when there is no reasonable alternative. Only offenders who pose a genuine, immediate and/or violent threat to society need to be incarcerated. When prison is truly the only reasonable response, it should be compassionate and rehabilitative. We are for non-custodial measures wherever possible.

Prison experience

Being sent to prison is itself the punishment. The deprivation of liberty and all that goes with it should not be exacerbated by bad treatment inside prison. We are against punitive regimes and degrading conditions. We are against long periods of incarceration without meaningful activity.

We are for the provision of education, training and useful work whilst in prison. We are for the provision of activities which will nurture mind and spirit as well as physical well-being. We are for the provision of health care, addiction treatments and nutritious food that will lead to the good physical and mental health of the offender. We are for these things being provided for all prisoners regardless of the length of their sentence.

Prisoners

We are against practices and behaviour in prison which undermine the dignity of prisoners. We are against a prison service that uses a profit motive or public expenditure cuts to treat prisoners in any way that fails to meet their basic needs as human beings.

We are for supporting prisoners and treating them with respect, whilst holding them accountable for their behaviour. We are for a prison service which treats people with respect and humanity.

Prisoners' families

We are against treatment of prisoners' families that undermines their dignity and shows indifference to their needs.

We are for helping to keep prisoners' families together. We are for prisoners being held as close to their families and friends as possible. We are for the provision of visitors' centres where information, practical support and pastoral care are available and which include visiting facilities for the children of prisoners.

Prison staff

We are against prisons being understaffed or staffed by people who are not properly paid, trained and supported. We are against either profit motive or public expenditure cuts being the rationale for decisions that adversely affect maintaining high standards of service in the prison estate.

We are for treating prison staff with respect and supporting them in their difficult role. We are for adequate staffing in all prisons, with appropriate recruitment, training, pay, supervision and professional support. We are for holding prison staff at all levels accountable for the way in which they carry out their responsibilities.

Women offenders

We are against women being sent to prison for reasons other than would be applied to male offenders, such as 'for their own good' or 'to teach them a lesson or for 'their own safety'. We are against women being sentenced more harshly than men in similar circumstances.

Where prison is necessary for a woman, we are for provision which takes account of the fact that women prisoners' physical, mental and emotional needs differ from those of men.

We are for the promotion of integration between the various government departments responsible for meeting the needs of women who offend or are at risk of offending.

Treatment of drug users

In the same way as it is inappropriate to imprison some people who have a mental illness, it is counter-productive to use imprisonment as a means of rehabilitating drug abusers.

Diversion to treatment recognises the dangers of drug use and misuse as primarily a public health issue.

Where drug dependency is a factor in other criminal behaviour we are for properly resourced and voluntary drug treatment being provided as an alternative to criminal justice sanctions.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation services need to be well planned, resourced and integrated. This will necessarily be expensive, but the saving in the long term will pay back dividends and the benefit to society will be beyond measure.

We are for measures which will help offenders avoid further reoffending and aid their reintegration into the community. We are for open-hearted, non-judgmental mentoring which dispassionately examines the circumstances that led to offending. We are for help to find work and accommodation in a suitable location upon release. We are for continuing support from probation, family, one-on-one mentoring and other 'services' like Circles of Support & Accountability for as long as the individual needs it.

Restorative justice

The restorative process is challenging and a satisfactory outcome depends on good practice leading to dialogue, understanding and appropriate reparation. It can be much more demanding and difficult for both victims and offenders, and more effective than punishment and prison.

We are for the use of restorative justice being available to everyone who wants it, victims and offenders, and at all stages of the criminal justice process. We are for giving both the offender and victim the chance to understand what happened. It is often helpful to be able to put the events into perspective, preventing what might be painful events from dominating the lives of those affected. Forgiveness can help to heal both parties: we are for providing this opportunity for it to happen.

We are for the right of victims to participate in restorative justice if they wish because it can help them to express their feelings and put a face to the crime. It can lead to their receiving an apology and reparation. We are for enabling offenders to respond to victims and offer apology and reparation. This helps offenders understand the harm which has been done and gives them a chance of putting things right.

Community justice

Communities play an essential role in reducing criminal behaviour. We are against the acceptance of a 'them' and 'us' divide, and the fostering of a blame culture. We are against the use of force as the default response for dealing with violence.

We are for helping people to understand conflict and to find ways of resolving it without resorting to violence. We are for understanding and addressing the root causes of violence and criminal behaviour and putting resources into addressing them.

We are for supporting local initiatives and partnerships in activities to achieve this. We are for involving local communities and voluntary organisations in working with prisoners, with victims of crime, and in the criminal justice system. We are for giving

prisoners the right to vote and encouraging their sense of belonging to society. We are for reconciliation.

Ethics of privatisation

Dealing with an offender is a public responsibility that should be the direct duty of the state: a private provider of services is responsible to its clients and its shareholders rather than to society. Thus an ethical conundrum arises over the degree of public accountability when prisons and probation services are delegated to private companies. We are against a delivery of these state responsibilities that is not fully transparent and publicly accountable. We are against creating circumstances in which financial profit can be made by regarding people as commodities.

We are for the state taking direct responsibility for its prisons and prisoners, as it takes responsibility for all of its criminal justice system. We are for transparency and the provision of prisons and probation services. We are for measures to ensure that high standards of probity are maintained.

Summary

We believe there is that of God in everyone: if I hurt another, I hurt myself and I have a responsibility with others to repair the harm. We see the criminal justice system as society's response to a breakdown in relationships which has brought about harm. We believe that restoring relationships to meet the needs of those affected by crime and sustain safer communities is done better through restorative justice than through punishment.

We are for a compassionate, positive, caring and non-judgemental society which helps its weaker citizens. Only a society like that has real moral strength and can offer all its citizens a contented life with less crime and less social division.

Quaker Peace & Social Witness, Crime, Community and Justice Sub-committee
September 2015

Quaker Peace & Social Witness is part of the central organisation of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain. It's Crime, Community and Justice Sub-Committee supports and represents Quakers in the area of crime and community justice.

**Quaker faith & practice*: the book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain. <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk>

2 Sustainability and New Energy Technologies

Introduction

The minute from BYM Sustainability Group is followed by the minute from Wensleydale and Swaledale AM.

BYM Sustainability Group Minutes from a meeting held at Friends House, Friday 13 November 2015

8a Minutes received: Wensleydale & Swaledale AM

We have received minute MfS/15/07/11 from Meeting for Sufferings, requesting advice from us and from QPSWCC on a minute received from Wensleydale and Swaledale Area Meeting. The area meeting wants Quakers to:

“speak out by sending a strong and clear message to our Government and politicians, asking them to act more decisively and urgently on the issue of Climate Change and to divert funds spent on the manufacture of arms to investment in research and the creation of benign and renewable forms of energy.”

Sunniva Taylor and Laurie Michaelis have talked with the clerk of the Area Meeting, seeking to understand the background to the minutes and explore possible ways forward. Friends in the Area Meeting do not seem to have been aware of existing centrally managed work and other Quaker work in this area. Laurie and Sunniva have briefed them through the AM Clerk on current and recent work such as the statement on climate change adopted at YM in 2009, and the statement produced for the climate negotiations last year by Quaker groups, coordinated by QUNO. BYM's divestment from fossil fuels received coverage in the national media and QPSW ESP Group has been campaigning for fossil fuel divestment and investment in renewables. There is ongoing centrally managed work on disarmament and campaigning against Trident renewal but we do not feel it would necessarily be helpful to link this in our messaging with the need for investment in renewables. Calls to reform fossil fuel subsidies are more relevant. Recipients of the Earth and Economy newsletter are frequently encouraged to take action, including writing to MPs and responding to government consultations, on legislation and other issues.

In addition, we would encourage members of the Area Meeting to attend the Swanwick gathering we are planning in March 2016. We hope the gathering is one way in which we can support local and area meetings as they grapple with issues of climate change and sustainability. We share these concerns, and know that they are also shared in other parts of the yearly meeting. We also experience the frustration of trying to persuade those in power to respond appropriately to these pressing issues.

We forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Committee.

Wensleydale and Swaledale AM held on 8 March 2015

Minute 15/20 Sustainability and new energy technologies

Following our Minute 15/11, which was sent to Meeting for Sufferings via the Recording Clerk's Office, we received a request for further clarification of exactly what we are asking of Meeting for Sufferings. We therefore held a threshing meeting on 8 February at Bainbridge Meeting House at which 15 Friends were present to voice and listen to concerns about sustainability and climate change.

We acknowledge our diversity of opinion on this issue but unite in wanting Quakers to speak out by sending a strong and clear message to our Government and politicians, asking them to act more decisively and urgently on the issue of Climate Change and to divert funds spent on the manufacture of arms to investment in research and the creation of benign and renewable forms of energy.

We are grateful for the work already being done by the Economics, Sustainability and Peace sub-committee of Quaker Peace & Social Witness and welcome the document on Energy Justice. Some of us are also concerned that achieving sustainability with regard to Climate Change may no longer be possible and that the word 'sustainability' may be lulling us into a false sense of security when what we need to be doing is adapting and making ready for an insecure future. We welcome the work begun by Quakers in the area of adaptation and ask that greater emphasis is placed on helping us to understand what this means for us globally, locally, practically and spiritually. We regard this as a moral issue.

We will send this Minute to Meeting for Sufferings. Minute 15/18 from Bainbridge Local Meeting has been received and we will attach this.

Signed: Ian Hunter Smart co-clerk

Minute received from Bainbridge Local Meeting held on 1 March 2015: 15/18 Climate Change

John Warren brought his concern to the Meeting in more detail than previously, and, after more discussion, the Meeting united with it and agreed to move it forward to Area Meeting. One of our members was unable to unite with the process.

Here is the paper from John Warren.

By far the greatest problem of our time is GLOBAL WARMING. It underlies our whole existence.

The key issue is the secondary atmospheric pollution by methane. If as a result of pollution by carbon dioxide global temperatures rise sufficiently, methane could be discharged from the Oceans and the Tundra in unstoppable volumes and in sufficient quantity to cause mass extinctions on this planet. This risk cannot be taken. We must have in mind earlier planetary history. The origin of most of the methane trapped as a toffee-like substance on the sea bed may be the product of luxuriant conditions in the Carboniferous Period. This era was succeeded by the Permian period of 250 million years when, through overheating some 95% of life on this planet was extinguished. This sequence could be repeated. Methane now contained by low temperature and high pressure could be released by modest climate change due to emissions of

Carbon Dioxide. Continuing use of fossil fuels puts us in danger of a temperature rise, which although modest will have the secondary effect of releasing uncontrollable 'greenhouse' gas emissions. There are technical solutions to this problem however, but they demand prompt action. Our place in this is to press relentlessly for an urgent, radical change of tactic worldwide. We should universally but incrementally set aside military expenditures on armaments and research, diverting these funds and skills towards benign energy production and adding further resources as necessary.

This generation, our generation, has a profound moral responsibility to its successors. If we fail to contain the greenhouse effects of the use of fossil fuels, we may condemn those who follow us to the horrors of population destruction on an unimaginable scale. It is contrary to our way of thinking to let this happen.