



Yearly Meeting of  
the Religious Society  
of Friends in Britain

## **To members of Meeting for Sufferings**

20 January 2017

### **Meeting for Sufferings will be held on Saturday 4 February 2017**

Dear Friends

I hope that you are looking forward to our first meeting of 2017 on Saturday 4th February in the George Fox Room, second floor of Friends House. Do register on-line so that we know who will be coming and then sign –in on arrival to meet fire regulations.

Our agenda is full and varied as you will see. We start with a report from the BYM Sustainability Group which was first set up after Yearly Meeting in 2011 and for which we are responsible. Has the group done what we have asked of them? It is now time to start the process of setting up a review of the Group, to confirm that it's the right way to take our commitment forward. You will see that the Group would also like us to endorse their revised recommendations for action.

Then we receive minutes sent to us and consider what should be done. Arrangements Group agreed at their last meeting that where possible they would try to indicate the possible actions that might be taken by Sufferings. This is in order to help representatives to have greater clarity as they prepare for decisions, which are only made in the meeting in our usual worshipful manner.

The second part of the morning is given to a consideration of our annual report and a review of our own working and effectiveness. The report gives us a chance to reflect on what we have done in 2016 and may help us to consider what we need to focus on in 2017. We will need to adopt it to send to Yearly Meeting and if you have any substantial amendments you wish to suggest, *please let us know before Monday 30th January.*

We also want to review how we operate as representatives and fulfil the responsibilities laid upon us. We are half-way through the triennium and so it is right to review how well we understand what we are about and how we can better fulfil our role. We will break into our home groups (roughly by geographical area) to consider this in greater depth and there will be a brief report back after lunch. We want to share good practice throughout our Area Meetings and to be an effective channel for the Spirit within our Yearly meeting.

In the afternoon, following nominations and appointments, we have the report of Quaker Housing Trust – they report to us only once every three years, primarily for our information as they are an independent body but it is good to have a picture of the important work that they do. We will hear more about the plans for Yearly Meeting at Warwick University in the summer and we will have time for worship together before we conclude at about 4pm.

As ever, do not hesitate to contact me via [sufferings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:sufferings@quaker.org.uk) if you have any queries about anything in the papers.

I wish you joy and peace as you prepare yourselves for our meeting

Yours in Friendship



Anne Ullathorne,  
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

**Papers enclosed with this mailing**

Agenda

MfS Arrangements Group minutes 2016 12 12

MfS 2017 02 05

Britain Yearly Meeting Sustainability Group report

MfS 2017 02 06a

Minutes from Area Meetings not taken elsewhere

MfS 2017 02 06b

Minutes from Central Committee's not taken elsewhere

MfS 2017 02 07

Meeting for Sufferings Annual Report

MfS 2017 02 08a & b

Meeting for Sufferings – mid-triennium check in

MfS 2017 02 10

Quaker Housing Trust Triennial Report 2013-16

# Meeting for Sufferings 4 February 2017

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



## Agenda

09:00 Arrivals

10:00 Session starts

### 1. Opening worship

### 2. Welcome and introductions

### 3. Agenda

Adoption and acceptance of the agenda.

### 4. Membership

(MfS 2017 02 04 – tabled paper)

### 5. Britain Yearly Meeting Sustainability Group report (For decision)

Lis Burch, clerk to the BYM Sustainability Group, will speak to their report.

(MfS 2017 02 05)

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

#### a) Area Meeting minutes (MfS 2017 02 06a)

**Pendle Hill AM minute 4** from the meeting held on 10 December 2016  
regarding fracking for shale gas.

**(For decision)**

#### b) Central Committee Minutes (MfS 2017 02 06b)

**Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee minute QPSWCC  
16/109** from the meeting held 18-20 November 2016 regarding the promotion  
of Cadet Forces in Scottish State Schools.

**(For consideration)**

Break

### 7. MfS Annual Report (for approval)

To consider the report from Meeting for Sufferings to Yearly Meeting 2017.

(MfS 2017 02 07)

### 8. Meeting for Sufferings: mid-triennium check-in

The clerk will introduce this item, and we will consider it in home groups.

(MfS 2017 02 08a and b).

12.45 – 14.15          Lunch in the Restaurant

Informal lunchtime gatherings in the William Penn suite:

Meet members of Quaker Housing Trust

Meet members of BYM Sustainability Group and QPSW staff

BYM Trustees are not reporting formally but will also be present

**8. (continued) Meeting for Sufferings: mid-triennium check-in**

Facilitated feedback from the home groups.

**9. Appointments**

**(MfS 2017 02 09 – tabled paper)**

**10. Quaker Housing Trust report**

**(For information)**

Jenny Brierley, the Clerk of Quaker Housing Trust will speak to their report.

**(MfS 2017 02 10)**

Break

**11. Yearly Meeting 2017 agenda**

**(for information)**

Deborah Rowlands, clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting, will speak to the proposed agenda for Yearly Meeting 2017.

15:45          Closing worship

16.00          Close  
Tea, coffee and departures.

# **Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group**

Held on 12th December 2016 at Friends House.

**Present:** Margaret Bryan (convenor), Sue Goodson, Ursula Fuller, Jane Pearn, Anne Ullathorne and Juliet Prager

## **1. Reflections on our December meeting and YP's participation day**

We have reflected on the meeting and participation day held on 3rd December.

Initial feedback indicates that the Young People had a good day particularly in meeting their AM reps over lunch. We noted our minute 2016.12.40 about Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) in which MfSAG is asked to do some initial thinking on the ways in which MfS can work more effectively with QLCC and will return to this in due course.

We feel that draft minutes can be helpful to speed the process and recognise the importance of being selective about what we read out.

It is not helpful to table so many papers on the day and we will implement a cut off of the Monday before Sufferings in future.

## **2. Meetings held since the last MfSAG**

All members of the MfSAG attended the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee threshing weekend at Woodbrooke, 11th -13th November. It provided an opportunity to look ahead to the next few years of Yearly Meetings.

Anne Ullathorne and Paul Parker met the clerks of Meeting of Friends in Wales (MFW) and General Meeting for Scotland (GMfS) in Cardiff on 30th November to discuss issues of common concern. One outcome will be to extend an invitation to MFW and GMfS to report to MfS; Young Friends General Meeting will also be asked.

Anne Ullathorne, Margaret Bryan, Juliet Prager, Graham Spackman and Anne Wilkinson travelled to Manchester on 8th December to begin planning for MfS to be held there in October 2017. Ideas are at an initial stage and could well change.

Possibilities include:- some sort of meeting on the Friday evening with reps and local Friends meeting to share concerns; invitation to up to 4 friends from each of the four adjacent AMs to attend MfS with their reps; opportunity for local friends to present aspects of their work and witness to MfS; a 'groups fair' event mid-afternoon. Nothing has been firmly decided, and there are some limitations on the space available to us.

## **3. Forward agenda**

We have considered the forward agenda, which informs our planning.

We have planned the agenda for our Feb 4th meeting

## **4. Date and time of future meetings**

Monday 6th March 2017

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Monday 4th September 2017

Friday 3rd November 2017

Margaret Bryan, Convenor

## BYM Sustainability Group - Annual Report

### Introduction

The main purpose of this item is to consider the annual report of the BYM Sustainability Group (BYMSG). In its report, the Group asks MfS:

1. to approve changes to the 'Recommendations for Action' agreed in 2014;
2. to encourage Friends (individually, in local meetings and at YM) to engage with our commitment;
3. to encourage BYM Trustees to work with the Group on relevant issues, including revising committee terms of reference, and addressing gaps in corporate action.

MfS is also asked to set up a small time-limited review group.

### Background

Yearly Meeting (YM) 2011's 'Canterbury Commitment' is in its minute 36<sup>1</sup>, available here: The minute described challenges we are facing, and acknowledged that Quakers have been concerned about, and worked on, sustainability, for many years. It continued:

*'... The action we are ready to take at this time is to make a strong corporate commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community. This will require a process to establish a baseline of current witness and a framework in which individual Friends and local meetings can share their successes.*

*We need to allocate adequate resources to this process. This process needs to be joyful and spirit-led, with room for corporate discernment at local, area and national level. We believe this corporate action will enable us to speak truth to power more confidently. Growing in the spirit is a consequence of taking action, and action flows from our spiritual growth; here is the connectedness we seek. Only a demanding common task builds community. ...'*

YM asked Meeting for Sufferings (MfS), working with AMs and staff to:

- make better known our current witness
- give thought to appropriate aims for our corporate commitment and the framework which will allow our successes to be shared
- look at the priorities in A Framework for Action<sup>2</sup> and ask BYM Trustees to see where there are resources that can be allocated to these priorities
- look at issues of public policy that we might be led to adopt and advocate in the political arena.
- report back to YM each year on progress.

The minute also asked AMs, local meetings and individuals to consider the issues and take action: *'... But above all that, Friends keep in their hearts that this action must flow from nowhere but love. ...'*

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<sup>1</sup> [www.quaker.org.uk/resources/free-resources/interfaith-peace-climate-social-justice](http://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/free-resources/interfaith-peace-climate-social-justice).

<sup>2</sup> the previous Long Term Framework: we now have 'Our Faith in the Future'

In 2012, the Minute 36 (Canterbury) Commitment Group was set up by MfS, to work until the rise of YM 2014, to co-ordinate the response and support the realisation of the commitment. The Group drafted a strategy document which was agreed by MfS and forwarded to YM 2014.

It also proposed strengthening the work with a slightly different approach, which led to the creation of the BYM Sustainability Group (MfS/2014/06/11).

#### Review

Although this work needs a long-term perspective, the environment changes fast; so when the BYMSG was set up in 2014, this was for 3 years in the first instance, with a review to ensure it continues to be the right approach.

BYMSG first met in late 2014, and will have worked for three years by the end of this year. MfS is asked to set up a small review group. If this is agreed now, we may hope to receive nominations at our April meeting. The review group would then report, and bring any proposals, to MfS in October 2017.

Juliet Prager  
Deputy Recording Clerk  
17/01/2017

## **BYM Sustainability Group - Annual Report to Meeting for Sufferings February 2017**

BYM Sustainability Group is a working group of Meeting for Sufferings, set up in 2014 to provide “a leadership role, similar to eldership and oversight” in relation to the Yearly Meeting’s Canterbury Commitment to become a low carbon sustainable community. Our terms of reference require us to monitor progress in the *Recommendations for Action*, adopted by Meeting for Sufferings in June 2014, and to identify any need for changes to them, engaging actively with Central Committees, BYM Trustees and others responsible for particular areas of action.

**In this report, we review progress in 2016 and priorities for 2017.**

**We ask Meeting for Sufferings and BYM Trustees to accept our revised *Recommendations for Action* (Annex A), in particular the new section, *Eldership: rooting the Commitment in our Quaker faith*. A survey of progress in addressing the recommendations is included in Annex B.**

**We believe that more priority should be given to the Commitment throughout BYM governance. All committee terms of reference should incorporate some reference to the Commitment and how their work relates to it. We would also like to see a greater readiness to work with us to find ways of addressing gaps in our corporate action in relation to the Commitment, and to make available the necessary staff and committee time and funding.**

### **Review of progress in 2016**

This is our second annual report to MfS. In our February 2016 report (paper MfS/2016/02/07, minute MfS/16/02/12) we identified three areas where work was needed:

- Strengthening our sense of community around the commitment
- Developing a shared story about the commitment and its basis in our Quaker faith
- Supporting Friends and Meetings to implement the commitment in their lives and practices

Much has happened since to take all three of these forward.

The BYM Sustainability Gathering in March was well attended. Participants arrived with a sense that sustainability efforts in local meetings had plateaued, but they were energised by a creative weekend, weaving the threads of spirituality, practical action and building community. Several Friends have been working on building links among local meetings following the Gathering.

Last year we reported on our proposal for a project *Nurturing our Sustainability Ministry*, enabling and encouraging Friends to give expression to our sustainability commitment in many different forms. This will be a collaboration among several Quaker bodies and we are still in the process of building a partnership. We hope that when the steering group meets in mid-2017 it will think of a better name for the project. In June 2016 we worked with Woodbrooke on a preliminary three day event entitled *Composting the Covenant* – talking about how our Quaker faith connects with sustainability. Quaker Life Representative Council in October also focused on the spiritual basis of our sustainability concern, and especially our relationship with the Earth.



We held a residential BYMSG meeting in June including a half day with George Marshall, founder of the charity *Climate Outreach* and author of the book *Don't Even Think About It: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change*. George affirmed Quaker gifts, encouraging us to stick to our core principles and make use of resonant Quaker language in communicating about climate change.

Developing support for Friends and meetings is a slower process, partly because it requires sustained staff time and expertise. QPSW has been advising local meetings on fossil fuel divestment, and supporting Friends' local initiatives through the Economics, Sustainability and Peace Network and the *Earth and Economy* newsletter. The Recording Clerk's Office now has a project officer providing advice to local meetings on property matters, including sustainability. QPSW and Living Witness are working together on proposals for the *Green Light* series of materials, to be sent to meetings in 2017 and 2018, including resources on lifestyle change, Quaker conversations about sustainability, corporate discernment, and engagement with the wider community and politics.

### **Priorities for 2017**

We feel that it is time for a revision of the *Recommendations for Action* agreed in 2014, in particular to incorporate a new section on rooting the Commitment in our Quaker faith. In **Annex A** to this paper the recommendations now fall in five sections.

1. Eldership: rooting the Commitment in our Quaker faith
2. Oversight: strengthening our community
3. Living faithfully: changing our lifestyles
4. Right ordering: Quaker core activities and property; and
5. Witness: working for systemic and policy change.

The Canterbury Commitment asked Meeting for Sufferings and BYM Trustees to report back to Yearly Meeting annually on the progress of the concern. We feel that it is important to monitor progress in local meetings as well as the centrally managed work, both so that we know what is happening and to encourage local engagement. We have tried several approaches, including very simple questionnaires, telephone interviews, and quantification of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. However, ongoing monitoring would require committed staff time, and we have yet to establish where the responsibility could lie within the BYM structure. We hope to find a solution and to be able to inform Meeting for Sufferings later in 2017.

Otherwise, in 2017 our main areas of focus are:

- Continuing to build connections and encourage initiatives across BYM. We have been invited to send representatives to the joint meeting of QPSW and Quaker Life Central Committees on 10-12 February, which will include a consideration of sustainability. We look forward to welcoming visitors from BYM Trustees, central committees and YFGM at our own meetings.
- Working on *Nurturing our Sustainability Ministry*, with an initial steering committee meeting in mid-2017.
- Encouraging regional groups of Friends and meetings engaging with sustainability
- Engaging with Friends at Yearly Meeting Gathering, and working with staff to support them in ensuring that YMG reflects our sustainability commitment.
- Beginning plans for a BYM Sustainability Gathering in 2018.

We continue to be concerned that insufficient funds and staff time are devoted to our sustainability commitment. We ask MfS and BYM Trustees to find ways of ensuring that sufficient priority is placed on the work that needs to be done, in particular:

- Ensuring that all committee terms of reference incorporate some reference to the Commitment and how their work relates to it, and
- Working with BYMSG to address gaps in corporate action in relation to the Commitment, making available the necessary staff and committee time and funding.

## **Annex A**

# **Becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community: Revised Recommendations for Action**

## **Introduction**

Our overall aim is to encourage and support Friends and meetings in implementing the Canterbury Commitment. This paper offers recommendations in five key areas:

1. Eldership: rooting the Commitment in our Quaker faith
2. Oversight: strengthening our community
3. Living faithfully: changing our lifestyles
4. Right ordering: Quaker core activities and property; and
5. Witness: working for systemic and policy change.

Friends and meetings vary in their situations and hence in their priorities, suitable approaches and needs for support. Their needs change over time. We must therefore be responsive, with a wide and evolving range of resources in each of the five areas, and regular communication to bring those resources to Friends' and meetings' attention in a variety of ways. We also need strong networking among Friends and meetings so they can share ideas and good practice and learn from each other's experience.

The following sections identify aims and make broad recommendations in each of the five implementation areas. We have not specified which organisation should take the work forward except in a few cases where this has already been discerned.

## **1. Eldership: rooting the commitment in our Quaker faith**

### **The aim**

While Friends mostly feel ownership of our corporate sustainability commitment, many understand it in secular or practical terms and find it hard to say what is Quaker about it; others have a clear idea of its spiritual basis for themselves, but may not recognise the relevance of others' spiritual paths and experiences. Our spirituality may relate to sustainability in many ways. It may enable us, for example, to engage with loss and suffering, to celebrate beauty, to connect with others in the work for transformation, and to discern our way forward.

We need to make the commitment real and relevant to Quakers as an expression of our faith. That means:

1. Recognising and being able to articulate how our own spiritual experience and practice relates to sustainability
2. Recognising and being able to acknowledge other Friends' spiritual experiences and practices – both similar to and different from our own – and their relationship with sustainability
3. Recognising all of these as part of our corporate faith and practice
4. Being able to bring Quaker insights, values and practices to bear on sustainability issues in our lives and communities and the wider world.

## **Recommendations**

This section of the *Recommendations for Action* is essentially about eldership – supporting Friends in their spiritual practice, worship, ministry, learning and discernment as these relate to our sustainability commitment. These need attention at all levels, from individual Friends and local meetings to the Yearly Meeting and other national and international Quaker bodies. In particular:

1. Local and area meetings should provide opportunities for worship-based explorations where Friends can share how sustainability is part of their faith, and how that shapes their lives, relationships and actions.
2. Quaker bodies including central committees, Quaker Recognised Bodies and other organisations, should make opportunities (including for their staff, members and networks) to explore how their work connects sustainability with Quaker faith.
3. Central departments and other Quaker bodies should work together to provide Friends and meetings with resources and support for learning and discernment related to sustainability and its basis in Quaker faith.
4. There is a particular need to support ministry in all its forms, from spoken contributions in meetings for worship to publications, art, drama and spirit-led action.

## **2. Oversight: strengthening our community**

### **The aim**

Community is fundamental to the Canterbury Commitment and underpins the whole of our recommended approach. In local meetings and in our Yearly Meeting we aim to strengthen our communities, grounded in love and worship. Such communities can be the settings where Friends and meetings engage more fully with the Commitment:

1. Listening to one another, relating constructively, working through pain and loss linked to living in a violent and unsustainable civilisation, as well as the tensions and conflict that arise out of our different responses, and supporting each other in opportunities for insight and growth
2. Strengthening our shared identity and developing a shared understanding of how Quaker faith and practice relates to becoming a low carbon, sustainable community
3. Discerning the way forward in our Commitment, rooted in the Light and following the leadings of the Spirit
4. Supporting one another in implementing the Commitment, sharing learning, insight and celebration
5. Becoming more resilient, able to cope with change and adversity.

## **Recommendations**

The Canterbury Commitment should be owned and implemented by BYM as a whole including individual Friends, local meetings, central committees, Woodbrooke, listed informal groups and other Quaker organisations. We all have a responsibility for embedding the Commitment in every group and every decision we participate in. Our

witness should also be connected to the work of international Quaker organisations, other yearly meetings and non-Quaker organisations.

1. Regular and ongoing dialogue involving Friends House, local meetings and other Quaker organisations is needed to build community and share resources.
2. Face-to-face gatherings are also vital for maintaining and developing our community and our focus on becoming low-carbon and sustainable. We see a need for such events to take place regularly, ideally every year, but at least every two years.
3. Regional and national networks can be ways for Friends and meetings to build community and share resources without relying on paid staff at Friends House. Further networks will be needed.

### **3. Living faithfully: changing our lifestyles**

#### **The aim**

We aim to support Friends in developing low-carbon, sustainable and spiritually enhancing ways of living.

#### **Recommendations**

Lifestyle change is about more than carbon reduction, it is about all of our priorities and choices including patterns of family and social life, consumption and work. We recommend ongoing and increased encouragement and support for local meetings to be adventurous in helping Friends to live sustainably – adopting, in doing this, approaches that are sensitive and loving, while also radically transformative. This means sharing the joys we find in a simple lifestyle freely chosen, while offering compassion and support to those who find change difficult.

A wide variety of resources are required to address Friends' different and changing needs. For some, personal climate impact calculators are a vital part of understanding and reducing their carbon emissions; for others it is more important to have opportunities to talk about feelings. Some want simple, practical guides to action; others like to do their own research.

1. Regular revisions are needed in resources for sustainable living such as those included in the QPSW/Living Witness Sustainability Toolkit (footprint guides, guides for practical action, study group session plans). New versions should be brought to Friends' attention in a variety of formats.
2. We hope that Living Witness, QPSW and Quaker Life will continue to work together to support Friends in deepening dialogue and making lifestyle changes, in particular through group activities. A variety of approaches are available.
3. We need to provide opportunities for Friends to connect with each other through talks, workshops, etc. Friends' experience of the practical, social and spiritual aspects of lifestyle change should continue to be shared regularly in a variety of ways, from face-to-face contact and networks to blogs, newsletters, talks and workshops.

## **4. Right ordering: Quaker core activity and property**

### **The aim**

Our aim is to support Quakers in Britain (including BYM departments and committees, area and local meetings, and other Quaker organisations) in making the Canterbury Commitment a core part of fulfilling their religious and other purposes, in making all of their activities and assets low- carbon and sustainable, and in being patterns and examples for the wider community.

### **Recommendations**

Quaker meetings, organisations and committees may struggle with the complexity of addressing their core purposes in low-carbon, sustainable ways. They may need support to get beyond seeing these as conflicting goals, and they may need technical help with addressing buildings, land, travel, food, waste and use of money. Friends particularly face dilemmas about travelling to meetings and maintaining historic meeting houses, which are seen as vital for maintaining and developing community.

Local meetings, central committees and other Quaker organisations should be encouraged to organise themselves in low-carbon, sustainable ways. This includes looking at how they meet, where and how often.

1. Resources should be developed to support Quaker bodies in discernment that takes account of the Canterbury Commitment, including weighing up the effects of their decisions on a wide variety of issues, and considering creative alternatives.
2. A way needs to be agreed to monitor and review progress by local meetings in developing low carbon, sustainable core practices and premises. This might include collection of data such as annual energy use, and a regular questionnaire or survey of local meeting activities. Central committee and staff support would be required. The results should form part of the BYM Trustees' Annual Report.
3. Encouragement and support should be given to all parts of the Quaker community to follow the example of BYM Trustees in ensuring that our investments are consistent with being low- carbon and sustainable, and in particular to disinvest from fossil fuels.

## **5. Witness: taking political action and promoting systemic change**

### **The aim**

To create structures and policies – locally, nationally and globally – which enable people to live low-carbon, sustainable lives; and a transformed economy and society which is low-carbon and just.

### **Recommendations**

We have heard that Friends want to take more political action and to be supported to call for and create systemic change in economics and society. In particular:

1. Friends and local meetings need ongoing support:
  - to use their experience of the joys and challenges of changing their lives and meetings as a foundation for engaging others in their local community, national businesses and politicians
  - to take radical action for change from the current system

- to be part of building the alternative
  - to speak out for systemic change and for climate justice.
2. This support comes from the centrally managed work (where the lead committee is the QPSW Economics, Sustainability and Peace subgroup) along with other Quaker organisations including Living Witness and Woodbrooke.
  3. Many parts of the centrally managed work are engaged, including Turning the Tide, Parliamentary Engagement, Peace Education, and the Peaceworker scheme. A continuing effort is needed to strengthen and connect up the Canterbury Commitment aspects of their activities.
  4. British Friends should continue to be supported to connect better with work on climate change and sustainability beyond BYM. There are opportunities to share our experience and contribute to work for change, in particular with international Quaker bodies, other churches and faith organisations, campaigning organisations and movements.

We recommend that Quaker bodies of all kinds continue to speak out publicly on systemic change and climate justice, making the links to traditional Quaker concerns for peace and justice. Advice and other resources are needed to help them to do this. Public statements can help to strengthen our Quaker community and identity, and affirm our shared values.

## Annex B

### Becoming a low carbon sustainable community: progress in addressing the recommendations for action

#### 1. Eldership: rooting the commitment in our Quaker faith

This section of the *Recommendations for Action* is essentially about eldership – supporting Friends in their spiritual practice, worship, ministry, learning and discernment as these relate to our sustainability commitment. These need attention at all levels, from individual Friends and local meetings to the Yearly Meeting and other national and international Quaker bodies. In particular:

Recommendation	Current Activity	Gaps & Priorities
1. Local and area meetings should provide opportunities for worship-based explorations where Friends can share how sustainability is part of their faith, and how that shapes their lives, relationships and actions..	In 2013 Yorkshire Survey, 60% of meetings mentioned some kind of corporate exploration of sustainability. Proposed <i>Green Light</i> series (QPSW/LW) including resources for worship-sharing, study groups etc.	Regular surveys of local meeting activity.
2. Quaker bodies including central committees, Quaker Recognised Bodies and other organisations, should make opportunities (including for their staff, members and networks) to explore how their work connects sustainability with Quaker faith.	QL Rep Council meeting Oct 2016	Exploration of faith basis for sustainability witness, as well as practicalities
3. Central departments and other Quaker bodies should work together to provide Friends and meetings with resources and support for learning and discernment related to sustainability and its basis in Quaker faith.	<i>Sustainability Toolkit</i> (2011) Proposed <i>Green Light</i> series (2017/2018) Woodbrooke courses on green spirituality etc. Living Witness courses and workshops	More co-ordination of different offerings and publicity/signposting so Meetings know where to find support.
4. There is a particular need to support ministry in all its forms, from spoken contributions in meetings for worship to publications, art, drama and spirit-led action.	BYMSG Nurturing Our Sustainability Ministry project	Support Friends to create their own stories about sustainability and its basis in our faith.

Abbreviations: ESP=QPSW Economics, Sustainability & Peace Group.  
LW=Living Witness. Wb=Woodbrooke.



## 2. Oversight: Strengthening Our Community

The Canterbury Commitment should be owned and implemented by BYM as a whole including individual Friends, local meetings, central committees, Woodbrooke, listed informal groups and other Quaker organisations. We all have a responsibility for embedding the Commitment in every group and every decision we participate in. Our witness should also be connected to the work of international Quaker organisations, other yearly meetings and non-Quaker organisations.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Activity</b>	<b>Gaps &amp; Priorities</b>
1. Regular and ongoing dialogue involving Friends House, local meetings and other Quaker organisations is needed to build community and share resources.	Regular newsletters: Earth & Economy earthQuaker Blogs: Quakernomics Living Witness 'Human Dimensions' Being Friends Together	
2. Face-to-face gatherings are also vital for maintaining and developing our community and our focus on becoming low-carbon and sustainable. We see a need for such events to take place regularly, ideally every year, but at least every two years.	Woodbrooke and Living Witness courses and retreats Quaker Life Rep Council Oct 2016 & follow-up Events at YMG 2017 BYM Sustainability Gatherings March 2016, late 2018	Support for/organisation of regional gatherings
3. Regional and national networks can be ways for Friends and meetings to build community and share resources without relying on paid staff at Friends House. Further networks will be needed.	QPSW ESP focus on sharing local meeting activity and supporting regional networks QL Property Network Cluster Vibrancy project Some regional groupings of meetings arising from BYM Sustainability Gathering 2016	Support for regional networks on sustainability

### 3. Living faithfully: Changing our lifestyles

Lifestyle change is about more than carbon reduction, it is about all of our priorities and choices including patterns of family and social life, consumption and work. We recommend ongoing and increased encouragement and support for local meetings to be adventurous in helping Friends to live sustainably – adopting, in doing this, approaches that are sensitive and loving, while also radically transformative. This means sharing the joys we find in a simple lifestyle freely chosen, while offering compassion and support to those who find change difficult.

A wide variety of resources are required to address Friends' different and changing needs. For some, personal climate impact calculators are a vital part of understanding and reducing their carbon emissions; for others it is more important to have opportunities to talk about feelings. Some want simple, practical guides to action; others like to do their own research.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Current Activity</b>	<b>Gaps &amp; Priorities</b>
1. Regular revisions are needed in resources for sustainable living such as those included in the QPSW/Living Witness Sustainability Toolkit (footprint guides, guides for practical action, study group session plans). New versions should be brought to Friends' attention in a variety of formats.	QPSW/LW proposed <i>Green Lights</i> series to include footprint guide, study group material, resources for Quaker conversations and for community dialogues	Limited staff or funding committed to this work.
2. We hope that Living Witness, QPSW and Quaker Life will continue to work together to support Friends in deepening dialogue and making lifestyle changes, in particular through group activities. A variety of approaches are available.	<i>Green Lights</i>	Limited staff or funding committed to this work. More co-ordination would be helpful.
3. We need to provide opportunities for Friends to connect with each other through talks, workshops, etc. Friends' experience of the practical, social and spiritual aspects of lifestyle change should continue to be shared regularly in a variety of ways, from face-to-face contact and networks to blogs, newsletters, talks and workshops.	Wb courses e.g. on co-housing, food. LW courses and retreats Bamford Quaker Community retreats LW occasional workshops for local meetings & talks at Quaker events.	Limited staff or funding committed to this work. More co-ordination would be helpful.

#### 4. Right Ordering: Quaker Core Activities and Property

Quaker meetings, organisations and committees may struggle with the complexity of addressing their core purposes in low-carbon, sustainable ways. They may need support to get beyond seeing these as conflicting goals, and they may need technical help with addressing buildings, land, travel, food, waste and use of money. Friends particularly face dilemmas about travelling to meetings and maintaining historic meeting houses, which are seen as vital for maintaining and developing community.

Recommendation	Current Activity	Gaps & Priorities
1. Resources should be developed to support Quaker bodies in discernment that takes account of the Canterbury Commitment, including weighing up the effects of their decisions on a wide variety of issues, and considering creative alternatives.	Reduced committee size & travel MfS travel/accom review. Could extend to other groups. Increasing use of teleconferencing BYM and Wb staff engagement on greening buildings and operations. BYM working with Carbon Smart on emissions associated with FH as a building. Possibly extending to other aspects e.g. food, travel. Resource for LMs on discernment in <i>Green Light</i> series.	Limited staff or funding committed to this work.
2. A way needs to be agreed to monitor and review progress by local meetings in developing low carbon, sustainable core practices and premises. This might include collection of data such as annual energy use, and a regular questionnaire or survey of local meeting activities. Central committee and staff support would be required. The results should form part of the BYM annual report.	BYMSG has trialled several different approaches	Need corporate clarity about the approach to be used, where responsibility should lie (committee oversight and staffing) and resourcing (time and funding).
3. Encouragement and support should be given to all parts of the Quaker community to follow the example of BYM trustees in ensuring that our investments are consistent with being low-carbon and sustainable, and in	Fossil fuel divestment by BYM and some local/area meetings Your Faith, Your Finance webpage and resources QPSW & Operation Noah delivering events in Autumn 2016 on investment for active transition. One for wealthy investors/decision makers, one	Need clear, simple information on ethical investment for AM trustees and treasurers.

particular to disinvest from fossil fuels.	for church goers, Quakers etc.. QPSW researching how BYM can influence our pension provider to divest/reinvest	
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## 5. Witness: Taking Political Action and Promoting Systemic Change

We have heard that Friends want to take more political action and to be supported to call for and create systemic change in economics and society. We propose an increased emphasis on this area of action. In particular:

Recommendation	Current Activity	Gaps & Priorities
<p>1. Friends and local meetings need ongoing support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to use their experience of the joys and challenges of changing their lives and meetings as a foundation for engaging others in their local community, national businesses and politicians</li> <li>• to take radical action for change from the current system</li> <li>• to be part of building the alternative</li> <li>• to speak out for systemic change and for climate justice.</li> </ul> <p>This support should continue to come from the centrally managed work (where the lead committee is the QPSW Economics, Sustainability and Peace subgroup) along with other Quaker organisations including Living Witness and Woodbrooke.</p>	<p>QPSW Sustainability Stories section on website; campaigns on energy justice and economic inequality; draft statement on economic principles; New Economy Project Quakers active, e.g. in Climate Mass Lobby, climate marches/days of action etc. with QPSW support. LW earthQuaker and Human Dimensions Network. Woodbrooke courses on political and practical engagement</p>	<p>Develop a clearer shared understanding of the faith basis of this work: 'witness' as ministry. Connect sustainability better with other areas of Quaker witness, including bridge-building in local communities. Support (advice, resources, guidelines) for local community engagement</p>
<p>2. Many parts of the centrally managed work are engaged, including Turning the Tide, Parliamentary Engagement, Peace Education, and the Peacemaker scheme. A continuing effort is needed to strengthen and connect up the Canterbury Commitment aspects of their activities.</p>	<p>Using Turning the Tide campaign support model with Friends developing campaigns</p>	<p>Strengthen the shared story of different areas of work as part of sustainability witness.</p>
<p>3. British Friends should continue to be supported to connect with work on climate change and sustainability beyond BYM. There are opportunities to share our experience and contribute to</p>	<p>QPSW ESP: Scoping work for Friends on 'first steps' towards activism. Delivering climate justice and divestment workshops to mtgs Info &amp; opportunities for action on TTIP &amp; sustainability</p>	<p>Developing a shared understanding of our Quaker contribution on sustainability</p>

work for change, in particular with international Quaker bodies, other churches and faith organisations, campaigning organisations and movements.	Connecting UK Friends with QUNO work through talks incl. via skype connections at events, articles in The Friend.	so Friends can articulate it better to other faith & campaign groups
4. We recommend that Quaker bodies of all kinds continue to speak out publicly on systemic change and climate justice, making the links to traditional Quaker concerns for peace and justice. Advice and other resources are needed to help them to do this. Public statements can help to strengthen our Quaker community and identity, and affirm our shared values.	QPSW work on fossil fuel divestment Facing the challenge of climate change, global statement by Quaker bodies: <a href="http://www.quaker.org.uk/facing-challenge-climate-change">http://www.quaker.org.uk/facing-challenge-climate-change</a> QPSW liaising with meetings taking action on fracking. QPSW wrote to govt on closure of Dept. of Energy & Climate Change. Encouraging Quakers to do the same.	Developing a shared understanding of our Quaker contribution on sustainability so Friends can articulate it better

## Meeting for Sufferings 2017 02 04 – AM minutes received

**Pendle Hill AM Minute 4** from the meeting held 10 December 2016 regarding fracking around the world. Also attached is a response to the minute from the QPSW Sustainability and Peace Programme Manager.

### Introduction

MfS is asked whether it wishes to express a Yearly Meeting statement that Quakers in Britain oppose fracking for shale gas.

### Background

Pendle Hill AM sent a minute about drilling for natural gas (fracking) to Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) in 2014. The minute was forwarded to Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) whose response was received in early 2015. In minute MfS 2015/02/12, Sufferings recorded:

*We note that this minute has helped Quaker Peace & Social Witness to clarify its advocacy work on this issue, and that Quaker Peace & Social Witness is working to support Friends who wish to take action against fracking.*

MfS Arrangements Group suggests that this new minute from Pendle Hill should also be sent to QPSWCC. They suggest Sufferings could spend some time reflecting on the concern, in order to help the Central Committee in its discernment.

The focus during this particular item will be on fracking. Arrangements Group recognise that Pendle Hill AM has also raised broader questions about accountability and integrity in politics – which is referred to in the following agenda item.

Sunniva Taylor, QPSW Programme Manager: Sustainability and Peace, has prepared a paper, which follows Pendle Hill's minute. She reminds us that some local Friends have been taking action and that QPSW has been speaking out against fracking since 2013. She also suggests that future advocacy could be strengthened if there was a clear shared Yearly Meeting position.

Our *Speaking Out Policy* (available from [www.quaker.org.uk/resources/directory-of-services/speaking-out](http://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/directory-of-services/speaking-out)) was approved by Meeting for Sufferings in 2014. It sets out what a Yearly Meeting statement is:

*Yearly Meeting statements establish an agreed text about a Quaker position on a matter of concern and are agreed by BYM or MfS. These may be in the form of a minute or a stand-alone statement.*

MfS is asked whether it wishes to express a Yearly Meeting statement. If so, it could be made in a brief minute. If MfS reaches the view that there should be a Yearly Meeting statement, but cannot agree how to express it, then QPSWCC could be asked to bring a draft text to our next meeting. Or, MfS may feel unable to reach a conclusion at this time.

Juliet Prager  
Deputy Recording Clerk

## **From a meeting of Pendle Hill AM held on 10 December 2016.**

### **Minute 4 – Fracking around the world**

Pendle Hill Area Meeting are concerned about fracking around the world. This is a world issue but it is also a local issue and we are particularly active around the current situation in Lancashire as Friends opposing fracking through actions, and as members of other organisations who protect the planet.

We are known, as Quakers, for silence but we are talking, singing and shouting about this. As a yearly meeting, action is being taken on our behalf but we need more: more action in protests, in changing our lifestyles, but especially in challenging government.

All the factual evidence is there against fracking and for sustainable alternatives but the powers that be can still speak out as if there is no evidence, act against all of the facts and act against the people that they represent. We have had our local democratic processes overturned by central government, we have had local people bullied and intimidated by big business and we have had our faith in our governing processes seriously undermined: there is a growing lack of belief that our country has the best interests of its people at heart. It is clear that this is not only an environmental issue regarding the stewardship of this planet, it is also about trust.

We need to have a political structure that we can trust to tell us the truth in all aspects of the running of this country, representatives who we can trust to take a long term view of the future not a short term financial and political view and who we can trust to act in the best interests of its citizens rather than the best interests of business and their own careers.

We ask Britain Yearly Meeting to maximise involvement in ecumenical and interfaith structures that allow faith groups to have a strong united environmentalist voice on fracking , and that as Quakers nationally we take a public stance against fracking. We also ask that we act, however we can, to challenge the lack of accountability and integrity in the politics of this country.

Ben Pink Dandelion  
Clerk



## Friends and fracking concern

*Meeting for Suffering is asked to affirm (as Britain Yearly Meeting's position) the need for a ban on fracking for shale gas, and support for Friends to take action on the same.*

QPSW, and many Friends, including Pendle Hill AM, have already spoken out against the development of fracking for shale gas, as a response to our yearly meeting commitment to climate justice. Pendle Hill AM have asked 'that as Quakers nationally we take a public stance against fracking'. This would also very much help the work of QPSW to speak out on the Yearly Meeting's behalf and collaborate with others; and to support other Friends and meetings in taking action.

### What have we done already?

QPSW has been speaking out against fracking since 2013, and supporting Friends to do the same. Notably:

2013

- Friends held a Meeting for Worship at the Balcombe anti-fracking camp.

2014

- June Meeting for Sufferings received first fracking-related minute from Pendle Hill AM. The minute was forward to QPSW Central Committee (QPSWCC) and from them to QPSW Economics, Sustainability and Peace (ESP)
- ESP minuted (ESP 14/34 Energy Justice) 'we should ask for: an immediate cessation of the exploration and extraction of natural gas and oil from the UK's shale formations and also ask for active government support for the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency methods.' This position was endorsed by QPSWCC and commended to Meeting for Sufferings (minute 14/108)
- QPSW led a Quaker campaign against elements of the Infrastructure Bill, particularly the clauses relating to maximising the recovery of UK petroleum, and the extraction of gas (and oil) by fracking. We submitted evidence to the Public Bill Committee; wrote letters to all members of that committee; and provided a briefing and support to Friends to write to their MPs. 38 MPs were contacted.

2015

- Britain Yearly Meeting staff co-organised a fracking briefing event for SNP in Westminster parliament

2016

- Scottish Parliamentary Liaison Officer produced a fracking briefing ahead of elections
- Friends involved in action against fracking for shale gas in Yorkshire and Lancashire (and probably elsewhere) including Pickering Quakers who had a letter printed in local press expressing dismay at approval for fracking in their local area.

## **Why should Quakers nationally take a public stance against fracking for shale gas?**

The Canterbury Commitment (Minute 36 of Yearly Meeting 2011) commits the yearly meeting to take action to become a low-carbon, sustainable community including to speak truth to power. It also asks Meeting for Sufferings to 'look at the issues of public policy that we might be led to adopt and advocate in the political arena'.

QPSW, and many Friends, have been campaigning for climate justice, recognising that climate change and sustainability more broadly is an economic justice and equality issue as well as an environmental one. This has necessitated speaking out against fracking. Only 20% of total known fossil fuel reserves can be burnt by 2050 if we are to have an 80% chance of avoiding a 2°C temperature rise. The latest climate negotiations in Marrakesh in fact agreed to try and keep temperature rise below 1.5°C.

There is certainly not space in the UK, or global, carbon budget (that is, the amount of carbon we can burn to stay below 2°C rise) for additional forms of fossil fuels, such as gas extracted by fracking. Instead of investing in new ways to extract fossil fuels we should be investing in the transition to renewable energy, and reducing demand.

See *appendix 1* for more information about climate justice and why fracking for shale gas is contrary to climate justice.

## **What more can we do?**

If Meeting for Sufferings is minded to do so, a yearly meeting position against fracking for shale gas would make our advocacy work stronger.

In addition:

- QPSW will continue to take opportunities to speak out and to support Friends to do the same, including ecumenically and with other faiths.
- We would encourage local and area meetings to make their position known locally, as Pickering LM has done. QPSW can support you to do so. You can find out about areas of the UK currently licensed and under consideration for licensing for fracking here:  
[https://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate/issues/uk\\_fracking\\_map\\_41274](https://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate/issues/uk_fracking_map_41274)
- QPSW will be supporting the Pendle Hill AM initiative to hold an anti-fracking Worship for Witness on top of Pendle Hill 2pm, 6<sup>th</sup> May. Pendle Hill sits in the midst of an area licensed for fracking. They are encouraging Friends from other AM's to participate, hoping for a big Quaker presence. Contact Maya Williams for information ([mayaw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:mayaw@quaker.org.uk) and 02076631056)

See the following minute from Pendle Hill AM 14/01/2016:

### **5. *Climate Justice***

We remain excited about the plans for the national Quaker meeting for worship for witness against fracking on Pendle Hill at 2pm on Saturday May 6. Stephen Lee is co-ordinating the invitation, working with staff in Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and many of us are helping in different ways. As an Area Meeting we offer our commitment and support to this act of witness as part of our Concern against fracking. We are pleased to know that John Cookson is

utilising the Area Meeting website to relay information and we look forward to hearing more in due course. We ask the Clerk to forward this minute to QPSW staff to show our commitment to continued action.

- Sign up to Earth and Economy and/or express your interest to take action on fracking by contacting Maya Williams ([mayaw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:mayaw@quaker.org.uk) and 02076631056)

*Sunniva Taylor, Sustainability and Peace programme, QPSW*

## **Appendix 1: Why is fracking for shale gas contrary to climate justice?**

In recent years QPSW has spoken out for 'climate justice' and for the UK government and others to build a just and sustainable energy system. The causes and consequences of climate change fall unequally. Fossil fuel extraction benefits the elite most and tends to happen in already marginalised areas; and the consequences of erratic weather conditions, food shortages, and infrastructure damage caused by climate change will hit the poorest hardest both in the UK and elsewhere. Of course extraction and climate change are brutally disruptive to planetary ecosystems too.

Alternative solutions are however possible, if backed by people and political will. QPSW has been advocating against additional fossil fuel extraction; and as well as the Yearly Meeting's central investment at least thirteen LM/AMs have divested or are actively on the way to doing so. But we are also calling for a just and renewable energy system<sup>1</sup>, and supporting Friends to take their own sustainability actions, as well as to reinvest in positive solutions.

As part of this work, it has been necessary to respond to and resist the UK government's continued support for fossil fuels extraction. The UK's emerging shale gas or 'fracking' industry has been of concern to QPSW and many Friends over the country. This is because:

- Fracking is incompatible with a low-carbon economy. The carbon intensity of fracked gas is approximately 500 gCO<sub>2</sub>/KWh (grams of carbon dioxide per kilowatt hour) (UNEP 2012)<sup>2</sup>. The UK Energy & Climate Change Committee recommends a power sector carbon intensity target of 100gCO<sub>2</sub>/KWh by 2030 and further reductions beyond this in order to achieve the UK's commitments under the Paris climate agreement<sup>3</sup>.
- In 2013, the UK Secretary for Energy & Climate Change<sup>4</sup> and fracking company Cuadrilla<sup>5</sup> both admitted, counter to earlier claims by David Cameron, that fracking in the UK will not help reduce fuel bills, and is therefore unlikely to help those in fuel poverty.

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Energy in the new economy: towards a green and fair energy system for all' Booklet 3, new economy series, Britain Yearly Meeting, November 2016. Available at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/economic-justice/new-economy>

<sup>2</sup> UNEP (2012) Thematic focus: Resource Efficiency, Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste. UNEP Global Environmental Alert Service (GEAS) November 2012. (p.4)

<sup>3</sup> Setting the Fifth Budget. Fifth Session of 2015-16. (Publish 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016). House of Commons Energy & Climate Change Committee.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/energy/fracking/10296274/Fracking-wont-lower-energy-bills-says-Davey.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/nov/29/browne-fracking-not-reduce-uk-gas-prices-shale-energy-bills>

- The fracking industry has been associated with local environmental damage including contamination and diversion of water sources, air pollution and minor earthquakes.

Whilst the UK fracking industry is still in its infancy, activity is increasing. As of January 2017, key fracking sites facing public opposition included newly permitted fracking operations in Preston New Road in Lancashire, and Kirby Misperton in Yorkshire. Licenses or permits were granted for exploration wells in Broadford Bridge, West Sussex, Tinker Lane near Blyth, and Balcombe in West Sussex. Fracking company INEOS has acquired licences to survey large areas of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire and North Yorkshire<sup>6</sup>. Concerns have been raised about proposed surveying in and around Sherwood Forest<sup>7</sup>.

2016 saw a number of developments that heightened these concerns among both the environmental movement and communities local to fracking sites:

- In 2015, the government granted itself new powers to 'fast track' fracking applications and overturn local planning decisions. In October 2016, the government overturned Lancashire County Council's rejection of fracking. Freedom of information requests also later revealed that the government delayed a damaging report it commissioned on the impact of fracking on local economies until after a council vote in Lancashire.
- Greenpeace reported in May that the small number of existing fracking companies operating in the UK been granted tax breaks of up to a total of £25m by 2020. Renewable technologies do not benefit from the same tax rule<sup>8</sup>.
- Brexit poses a possible deregulation of the industry. Whilst the regulatory impacts of Brexit are very unclear, EU directives currently regulate on greenhouse gas emissions, water contamination, impacts on biodiversity and community consultation.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://frack-off.org.uk/locations/fracking-sites/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/12/31/robin-hood-oak-frackers-sights/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://energydesk.greenpeace.org/2016/05/25/oil-tax-how-the-uk-taxpayer-could-spend-millions-funding-the-hunt-for-fracked-gas/>

## **Meeting for Sufferings 2017 02 04 – CC minutes received**

**Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee minute QPSWCC 16/109** from the meeting held 18-20 November 2016 regarding the promotion of Cadet Forces in Scottish State Schools.

### Introduction

MfS is asked to reflect on lack of transparency and integrity in government. Sufferings is not expected to reach a decision. It is asked to consider and articulate this developing concern, in a way that will help QPSWCC as it discerns whether and if so how BYM might take our concerns forward.

### Background

Last October, Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) received a minute from General Meeting for Scotland, regarding the proposed expansion of cadet forces in Scottish schools to be financed by the UK Government from fines levied on banks. The request was for Meeting for Sufferings, in conjunction with QPSW, to campaign on this issue. They highlighted how this bypasses normal democratic discussion in the UK Parliament.

MfS sent the minute to QPSWCC whose initial response is in the minute below.

MfS Arrangements Group is aware that similar concerns are emerging elsewhere in the Yearly Meeting. The minute from Pendle Hill AM in the preceding paper refers to the importance of truth and trust in public life, and describes a lack of accountability and integrity in British politics. In 2015, Pickering and Hull AM sent a minute about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which spoke of the need to defend the principles of democracy and equality before the Law (MfS 2015/07/12). The European Referendum campaigns led to Quakers and others asking questions about honesty in politics.

So Arrangements Group hope that MfS will spend some time reflecting on these issues, to help QPSWCC in its continuing discernment.

Some Friends may remember previous QPSW work on 'Truth and Integrity in Public Affairs' which was laid down in 2004. A short paper about that concern follows the minute from QPSWCC. Although there are similar themes, the context has changed: if this is an emerging concern then it will not be manifested in the same way as before.

Juliet Prager  
Deputy Recording Clerk

## **Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee**

Held 18 – 20 November 2016 at Friends House, London

### **QPSWCC 16/109 MINUTE FOR CONSIDERATION NOT TAKEN ELSEWHERE**

#### **Meeting for Sufferings minute MfS/16/10/14 Cadet Forces in Scottish State Schools**

We recognise that this minute raises several inter-linked issues. We are already working to counter militarisation of schools and wider society, and on peace education. But we may need to return to the issues of the lack of transparency and integrity which this government decision raises. The use of LIBOR fines is particularly troubling.

We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings and to Peace Education, Campaigning and Networking Sub-committee for information, and we will return to some of the wider issues. We ask QPSW staff to liaise with our Parliamentary Engagement staff, and with Scottish Friends and to bring us further information in due course.

Charlotte Seymour-Smith  
Clerk

## **The Truth and Integrity in Public Affairs (TIPA) concern – 1990 to 2004**

Robin Robison, a young Friend who had been working in the Cabinet Office, was troubled by the secrecy of the Joint Intelligence Committee and the lack of accountability of the secret services. His concern was supported by his Monthly Meeting and came to MfS and, unusually, to Yearly Meeting in 1990. Yearly Meeting united with the concern. Part of their minute forms 23.91 of *Qf&p*:

We are deeply uneasy about the increasing secrecy which permeates our process of government. We see this in the 1989 Official Secrets Act, which no longer allows the defence of the right of disclosure in the public interest. We have been led to the conviction that, despite a culture of state secrecy, we must strive to bring about openness in our country. Secrecy bolsters power and leads to deceit and the abuse of power. At times a sensitive reticence is required but, in working in the spirit of love and trust rather than fear, we seek to discern the boundary between that reticence and secrecy.

Individual Friends elsewhere in the YM were also under a sense of personal concern and doing work themselves, including Friends in Warwickshire Monthly Meeting. Some of them became part of an ad hoc group set up by Meeting for Sufferings to explore how the concern should be put into action. The Quaker Committee on Truth and Integrity in Public Affairs (TIPA) started work in early 1991. Robin Robison was employed to take the work forward with and under the guidance of the committee.

Their focus in the early days was on moral values in political life, excessive secrecy, executive power being exercised without accountability and use of the royal prerogative. In practice, they worked on a possible private member's bill on the accountability of the intelligence and security services, and when the government published a bill on this subject, they responded, asking for it to be strengthened.

They had a series of meetings with MI5 – this was at a time when MI5 had only recently been acknowledged to exist. At one point they had doubts about whether such meetings were worth continuing, and took the question to the Central Committee of Quaker Social Responsibility & Education (a predecessor body to QPSW) who advised that they needed to be well focussed if they were to meet with MI5 again. The committee at that time felt they were not ready, though did have further meetings later.

Robin Robison was seen as a controversial whistleblower and had a high public profile. He was repeatedly approached by the media. After taking part in TV programme 'World in Action' there were even accusations in the press that he was a traitor.

TIPA wrote a booklet called 'Witness to Truth', ran a seminar on moral values in public life and produced a study pack on National Security. They built connections in Europe and with other churches. They ran a series of conferences for Friends and produced newsletters and briefings. They invited Friends to help them to do research on their local governments and to write to MPs.

In 1993 the Meeting for Sufferings TIPA committee was laid down and the work was brought under the care of QSRE. At that time, the outgoing committee wrote:

'The heart of the concern ...is our experience that in our national life there is an increasing disintegration with many people unable to participate. We have a vision of an open society. It is at the heart of Quaker experience that respect between individuals can provide the true basis of community.'

In 1995 the new committee wrote: 'Our experience and research over the last 5 years convinces us that morality is not simple, in this we recognise that we ourselves and perhaps Friends generally need to determine just how much covert activity is acceptable within a civilised and democratic country. We are within and part of the world, and all its problems of good and evil. If we are part of the problem, we need to be part of the solution. ... We would wish to see information used in such a way that nobody in society is disadvantaged or disempowered ... It may be that we can contribute ... by focusing on the use and abuses of information; power lies in the control of information.'

In 1996 they issued a public statement on the Scott Report, the judicial inquiry into arms sales to Iraq.

From about that time onwards, there was a shift in emphasis of the work, towards 'ways in which economic interests compromise truth and integrity'.

In 2001, under the newly-formed Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee, the work was brought under the care of a new Public Affairs Committee. By then TIPA had much less staff time allocated to it. The energy, the sense of urgent leading in the concern seems to have abated by then. It was formally laid down in 2004, by the following minute:

#### QPSWCC 04/43 THE FUTURE OF TRUTH AND INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS (TIPA) PROGRAMME

We have received a paper prepared by Robin Robison, Programme Manager, TIPA, and Helen Drewery, which gives background to the TIPA work, the minute of a consultation held on 29th November 2003, and minute 9 from Public Affairs Group meeting 11<sup>th</sup> February 2004, and we note minute 04/12 of Testimonies Committee held 27-29<sup>th</sup> February 2004.

We feel that the time is right to lay down this particular programme of work. We ask for revised terms of reference for the Public Affairs Group to be brought to our next meeting.

We recognise however, as the minute of the consultation day concludes that:

"....truth and integrity (is) a basic Quaker Testimony and so the work is not solely for a department or an individual – it needs to be something all Friends hold to in the way they live their whole lives and it should underpin all Quaker work....."

Although the issues have not gone away, there does not seem to be useful work currently that QPSW can do.



Our work will continue to challenge secrecy and strive for accountability where we encounter it, for example through the Economic Issues work, the Parliamentary Liaison work, and in QUNO.

We remain open to the possibility, as with all our work, of new opportunities emerging for an appropriate piece of centrally managed work in this area that reflects the thinking of Friends in their local meetings. We suggest that a conference for Friends who face dilemmas relating to truth and integrity in their working lives could be helpful. We ask staff to identify when and where this might be held and how it might be overseen.

We thank all who have contributed to and worked for this programme over the years.

We send this minute to Public Affairs Group and to Testimonies Committee.

Helen Drewery  
Head of Worship & Witness

## Meeting for Sufferings Annual Report 2016

### Introduction

This draft report has been prepared by the clerk, working with Arrangements Group. After Meeting for Sufferings has approved the report, it will be forwarded to Yearly Meeting 2017. It will be included in the YM papers and the clerk may also report verbally to Yearly Meeting.

It is difficult for a large gathering to re-draft text; so the clerks ask for any suggested amendments to reach them by Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January. Any revisions will be available in writing on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>.

### Meeting for Sufferings Annual Report 2016 - *draft*

*Our principle is, and our practices have always been, to seek peace, and ensue it, and to follow after righteousness and the knowledge of God, seeking the good and welfare, and doing that which tends to the peace of all.* Qf&p 24.04 Margaret Fell 1660

Meeting for Sufferings is the 'standing representative body entrusted with the general care of matters affecting Britain Yearly Meeting and in the intervals between Yearly Meetings'. It is the 'central body which can act on behalf of the Society (i.e. Britain Yearly Meeting) between Yearly Meetings' and tries therefore to be representative of Friends both as to diversity and geographically. There are just under one hundred members of Meeting for Sufferings including representatives from all (70) Area Meetings, from Young Friends General Meeting, General Meeting for Scotland, and Meeting of Friends in Wales and there are also representatives from the standing central committees. BYM trustees, Management Meeting (senior staff) and the Yearly Meeting clerk are ex officio members of Meeting for Sufferings.

This balance of membership enables Sufferings to fulfil its function 'in drawing together and relating to one another the different strands in the yearly meeting's life and service.' During 2016 we have met five times, usually in George Fox Room at Friends House. In December we welcomed young Friends from the Young People's Participation Day who joined us in the Large Meeting House in worship at the start and the close of the day.

*Quaker faith & practice* Chapter 7 lays down in detail the role and functions of Meeting for Sufferings and these may be broadly defined as making decisions and issuing statements on behalf of BYM, exercising discernment on priorities, receiving regular reports from trustees, and fostering communication within the yearly meeting. Qf&p 7.02 also states that Sufferings has a 'part to play in developing a visionary and prophetic role for the whole yearly meeting'. There are 19 separate functions detailed and this report is intended to show how Meeting for Sufferings has endeavoured to fulfil these.

### **Making decisions and issuing statements**

The business addressed by Meeting for Sufferings this year has not been new or major decision making but rather continuing with established items.

- 1) **Refugees and Asylum seekers:** This issue has been to the forefront of our agendas and last year we adopted a statement that has been circulated widely and used by Friends throughout BYM in speaking out on this issue. We deliberated at length in February about joining a private sponsorship scheme run by Citizens UK but we were not clear that this was the right action for Quakers to take. Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Central Committee continued work on this issue and, in July, reported that a new project; 'Responding to Forced Migration' had been launched. This has been enabled by the use of legacy income to fund a full-time worker. Friends organised a conference on this topic in February 2017. We continue to hear of work with refugees and asylum seekers that is being done locally in Area Meetings across Britain.
- 2) **Court and Prison register:** We have heard of Friends acting under conscience and upheld them in our prayers. We have recorded the sentencing of one Friend and the arrest of five others whose trials took place in late 2016 and early 2017.
- 3) **Appeal process:** On the recommendation of the Church Government Advisory Group, we agreed, in July, to initiate a review of the appeal process described in Quaker Faith and Practice 4.25 and 4.26.
- 4) **Quaker Faith and Practice Amendments:** In December we agreed amendments to Quaker Faith and Practice 13.19, 11.05 and 11.11 (Quaker Recognised Bodies) and to 8.21 and 14.40 (Management meeting changes) and forwarded these to Yearly Meeting 2017 by our minutes MfS16/12/5 and MfS 16/12/16.
- 5) **Holding of Meeting for Sufferings:** We agreed to hold a single meeting of MfS at a venue outside London in 2017 as an experiment. This is to help greater awareness of the workings of Britain Yearly Meeting and to encourage representatives to meet with local friends in a different area of Britain.

### **Exercising discernment on priorities and Receiving reports for information and consultation**

During the year we have had regular reports from BYM trustees, and we have heard from Quaker World Relations Committee in April, from Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations in July, from Quaker Peace and Social Witness in October and from Quaker Life in December. It has been helpful to hear how the work of these groups fits with our vision statement - 'Our Faith in the Future' - and how BYM is moving towards these ideals.

In April we spent time considering how we test concerns: listening to the Spirit in Meeting for Worship is our starting point. We noted the importance of being tender with Friends: acting under concern can be a frightening experience, when you feel impelled and can do no other. Some meetings do not have experience of testing concerns and the process needs to be explained, clearly.

### **Playing a part in developing a visionary and prophetic role for the whole yearly meeting**

There have been four strands of work:

- 1) **Call for Equality (YM Minute 2015/36):** Yearly Meeting asked 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 spent productive time together in April, hearing about both the various issues important to Friends and the work that is going on around the yearly meeting but our minute concluded that 'we have struggled with the concept of Meeting for Sufferings being responsible for co-ordination and see our role more as encouraging and providing networking among Friends'.
  
- 2) **BYM Sustainability Group (YM Minute 2011/36):** Yearly Meeting in Canterbury in 2011 committed to becoming a low carbon sustainable community. Meeting for Sufferings oversees and encourages progress in the commitment through the BYM Sustainability Group (BYMSG). In 2016 BYMSG paid particular attention to strengthening the sense of community around the Canterbury Commitment, and to nurturing Quaker sustainability ministry in all its forms. While we have a long way to go in raising the profile and priority of the Commitment, there is increasing engagement in the various parts of our structures. QPSW has been advising local meetings on fossil fuel divestment and supporting local Quaker initiatives through the Economics, Sustainability and Peace Network. Quaker Life Representative Council in October 2016 focused on spiritual aspects of sustainability. The Recording Clerk's Office now has a project officer providing advice to local meetings on property matters, including sustainability. QPSW and Living Witness are working together on proposals for Green Light, a new series of resources on lifestyle change, Quaker conversations about sustainability, corporate discernment, and engagement with the wider community and politics. Plans are underway for the next BYM Sustainability Gathering, to be held in the second half of 2018.
  
- 3) **Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group (MfS 2014/04/05):** The Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group created the 'Reading Quaker faith and practice' project and invited Quakers across the country to participate in order to get to know our current Book of Discipline. There has been a gratifyingly large take up of this project. The calendar produced for this finishes in spring 2017. One of the aims was to get Friends talking and listening to each other about all aspects of our life together. This aim has been successful.

One of the group's major pieces of work has been considering the church government aspect of our Book of Discipline. Over 220 people completed a questionnaire about its use. The group has concluded that the church government part of the text should be comprehensively revised, rather than simply updated. The group sees this as an integral part of a wider revision of the Book of Discipline. The group expects to recommend that a future book of discipline should focus on describing and explaining the enduring principles of our church government, together with anthology examples of our practice. We noted in September 2016 that 'Friends today – many of whom are new to Quakers – have greater need than previous generations to articulate why we do things as we do and the theological base for them. This will be challenging, but we see it as exciting and necessary.'

- 4) **Quaker Recognised Bodies: In December**, Meeting for Sufferings recorded the first four organisations to be recognised under the new system which was agreed in 2015.

### **Fostering communication throughout the yearly meeting.**

At every meeting we receive minutes from Area Meetings, General Meetings or Central Committees. Friends from different parts of Britain are able to meet and to hear from each other about new issues and issues of common concern. We provide a forum for representatives to share those issues which may be a burden or a joy to them in their locality and to build on the shared insights that we have in the family of Friends.

One such matter, brought to us originally from Cornwall Area Meeting, was their concern for the decriminalisation of the possession of drugs for personal use. Meeting for Sufferings received this in April and asked Area Meetings to consider the issue. We returned to this in December, having received minutes from 37 Area Meetings and their response added to our discernment. All the minutes have been forwarded to Cornwall and although we did not feel able to adopt this as a concern for Britain Yearly Meeting at this time, we agreed that we need to seek a humane and compassionate response to drug users and that Friends should be encouraged to work with Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs and other organisations where appropriate.

A paper from QPSWCC, 'Towards a vision of a criminal justice system' has also been widely circulated and considered by Area Meetings. There have been minutes about sustainability, interfaith relations, the arms trade, conscientious objection to military tax and peacebuilding. Often we know that our work, at local level or nationally, can be enhanced by joining with others already working on these issues. We look forward to further information and encouragement at Yearly Meeting 2017 when movement building is to be a main theme.

### **Other matters**

We have received enthusiastic reports from our own workers in the Vibrancy Project which has commenced operation in four areas of Britain (Kent, Sussex and Surrey; North-west England; Wales and Southern Marches; and West Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.) We have spent time reflecting on how we work together so as to be effective and responsive to guidance by the Spirit. Looking forward, we wish to strengthen the links between Area Meetings, Meeting for Sufferings and the various work going on in Britain Yearly Meeting and to continue to work towards the vision encapsulated in 'Our Faith in the Future'.

## Meeting for Sufferings – mid-triennium check-in

This triennium of Meeting for Sufferings runs from Yearly Meeting 2015 to Yearly Meeting 2018. All members of Sufferings (representatives and alternates) were invited to the first meeting of the triennium, in July 2016, which included a morning dedicated to induction.

However, not all of the reps and alternates were able to come to that meeting; and since then, there have been changes of representatives in roughly half the AMs and other bodies which form Meeting for Sufferings.

So Arrangements Group feel it is right to have a mid-triennium check-in. This is a chance to:

- Remind ourselves about (and in some cases discover) the purpose of Meeting for Sufferings
- Consider practicalities - how Meeting for Sufferings works
- Think about what we're doing well, and what might be improved

### How we will 'check-in'

Following an introduction from the clerk, we will move into Home Groups, organised geographically (please see the separate paper and information on the day). Groups will be asked to record key points from their discussions on paper. Members of Arrangements Group will gather these reflections and prepare feedback which we will receive after lunch.

### Other reading

It will be helpful for us all to be reminded of (and possibly re-read) some background material:

#### a) What Meeting for Sufferings is and how it works

- **Quaker faith and practice chapter 7, Meeting for Sufferings** – which sets out the history, functions and constitution - <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/7/>
- The updated **Meeting for Sufferings Handbook** and other general information for Friends who are serving on Meeting for Sufferings are available on the **Practical arrangements for Sufferings** page in the MfS section of the BYM website.  
<http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings>

#### b) What has Meeting for Sufferings been doing recently?

- The **Meeting for Sufferings report to Yearly Meeting 2017** (see the previous agenda item – paper **MfS 2017 02 07**) describes what Meeting for Sufferings has been doing in the last year.
- A list of **AM minutes received in the current triennium** – with information about what happened next – is copied below.

## **AM minutes received by Meeting for Sufferings in the current triennium**

In the eight meetings between July 2015 and December 2016, MfS considered 21 minutes sent by 18 AMs or General Meetings (one AM sent 3 minutes and another sent 2). In this paper, they've been grouped into 7 subject headings:

- BYM Communications
- BYM structures
- Interfaith relations
- Peace
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Social Justice
- Sustainability

In addition:

- 37 AMs sent minutes regarding the Decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs (2016)
- 27 AMs sent minutes responding to QPSWCC's paper 'Towards a vision of a criminal justice system' (2016)
- 2 AMs sent minutes about acts of witness, which led to entries in the court and prison register (there have been 6 MfS minutes about the court and prison register, but the other 4 were the result of informal communication, not an AM minute)

### BYM Communications

Date	Minute	Meeting	Issue	What happened next
Apr 2016	MfS/16/04/13	Cambridgeshire AM	Use of the phrase 'Quakers in Britain'	<i>Minute sent seeking a change of practice:</i> The minute came to MfS alongside a paper from the Recording Clerk, setting out some of the complexities relating to this issue. It was forwarded to BYM Trustees, who are expected to respond shortly.

### BYM Structures

Date	Minute	Meeting	Issue	What happened next
Sep 2015	MfS 2015/09/10	Lancashire Central & North AM; Pendle Hill AM	Transfer of a local meeting	<i>Minutes sent for endorsement</i> as set out in Qfp 4.12.

### Interfaith relations

Date	Minute	Meeting	Issue	What happened next
Jul 2016	MfS/16/07/08	Leeds AM	Leeds Quaker-Jewish Dialogue	<i>Minute sent for information:</i> Leeds AM let MfS know it was considering a report on a local dialogue initiative.
Dec 2016	MfS/16/12/13	Leeds AM	Leeds Quaker-Jewish Dialogue	<i>Minute sent for information:</i> Leeds AM let MfS know it had considered the report. The AM encouraged avoidance of inflammatory and divisive language; and sharing information about peace work in Palestine and Israel.

### Peace

Date	Minute	Meeting	Issue	What happened next
Jul 2015	MfS/15/07/14	Southern Marches AM	National Memorial Arboretum - Memorial to the Innocent Victims of War	<i>Minute sent for information:</i> Southern Marches brought this to MfS in 2014: MfS expressed support and encouragement, while asking some questions; and asked meetings who would like to offer support to be in touch with Southern Marches AM. In 2015, Southern Marches sent an update on progress.
Apr 2016	MfS/16/04/15	North West London AM;	UK Arms trade: UK sales to Saudi Arabia	<i>Minutes sent to encourage action:</i> Two AMs expressed concern about UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia, particularly in light of violent conflict in Syria and Yemen. Subsequently, QPSW



		Ipswich & Diss AM		explained it is working closely on this issue with Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) and that many Quakers are active in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. Friends were encouraged to take action in support of its work.
Apr 2016	MfS/16/04/16	Dorset & South Wilts AM	Conscientious objection to military taxation	<i>Minute sent to encourage action:</i> The minute asked for national Quaker support for a private members' bill. At the following meeting, QPSWCC was able to explain how it helped initiate and is supporting this.
Oct 2016	MfS/16/10/11	Brighthouse West Yorks AM	Peacebuilding: the Ammerdown Invitation	<i>Minute sent to seek information and to encourage action:</i> The minute asked for Quaker support for the Ammerdown initiative, which is considering the future of peace and security the UK and worldwide. QPSW explained how this had already been happening. MfS encouraged Friends to learn more about this work, and to support it where possible, perhaps through hosting local community discussions.
Jul 2015	MfS 2015/07/13	Luton and Leighton AM	WW1 Memorial Meetings for Reconciliation	<i>Minute sent to encourage action:</i> The AM hoped that some events marking the centenary of WW1 could have a multi-national character with representatives from Britain, Germany and other countries coming together to remember all those who lost their lives and to recommit themselves to working together to prevent such conflicts. MfS forwarded this encouragement to Area Meetings; and also sent the minute to QCCIR, which responded in late 2016 with encouragement and further suggestions.
Oct 2016	MfS/16/10/14	General Meeting for Scotland	Cadet Forces in Scottish State Schools	<i>Minute sent to encourage action:</i> Friends in Scotland are concerned that the Westminster Government is funding cadet forces in Scottish state schools, and asked MfS to take this up. MfS forwarded the minute to QPSW and asked it to consider this, working with GMS. QPSWCC's initial response is on the agenda for this meeting.

### Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Date	Minute	Meeting	Issue	What happened next
Jul 2015	MfS/15/07/10	East Kent AM	Safe routes to Europe	These minutes followed several others received in preceding meetings. QPSW has advocated publicly on the issues. In February 2015, QPSWCC asked MfS to test possible involvement in a specific scheme. Sufferings' advice led QPSWCC to seek other ways forward, and thanks to generous legacy funding, a Forced Migration Programme Developer (Tim Gee) has been employed. QPSWCC has reported on progress and there will be more news to share later in 2017.
Jul 2016	MfS/16/07/10	Notts & Derbys AM	Unaccompanied Refugee Children	
Oct 2016	MfS/16/10/12	East Kent AM	Local support for refugees	

### Social justice

Date	Minute	Meeting	Issue	What happened next
Feb 2015	MfS/16/12/10	Cornwall AM	Decriminalisation of drugs	<i>Minute sought shared adoption of concern:</i> MfS spent time on this in December 2016. Although many Friends don't feel able to unite with this concern, MfS agreed on the need to seek a humane and compassionate response to drug users. The issues are complex and there is an appetite to learn more. Cornwall AM is taking this forward with other AMS that have expressed an interest, working with Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs (QAAD) and other organisations where appropriate.
Sep 2015	MfS 2015/09/08	North Wales AM	Quaker Credit Union	<i>Minute sought shared adoption of concern:</i> There were some reservations, particularly about whether to do this separately as Quakers or to encourage Friends to get more involved within existing structures. MfS encouraged North Wales AM to continue to work on this, linking with other AMs and central committees where appropriate.
Jul 2015	MfS 2015/07/12	Pickering & Hull AM	TTIP	<i>Minute sent to encourage action:</i> MfS learned about existing work nationally in QPSW's Economics, Sustainability and Peace programme, and internationally by QCEA and QUNO. MfS noted its support for this work and encouraged Friends locally to engage with these issues, including taking the matter to their MPs and MEPs where appropriate.

Dec 2015	MfS/15/12/15	West Somerset AM	TTIP	Minute sent to encourage action: MfS agreed on the need to speak out urgently against TTIP, and asked QPSW staff to take this to Government in the most appropriate way. It also repeated encouragement to Friends to engage with these issues locally. The situation has changed somewhat since then. Information about relevant QPSW work is available on: <a href="https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/economic-justice/trade">https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/economic-justice/trade</a>
Jul 2016	MfS/16/07/09	Leeds AM	End of Life Issues	Minute sent for information: Leeds AM previously sent a minute about this concern which was considered by Quaker Life Central Committee. This 2016 minute told MfS that Leeds AM has published 'Assisted dying: a Quaker exploration' and copies had been sent to all AMs.

### Sustainability

Date	Minute	AM	Issue	What happened next
Jul 2015	MfS 2015/07/11	Wensleydale & Swaledale AM	Sustainability & new energy technologies	<p>Minute sent to encourage action: The AM hoped Quakers would advocate for new technologies. It wanted Friends to put more emphasis on adapting to inevitable climate change; and urged more decisive and urgent advocacy, particularly asking the Government to divert funds from manufacturing of arms to investing in new forms of energy.</p> <p>MfS forwarded the minute to BYM Sustainability Group. In April 2016 it reported that two of its members had spoken with the clerk of the AM to listen, and to share information about existing centrally-managed work. MfS recognised that climate change and sustainability are very challenging.</p>

## **February 2017 MfS Home Groups**

More information, including rooms, will be available on the day.

### **1 - London**

Kingston & Wandsworth AM  
London West AM  
North East Thames AM  
North London AM  
North West London AM  
South East London AM  
South London AM

### **2 - Midlands and East of England**

Cambridgeshire AM  
Central England AM  
Ipswich & Diss AM  
Leicester AM  
Lincolnshire AM  
Mid Essex AM  
Norfolk & Waveney AM  
Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM  
Southern East Anglia AM  
Staffordshire AM  
Thaxted AM  
Worcestershire & Shropshire AM

### **3 - North and North West England**

Cumberland AM  
East Cheshire AM  
Hardshaw and Mann AM  
Kendal & Sedbergh AM  
Lancashire Central & North AM  
Manchester & Warrington AM  
Northumbria AM  
Pendle Hill AM  
Swarthmoor (SW Cumbria) AM  
Teesdale & Cleveland AM  
Wensleydale & Swaledale AM  
Wirral & Chester AM

### **4 - Scotland and Wales** (with the option of splitting into two groups)

East Scotland  
North Scotland AM  
South East Scotland AM  
West Scotland AM  
Mid Wales AM  
North Wales AM  
South Wales AM  
Southern Marches AM

## **5 - South Midlands**

Banbury & Evesham AM  
Chilterns AM  
Gloucestershire AM  
Hertford & Hitchin AM  
Luton & Leighton AM  
Mid-Thames AM  
Northamptonshire AM  
Oxford & Swindon AM

## **6 - South of England**

Bournemouth Coastal AM  
East Kent AM  
Hampshire & Islands AM  
Surrey & Hampshire Border AM  
Sussex East AM  
Sussex West AM  
West Kent AM  
West Weald AM

## **7 - South West England**

Devon AM  
Bristol AM  
Cornwall AM  
Dorset & South Wiltshire AM  
Mid-Somerset AM  
North Somerset AM  
West Somerset AM  
West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM

## **8 - Yorkshire**

Brighouse West Yorkshire AM  
Central Yorkshire AM  
Craven & Keighley AM  
Leeds AM  
Pickering & Hull AM  
Sheffield & Balby AM  
York AM

## **9 – Central Committees**

BYMT clerk  
General Meeting for Scotland  
Meeting of Friends in Wales  
QLCC  
QPSWCC  
QCCIR  
QWRC  
YM Treasurer  
YM clerk  
YFGM

## Quaker Housing Trust Triennial Report

### Introduction

Quaker Housing Trust is a committee of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain. The QHT trustees are appointed by Meeting for Sufferings [Quaker faith & practice 8.15]. QHT is a separately registered charity [no. 254704] and a company limited by guarantee registered in England [no. 00924311]. It operates throughout the Britain Yearly Meeting area of England, Scotland, Wales, Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

The work of QHT is serviced on a part-time basis by a member of Britain Yearly Meeting staff based in Quaker Peace & Social Witness, who acts as secretary and administrator. The cost of this is paid by Britain Yearly Meeting as a reflection of the Yearly Meeting's concern for housing issues in its corporate work.

There is more information about QHT on its website: [www.qht.org.uk](http://www.qht.org.uk)

QHT generally reports to BYM via Meeting for Sufferings every three years. Jenny Brierley, the Clerk, will be speaking to this report.

## Quaker Housing Trust Triennial Report: November 2013 to November 2016

### **Practical witness**

*A Quaker body giving Quaker money, on behalf of Quakers, to local housing projects we believe Friends would want to support.*

Quakers have been actively engaged in promoting social housing for over a hundred years. Friends were early supporters of the new 'garden cities', and are long-term advocates of good quality and affordable housing for all.

Quaker Housing Trust (QHT) was created by Yearly Meeting as a channel through which "every Friend who feels able may give or lend as much as can be spared to those who are particularly vulnerable in their efforts to secure housing". It turns Friends' money and activity into practical help for social housing projects which can transform lives by creating a safe place to live – homes – for people in housing need.

We make grants and interest-free loans and offer advice to charitable organisations meeting a real housing need. We support good quality, appropriate accommodation at a rent which low income occupants can genuinely afford. This is a very practical expression of Friends' longstanding and continuing concern about the needs of badly housed, homeless and vulnerable people in Britain – a concern most recently tested again during Yearly Meeting 2015.

### **Supporting small projects**

When creating QHT Yearly Meeting saw a particular need to assist housing projects which were focused on meeting the needs of "the most vulnerable groups in our population" not being met by the government. Today we are still helping this kind of project, often meeting either a local or a very specific personal need, and finding it difficult to attract funding from other sources.

Smaller projects can be more innovative in seeking solutions and, like Quakers, are often making a positive difference disproportionate to their size. We aim always to be open to new ideas, looking to the future as well as today. Specialising in helping small projects allows us, as a small charity, to use our very limited resources where they can make a genuine and positive difference. Generally this is through helping a project to enhance the quality of their housing provision or to create new homes.

### **Disbursing and gathering the funds**

Independent of the Britain Yearly Meeting central funds, our funding work uses the money from individual Friends and meetings, and the repayment of our loans to housing projects.

It is part of QHT's ethos that we seek to disburse whatever funds are currently available to us at our application meetings, and there is a considerable degree of flexibility and imagination in how we can respond to applicant projects. Every application is dealt with individually and on its own merits, which lets us respond appropriately to the project's needs, whilst enabling us to make what we feel is best use of our funds. As Trustees we welcome this ability to combine living adventurously with good stewardship.

For the first time in our history, by the end of 2014 QHT had disbursed all the immediately available non-operational and unrestricted funds. Three-quarters of a million pounds (£755,000) of Quaker money was actively at work on loan to housing projects around Britain, and £98,000 had been given as grants during that year. A success, but one that meant more funds were – and still are – needed to continue the work. Also a reflection of the increased need for these projects in a time of growing economic and social difficulty.

Donations from Friends following Yearly Meeting in May 2015 replenished QHT's funds to a level which allowed us to re-open applications by the end of July. Not surprisingly this led to a big increase in enquiries and applications from housing projects.

### **Yearly Meeting 2015**

We are well aware of the links between good housing – homes – and Quaker concerns for the environment, social justice, and economic justice. To this we add the importance of good housing to the sustainability of healthy communities and societies. We warmly welcomed 2015 Yearly Meeting's exploration of the interconnectedness of these matters.

The session, 'Responding to social inequality and injustice: housing as a tested concern' was introduced by our clerk, Jenny Brierley. We supported it with two special interest meetings and a new publication 'Housing: a tested concern'.

Yearly Meeting expressed a particular concern that the extension of right-to-buy could lead to an actual reduction in social rented housing, increasing inequality between those people who are home-owners and those who are not. We contributed to the Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) work in responding to the Housing and Planning Bill, and ourselves supported an amendment to the Charities Bill which would protect charitable social housing projects from right-to-buy.

Yearly Meeting sparked a renewed energy in Friends to address housing and inequality, yielding some exciting initiatives. Friends around the country organised events from small discussion groups to national conferences and we contributed to many of these events by providing speakers, workshop leaders and materials. Other support to Friends included:

- Republishing 'Housing: Our Spiritual Concern' and 'Principles for a Just Housing Policy' in preparation for both Yearly Meeting and the general election.
- Contributing to BYM pre-election materials.
- Helping to develop the new BYM-funded housing policy 'internship' post now hosted by Housing Justice.
- Organising the BYM threshing meeting on housing held at Woodbrooke in September 2015.
- A follow-up special interest group at Yearly Meeting 2016.

### **Part of wider Quaker concerns**

We are clear that QHT's work is rooted not only in the long-standing spiritual concern for housing but also in wider Quaker concerns, most notably in the areas of ethical use of money and property, and about the environment.

- During 2017 we will be exploring with Triodos Bank new ways of using the money Friends have deposited in Quaker Social Housing Accounts.
- We are amending our application pack to include questions to encourage applicants to be better aware of good energy efficiency and space standards.
- We continue to offer resources to encourage Friends to explore how Quaker property might be used as social housing.

### **Relationship with projects**

Our personal contact with the projects we fund has long been important to us, not least because it generates good relationships and trust, helping to keep our processes simple and open. We achieve this by appointing one of ourselves as 'Trustee-in-Touch' for projects. This can be done as part of the application process when a conversation is mutually helpful to our decision-making, or after a loan or large grant has been given.

Housing is not always the sole element of an applicant organisation's work: sometimes it is only one element in a wide range of activities meeting the needs of individuals and communities. What we learn from our Trustee-in-Touch visits helps to broaden our own personal experience, and to root our collective work as QHT trustees in the context of Friends' wider concerns. Trustee-in-Touch contact also provides us with an effective form of monitoring a project's progress and use of our funding.

### **Looking to the future**

When we made our Triennial Report to Meeting for Sufferings in October 2013, part of our message to Friends was about the effect of national policy on the people who need state support in housing as in other areas of life. Changes to the benefits system quickly began to adversely affect large numbers of people hitherto assumed to not need that safety net.



The interconnectedness of housing and all other aspects of social equality and inequality means that we are all part of the effect of housing and welfare policy in this country. We continue to share with Friends our deep concern about the deteriorating situation for people in housing need in Britain, and the growing number of people who find themselves in housing need.

In our own discussions we have heard the word ‘sanctuary’ as both a practical response to the needs of people experiencing inequality and injustice, and as a less tangible but equally important expression of the spiritual response Friends can have to those needs.

Our work confirms both the need for more homes which are genuinely appropriate and affordable, and the potential within Yearly Meeting for using Quaker resources to contribute towards meeting that need. QHT is helping, in however small a way, to redress the situation in which the number of people potentially and really in “necessitous circumstances” is growing.

Through engagement with the applications we receive, QHT has regular and informed insight into where housing need exists, changes and increases, particularly for the most vulnerable people in society. You will see this reflected in the list of projects [below] we have funded on your behalf during the last three years.

Perhaps the recent increase in approaches to us by projects creating safe homes for young people setting out on their lives, for older people facing increasing frailty, and for refugees and asylum seekers, is a further, and specific, illustration of those needs. That so much of this need is being met by charitable and local projects is itself an indication of the gaps in national provision.

In offering this Triennial Report to Meeting for Sufferings, our governing body within the structure of the Yearly Meeting, we ask for your continued prayerful and practical support for the work we do on your behalf as trustees of the Yearly Meeting’s own housing charity.

Jenny Brierley, Clerk,  
on behalf of Quaker Housing Trust trustees/Council of Management  
November 2016

## **Grants and loans made and offered: November 2013 to November 2016**

We have a particular preference for supporting projects which are:

- Helping individuals who are vulnerable at points of transition in their lives: These may be people who may be moving literally from one place or stage of life to another and/or who can be helped to move from the margins of society into the community, and/or whose needs are often overlooked by other housing providers.
- Contributing to well-balanced and sustainable communities: Which can be within the housing project itself and/or the geographical area in which it sits, perhaps by an innovative approach, or meeting a small but locally significant housing need.
- And, of course: creating new homes.

We also like to see projects trying to achieve the highest standards for energy efficiency: Including carbon emission reduction and/or other environmentally sustainable options which are possible in the circumstances – and ideally where this will also contribute to a reduction in costs for the occupants.

Projects are grouped together below to give examples in each category: as you will see, most projects could fit into more than one.

### **Helping individuals who are vulnerable at points of transition in their lives**

#### **1. Afghan Association Paiwand, Harrow, Middx**

Capital Costs grant of £11,600 to up-grade a seven-bedroom house as further supported homes for unaccompanied young people aged 16-18 escaping war or persecution. 2015

#### **2. Amersham United Charities, Amersham, Bucks**

Capital Costs Grant of £25,000 for remodelling nine almshouses to create seven larger, more energy-efficient and modern homes better adapted for their older residents. 2016

#### **3. Boaz Trust, Manchester**

Capital Costs Grant of £15,500 to make fit-for-purpose six houses in which Boaz Trust gives safe homes to refugees and asylum seekers. 2015

#### **4. Charity of Amy Temple, St Margaret's Bay, Kent**

Capital Costs Grant of £10,000 to modernise and extend one of their four 1960s bed-sitting room almshouse bungalow cottages for single women over 60 years of age. 2016

#### **5. Home-Start, Tamworth**

Capital Costs Grant of £12,000 to complete the renovation of a property to provide safe homes for teenage girls who are homeless after becoming mothers. 2013

#### **6. Home-Start, Tamworth**

Capital Costs Grant of £17,226 to refurbish an ex-bed & breakfast property which they will lease to extend their supported housing for parents under 25 and their child/ren. 2016

**7. Hope into Action: Black Country (Bilston)**

Capital Costs of £20,000 grant and £10,000 loan to buy and refurbish a property to house three people who are, or are at risk of being, homeless, and in need of some support. 2016

**8. Hope into Action: East of England (Nottingham)**

Capital Costs of £20,000 grant and £80,000 loan to buy and renovate a house to give supported accommodation for 2-3 vulnerable adults so they can move into independent living. 2013/2015

**9. Justlife Foundation, Manchester**

Capital Costs Grant of £20,000 to refurbish a property leased from Manchester City Council in order to create safe, supported homes for 13 single homeless adults. 2016

**10. Lighthouse Homes, Rotherham, South Yorkshire**

Capital Costs Grant of £12,500 for furnishing 15 more bedrooms to increase their housing for vulnerable homeless men with problems of addiction. 2016

**11. Luton Accommodation and Move-on Project (LAMP), Bedfordshire**

Capital Costs Grant of £40,000 and £20,000 loan to buy a four-bedroomed property to provide supported homes to young homeless people aged 16-25. 2016. (Sadly LAMP has not been able to go ahead with this project.)

**12. Oasis Aquila Housing, Gateshead**

Capital Costs Grant of £46,258 to build an extension to provide a safe place for professionals supporting clients and an additional play space for the children living at this project for teenage mothers and their children. 2015

**13. Purfleet Trust, King's Lynn, Norfolk**

Capital Costs Grant of £6,500 to furnish two bedrooms in one of two houses giving supported homes to nine single homeless people, often with complex multiple needs. 2016

**14. Rainbow Living, Exeter**

Capital Costs Grant of £25,000 to buy a third property to give long-term supported homes to five learning disabled adults who wish to live as independently as possible. 2015

**15. Ruskin Mill Trust, Plas Dwbl, Wales**

Capital Costs Grant of £15,000 for converting an overbyre to create an independent-living flat for students at a newly developing project that provides a supported home, training and education for young adults with particular needs. 2013

**16. South Tyneside Churches KEY Project, Tyne and Wear**

Capital Costs Grant of £15,000 for improvements to a newly purchased house to provide shared supported accommodation for four teenagers. 2014

**17. Springfield House (Westmorland Association for Social and Moral Welfare), Kendal, Cumbria**

Capital Costs Grant of £10,500 for new plumbing and energy-efficient heating as part of up-grading their 1866 building in which single homeless women are housed and supported. 2014

**18. St Hilda's Almshouses Trust, Saltburn, North Yorkshire**

Capital Costs Grant of £12,000 to turn a derelict property into a modern one-bedroom flat for low income 'hidden homeless' people in the area. 2016

**19. YMCA Glenrothes**

Capital Costs of £10,000 grant and £15,000 loan to buy one property as part of a bigger project providing supported, shared, move-on homes for homeless people aged 16+. 2016

**Contributing to well-balanced and sustainable communities**

**20. Adfer Ban a Chwm (ABC Wales), Brecon Beacons**

Feasibility Study Grant of £5,000 to identify derelict vernacular buildings in Brecon Beacons National Park as potential candidates for repair as affordable housing which would be held as a long-term community asset. 2016

**21. AEOB House People, Bristol**

Capital Costs of £30,000 grant and £20,000 loan to buy and convert a property into affordable homes in an area of housing need in Bristol. 2015 (A Triodos Bank loan of £425,000 to AEOB is being made from the Quaker Social Housing Account.)

**22. Coventry Refugee & Migrant Centre**

Capital Costs Grant of £10,000 to furnish and decorate another property for refugees, migrants and other destitute people with no recourse to public funds. 2014

**23. Emmaus Sussex (Brighton & Hove)**

Capital Costs Loan of £13,675 to refurbish a two bedroom cottage to provide homes for two more Companions. 2013/2014

**24. Gatesbield Quaker Housing Association, Windermere, Cumbria**

Feasibility Study Grant of £5,000 to test the feasibility of creating four new, fully accessible, high eco-standard flats from the founder's workshop. 2016

**25. Glendale Gateway Trust, Wooler, Northumberland**

Capital Costs £20,000 grant and £70,000 loan to convert properties into flats for older people, enabling them to live independently close to shops and services. From the Audrey Deacon Legacy Fund. 2014/2015

**26. Iona Housing Partnership, Iona**

Capital Costs Grant of £20,000 for professional fees for the initial development work in building five houses for affordable rent for people living and working on Iona. 2014

**27. Jewish Community Council of Gateshead, Gateshead**

Capital Costs Loan of £50,000 offered towards new project to build 12 large family homes. 2014. (Project subsequently found they no longer needed this funding.)

**28. Julia Norris Almshouse Trust, Cambridgeshire**

Capital Costs Grant of £10,000 to refurbish four almshouses for local people with varying levels of financial and physical need and otherwise unable to stay in the area. 2016

**29. Knoydart Foundation, West Scotland**

Capital Costs of £10,000 grant and £25,000 loan for demolishing two sub-standard properties and building three new houses for rent to people living in the local community. 2014/2015 (Project subsequently changed significantly and the funding was returned.)

**30. Mull & Iona Community Trust, Ulva Ferry**

Capital Costs £60,000 grant and £21,000 loan to build two three-bedroom houses to a high eco- standard, for local families otherwise unable to afford to stay in the community. 2015

**31. New Forest Quaker Care Home, Hampshire**

Feasibility Study Grant of £5,000 to ensure the design of their new dementia care facility as part of a planned expansion of the accommodation, incorporates best practice. 2013

**32. YMCA North Tyneside**

Capital Costs Grant of £18,500 to furnish and equip a new Community House in a property they received unexpectedly, in order for it to provide supported housing for young men moving from custodial accommodation back into the community. 2014

**33. Seaview Project, St Leonard's on Sea, East Sussex**

Feasibility Study Grant of £5,000 to test the feasibility of using 'eco-pods' to provide accommodation on a local site for people presently sleeping rough in the area. 2016

**Creating new homes**

**34. Anawim – Women working together, Birmingham**

Capital Costs Grant of £30,000 for furnishing six en-suite rooms in new-build accommodation with support services and a crèche for vulnerable women with multiple needs. 2015

**35. Bournemouth Coastal Area Meeting**

Feasibility Study Grant of £5,000 offered, subject to completion of the full brief for the feasibility study tender, to test how the Friends Meeting House in Bournemouth could be used to meet a local housing need. 2015

**36. Bridgnorth Housing Trust, Shropshire**

Capital Costs of £10,000 grant and £20,000 loan towards building 22 new almshouses (with office and residents' meeting room), on land they already own. 2016

**37. Charity of Amy Temple, St Margaret's Bay, Kent**

Capital Costs Grant of £10,000 towards building three modern, one-bedroom bungalows on their own land in the centre of the village to add to their existing four almshouses for single women over 60 years of age. From the Audrey Deacon Legacy Fund. 2014

**38. Contextual Theology Centre, London**

Dissemination of Good Practice Grant of £4,000 as matched funding for research to show how churches and housing associations can work together to produce social housing. 2014

**39. Gilead Foundations Charity, Devon**

Capital Costs of £15,000 grant and £30,000 loan to help them finish building a new block providing supported housing for vulnerable adults with a variety of needs. 2013/2014

**40. Headway, Suffolk**

Feasibility Study Grant (up to £5,000) to further develop a proposal to extend their established domiciliary care service by buying a bungalow as supported housing for people with brain injury/neurological conditions who might otherwise be homeless. 2016

**41. Jericho Foundation, Birmingham**

Feasibility Study Grant of £5,000 to test housing options for providing safe houses for survivors of human trafficking as an extension of the organisations existing support to survivors who are at key transition points. As a result, the Jericho Foundation found a property in which to do that work. Capital Costs of £30,000 grant and £20,000 loan towards the creation of five flats in phase one of developing the property. 2016

**42. Quaker Social Action, East London**

Feasibility Study Grant of £5,000 to explore whether they could become a small-scale direct provider of affordable rented accommodation in East London. 2013

**43. Shepton Mallet United Charities, Somerset**

Capital Costs Grant of £16,425 to convert a former office property into an almshouse home suitable for an older person with significant mobility difficulties. From the Audrey Deacon Fund. 2015

**44. Street Connect, Glasgow**

Capital Costs of £20,000 grant and £20,000 loan to help buy a one-bedroom flat as move-on accommodation for people who have successfully completed a residential rehabilitation programme. 2016