

MfS 2016 12 13 - appendix

Vision for a criminal justice system

South Wales AM minute 16:06:04 from the AM held on 11 June 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.. Also included is a minute from Caerleon, Newport LM.

East Kent AM minute 10b from the AM held on 9 July 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Pendle Hill AM minute 6 from the AM held on 9 July 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system. Also included are relevant minutes from the constituent LM's.

Leicester AM minute 16/55 from the AM held on 10 July 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Luton & Leighton AM response regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Wirral & Chester AM minute 16/88 from the AM held on 13 July 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Norfolk & Waveney AM minute 6/7/2016 from the AM held on 16 July 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Bournemouth Coastal AM minute 16.7.7 from the AM held on 17 July 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system. Also attached is a paper from Poole LM.

Luton & Leighton AM minute 6/7/2016 from the AM held on 16 July 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

East Scotland AM minute 16/36 from the AM held on 20 August 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Sussex West AM minute 16/85 from the AM held on 10 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Gloucestershire AM minute 16/55 and 16/61 from the AM held on 11 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system. Also included is a report from Nailsworth LM.

Mid-Somerset AM minute 45/16 from the AM held on 11 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Northumbria AM minute 9/9/16 from the AM held on 11 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Sheffield & Balby AM minute 6 from the AM held on 11 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Bristol AM minute from the AM held on 17 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system. Also attached are the notes from the Bristol AM Prison Chaplin.

Hertford & Hitchin AM minute 16/54 from the AM held on 17 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system. Also included are relevant minutes from the constituent LM's.

Lincolnshire AM minute 16.09.71 from the AM held on 17 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Notts & Derbys AM minute 49/16b from the AM held on 17 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system. Also included are relevant minutes from the constituent LM's.

West Somerset AM minute 16/67 from the AM held on 17 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system. Also attached is a summary of responses from the constituent LM's and a review of the QPSW paper from Spiceland LM.

Kingston & Wandsworth AM minute 16/79 from the AM held on 24 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

North London AM minute NLAQM 16/78 from the AM held on 24 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Forest Hill LM (South East London AM) minute from the meeting held on 25 September 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM minute 16/47 from the AM held on 2 November 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Mid-Thames AM minute from the AM held on 9 October 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system

Sussex East AM minute 58/16 from the AM held on 9 October 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system. Also attached are a summary of responses from the constituent LM's

York AM minute 2016.11.59 from the AM held on 12 November 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Kendal & Sedbergh AM minute 16.11.22 from the AM held on 12 November 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Worcestershire and Shropshire AM minute 71/16 from the AM held on 19 November 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Southern East Anglia AM minute 2016/61 from the AM held on 27 November 2016 regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

Responses from three constituent local meetings of **Central Yorkshire AM** regarding the QPSW vision for a criminal justice system.

South Wales AM held on 11 June 2016.

Minute 16:06:04 Meeting for Sufferings / QPSW / CCJ

Further to minute 16:05:07 regarding the QPSW Crime, Community & Justice subgroup paper 'Vision for a Criminal Justice System', we have heard read to us the minutes from Bridgend and Swansea LMs and the paper sent from Caerleon/Newport LM.

We affirm the view expressed in these papers that the CCJ sub-committee 'Vision' paper is a philosophical document. It would be more helpful if the document contained specific proposals and was in a format similar to the 'Principles of a New Economy' paper. It could then be used by QPSW to question the Government's intent regarding criminal justice.

We would like to see the principle of restorative justice made more prominent in the document.

We affirm that the 'Vision' document is in keeping with Quaker values and reflects our view that each person is of value and we affirm it in that respect.

We think that examples of the work Friends are already doing, including at a European level, should be acknowledged within the 'Vision' document.

We have heard Friends concerns about the issue of all Welsh women prisoners having to be accommodated in English prisons with the resultant negative impact on them (especially those for whom Welsh is their first language) and their family, children and community links. We are aware that the language and culture issue also impacts on men in prison.

We have also spoken of our concerns about the need for Government to properly meet the needs of those people with mental health problems within the Health and Social Care services rather than them coming into contact with the Criminal Justice system. We are also concerned about the disproportionate number of individuals who have been in the Care system entering the Criminal Justice system.

We are keen to learn of examples of past and current work in relation to criminal justice within our Area Meeting and ask our Clerks to request Local meetings to provide this by September.

In Friendship,
Carolyn Sansom and Frances Rutter
Co-Clerks

Caerleon, Newport LM - Response to Cornwall & Devon AM Concern and Briefing paper: Decriminalisation of the possession of all drugs for personal use.

We commended the Briefing paper, which set out the arguments thoroughly and cogently, backed up with well-researched references.

We appreciate the harm caused by excessive drug use to individuals, their families, and wider society. Much time is spent by the criminal justice system in dealing with this matter. We agree that the problems need to be addressed by a medical model instead of a criminal justice model. Excessive drug use by individuals, many of whom have complex social, psychological and psychiatric problems, needs to be dealt with by all appropriate agencies, including the NHS.

Local agencies seem limited in the numbers of people they can help due to limited and uncertain funding. Unfortunately it seems unlikely that funding will be made available for radical change by any government in the near future.

We also understand the potential therapeutic uses of cannabis in some situations, and felt that legislation to enable this to happen might be a way forward in the decriminalisation of drug possession for personal use in other circumstances.

We hope that AM will respond positively to this concern.

East Kent AM held on 9 July 2016

Minute 10b

Meeting for Sufferings also wishes to test Quaker Peace and Social Witness's vision for a criminal justice system. We believe there are many existing examples of Quaker faith in action that are based not on retribution but on conciliation and restoration that enable offenders to change. We support change in a system that is rife with injustice and does not prevent re-offending. Whilst we have some reservations over the language in which it expressed, we believe this vision is in the spirit of Quaker peace and justice so support it.

Eleanor Brooks, Clerk

Pendle Hill AM held on 9 July 2016

Minute 6, Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Vision for a Criminal Justice System.

We have received this document from Meeting for Sufferings to test locally. Some of our Preparative Meetings have discussed it and we have received the following minutes:

Minute 3, Marsden Local Meeting, July.

Area Meeting will be 'testing' the Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Vision for a Criminal Justice System. This is a very thorough report and a lot of careful work has gone into its preparation. We agree that this forms a Quaker view on a Criminal Justice System however we hope that those groups concerned feel guided by the spirit.

Minute 3, Sawley Quaker Meeting, July

We appreciate the document very much and unite with the vision, particularly the emphasis on rehabilitation and restorative justice. We are not clear if it can be effected in a capitalist society which, when money is short, is about compromise, but hope we can continue to move in this direction. We send this minute on to Area Meeting.

Minute 6, Bolton Local Meeting, July

This was the subject of a discussion following our 3rd Sunday Shared Lunch. The comments were wide-ranging and, for some of us, eye-opening. Overall we feel that society as a whole should take responsibility for the causes of offending and that a truly restorative approach, in which the offence is recognised, is one which will bring a lessening of harm. However, we do understand that this is a resource-expensive approach in which we all need to take part. This minute to be forwarded to AM Clerk.'

Minute from Blackburn Local Meeting, July

We felt it was an acceptable statement and agreed to forward this minute to AM

As an Area Meeting, we feel the document is comprehensive and we fully share and support the vision outlined there. We are committed to doing what we can to help the vision become a reality. We ask the Clerks to send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Ben Pink Dandelion
Clerk

Leicester AM held on 10 July 2016

Minute 16.55

We have received and considered the paper from Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Crime, Community and Justice Sub-committee (CCJS) on "A vision for a criminal justice system" forwarded to Area meetings from Meeting for Sufferings in April.

We commend the work that Friends have undertaken in providing a thoughtful and fair approach to criminal justice which is in keeping with our belief that there is that of God in everyone.

We support their vision of the criminal justice system but would like to see better distribution of resources in order to facilitate this work. We look forward to hearing about future developments, focused action and the next steps.

Fran Hewett
Co-clerk
Leicester AM

Luton & Leighton AM

Consideration by members & attenders of of the QPSWCC paper: 'Vision for a Criminal Justice System'

Background

This paper originated from the centrally-managed work through QPSW's Crime, Community and Justice programme. This programme seeks to address government policy; and inform Quakers and Meetings – this includes providing briefings and workshops.

'Vision for a criminal justice system'

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee sent a paper to Meeting for Sufferings for consideration on 2 April 2016 entitled 'Vision for a criminal justice system'. This matter was raised and the minute agreed at the Meeting for Sufferings on 2 April was as follows:

MfS/16/04/17 'Vision for a criminal justice system' We receive minute 15/121 of QPSWCC, commending a paper on 'a vision for a criminal justice system' for our consideration. QPSWCC hopes Friends will help test the vision expressed in the paper. We ask AMs to consider it, and to respond direct to Meeting for Sufferings. We will return to this later in the year.

Response from Luton and Leighton Area Meeting

Friends and attenders of Luton and Leighton Area Meeting with an interest in this subject met on 10 July 2016 and discussed the paper.

We had a wide ranging albeit brief discussion and deepened our realisation of the issues involved. These are complex and demanding.

Observations of Friends included the following:

1. If this is a paper about a 'vision' it is hard to see the vision within it. What is the vision of what needs to happen within the criminal justice system ... from where it is now? What is the way forward? How can the Criminal Justice System be integrated with, for example, health and education? There are many links between poverty and offending, poor education and offending, mental health issues and offending.
2. Should government have a clear role in educating wider society about criminal justice?
3. The 'for' and 'against' arguments are not that clear cut. It is not a black and white issue. The words 'we regret' and 'we encourage' are suggested as alternatives.
4. Concern that the material is not up-to-date. Much has changed and is changing in the criminal justice system. Has any progress been made since 2009 when the previous statement was made?
5. Victims & Offenders section: we encourage the support of both victims and offenders so that healthy relationships can be created.
6. Vulnerable Adults section: we encourage the assessment and support of vulnerable adults as early as possible in the process which is currently required but not always implemented.
7. Women offenders section: is there evidence to support the first paragraph?

8. Restorative Justice section: query regarding motivation by individuals to take part.
There is a need for good practice in this area based on sound experience.
9. Rehabilitation Section – it would be useful to give examples of what currently exists.
10. There is an assumption that prison is the appropriate place for those who have offended. Prison is not appropriate for many. Alternative provision should be included.
11. The current resources which are being allocated to prisons are totally inadequate. Prisoners are often in cells for most of the day, at times accommodated in little cells with someone whom they are fearful of.
12. Something could be added within the 'vision' about resources. Not enough is being spent on criminal justice. The numbers in prisons are increasing and the staffing has reduced considerably.
13. The number of people committing suicide in prisons has increased.
14. Drug taking has increased. Some come in with this problem others become addicted when in prison. Treatment of drug users should be expanded. A massive expansion of high quality residential rehabilitation is what is needed, whereas what is actually available is declining.
15. Are in-determinant sentences being considered?
16. Deterrence is more important than retribution. There needs to be a consequence to unsocial behaviour. Punishment needs to be proportionate to the crime. It is not justice to be punished for more than one has done as an example to others.
17. It can be helpful at times to send someone to prison, to take them out of the community, to give them respite in addition to giving the community in which they have been offending, a period of respite.
18. There are usually sentencing plans but what is contained in them is often not fulfilled. There is often a gap between the plan and practice. Programmes are not always available especially for short-term or remand prisoners.
19. Prisoners are often moved for no apparent reason from one prison to another which is almost always not helpful to the prisoner or their family.
20. It is important that the person is not labelled as bad. The offending behaviour is only one part of the individual.
21. Prisons tend to be used as a 'catch-all'.
22. Changing the criminal justice system requires political action. However it is also a community responsibility to integrate offenders.
23. Probation officers are not sufficient in number and often have their hands tied. A lot of work that used to be done by probation officers is now being done by less qualified staff and volunteers. The latter is a good thing, of course, in that its community rooted and very supportive, but the de-professionalisation of the probation service (into a series of tasks rather than the old 'advise, assist and befriend') is part of the punishment oriented and less humane ethos that is current practice. Once released prisoners are often not given the support they need to reintegrate into society. Privatisation of the probation service – payment by results is an additional issue for probation staff.
24. Ex-offenders have a right to work and the improper use of disclosure of past 'spent' convictions limits their opportunities.
25. There are positive things happening (such as Circles of Support) which is not mentioned in the paper.

To conclude

A 'Vision' for the criminal justice system would also be a vision for the whole of the society we live in. We need a clear, accurate and full understanding of the present situation in order to envision what progress looks like.

In love and friendship

Gloria Dobbin, Meeting for Sufferings Representative
Janey Meadows, Meeting for Sufferings Alternate
Helen Osborn, Clerk of Luton and Leighton Area Meeting

Wirral & Chester AM held on 13 July 2016

Minute 16.88

We have heard from our Local meetings about the concern of QPSW Council, "Vision for a criminal justice system." North Wales and Wirral and Chester Area Meetings have established a working group to support the establishment of the new prison at Wrexham and we feel that this is an appropriate and ongoing response to this concern.

Sheila Houldin

Clerk – Wirral and Chester Area Meeting

Norfolk & Waveney AM held on 16 July 2016

Minute 6/7/2016 Area Meeting response to Quaker Peace and Social Witness Paper: Vision for a Criminal Justice System.

We have received from Meeting for Sufferings a paper 'Vision for a criminal justice system: a view from Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Community & Justice Sub-Committee', a copy is attached to these minutes. This document was circulated in advance of this meeting to allow Friends and Local Meetings to consider the matter. Meeting for Suffering is seeking our response to this paper to help ensure the work Quaker Peace and Social Witness does is based on a vision shared and tested by Friends about the criminal justice system.

We feel, from our experience with Glebe House, we would welcome mention proven efficacy of the approach of therapeutic work and refer Quaker Peace and Social Witness to the Boswell Report.

We welcome the report's support for prisons to remain within the public domain.

We ask that consideration be given to the effects on children, positive and negative, when sentencing the parent.

We question the use of the words 'weaker citizens' in the last paragraph of the report.

We support this report and we ask our Clerk to send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Michael Johnson
Clerk, Norfolk & Waveney AM

Bournemouth Coastal AM held on 17 July 2016

Minute 16.7.7 QPSW Vision Statement on Criminal Justice

We have received a Minute from Poole Local Meeting.

We agree to forward the following amended version to Meeting for Sufferings:
Our feeling is that this document expresses Quaker values about dealing with crime in society well, with an appropriate emphasis on restorative justice and on people being held responsible for their actions. We feel that it would be useful to include sections on the Police, both the work they are currently doing and the changes that would be necessary in their dealings with offenders and victims to reflect the values of the document.

There could be greater prominence given to the impact on victims, and the need to consider both offenders and victims throughout the criminal justices process. As an example, headings could be changed to, "Restorative justice for offenders and victims" and so on.

There could well be greater consideration as to the audience for which the document is prepared, more about alternatives to prison and clearer definition of terms used.

Tom Sanders, Clerk.

QPSW Vision statement on Criminal Justice

Agenda item at the May and July AMs

The following is a detailed critique by Stephen Feltham, the first section of which was read and discussed at the July AM.

Stephen started by saying, "This is far too important to be dealt with sympathetically. It needs care and logic."

Friends felt that it should be sent to the Clerk to Meeting for Sufferings along with our Minute, though with the clear proviso that it was discussed, but not agreed at AM.

General

The vision statement is wholly admirable in its intent and probably reflects many hours of work by dedicated and hard-working Friends. I find myself in unity with the majority of its sentiments but nonetheless feel that the document will not advance its cause for a few general reasons and several specific ones. I do like the bluntness (Plain speaking) of "what we are against and what we are for but I do wish that the order of presentation were reversed. It seems very negative harping on about what we are against at the start of each new topic and then only referring to what we are for later on.

The topic is near to the hearts of most Friends and specially those involved with the writing of the vision statement but I feel that definitions of some key terms must be included. Specifically the word "Punishment". I discern that this is a 'dirty word' in the vision authors' minds but to me punishment just means 'the sentence of the court'. I feel that for many there is a blind spot with the use of this word and that the process of

punishment is anathema. I have been punished many times by parents and schools and communities (But not the courts) and I suspect that most Friends have also and it is generally been beneficial. So now in my seventh decade I have trouble with re-writing the English dictionary. Another word or term is "Restorative Justice". It is alluded to in the document and patently the whole text is about the concept of it but it does not actually say what it is.

I feel that the vision statement is written by Quakers for Quakers (but not all), and is preaching to the converted. I doubt that it will influence the hearts and minds of folk outside of our society much because it is mainly an anthology of QPSW soundbites and wishful thoughts, not that I disagree with them but visions of this nature must be achievable and there is nothing in this document that provides a tangible baseline for the manifestation of the vision.

Although we should be proud of our endeavour and our idealistic visions and therefore should give them the broadest visibility as is possible, I am afraid that those whom we wish to influence will not have read it thoroughly but nonetheless will be significantly influenced by the general press who will make merry with some of the notions within the document.

The title of the document is "Vision for a criminal justice system:....."but there is nothing of a system within it. It is nothing more than a list of likes and dislikes regarding the consequences of the sentencing system. There is nothing concrete within it or how such a vision could be made to work.

Where in the document is the word "atonement"? Without it criminals will only learn how to play the system.

Where is the recognition of what our current system has got right or makes a decent fist of? One is not going to win any friends with a document that highlights the failures of others, ignores their endeavours and proposes a remedy that is likely to be seen by someone just insulted as a wish list of sound-bites and social aspiration rather than a vision for a system.

Specific

Offenders, first paragraph final sentence: It is true that many offenders have also been victims; but not of the same event for which they are being tried.

Sentencing, second sentence. I need educating here. I thought that the sentence after a guilty verdict was some sort of punishment but I do not think that punishment should be negative, in fact I think I agree with the concept of restorative justice. (I think, because it is not defined as a concise statement so am not sure if we are talking about the same thing). But I still feel it is punishment

Sentencing third paragraph, third sentence: "Restorative justice processes" are not defined so how is the reader to be convinced by this sentence

Use of prison, second paragraph, first sentence: "Reasonable alternative" is a very poor and subjective counter argument for prison. I doubt many JPs would know how to respond except to ignore this preference.

Treatment of drug users, final sentence:an alternative to criminal justice sanctions. Whilst I do not uphold the current system I need an argument to abandon it.

If the authors of this document are going to reference the status quo they must be rational. Otherwise the Vision's unsupported wish list is degraded by its unsupported condemnations and the whole document will lose credibility, and this would be regrettable.

Rehabilitation, second sentence: The use of the term 'necessarily be expensive' is abhorrent to me. Why must any further process be advocated in this document as expensive by necessity? Whose colours are being flown here because I see little to do with criminal justice in it? This is not a very convincing vision.

Restorative justice first paragraph: Is this really appropriate as a vision statement, saying how hard it is going to be and referring to dependencies and difficulties.

Restorative justice, third paragraph final sentence. The document presumes offenders do not understand the harm they do. Some may say that they do, but just don't care.

Ethics of privatisation, first paragraph. There is not an ethical conundrum merely good or not so good management. The interests of shareholders and the state are not to be presumed to be mutually exclusive. Again, what agenda is being plugged here, is it restorative justice or some dogmatic pseudo political viewpoint with tunnel vision?

Summary, second sentence: Whilst I do acknowledge that the authors see the criminal justice system as society's response to breakdown in relationships, I disagree with them. The criminal justice system is society's response to crime and whilst a breakdown in relationships may be a causal mode so is greed, drug dependency, ego, delusion, spiritual paucity, moral turpitude, poverty, failures in the welfare system, abandonment of personal discipline and the encouragement of self over community. The final two paragraphs are a poor summary of the foregoing materiel of the vision. It has failed to convince this reader that restorative justice is in a fit state to be rolled out to a greater public. In my own heart of hearts restorative justice constitutes a most meritorious Concern. Restorative Justice is worthy of support, but not with this vision for it is a poor face for it.

... who is the document for, Quakers or non-Quakers?

East Scotland AM held on 20 August 2016

Minute 16.36 Vision for a Criminal Justice system

QPSW Central Committee have prepared a draft paper “Vision for a Criminal Justice system” setting out principles that Friends could support on this important topic. It is summarised in the sentences “Justice should be compassionate, forgiving and healing – restorative, not retributive. We want to change attitudes and encourage the criminal justice system to move towards this vision of justice”. We have been asked to reflect on the paper and report back to Meeting for Sufferings. The report has been placed on our webpage, and copies have been made available for our consideration today.

We support the principles contained in the document. In addition, we hope that there could be reference to:

- The position of young offenders
- The situation regarding women offenders with young children
- The disproportionate use of prison for some ethnic minorities
- Work by Quakers on international penal reform.

We recommend that the “for” statements precede “against” statements.

We note that penal policy is a devolved matter, and the Scottish government can implement policies separately from Westminster.

Robin Waterston
Clerk, East Scotland AM

Sussex West AM held on 10 September 2016

Minute 16/85 Vision for a Criminal Justice System

A paper outlining the proposals has been circulated to all LQMs prior to this meeting. We thank Paul Funnell for explaining the issues and the background to this paper. We have discussed the paper which we find inspiring and support it.

Worthing LQM suggested that the 'positive' aspects are written before the 'negatives' although we understand that it was following the pattern written by Edward Burrough in the quote at the beginning of the paper.

Most friends were happy with this. We are disappointed that there is no reference to ethnic minorities as ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented as offenders in the criminal justice system. We encourage support for both prisoners and prison officers.

We value the work of our Quaker chaplains and the work that the Crime, Community and Justice Group has already achieved to improve the justice system. We are pleased that our justice system is held in high regard and hope that with the implementation of these proposals it will continue to be so regarded.

We hope that our discussion has inspired friends to become involved in a practical way.

We ask the clerk to send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Heather Brayshaw
Kathryn Pearce
Clerks

Gloucestershire AM held on 11 September 2016

Minute 16/55 Vision for criminal justice.

Following minute 16/36, clerks have received a response from Nailsworth meeting, based on a one-hour threshing meeting of seven Friends. Wendy Gerard undertook to send this round LM clerks for interest. We ask other LMs to forward any responses to the clerks in time for our September AM.

Minute 16/61 Vision for Criminal justice

Following minute 16/36 and 16/55, the clerk has received only the Nailsworth meeting response to the paper by the QPSW Crime, Community and Justice sub-committee, circulated to Local Meetings in May.

As requested, Nailsworth sent their response to LM clerks for interest in July. The clerk having received no further comments, we now ask her to forward this as our AM response to Meeting for Sufferings clerk as requested.

Jane Mace, Clerk
Gloucestershire Area Quakers

Notes of the Threshing Meeting held on 20th June 2016 from 5.15 to 6.15 pm at Nailsworth Quaker Meeting House to test the "Vision for a Criminal Justice System: A View from the QPSWCCJC" dated September 2015

Present: Meg Walker, Sally Birch, Jude Emmet, Mike Davis, Noel Baker, Wendy Gerard and Colin Gerard (Convener)

We began by agreeing that we would each have the opportunity to speak and would work towards noting a general response, accompanied by notes on specific paragraphs in the vision statement that would be put to the July Nailsworth Meeting for Worship for Business.

We welcome the paper and thank QPSWCCJS and Meeting for Sufferings for the opportunity to test the vision.

It is useful to receive a statement on the Quaker position and refreshing to read something so uncompromising and radical from a number of perspectives. It is not a populist vision but one that would have many consequences for the government in terms of policy, guidance and resourcing.

We would like to know who the vision is for, where the vision would go and what use is to be made of it over time.

We believe that the vision would benefit from further work - some editing and consideration of how we own in our choice of language that we are stating our vision from a faith-based tradition but wishing to communicate widely.

Jessica Metherringham, Britain Yearly Meeting's Parliamentary Liaison fFriend might helpfully be consulted before the vision goes out from here.

We wonder whether it would be helpful to include what we mean by:

- a) the opening statement “We believe in that of God in everyone”, which is to do with the way that we relate to others and
- b) from the 2009 view of a CJS that we could explicitly link the overarching aims “*Justice should be compassionate, forgiving and healing – restorative, not retributive*” with the points raised in each paragraph. For example we are against “x” because it is not *compassionate*; we are for “y” because this is what *forgiveness* demands and so on for *healing, restorative* and *retributive*.
- c) We noted the wish to “*change attitudes*” and reflected on how difficult it is to help people to understand that there is a human being behind each crime, when media reporting does not support this.

We find the number paragraphs somewhat overwhelming and the order rather random. We wonder if it would be helpful if the vision focussed on a number of major subtopics such as women offenders, young offenders and privatisation.

Having noted this, we consider that a number of important issues have not been included in the statements of “against” and “for” notably:

- a) children (impact of separation from their parents resulting from prison sentences; early years deprivation; sense of victimisation amongst older children)
- b) child and young offenders
- c) mentally ill offenders
- d) education (disadvantage in early life, disruption in prison setting due to transfers)
- e) opportunities for spiritual exploration
- f) the National Offender Management Service
- g) prisoners currently serving indefinite sentences

We think that the vision would be supported by having a number of appendices, footnotes and references, including:

- a) naming “others saying similar things”
- b) naming organisations associated with Criminal Justice that Quakers have supported in being set up over the years
- c) the witness of individual Quakers
- d) the research / facts from UK and other countries to back up the assertions and statements
- e) definitions: what we mean by prison, community justice, restorative justice
- f) the profile of the prison population: age, gender, ethnicity, offence +

Para	Title	Against	For	Comments
1	Victims		We are for giving care and support to the victims of crime, making sure their needs are met so that their equilibrium can be restored. We are for helping the people around both victims	No “against” on this first heading. Could be along the lines of “We are against polarising people into labels of good and bad”?

			and offenders to support them so that healthy relationships can be restored.	
2	Offenders	<i>We are against the simplistic concept of good victims and bad criminals.</i>	We are for treating offenders as people who need help to take responsibility for themselves and their actions. We are for helping offenders understand their actions and move into a useful, happy and constructive life. We are for recognising that many offenders are also victims.	Does it have to be “offenders”, could it be “People who have committed Criminal offences”
3	“Vulnerable Adults”	<i>We are against provisions and practices that act as a barrier to vulnerable adults being properly heard. We are against attitudes and behaviour towards people with mental illness, emotional disturbance, Specific Learning Difficulties, physical disabilities or addictive behaviour which prejudice their right to fair and respectful treatment.</i>	We are for appropriate professional assessment and diagnosis of the mental and emotional state of people caught up in the criminal justice system. We are for appropriate support being available to all vulnerable people in the criminal justice system whether as victim, offender, witness, or family member. We are for both the assessment and the support being initiated as early as possible in the process. We are for good quality training to make police, courts and judiciary aware of the variety of ways in which a person can be “vulnerable” and how their specific needs can be met.	<p><i>“Specific Learning Difficulties”</i> We find the word “specific” unhelpful as people have a range of learning difficulties / educational disadvantage that need to be taken into account. <i>“right to fair”</i> We are not sure about this phrase possibly “which prejudice just, informed and respectful treatment”?</p> <p>“For” “training”: why just police courts and judiciary, why not all those involved in working with people who have offended?</p>
4	Punishment	<i>We are against punishment for its own sake: Jesus taught us to forgive and try to help the</i>	We are for holding offenders accountable for their actions and for balancing wrongdoing by	<i>“Against”</i> : Jesus taught us to forgive and try to help the wrongdoer” We do not think that this

		<p>wrongdoer. We are against a criminal justice system based primarily on deterrence and retribution. We are against an assumption that only a punitive outcome matters.</p> <p>We are against criminal sentences which disengage people further from the society which imposes them.</p>	<p>reparation. We are for a response to crime based on making things better for the victim and the offender, and thus for society. Punishment alone disengages people further from the society that imposes it.</p> <p>We are for offenders attaining reintegration and acceptance.</p>	<p>passage belongs here. “For” “Punishment alone disengages people further from the society that imposes it.” We do not think that this passage belongs here.</p>
5	Sentencing	<p>We are against sentencing being based on the principles of retribution or reflection of public anger. We are against the assumption that further crime is prevented through punishment. A criminal sentence should have a positive purpose, and is more likely to be effective if the expected outcome is clearly identified.</p>	<p>We are for measures to help sentencers be aware of the effect of their decisions upon everyone affected: the offender, their family (particularly any dependent children or others for whom the offender is the primary carer), the victim and their family, and the wider community.</p> <p>We are for all sentencing saying clearly what its purpose is and the actions needed to achieve that purpose.</p> <p>We are for a criminal justice system that allows for a variety of ways of responding to criminal behaviour to be considered.</p> <p>We are for measures which aim to persuade and enable offenders to reflect on their acts and change their future behaviour.</p> <p>We are for the availability of restorative justice processes throughout our criminal justice system.</p>	<p>“Against” “A criminal sentence should have a positive purpose, and is more likely to be effective if the expected outcome is clearly identified.”</p> <p>We do not think that this belongs here.</p> <p>“For” “(particularly any dependent children or others for whom the offender is the primary carer),”</p> <p>We would like to see this strengthened in the vision in response to the research that identifies the importance of a child’s experience during the first 5 years of their life both for sentencing and the development of prison sentences that take account of this.</p> <p>“persuade and” uneasy with the use of persuade in this context.</p>
6	Use of Prison	We are against the	We are for the use of	“Against” “We are

		<i>use of prison as a default response to offending when other penalties have not been adequately explored and properly rejected. We are against a prison system that seeks to detain people for longer than necessary, whether this be for profit or political expediency: either motive is morally repugnant.</i>	prison only when there is no reasonable alternative. Only offenders who pose a genuine, immediate and/or violent threat to society need to be incarcerated. When prison is truly the only reasonable response, it should be compassionate and rehabilitative. We are for non-custodial measures wherever possible.	<i>against a prison system that seeks to detain people for longer than necessary, whether this be for profit or political expediency"</i> We are aware also of the impact of inefficiencies and poor management.
7	Prison Experience	<i>Being sent to prison is itself the punishment. The deprivation of liberty and all that goes with it should not be exacerbated by bad treatment inside prison. We are against punitive regimes and degrading conditions. We are against long periods of incarceration without meaningful activity.</i>	We are for the provision of education, training and useful work whilst in prison. We are for the provision of activities which will nurture mind and spirit as well as physical well-being. We are for the provision of health care, addiction treatments and nutritious food that will lead to the good physical and mental health of the offender. We are for these things being provided for all prisoners regardless of the length of their sentence.	<i>"Against" "Being sent to prison is itself the punishment. The deprivation of liberty and all that goes with it should not be exacerbated by bad treatment inside prison."</i> We do not think that this belongs here.
8	Prisoners	<i>We are against practices and behaviour in prison which undermine the dignity of prisoners. We are against a prison service that uses a profit motive or public expenditure cuts to treat prisoners in any way that fails to meet their basic needs as</i>	We are for supporting prisoners and treating them with respect, whilst holding them accountable for their behaviour. We are for a prison service which treats people with respect and humanity.	

		<i>human beings.</i>		
9	Prisoners' families	<i>We are against treatment of prisoners' families that undermines their dignity and shows indifference to their needs.</i>	We are for helping to keep prisoners' families together. We are for prisoners being held as close to their families and friends as possible. We are for the provision of visitors' centres where information, practical support and pastoral care are available and which include visiting facilities for the children of prisoners.	
10	Prison Staff	<i>We are against prisons being understaffed or staffed by people who are not properly paid, trained and supported. We are against either profit motive or public expenditure cuts being the rationale for decisions that adversely affect maintaining high standards of service in the prison estate.</i>	We are for treating prison staff with respect and supporting them in their difficult role. We are for adequate staffing in all prisons, with appropriate recruitment, training, pay, supervision and professional support. We are for holding prison staff at all levels accountable for the way in which they carry out their responsibilities.	
11	Women Offenders	<i>We are against women being sent to prison for reasons other than would be applied to male offenders, such as 'for their own good' or 'to teach them a lesson or for 'their own safety'. We are against women being sentenced more harshly than men in similar circumstances.</i>	Where prison is necessary for a woman, we are for provision which takes account of the fact that women prisoners' physical, mental and emotional needs differ from those of men. We are for the promotion of integration between the various government departments responsible for meeting the needs of women who offend or are at risk of offending.	We would like this paragraph to go deeper. <i>"We are against women being sent to prison for reasons other than would be applied to male offenders,"</i> We are conscious that it is very easy for prisoners to lose their home and therefore lose their children and that children lose their mother – so prison for women should be approached differently from men. <i>"such as 'for their</i>

				<i>own good' or 'to teach them a lesson or for 'their own safety'.</i> " We felt that this does not belong in the "against" statement and that the reasons apply to sentencing men as well as women.
12	Treatment of Drug Use	<i>In the same way as it is inappropriate to imprison some people who have a mental illness, it is counter-productive to use imprisonment as a means of rehabilitating drug abusers. Diversion to treatment recognises the dangers of drug use and mis-use as primarily a public health issue.</i>	Where drug dependency is a factor in other criminal behaviour we are for properly resourced and voluntary drug treatment being provided as an alternative to criminal justice sanctions.	"Against" could be expressed as "We are against prison as a means of rehabilitating people who are substance dependant" "For" We suggest "voluntary" could be expressed as "agreed" drug treatment that has been consented to by the offender and not necessarily an alternative to CJ sanctions. We suggest that there needs to be an additional heading for mental illness to take account of the wide range of mental health problems that would not result in the offender being in hospital rather than prison.
13	Rehabilitation	<i>Rehabilitation services need to be well planned, resourced and integrated. This will necessarily be expensive, but the saving in the long term will pay back dividends and the benefit to society will be beyond measure.</i>	We are for measures which will help offenders avoid further reoffending and aid their reintegration into the community. We are for open-hearted, non-judgmental mentoring which dispassionately examines the circumstances that led to offending. We are for help to find work and accommodation in a suitable location upon	"Against" <i>"Rehabilitation services need to be well planned, resourced and integrated. This will necessarily be expensive, but the saving in the long term will pay back dividends and the benefit to society will be beyond measure."</i> We do not think that this belongs here. There is not an "against" statement.

			<p>release.</p> <p>We are for continuing support from probation, family, one-on-one mentoring and other 'services' like Circles of Support & Accountability for as long as the individual needs it.</p>	<p>Could go under "For" expressed as "We are for well planned, resourced and integrated rehabilitation services that support social inclusion".</p>
14	Restorative Justice	<p><i>The restorative process is challenging and a satisfactory outcome depends on good practice leading to dialogue, understanding and appropriate reparation. It can be much more demanding and difficult for both victims and offenders, and more effective than punishment and prison.</i></p>	<p>We are for the use of restorative justice being available to everyone who wants it, victims and offenders, and at all stages of the criminal justice process. We are for giving both the offender and victim the chance to understand what happened. It is often helpful to be able to put the events into perspective, preventing what might be painful events from dominating the lives of those affected. Forgiveness can help to heal both parties: we are for providing this opportunity for it to happen.</p> <p>We are for the right of victims to participate in restorative justice if they wish because it can help them to express their feelings and put a face to the crime. It can lead to their receiving an apology and reparation.</p> <p>We are for enabling offenders to respond to victims and offer apology and reparation. This helps offenders understand the harm which has been done and gives them a chance of putting things right.</p>	<p><i>"Against" "The restorative process is challenging and a satisfactory outcome depends on good practice leading to dialogue, understanding and appropriate reparation. It can be much more demanding and difficult for both victims and offenders, and more effective than punishment and prison."</i> We do not think this belongs here. We suggest that it could be expressed as "We are against people who offend lacking the opportunity to meet with their victim if both wish to do so."</p> <p>"For" We suggest that the following parts of the text do not belong here. "It is often helpful to be able to put the events into perspective, preventing what might be painful events from dominating the lives of those affected. Forgiveness can help to heal both parties: we are for providing this opportunity for it to</p>

				<p>happen.”</p> <p>“because it can help them to express their feelings and put a face to the crime. It can lead to their receiving an apology and reparation.”</p> <p>“This helps offenders understand the harm which has been done and gives them a chance of putting things right.”</p>
15	Community Justice	<p><i>Communities play an essential role in reducing criminal behaviour.</i></p> <p><i>We are against the acceptance of a ‘them’ and ‘us’ divide, and the fostering of a blame culture.</i></p> <p><i>We are against the use of force as the default response for dealing with violence.</i></p>	<p>We are for helping people to understand conflict and to find ways of resolving it without resorting to violence.</p> <p>We are for understanding and addressing the root causes of violence and criminal behaviour and putting resources into addressing them.</p> <p>We are for supporting local initiatives and partnerships in activities to achieve this.</p> <p>We are for involving local communities and voluntary organisations in working with prisoners, with victims of crime, and in the criminal justice system.</p> <p>We are for giving prisoners the right to vote and encouraging their sense of belonging to society.</p> <p>We are for reconciliation.</p>	<p>“Against”</p> <p><i>“Communities play an essential role in reducing criminal behaviour.”</i> We do not think that this belongs here.</p> <p>We think we could put under “For” “We are for communities contributing to the reduction of criminal behaviour.”</p>
16	Ethics of Privatisation	<p><i>Dealing with an offender is a public responsibility that should be the direct duty of the state: a private provider of services is</i></p>	<p>We are for the state taking direct responsibility for its prisons and prisoners, as it takes responsibility for all of its criminal justice</p>	<p>We suggest the heading as “Privatisation of Prisons”.</p> <p>“Against” <i>“Dealing with an offender is a public responsibility</i></p>

		<p><i>responsible to its clients and its shareholders rather than to society. Thus an ethical conundrum arises over the degree of public accountability when prisons and probation services are delegated to private companies. We are against a delivery of these state responsibilities that is not fully transparent and publicly accountable. We are against creating circumstances in which financial profit can be made by regarding people as commodities.</i></p>	<p>system. We are for transparency and the provision of prisons and probation services. We are for measures to ensure that high standards of probity are maintained.</p>	<p><i>that should be the direct duty of the state: a private provider of services is responsible to its clients and its shareholders rather than to society. Thus an ethical conundrum arises over the degree of public accountability when prisons and probation services are delegated to private companies.”</i> We do not think this belongs here.</p>
17	Summary	<p>We believe there is that of God in everyone: if I hurt another, I hurt myself and I have a responsibility with others to repair the harm. We see the criminal justice system as society’s response to a breakdown in relationships which has brought about harm. We believe that restoring relationships to meet the needs of those affected by crime and sustain safer communities is done better through restorative justice than through punishment.</p> <p>We are for a compassionate, positive, caring and non-judgemental society which helps it’s weaker citizens. Only a society like that has real moral strength and can offer all its citizens a contented life with less crime and less social division.</p>		

Context

Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting is located in an area that has no prisons. As a result of Bristol Area Meeting’s difficulty in bringing forward the name of a Friend to be appointed as Quaker Chaplain at HMP Leyhill, one of our members, Sue Barrance, is the current Quaker Chaplain there.

As a result of HMP Gloucester closing, our Quaker Prison Chaplain Judy Roles looked into supporting the QPC in an adjoining county and is now a member of HMP Long Lartin’s chaplaincy team. Mary Brown, who had been QPC at Gloucester Prison, was one of the initiators of Positive Justice Gloucestershire, which aims to encourage the use of restorative and therapeutic practices within the criminal justice system, in order to reduce crime and its impact on victims and to act as a pressure group: balancing

negative representations in the popular press, and raising public awareness of, and support for, positive initiatives within the criminal justice system, particularly alternatives to imprisonment where appropriate by organising regular public meetings and informal discussion forums; disseminating accurate and up to date information regarding crime and the community; cooperating with other community/voluntary groups and acting as an information point for those who wish to get involved with the voluntary sector; to promote positive policies to the media and to policy makers by writing letters, putting out press releases and through their website.

A fire was set at Gloucester Quaker Meeting House and the meeting engaged with the person who set the fire through Restorative Gloucestershire. This organisation is committed to promoting the use of Restorative Practices through facilitation, advice and by supporting others to use and develop restorative skills. Restorative Gloucestershire is a group of statutory, non-statutory and voluntary sector partners that have joined with the aim of offering all people who come into contact with the criminal justice system (CJS) or who come into conflict in the community an opportunity to participate in a restorative intervention.

They aim to develop the use of Restorative Practices across services operating in Gloucestershire and throughout communities in Gloucestershire; build on existing work where Restorative Practices impact positively on outcomes in order to develop a strategy designed to embed Restorative Practices county-wide; implement the use of Restorative Practice Philosophy, not just Restorative Justice Interventions; place an emphasis on the proactive, community and relationship building side of Restorative Practice as well as dealing with reactive side of Restorative Practice; employ agreed protocols that strengthen relationships and seek to repair harm when relationships break down; be a central hub and centre of excellence for Restorative Practices in Gloucestershire by providing training, advice and guidance; offering Restorative Interventions service using qualified, experienced volunteer facilitators; promoting and supporting the use of restorative practice across the County and setting up a system of support for all Restorative Practitioners operating within Gloucestershire.

Nailsworth Quaker Meeting has welcomed men on leave from HMP Leyhill with the support of the QPC at the time.

Wendy Gerard
21st June 2016

Mid-Somerset AM held on 11 September 2016

Minute 45/16

We have heard Meeting for Sufferings' request to test the vision of minute 17/16 of QPSWCC [Quaker Peace & Social Witness Crime, community and justice sub-committee] and considered their vision which has much in common with the experiences of our Meeting, some of whom work or volunteer within the Criminal Justice System. In general we accept the paper's views on what we stand for and reject within the system.

In our own Meeting we have shared the following concerns:

The UK Criminal Justice System needs clear objectives on what needs to be achieved

The lack of achievement of the Criminal Justice System

More use of research could be used to point to successful outcomes

We do not believe that the Criminal Justice System should be privatised and privatisation may work in its own interests, against rehabilitation

Privatisation fails to encourage sharing good practice

There should be more use of alternatives to custody

Restorative Justice needs to have a better profile within Criminal Justice System

Punishment should include rehabilitation

Furthermore, we encourage Meeting for Sufferings to ask QPSWCC to consider planning more specific action of their vision by:

Researching the effect of the Criminal Justice System on both victim and perpetrators' families, perhaps using a pre-existent Quaker study

Considering how successful local projects can be rolled out nationwide

Considering how the media can be used to reach and inform a wider community to a healing effect

Gathering evidence from existing Quaker communities including Quakers in Criminal Justice, whom they might consult, with a view to Lobbying our government to reverse current privatisation (it may be that researching successful Euro systems will help provide evidence)

Overall we were encouraged by the views put forward in minute 15/121 and hope that QPSWCC will be proactive in developing their positive approach.

Andy Hall, clerk

David Winter Assistant Clerk

Northumbria AM held on 11 September 2016

Minute 9 9/16 Concerns

Further to Minute 8 WG 8/16, some of our Local Meetings have discussed the concerns below and the following Minute from Stocksfield Local Meeting has been received:

Min 4 (4.9.16) reads in part 'Our Clerk has drawn our attention to two matters which will be on the agenda of the MfWfB in the afternoon. Firstly, the concern of Cornwall AM for the decriminalisation of all drugs for personal use. Sue Bennet, Clerk AM, has summarised the issues as outlined by Cornwall Friends, in the attached paper. Secondly, the concern from Meeting for Sufferings about the need to reform the Criminal Justice system. Background papers have been prepared and circulated. We are encouraged to know that Friends are actively engaged in taking these matters forward. We support the work being done and look forward to hearing how it progresses.'

a) Vision for a criminal justice system

We receive a minute from Newcastle Local Meeting:

Minute 2016/7/6: Two concerns for discussion in local Meetings from Meeting for Sufferings:

Meeting for Sufferings has asked LMs to consider two concerns and to send their views to MfS through the AM representative.

i) Minute 17 – Vision for a criminal justice system: a view from the Quaker Peace & Social Witness Crime, Community & Justice Sub-committee

We are aware that there are some good examples in the UK of the use of restorative justice, e.g. among young offenders and Circles of Support & Accountability. We ask all Friends to read the paper from QPSW so that we are properly informed. In principle we are in full agreement and support the vision set out in the paper (lodged with the minutes).

We also receive a minute from Alnwick Local Meeting:

Minute 09/04 MfS Vision for a criminal justice system

Friends wish to join with Area Meeting Working Group in supporting this vision. We should like to see additional reference to legal aid.

We receive the minute below from Sunderland Local Business Meeting held on Sunday 4th September 2016

11.1 Concern re vision of criminal justice system based on restorative justice

Sunderland Friends support this concern in principle but stress the need for adequate resources to ensure skilled facilitation and careful monitoring.

We thank our other Local Meetings for their consideration of this concern. The Clerk will pass on this Minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Susan Bennet
Clerk to Northumbria Area Meeting

Sheffield & Balby AM held on 11 September 2016

Minute 6 'Vision for a criminal justice system' from the Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) crime, community and justice subcommittee. (refers Sheffield & Balby AM minute 4abMay meeting and minute 8 July meeting)

We have taken leadings from two members experienced in the criminal justice system: Laura Kerr is a recently retired probation officer with some 23 years in the profession, and Norman Anderson was imprisoned for a number of years for drug dealing and is still on licence. Norman's rehabilitation started from an immersion into the visual arts and discovery of his spiritual self with help from a Quaker chaplain. Having heard their consideration of the Vision for a Criminal Justice System document we discussed the document by way of a 'World Café' answering a number of predetermined questions and suggesting more still.

We feel that the document, while containing many laudable statements e.g. "We are for a prison service which treats people with respect and humanity" could have been more challenging. The document contains nothing we cannot support but does not fully reflect the problems within the prison service today.

We are concerned by the under resourcing of the system, and the restructuring of the probation service, notably the sale of the larger section to private companies such as G4S and in our area, Sodexo.

In our discussions we considered influences in early and later life which lead to criminal activity; poverty, disturbed parenting and later on peer pressure. We acknowledge the importance of education at all stages of life, self-respect, connective humanity and paid employment to break the cycle of reoffending. We appreciate the definition of restorative justice in the document as being "so that healthy relationships can be restored", both for the offender and the victim. We also feel that a very broad base for education and spiritual development in prisons is vital for rehabilitation.

We also feel that as Friends we can and do individually find ways to improve the outcome by visiting prisoners, campaigning and trying to counteract negative media cover.

So while the document is a good reflection of a Quaker view of the criminal Justice System, we also recognise the damage being done by lack of funding by the government, the negative social climate fuelled by the media and the absence of wider possibilities for prisoner support and prevention of reoffending.

We ask our Clerks to send the minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Sallie Ashe
for the Clerking team at Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting

Minute of Bristol Area Meeting concerning “Vision for a Criminal Justice System,” a paper produced by Quaker Peace and Social Witness.

We have heard and considered Quaker Peace and Social Witness’s paper “Vision for a criminal Justice system,” which is essentially about the prison service. We have listened to the experiences of Friends working as prison chaplains in local prisons. It is clear that the vision for a more compassionate and healing system as set out in the Quaker Peace and Social Witness paper is only rarely realised within prisons , although we have heard there are instances of good practice and personal kindness in our local prisons. We are told that the paper does not reflect the truly dire conditions in some men’s prisons which lead to harm, violence and increasing social alienation.

We unite in outrage at the misuse of resources and the suffering caused and we are concerned about lack of funding and the ethics of privatisation.

We hope the paper will be used as a basis for deciding where Quakers have a role, for example through service in prisons, by supporting organisations that exist to improve conditions, or by promoting measures such as Restorative Justice which can be a healing process for both victims and offenders and plays a strong role in preventing re-offending.

Whilst we can unite with the general principles of the paper, we are submitting further comments from our Friends with direct experience as chaplains and attach a note with this Minute.

Heather Lister
Clerk, Bristol Quakers
September 17th 2016

Comments on the Vision Statement for 17 Sep 2016 Conference

The Vision Statement is essentially about the prison service, not the Criminal Justice System. Similar papers could be written about the police service, the courts, the legal profession and the probation service.

The document is a general statement of principles prepared for Quakers (“we articulate for ourselves what we are for and what we are against”). What is its purpose? What did it cost to produce it and for 70 AMs to discuss it?

Punishment “Against punishment for its own sake” Magistrates and judges are human beings so inevitably they will be fearful of lurid headlines in the tabloid press if they impose a sentence deemed to be lenient by those who have not attended the trial. But I find it difficult to believe that any would administer punishment for its own sake. The purposes are:

- Deterrence of the offender to prevent reoffending;
- Deterrence of others who might be considering a similar crime;
- An expression of abhorrence of society wrt the crime (this is similar to retribution);

- Reform of the offender;
- Reparation to be made by the offender;
- Rehabilitation – acceptance back into society.

Judges and magistrates are constrained by legal guidelines on sentencing. Within the range of options available, some are harsh, some are lenient, but the number of appeals against sentence is relatively few.

Use of Prison “detain people for longer than necessary whether this be for profit or political expediency” Is this true? If so, how can it be stopped?

“Only offenders who pose a genuine, immediate and/or violent threat to society need to be incarcerated” - plus those who pose a threat to themselves. What about addictions?

Women offenders “being sentenced more harshly than men in similar circumstances” – for some women, prison is a relatively safe place in which they can begin to sort out dysfunctional lives. It may be imperfect but Beryl’s report indicates that good work is done.

Prison Experience “punitive regimes and degrading conditions” Some prison officers do their best in difficult circumstances to act with humanity and courtesy towards the prisoners in their care but the prison service (like, to some extent, the police and the armed forces) gives men in uniform power over other people and has attracted in the past disproportionate numbers of those whose behaviour is influenced too much by their prejudices. For the management and many of the staff the dominant thinking is security and punishment rather than rehabilitation.

Prisoners “treating them with respect” – as should be shown by forms of address, use of hand-cuffs etc.

Prisoners’ families - all good sense if the family is supportive. This is not always the case.

Ethics of Privatisation – Yes, but compare Ashfield (civilised establishment run by Serco) with Bristol (state prison which is the opposite of civilised).

Looking to the Future

Quakers have a role to play because of the experience of Quaker Prison Ministers in nearly every prison.

Individuals could support existing organisations e.g. Prison Reform Trust, Howard League for Penal Reform, and many others.

Quakers as a body could campaign on a particular change for which there was a chance of success.

In any case, promote Restorative Justice – repeatedly advocated in Vision Statement.

Hertford & Hitchin AM held on 17 September 2016

Minute 16/54 - Meeting for Sufferings Consultations [regarding "Decriminalisation of Drugs for Personal Use" and "Vision for a Criminal Justice System"]

Several of our Meetings have tried to consider these two papers, and some have found it difficult to deal with both of them at the same time.

There is support for the decriminalisation of drugs for personal use, and some support for the ideas of the "Vision for a Criminal Justice System".

We recognise that in both cases these papers deal with complex problems which do not have simple answers. We uphold and encourage those working in these areas. We ask the Clerk to forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings, with the Local Meeting minutes and individual comments provided to us.

David Hindle
Area Meeting Correspondence Clerk

Hertford & Hitchin Am 17 Sep 2016 Local Meeting Responses to Meeting For Sufferings Papers

Hitchin LM

43/16: Papers from Meeting for Sufferings:

Vision for a Criminal Justice System

We have received, via Area Meeting, two papers from Meeting for Sufferings for discussion, initially by local meetings, then by Area Meeting this month, so that responses can be forwarded to Meeting for Sufferings, to assist in their preparation of policy documents. We thank the six Friends who have made known their views in advance. A copy of the two documents from Meeting for Sufferings, and the six contributions from individual Hitchin Friends, are filed with the attachments to these minutes.

Hitchin Preparative Meeting 3 July 2016 Drug Decriminalisation and Criminal Justice discussion papers

Six responses from Hitchin Friends

I have read the Cornwall paper - but not checked any the references. The first paragraph is uncompromising on its boundaries and rightly so, in my opinion - "This concern focuses on the need to decriminalise the possession of all drugs for personal use. The concern does not address the production, importing or selling of drugs, nor does it address drug related crime (crimes committed to enable the purchase of drugs)".

My concern would be that as it stands this might be taken as a cost-saving opportunity. There may be a cost-saving eventually, but produce any social or financial benefits,

any redirection of resources must have commensurate investment in support structures. This point is adequately made in the body of the document.

I would add that such a change will impact drug-related crime and the drug supply chain - and how these are treated. This is not to detract from the validity of the concern, but rather towards pursuing it with eyes. I would hope that this is also acknowledged in some way, in our response to this concern.

What a challenge both these papers provide. They almost reduce me to silence and a feeling of hopelessness.

It's a pity they have come together like this, as taken together they test the boundaries of my liberal instincts. I know what Quaker orthodoxy requires of me but on the other hand I feel that too many assumptions are being made about what individual Friends think.

I find the criminal justice paper too wide ranging and idealistic to respond to, while the paper on decriminalisation is much more of a single issue that I can imagine getting somewhere.

My view from liberal Sweden is I support the decriminalisation proposal but consider the criminal justice paper needs further consideration to identify specific achievable objectives.

I am sympathetic to the QPSW vision on criminal justice.

Vision for a Criminal Justice System - I support this paper too and have only a few specific comments, mostly on format. I would like to see:

1. the separate inclusion of the text on Women offenders removed. No doubt there are special factors with women being in prison, although there is no mention of mothers, but as a pro-feminist I cannot see that there is anything to warrant a special section. I suspect the phrase "women prisoners' physical, mental and emotional needs differ from those of men" (which could just as easily read "men's prisoners' physical, mental and emotional needs differ from those of women") is because women form a minority. However, there are other minorities in prison, gay people, transgender people, older people, Muslim people etc and these aren't highlighted.

2. The sections Prison experience and Prisoners are essentially about the same subject; I suggest they are consolidated and include relevant text about women (and other minority) prisoners.

Welwyn Garden City LM

45/16 Consultation on the Decriminalisation of drugs and Criminal Justice

We shared part of the report on 'A Vision for a Criminal Justice System'. We welcome the paper and encourage and uphold the members of the QPSW subcommittee in their work.

Lincolnshire AM held on 17 September 2016

Minute 16.09.71

Response to two matters from Meeting for Sufferings, namely Decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs and Vision for a criminal justice system. Ref. mins 16.05.46 and 16.07.49

The clerks have reminded this meeting of the email sent from MfS in spring of this year.

Alford LM has stated that it is content to go with the feeling of AQM.
Grimsby LM supports these concerns but is not able to submit a minute.
Spalding LM is unable to respond to this at this time.
Gainsborough LM and Boston LM are not in a position to respond.

Brant Broughton meeting has sent the following –

Brant Broughton Quaker Meeting. Meeting for Worship for Business

Thursday, 11th August 2016

1. Matters from Meeting for Sufferings

At our Meeting for Worship for Business on 9th June 2016 we received two items from Meeting for Sufferings and we asked Elders and Overseers to consider them and also agreed to hold a separate meeting to discuss them. This is that Meeting. We undertook to submit a Minute for consideration at Area Meeting in September. We have discussed both items and offer the following:

a. Vision for a criminal justice system

We have read the paper from Quaker Peace and Social Witness Crime, Community and Justice Sub-committee. We are in agreement with the views expressed in the paper and would submit the following Minute to Area Meeting: We support the vision set out in the paper Vision for a criminal justice system and we are content to rely upon QPSW to take it forward in our name and with our support.

We ask the clerks to forward these minutes to MfS as an individual local meeting's response adding that our other local meetings do not feel able to respond at this time due to a lack of knowledge on these subjects."

In friendship,

Janette Fraser
Lincs AM co-clerk

Notts & Derbys AM held on 17 September 2016

Minute 49/16 Matters arising from MfS 2/4/16

(b) A vision of a criminal justice system

We have considered the two issues sent to us by Meeting for Sufferings, taking into account the responses from our local meetings, agree the [...] minute[s] following:

“We commend the comments made by local meetings, which are attached. We also believe it important to consider more fully the motivations of individual offenders, to assist the process of rehabilitation.”

In addition to the above the Clerks are requested to send the respective responses from our local meetings.

In friendship,
Steve Adams
Paul Nicholas
Co-clerks, Notts & Derby Area Quaker Meeting

Notts and Derby Area Meeting: May 2016 - Vision for a criminal justice system:

Minute 23/16 (c) Juliet Prager, BYM Deputy Recording Clerk, has drawn our attention to minutes 14 and 17 of the meeting in April.

Minute 17 – Vision for a criminal justice system

“Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee is considering this paper. It builds on and develops previous work. The Committee hopes Friends will help test the vision expressed in the paper.”

We note that MfS has requested responses from area meetings by 21st October, to enable it to be included in papers for its meeting on 3 December. We ask the correspondence clerk to circulate background papers to these two issues, to enable Friends to take these concerns to their Local Meetings, and to help inform a fuller discussion at our area meeting in September.

The following responses have been received to date:

Chesterfield:

16/53 We discussed the Criminal Justice System. We think that moves towards Restorative Justice are positive. We would like to see better links between Mental Health Services and the Criminal Justice System notably for Black & Minority Ethnic Groups. We would prefer to see a move to more flexible imprisonment with greater Community input in order to reduce the prison population. The Clerk will report this back to Area Meeting.

Worksop

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

We have also discussed the paper being considered by Quaker Peace and Social Witness. We concur with the judgements expressed in the paper ("what we 'are for' and what we 'are against'") and are happy for it go forward for further consideration by Meeting for Sufferings.

Derby LM

Meeting for Business, 4 September 2016

6. 'Vision for a Criminal Justice System'

Meeting for Sufferings has circulated a paper with this title, prepared by a sub-committee of Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and has asked Friends 'to test the vision expressed in the paper'.

We believe that this 'Vision for a Criminal Justice System' provides a good starting-point as we seek to move from a system based on retribution to one based on reparation and rehabilitation, though we also need to address the question of what part, if any, deterrence should play in the system. We especially welcome the emphasis on removing the harsh treatment of women offenders and on the need for help to the many prisoners who have mental health issues. At the same time we recognise that if Friends are to make an effective contribution to the public debate they need to be better informed on recent developments in the criminal justice system. We hope that Woodbrooke and the Yearly Meeting programme can offer opportunities for this learning. We also note that many of the system's failings are symptoms of wider social problems, such as the inadequate funding of mental health by the NHS, and the notorious readiness of politicians and the press to win cheap popularity by offering simplistic and often counterproductive approaches to reducing crime.

Bakewell LM:

Report for Local Business Meeting 4th September 2016 – Sue Isaac

We were recently asked by Area Meeting to consider two items.

Ros Bourne, Judith Green, John Scampion and I read and discussed the "Vision for a Criminal Justice System: a view from the Quaker Peace and Social Witness Crime, Community and Justice Sub-Committee". We commented as follows:

"It was felt that the document was a thoughtful, considered and comprehensive paper but that it needed to be more focused if it was to be acted upon and be anything more than a distant dream. We picked out the issues on which we would wish Friends to concentrate, the last issue not having been considered within the document.

1. In the tradition of Elizabeth Fry, we felt that Friends should be campaigning to improve prisons.

- a) A good first step would be to reduce the prison population by, for example
 - Examining the criteria by which people are put in prison
 - Reducing the prison population – the indiscriminate use of indeterminate Public Protection Schemes (IPP), together with the use of imprisonment for people with mental health issues or drug addiction who would be better treated outside the prison system has contributed to the increase of the prison population.
- b) Rehabilitation should be available to all prisoners – with an emphasis on education, acquiring skills, community involvement leading to confidence building,

empowerment and experience of normal life outside an institution (we had heard good reports of catering/restaurant initiatives which would lead to jobs outside, for instance).

c) We would like to see more use of restorative justice within prisons.

2. A characteristic of a good criminal justice system is that everyone should be able to access it and this means access to legal aid. The effect of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) has meant that many people are being denied meaningful access to justice. We would like to see the government carry out a review of this Act which they said they would do after 3 years.

Mansfield Local Business Meeting

Held on 21st August 2016 at 12 noon

Minute 6: Items from Area Meeting

Response to Minutes from Meeting for Sufferings.

We have shared the following documents with Mansfield friends and after some discussion we consider it appropriate to support both concerns.

Minute 14 - Decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs.

Minute 17 - Vision for a criminal justice system.

West Somerset AM held on 17 September 2016

Minute 16/67 Consideration of the paper from QPSW, Vision for a Criminal Justice System.

We have tested the vision expressed in the QPSW paper "A Vision for a Criminal Justice System", both at Local and Area Meetings.

We agree to send a collation of LM and AM feedback from our considerations (attached to these minutes) to Sufferings, as our response to this paper.

In Friendship,
Anne Jackson and Gilly Lee

West Somerset Area Quaker Meeting - A summary of responses from LMs and AM to the Criminal Justice paper

General comments:

There was general agreement with the overall principles and policies in the paper, and particularly with the quotation from CCJS.

We found the paper helpful and clear, and felt it did express our Quaker values. It describes a direction in which we should try to travel, and a shift in attitude which would be much more compassionate, less destructive, and a far better foundation for our criminal justice system.

However, it does not take proper account of Humanity's capacity for cruelty and harm. We fear, that as a whole, it may fall into the Friendly trap of failing to fully acknowledge the shadow behind the light.

Specific comments:

It provides a sound basis for more detailed comments on specific matters.

The current system is close to breaking point because of cost pressures.

There is insufficient support for victims and witnesses.

A hope for restorative justice needs to be balanced with acknowledgement that there are situations where this is not appropriate.

We recognise that prison is necessary for some, but not for many of those currently sentenced.

The paragraph on the ethics of Privatisation was felt to be very relevant, and some felt Privatisation should play no part in the national criminal justice system.

It was noted that the views expressed were out of line with those held by many in British society.

One meeting also proposed some specific additions to the text:

We are for sentencing that is proportionate and fair and against the overuse of mandatory and indeterminate penalties.

We are for opportunities for people in prison to take responsibility for themselves and to help others for example as mentors, Samaritan listeners, or Members of a prison council.

We are for a prison system which enables people to progress their sentences and allows for hope of rehabilitation and change.

We are for particular support by the state as corporate parent for high numbers of young offenders who are in care and for care leavers in custody and on release. We are for a criminal justice system that takes proper account of primary care roles and responsibilities.

Taunton Friends have agreed to write to their MP and suggest inviting Ginny Membury a long term prison visitor, to any potential AM initiative.

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

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

Edward Burrough, 1659. Quaker faith & practice* 23.11

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

Justice should be compassionate, forgiving and healing – restorative, not retributive. We want to change attitudes and encourage the criminal justice system to move towards this vision of justice.

QPSW Crime, Community and Justice Sub-committee, 2009

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

Victims

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

Give victims and witnesses information, especially in regard to court procedures (probably just adding 'information' covers ground adequately)

Offenders

We are against the simplistic concept of good victims and bad criminals.

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

We welcome liaison and diversion services in police stations and courts(suggest delete this sentence from here and move to 2nd para below)

Vulnerable' adults

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

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

We are for appropriate support being available to all vulnerable people in the criminal justice system whether as victim, offender, witness, or family member.

We are for both the assessment and the support being initiated as early as possible in the process.

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

Punishment

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

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

Sentencing

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

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

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

Reduction in mandatory sentencing and dealing with indeterminate sentencing(sentence now added above).

Use of prison

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

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

Prison experience

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

We are for the provision of education, training and useful work whilst in prison. We are for the provision of activities which will nurture mind and spirit as well as physical wellbeing. We are for opportunities for people in prison to take responsibility for themselves and help others for example as mentors, Samaritan Listeners or members of a prisoners' council. We are for the provision of health care, addiction treatments and nutritious food that will lead to the good physical and mental health of the offender. We are for these things being provided for all prisoners regardless of the length of their sentence.

(see above) Give prisoners scope to take responsibility for themselves and others.
Example – listeners.

Prisoners

We are against practices and behaviour in prison which undermine the dignity of prisoners. We are against a prison service that uses a profit motive or public expenditure cuts to treat prisoners in any way that fails to meet their basic needs as human beings. We are for supporting prisoners and treating them with respect, whilst holding them accountable for their behaviour. We are for a prison system which

enables people to progress their sentences and allows for hope of rehabilitation and change. We are for a prison service which treats people with respect and humanity.

(see above) Build hope into the prison system.

Prisoners' families

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

We are for helping to keep prisoners' families together. We are for prisoners being held as close to their families and friends as possible. We are for the provision of visitors' centres where information, practical support and pastoral care are available and which include visiting facilities for the children of prisoners. We are for particular support by the State as corporate parent for high numbers of young offenders who are in care and for care leavers in custody and on release.

(see above) Consider how many prisoners come from care backgrounds. Consider prisoners' relationships with family/society.

Prison staff

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

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

Women offenders

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

Where prison is necessary for a woman, we are for provision which takes account of the fact that women prisoners' physical, mental and emotional needs differ from those of men. We are for a criminal justice system that takes proper account of primary care roles and responsibilities.

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

(see above) Consider the primary care roles and responsibilities of women.

Treatment of drug users

In the same way as it is inappropriate to imprison some people who have a mental illness, it is counter-productive to use imprisonment as a means of rehabilitating drug abusers. Diversion to community or residential treatment recognises the dangers of drug use and misuse as primarily a public health issue.

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

justice sanctions.

(see above) Emphasis on treatment in Society

Rehabilitation

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

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

Restorative justice

The restorative process is challenging and a satisfactory outcome depends on good practice leading to dialogue, understanding and appropriate reparation. It can be much more demanding and difficult for both victims and offenders, and more effective than punishment and prison. We are for the use of restorative justice being available to everyone who wants it, victims and offenders, and at all stages of the criminal justice process. We are for giving both the offender and victim the chance to understand what happened. It is often helpful to be able to put the events into perspective, preventing what might be painful events from dominating the lives of those affected. Forgiveness can help to heal both parties: we are for providing this opportunity for it to happen.

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

(covered in intro so suggest delete) Promote co-operational considerations over adversarial.

Community justice

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

We are for helping people to understand conflict and to find ways of resolving it without resorting to violence. We are for understanding and addressing the root causes of violence and criminal behaviour and putting resources into addressing them. We are for supporting local initiatives and partnerships in activities to achieve this. We are for involving local communities and voluntary organisations in working with prisoners, with victims of crime, and in the criminal justice system. We are for giving prisoners the right to vote and encouraging their sense of belonging to society. We are for reconciliation.

Ethics of privatisation

Dealing with an offender is a public responsibility that should be the direct duty of the state: a private provider of services is responsible to its clients and its shareholders

rather than to society. Thus an ethical conundrum arises over the degree of public accountability when prisons and probation services are delegated to private companies. We are against a delivery of these state responsibilities that is not fully transparent and publicly accountable. We are against vested interests determining, or affecting, penal policy. We are against creating circumstances in which financial profit can be made by regarding people as commodities.

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

Summary

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

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

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

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

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

Kingston & Wandsworth AM held on 24 September 2016

Minute 16/79 - Meeting for Sufferings: Vision for a criminal justice system

We welcome this paper and the willingness to consult. However, we have had difficulty engaging with the paper because of its breadth and lack of a particular focus. What is the purpose of this consultation? How will the paper influence policy-makers? Should this be a priority and if so, are there plans for developing particular costed and researched proposals and for better supporting the efforts of individuals and meetings?

We urge Meeting for Sufferings in future to provide structured papers which have been filtered into a usable form for consultation.

Gillian Ashmore
Clerk

North London AM held on 24 September 2016

NLAQM 16/78 Meeting for Sufferings – criminal justice

In response to our minute 16/58 last time we have received Bunhill Fields meeting minute 16/37 which includes the following response to the Meeting for Suffering paper on criminal justice:

We have considered the document and recognise that it is addressing an important and key issue for us. The thinking expressed is comprehensive and lists admirable principles – we agree with the thrust of every statement and endorse these principles strongly.

Our reservation is that there is a need for development of the practical implications for us and the wider society in terms of necessary actions and priorities for those actions. As a basis for such development we wonder if the apparently simple extremes of "for" and "against" might be more helpfully phrased – e.g. "we aim for...", "we plan to work for...", "we must change...".

We thank Bunhill Fields for their consideration of the report and forward this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Other meetings are encouraged to read the document which has been reported to us as 'exciting', and to either respond to Meeting for Sufferings directly via their web page or send responses to Area Meeting for November at their discretion.

Jonathan Whitson Cloud
(Clerk this time)
Chris Venables
(Asst. Clerk)

Sussex East AM held on 9 October 2016

Minute 58/16 Vision for a Criminal Justice system

At the Area Meeting 9.10.2016 the following considerations were discussed:

- a) Families need support, particularly young children, who may be at risk, starting with whole of life skills, especially communication, as early as possible.
- b) The Education System needs to address the high levels of illiteracy in the prison population.
- c) There needs to be more resources for Mental Health in prisons as well as the Probation Service, to support prisoners and offenders with rehabilitation, this will involve long term planning with “a” and “b” above.
- d) Solutions to social issues using the Criminal Justice System itself must be evidence based e.g. decriminalisation of the supply and use of drugs.
- e) There is perceived a need to educate the Judiciary with regard to evidence as to what is effective rehabilitation, reflecting this in their sentencing.
- f) Local initiatives that Quakers may pursue include
 - Supporting Lewes Prison Visitors Centre.
 - Area wide link groups of local Meetings to support released prisoners.

Encourage Transparency with regard to the starvation of resources for Criminal Justice System and effective rehabilitation of offenders, many of whom have mental health issues. This could be pursued by Local Meetings.

Lewes Local Business Meeting 2nd October 2016

4. Vision for a Criminal Justice System and concern for the welfare of children and families during visits to prisoners at Lewes Prison

We have received the following minute and a report which is attached from a discussion evening held on 23 September.

“Minute of Discussion Evening held 23 September 2016

Alan Thompson has led a discussion on the important topic of Criminal Justice, and provided us with a number of useful documents:

1. QPSW: Vision for a Criminal Justice System
2. A paper from Peter Bolwell: comment on the vision
3. Prisoner factsheet
4. Government paper on transforming the justice system
5. Volunteers for Lewes Prison Visitors' Centre
6. Restorative Justice (with cartoons!)
7. The Welcome Directory
8. Circles of Support and Accountability
9. Progress? Words of Winston Churchill, July 1910.

Local Meetings have been asked by Sussex East Area Meeting for a response to the Quaker Peace and Social Witness paper: A vision for a criminal justice system. We have talked about what might be specifically Quaker in a vision for a Criminal Justice system and agreed there is value in joining others with a similar vision. We have not prepared a joint response to the paper but have agreed to send individual comments to the local meeting clerk for forwarding to SEAM.

We have also heard about the current situation in Lewes prison and in particular the need for volunteers to help during family visits to prisoners in the visitor centre. We agree to recommend to Lewes Meeting that the meeting should indicate its support for the work of the visitor centre in particular with the children of prisoners.

Bronwyn Harwood
Clerk
23 September 2016"

We share the concern for the welfare of prisoners families and in particular the children during visits to prisoners and ask Caroline Pybus to express the interest of Lewes Quakers when attending a committee meeting of Churches Together in Lewes and District which will consider the matter, and we ask her to keep us informed of further developments.

We forward the minute and report to Area Meeting as our response to the request from Area Meeting to comment on the Vision for a Criminal Justice System paper forwarded from Meeting for Sufferings. And we agree further to request that other local meetings in the area also consider whether they might offer support to, and help to find volunteers for, Lewes Prison Visitor Centre. We also note that is a possible cause which Friends could support financially through the Sunday collections for Good Causes.

Rye Local Meeting – 05.10.16

Study Evening held at St Mary's Centre, Rye

23.16 Minute of Record - Study Evening:

QPSW paper - Vision for a Criminal Justice System

Thirteen Friends met to discuss the QPSW document Vision for a Criminal Justice System.

We thank Peter Bolwell for leading and informing us in our discussion.

Many areas of the document were covered, some of the main points being:
We were much in agreement in that outcomes of sentencing should be clear, i.e. "...sentencing saying clearly what its purpose is and the actions needed to achieve that purpose". However, we felt that the judiciary should be trained and receive documentary conclusions from research into the successes of various approaches in different countries and places in view of reduction in reoffending rates and prevention of crime.

We also thought that the QPSW consultation document could benefit from devoting some space to the role played and the difficulties faced by the beleaguered Probation Service, which is after all, the body that is expected to deliver most of the non-custodial sentencing alternatives that the document advocates.

There was also lengthy discussion as to the need for giving a sound start in life to those under 5 years old who are born into the neediest of situations.

We also agreed that we must remember that “there is that of God” in all people, and that we must show love in dealing with those who have been criminalised as well as those who are the victims of crime.

Peter Aviss (clerk)
5.10.16

West Wiltshire and East Somerset AM held on 2 November 2016.

Minute 16/47 Meeting for Suffering's Vision for a Fairer Criminal Justice System

We welcomed Melanie Jameson, (Sally Harris' sister) to speak with us and lead us in discernment on this topic. Melanie has served on the Quaker Crime, Community and Justice Subcommittee and is part of the Quakers in Criminal Justice Network. She sits on the national Prisoner Learning Alliance as an expert on prisoners with dyslexia and related conditions. She attends the Quaker meeting in Long Lartin High Security Prison.

Through her talk, small group discussion and a threshing period, we record that our Area Meeting found looking at the Quaker Vision of Criminal Justice disturbing. It made us realise how far the shortfall is between our values and what is actually going on in the criminal justice system. It brought up the need for early preventative measures to identify and care for people's needs.

We hope that the frustration this paper generates will illuminate the need for social justice reform and will spark ways of genuinely engaging the interests of offenders, so treating them as individuals. We ask that it is made clear for whom this paper is intended, because at the moment the statements are very general. More work is needed to direct our attention and energies.

We thank Melanie Jameson for enlightening us and helping us with this difficult matter."

Lin Patterson
Clerking team

Mid-Thames AM held on 9 October 2016

A Quaker vision for a Criminal Justice System

Meeting for Sufferings have asked Area Meetings to consider a guide to help Friends engage with their local policing bodies from QPSW. We have seen the vision, currently at <http://bit.ly/QuakerCJS>

As an Area Meeting, we are pleased that the Vision is expressed in positive terms as well as highlighting some of the current negatives in the current system.

We are concerned in particular with the reduction in the affordability of justice and would like to see this reflected in the Vision.

We also suggest that our Area Meeting Criminal Justice Group consider ways to engage with our Police and Crime Commissioner.

Judy Still
Clerk

(South East London AM) - Forest Hill Quakers

Extension meeting 25 October 2016 – Quaker vision for the Criminal Justice system

Forest Hill meeting hosted a visit from Martin Wright who is a member of the QPSW Crime Community and Justice Sub-committee. Martin came to lead our discussion around the vision of the sub-committee on Quakers and criminal justice. The sub-committee have produced a leaflet, "Why Prison?" – a vision for a criminal justice system.

Martin talked about our Quaker history of raising concerns about the criminal justice system and helped to clarify what we mean by crime, punishment, retribution and justice. He challenged us to think about how we should respond when a crime is committed and what Friends can do to improve and change the current system. We heard from Friends about their own experiences of the criminal justice system and their views of it.

As part of the discussion, Martin asked us to come up with our own questions for the Justice Secretary which are listed below.

It was a very informative and interesting meeting and Martin concluded with 3 statements that we could consider further as part of our Area meeting on a similar theme (The criminalisation of drugs)

- You don't get people to behave well by treating them badly
- "Balancing the harm done by the offender with further harm inflicted on the offender...only adds to the total amount of harm done in the world"
- Do not return evil for evil, but drive evil out with good

Questions for the Justice Secretary

What evidence do you have that our current system is working? If there is no evidence why do you continue?

Why does the UK have such a high prison population?

There are too many non-violent offenders in prison: what do you propose to do about this?

Would it not be a good idea to involve prisoners in management decisions about the prison service?

Why is so little attention paid to the needs of prisoners for education, the arts and mental health?

Will the Minister commit to diverting some funds from providing prison places to restorative justice projects, which have been proven to work?

Please fund restorative justice schemes in all prison and probation services

How do you intend to improve support for ex-prisoners upon their release?

Is the Prison service over-reliant on staff from security firms? Should security firms/commercial interests be involved in running prisons or building new prisons?

Please halt and reverse the privatisation of the probation service.

Please advocate a whole-society approach, to change a culture of simplistic punishments and social avenging, e.g. Use Citizens/ Juries, Whole-System Events, deliberative and inclusive. Fund cross-skilling teams to be able facilitators and supporters of these new regimes.

York AM held on 12 November 2016

Minute 2016.11.59 Meeting for Sufferings consultations.

A group has been considering the document from the Quaker Peace & Social Witness Crime, Community and Justice Sub-committee. We agree to forward their minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

We urge society to support the aims of the paper QPSW Community and Justice Subcommittee minute 15/121 to better the criminal justice system. We also support everyone in the system towards working towards these aims.

We recognise the comprehensive nature of the scope of what would need to change in the criminal justice system to bring about a more compassionate, forgiving and healing- restorative, not retributive.....system (QPSW Crime, Community and Justice Subcommittee, 2000)

We want to add something about encouraging the government to prioritise spending so as to make this vision possible and to examine the causes of criminal behaviour, including the role of inequality in society. We call on the government to invest in prevention of reoffending and a rehabilitative system. We would also like to support investment in evidence based rehabilitation.

John Guest,
Clerk

Kendal & Sedbergh AM held on 12 November 2016.

Minute 16.11.22 Meeting for Sufferings, Dec 3rd 2016. (16.09.15 refers).

Two matters referred to area meetings. 'Decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs' (Minute from Cornwall A.M.) and 'Vision for a criminal Justice system'. (Paper from QPSWCC.)

These two issues have had preparatory discussion by Kirkby Stephen Meeting and at a threshing meeting for Brigflatts, Kendal and Preston Patrick Friends held in Kendal. Vision for a Criminal Justice System.

We have been asked 'to test the vision expressed in the paper'. Friends have expressed general agreement with the paper as a whole though criticism has been expressed about its length and wordiness. Some have pointed out that the use of non-governmental organisations within the criminal system may have a valuable place although they need careful control and monitoring.

Peter Leeming
Clerk

Worcestershire and Shropshire AM held on 19 November 2016.

Minute 71/16 Vision for a criminal justice system

Melanie Jameson guided us through the paper 'Vision for a criminal justice system: a view from the Quaker Peace and Social Witness Crime, Community and Justice Sub Committee (CCJS)'. The following minute arises from our discussions today.

We welcome and fully support this document which addresses a matter that has always been at the heart of Quakers.

The summary is thought to be too good to be at the end. Perhaps the Burroughs quotation could be replaced by something written more recently.

A holistic view from the crime to the justice system is needed. We feel that flexibility is needed in the system to be creative and try new initiatives. Is this possible without privatisation? Can we trust offenders more?

We need to focus on rehabilitation for all offenders; to move beyond punishment for its own sake. Unless we work with offenders to find the causes of the offences and learn from them, rehabilitation, restoration and reparation are not possible.

Restorative justice has low status. A wider education process is needed to reach a more compassionate approach in the media. This may include the need for more research and an emphasis on real benefits to the community: financially, in public safety and a reduction in the number of victims. Victims include everyone affected by the crime, including the perpetrator's family.

Some additional sections are recommended for the document on the following subjects:

- Remand prisoners, who can be imprisoned with convicted offenders for long periods with no chance to clear their names if not charged.
- The Official Secrets Act, which prevents openness, transparency and whistle-blowing.
- Legal support, where lack of funds can lead to poor representation and longer sentences.

We thank Melanie Jameson for explaining and helping us to consider these matters.

Angie Dunhill and Jackie Fowler,
Co-clerks

Southern East Anglia AM held on 27 November 2016.

Minute 2016/61 Vision for a criminal justice system

Further to Minute 2016/31, we have been asked by MfS to help test the vision expressed in the QPSW Central Committee paper "Vision for a Criminal Justice System". Reg Webb prepared a report, read to us by Jenny Kay, on this paper, which builds on and develops previous work. We thank Reg for his summary report, which is attached to these minutes.

The vision document articulates the principles by which we might examine our criminal justice system and our attitudes to crime, to offenders and to the victims of crime. The paper gives a series of statements which set out a Quaker vision, stating what we are *for*, such as "We are for holding offenders accountable for their actions and for balancing wrongdoing by reparation".

In setting out these statements, the paper envisages a society in which, for instance, prison sentences are applied only when there is no reasonable alternative, a society in which justice is non-retributive and, wherever possible, restorative to both the offender and victim. This would be a criminal justice system in which the benefits of forgiveness would be made available to all concerned. As Reg says in his report, Quakers might think of a just society as a primary objective, not a concept to be tinkered with when we think we can afford it.

Mary Grocock read from Guardian Weekly articles about the often dreadful consequences of our current overcrowded and inadequate prison system. We considered how our justice system has in many respects lost its way: instead of preventing reoffending, its focus has been on punishment. Friends spoke of the benefits of therapeutic prison communities. Our Quaker vision is to give offenders - and our society - a sense of future and of hope.

We recognise the difficulty of effecting change in the prison system. There is a huge sense of inertia and the challenge is to effect any change at all. Rather than focusing on the specific horrors, wastefulness and inappropriateness of the current system, we need to work out how change can be brought about.

Having a vision is all very well but facing up to reality and having an approach to effecting change - and the will for change - is what is needed. While we support the QPSW vision statement, we ask that the statement include some indication about that change should be initiated.

In Friendship,

Alison Parkes
Clerk

Responses from three constituent local meetings of Central Yorkshire AM.

High Flatts LM Extraordinary Meeting 2.10.2016

We have been asked by CYAM (minute 5, 15.5.2016), and agreed to arrange a special meeting (HF LM 48, 3.7.2016), to respond to the MfS request for responses to the QPSW Crime, Community and Justice Subcommittee paper "Vision for a Criminal Justice System".

Mike Casey gave us a general, thought provoking introduction, including testimony from prisoners and extracts from "Why Prison; A Framework to encourage discussion about purposes, effectiveness and experience of imprisonment as a response to criminal actions" (by the above authors).

Mike posed nine questions. Most of our consideration was on the questions; "What do you think prison is for?" and "What do you think prison should be for?".

We concluded that:

1. Victimisers were often initially victims.
2. There is a class bias in the present justice system.
3. Marginalised people e.g. the mentally ill, drug addicts are over-represented in prison.
4. The years of austerity have exacerbated problems in prison. What is needed is a massive investment in society to ameliorate deprivation (often a reason for individuals entering a life of crime). This would enable support systems to be put in place for those people who are currently in prison but shouldn't be.
5. Innocent people are imprisoned too.
6. Privatisation will not improve treatment of prisoners but will cost more. We must not opt out of our responsibility towards people that the state deems criminal.
7. The needs of prisoners' families are not taken into account. Families are often stigmatised and traumatised by the consequences of the crime.

We are against the dehumanising of people that can be caused by being imprisoned.

We are for a system that mends the breakdown in relationships that harmed them in the first place.

We agree with the authors of "A Vision for a Criminal Justice System" that justice should be compassionate, forgiving and healing. Restorative not retributive.

We thank Mike for leading this consideration.

Response from Wooldale Quakers to QPSW 'Vision for a Criminal Justice System' October 2016

Friends from Wooldale Local Meeting have met to discuss the 'Vision' paper from QPSW and forward their response via Central Yorkshire Area Meeting to Meeting for Sufferings. We find ourselves in agreement with the view of QPSW and very much commend the emphasis on compassion, forgiveness and healing.

The paper is very comprehensive and deals with concern for victims, offenders and society as a whole in the light of emphasis from successive governments on

retribution, punishment and the reflection of public anger. These questionable aims lack both hope and compassion.

We share deep concerns about the privatisation of many sections of what SHOULD be a holistic system as this leads to fragmentation and uncertainty. It also emphasises a target-driven culture which frequently loses sight of the essence and understanding of the concepts of evolving processes and individual needs. Individual needs within any process, be it education, criminal justice or health cannot be reduced to a set of numerical targets and we fear that in so doing, much expertise and deep knowledge is forfeit.

We hope that the Crime, Community and Justice Sub-Committee is able to lobby and influence Ministers in order to bring about a better understanding and response to the troubling issues highlighted in this paper.

Response from Wakefield Quakers to QPSW 'Vision for a Criminal Justice System' October 2016

We had a lively discussion after Meeting for Worship on Sunday 16 October 2016 when we considered the QPSW paper "A Vision for a Criminal Justice System". Some Friends disliked the way that the paper was structured. Some strong feeling was expressed that the paper did not sufficiently assert the importance of the rule and enforcement of law to society so there is a clear need for justice to be seen to be done. There was agreement that the present system has led to the overuse and therefore overcrowding of prisons, and that prisons as the responsibility of the State should not be privatized and profit making. We did not disagree with the strong humanitarian emphasis of the paper but felt the overall impression was a bit vague