Friday 24 May

*Evening*

**Minute 1: Clerks**

The Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks nominates the following Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerks for Yearly Meeting 2019, serving until the first session of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020:

Clerk: Clare Scott Booth London West AM

First Assistant Clerk Siobhan Haire North London AM

Second Assistant Clerk Gavin Burnell Leeds AM

These nominations being acceptable, we appoint the Friends named accordingly.

**Minute 2: Worship**

We have met in worship and we have heard read from *Quaker faith & practice* paragraph 23.32.

**Minute 3: Welcome to all**

We welcome everyone who is attending any part of Yearly Meeting this year. This year 1247 people have registered in advance to attend. Of this number, there are 250 non-members attending with permission.

**Minute 4: Children and Young People’s Programmes**

As well as the Friends gathered here, there are 121 children and young people attending Yearly Meeting. These comprise:

81 0-11 year olds in four groups participating in the Children’s Programmes based in Friends House exploring the theme Caring and Including.

29 11-15 year olds taking part in the residential Young People’s Programme being held at High Leigh Conference Centre, on the theme Opening our hearts and minds to transform the world.

11 15-18 year olds taking part in the Accompanying Programme.

There are 23 adult volunteers working across these programmes, supported by the 5 members of the Quaker Life Children and Young People’s staff team. All the children and young people’s programme themes reflect the theme of the Yearly Meeting and all will be attending sessions at some points during the weekend.

We look forward to joining with these Friends during this weekend and to sharing their ministry and contributions to our discernment at various times during our Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 5: Committee to Examine Minutes**

We appoint the following Friends to arrange by rota for two of their number to examine the minutes of this Yearly Meeting at the close of each session, and to correct any slight inaccuracies:

Roger Bartlett Southern Marches AM

Christopher Coffin Hampshire and Islands AM

Brenda Crothers East Cheshire AM

Helen Gamsa Bristol AM

Betty Hagglund Central England AM

Sheila Houldin Wirral and Chester AM

Richard Levitt Leeds AM

Jonathan Lingham London West AM

Susan Rooke-Matthews Bristol AM

Clare Scott Leicester AM

If any substantive alterations appear to be required, they are to be proposed at the next session prior to further business.

**Minute 6: Agenda**

We receive and accept the report of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee in appendix A of the Yearly Meeting Programme and accept the agenda as listed in section 4.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to carry out a review of the purpose and function of Yearly Meeting and Gatherings, liaising with the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, and consulting more widelyas appropriate, and to bring any recommendations to a future Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 7: Report of Central Nominations Committee**

Further to minute 8 of Yearly Meeting 2018, Central Nominations Committee brings forward nominations as specified in Table 1 of the Schedule of Nominations as amended in this meeting and appended to these minutes.

These nominations being acceptable, the Friends named are appointed accordingly.

**Minute 8: Central Nominations Committee: Nominations Required**

We ask Central Nominations Committee to bring nominations to Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020 as specified in Table 2 of the Schedule of Nominations appended to these minutes.

**Minute 9: Report of Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks**

The Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks brings forward nominations as specified in Table 3 of the Schedule of Nominations appended to these minutes.

These nominations being acceptable, the Friends named are appointed accordingly.

**Minute 10: Report of Yearly Meeting Nominating Group**

Further to minute 47 of Yearly Meeting 2018, the Nominating Group appointed at Yearly Meeting 2018 brings forward nominations as specified in Table 4 of the Schedule of Nominations as amended in this meeting and appended to these minutes.

These nominations being acceptable, the Friends named are appointed accordingly.

**Minute 11: Nominations to the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (2019 – 2020)**

Friends are asked to consider nominations for the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group 2019–2020.

The nominations process has been explained. We will return to this later in this Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 12: Proposed amendments to *Quaker faith & practice***

We receive part of Minute MfS/18/11/06 from Meeting for Sufferings held 23-25 November 2018, forwarding to us proposed amendments, prepared by Church Government Advisory Group, to *Quaker faith & practice* as follows:-

1. **4.23 – 4.26 Changes to the Appeals Process**

Meeting for Sufferings recommends amending sections 4.23. 4.25 and 4.26 to reflect changes to the appeals process.

We agree to the proposed changes to the appeal process and to the revisions consequent upon this as contained in Section 4 of the Yearly Meeting Programme.

1. **6.21 and 6.22 Changes to Central Nominations Committee and Yearly Meeting Nominating Group**

Meeting for Sufferings recommends amending sections 6.21 and 6.22 consequent upon changes to the Terms of Reference of Central Nominations Committee and Yearly Meeting Nominations Group agreed by Minute 28 Yearly Meeting 2016 and minute 22 Yearly Meeting 2017.

We agree the revisions as contained in Section 4 of the Yearly Meeting Programme.

**Minute 13: Epistle**

Part of the epistle from Intermountain Yearly Meeting held 11-18 June 2017 has been read.

**Minute 14: Eldership and Pastoral Care at Yearly Meeting**

We have heard from Margaret Heathfield, convener of Yearly Meeting elders, and Katie Evans, convener of the Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group, about arrangements for eldership and pastoral care over the period of Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 15: Concerning privilege: an introduction**

Our clerk has introduced the matter of privilege and how we will consider it over the course of this Yearly Meeting. We are reminded that our considerations should be grounded in love. We will return to this tomorrow.

Saturday 25 May

*Morning*

**Minute 16: Worship**

During our opening worship we have heard read *Quaker faith & practice* 21.14.

**Minute 17: Looking through the lens of privilege at climate justice and inclusion.**

 “If you have come here to help me, then you are wasting your time… but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” – Lilla Watson, Aboriginal activist.

How can we use our life experience to create a changed world? How might we use our experience of privilege and of disprivilege to reveal the kingdom?

We have reflected together on our own privilege and lack of privilege. Each of us has a complex identity rooted in human differences, and informing how we do things.

Acknowledging our privilege may make us feel guilty about the things we cannot control. Acknowledging our disprivilege can make us feel vulnerable and frustrated. It is important not to let these feelings overwhelm us or we may become more excluded.

Rather than guilt or shame which takes us nowhere, we need accountability and responsibility for our actions. Where we have privilege we must look at what we are doing to perpetuate it.

When we are wholly honest with ourselves and others we can be truly open to the workings of the Spirit.

### Saturday 25 May

*Afternoon*

### **Minute 18: Parallel sessions**

We have spent the first part of our time this afternoon in parallel sessions exploring aspects of privilege, diversity and inclusion, and climate justice in different ways, including through dance and singing.

### **Minute 19: Testimony**

Part of the testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Betty Swancott (pages 46 and 47 of the printed version of Testimonies) has been read.

### **Minute 20: The work of our national representative body: receipt of annual report from Meeting for Sufferings**

We receive the annual report for 2018 from Meeting for Sufferings. The report is at Appendix D in the Yearly Meeting Programme and has been introduced by the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings.

We are reminded in our consideration of the need to be clear what privilege is, and we will return to this tomorrow. We give thanks for the service of all the Friends appointed to Meeting for Sufferings and for their support of Friends in Britain.

### **Minute 21: Process for amending *Quaker faith & practice* while a new Book of Discipline is being prepared**

We receive part of Minute MfS/18/11/06 from Meeting for Sufferings held 23-25 November 2018, offering to take responsibility for keeping up to date the current Church Government text included in *Quaker faith & practice* while a new Book of Discipline is being prepared.

During the period of revision the current text will require minor factual amendments to keep it up to date. We agree to delegate the responsibility for agreeing such amendments to *Quaker faith & practice* to Meeting for Sufferings. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to continue to bring to us any substantive matters of our Quaker discipline which require the attention of Yearly Meeting in session, and to include in their report to us annually the updates made in the interim on our behalf.

We are reminded that the online published version of our *Quaker faith & practice* is the definitive version.

Sunday 26 May

*Morning*

### **Minute 22: Worship**

We have worshipped with those participating in the Children’s Programme using a story about our Fragile Earth.

### **Minute 23: The work of our yearly meeting Trustees: receipt of annual report of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees**

We receive and accept the *Trustees’ annual report* including financial statements for 2018. The clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and the Yearly Meeting Treasurer have introduced this report on the Trustees’ work and responsibilities.

Trustees are working to three strategic priorities:

* Supporting Quaker meetings and other groups to be diverse, to thrive and grow
* Working with and on behalf of Quakers towards a sustainable and peaceful world
* Simplifying structures and practices in our local and national organization

We have heard that in 2018 expenditure exceeded income by around three quarters of a million pounds, and that there was a fall in legacies and contributions by about the same amount. We have heard passionate encouragement to fund our work and examine our support for our Yearly Meeting’s work.

### **Minute 24: Minute from Junior Yearly Meeting**

We have received minute 1 of Junior Yearly Meeting, as follows:

“What is our reality as a Quaker community and how does our privilege affect how we understand it?” As a Religious Society we are generally privileged, however we lack diversity. We may find it hard to understand privilege among minority Quakers as every one of us has individual, different experiences but by listening to other experiences and reflecting upon our own we can broaden horizons and understand others.

It’s difficult to talk about privilege for some due to the complexity and intricacies of the issues faced by many, also some have avoided thinking about it due to guilt for their privilege. We are learning not to be guilty and that we each are privileged or not in diverse ways. The conversation is hard and awkward but can be done and we shouldn’t shy away from it due to fear of conflict.

Are we presenting ourselves openly? Do we make newcomers comfortable? We recognise the exclusion we may create is not intentional but it doesn’t mean we aren’t responsible for it. There is a feeling Quakers are passively inclusive. Our testimony to equality makes us complacent. However, it is not enough that this testimony exists, our words and actions as a community and individually should back it up as well. We cannot choose which or when to follow a testimony if we want to challenge privilege and become diverse.

Many Young Quakers feel excluded from the wider Society of Friends specifically Local Meetings. These are sometimes felt to be exclusionary to younger Quakers as they aren’t accessible to them in terms of times, dates and places. This creates a cycle, because if young Quakers are not included locally, they are less likely to be part of national Quaker bodies, meaning young Quakers cannot amend conventions to be inclusive for them.

We cannot reinvent Quakers overnight but trying is better than not. It is important to re-evaluate our relationship with our own privilege and a make a shift in mentality in how we approach new Friends and existing minority Friends at all levels from local to national. This hopefully will allow us to be the truly welcoming community we hope to be.

Signed

Anya Nanning Ramamurthy
Lucy Cox Dodgson

Junior Yearly Meeting Clerks 2019

### **Minute 25: Hearing other voices**

We have continued our exploration of privilege by hearing stores from lived experience.

We will draw on these stories in our consideration this afternoon.

Sunday 26 May

*Afternoon*

### **Minute 26: Parallel sessions**

We have again spent the first part of our time this afternoon in parallel sessions exploring aspects of privilege, diversity and inclusion, and climate justice in different ways, including through dance, drama and singing.

### **Minute 27: Testimony**

Parts of the testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Jonathan Graham Castle (pages 13-15 of the printed version of Testimonies) have been read.

### **Minute 28: Looking through the lens of privilege at climate justice and inclusion – further discernment and gathering the threads**.

If we have a stone in our shoe, and we complain about it, we need to instead remove it to stop the pain. The stones in our Quaker shoes hurt people now. But we are seeing signs of hope and change; on our journey there are times for tears and times for joy.

We will return to this matter tomorrow.

### **Minute 29: Invitation to Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020**

The clerks of Yearly Meeting Gathering Planning Group have introduced plans for the Yearly Meeting Gathering to be held 1-7 August 2020, at the University of Bath.

Monday 27 May

*Morning*

Minute 30: Epistle

Part of the epistle from Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Concerns held July 2018 has been read.

Minute 31: The work of Quaker Stewardship Committee: receipt of annual report

We receive the annual report for 2018, including the compliance report, from Quaker Stewardship Committee. The report is at appendix E in the Yearly Meeting Programme, and has been introduced by the clerk of Quaker Stewardship Committee.

We accept this report.

Minute 32: Receipt of other reports

We receive and accept the following reports presented in appendices in *Agenda and Notes,* giving thanks for the service of those Friends involved during the year:

Central Nominations Committee (appendix B)

Quaker Housing Trust (appendix F).

We note that Friends Trusts Ltd’s audit has not yet taken place. The report will be available on the Britain Yearly Meeting website together with the company’s Annual Report and Financial Statements when they have been approved by the Directors at their June meeting.

Minute 33: Who we are? How do we live? What impact does our living have?

We have embarked on an exploration of privilege, seeking to become aware of the unseen and unspoken chains that bind us, and affect our ability to act on our urgent concerns of sustainability and climate justice, and diversity and inclusion.

Through hearing personal stories and reflecting on our own lived experience, we have confronted our own privilege and lack of privilege. We have learned that we may be seen as privileged in some contexts and as disprivileged in others. Where we have privilege we can choose how to use it: we must choose carefully. We must each learn to love who we are, be authentic, and act out that love in the world, working in partnership to dismantle the institutions and transform the systems that marginalise people.

Exploring privilege can be challenging and it can be uncomfortable. We need to show each other compassion and trust. Quakers are all sorts of people with the capacity for both good and bad actions, and we find it hard to do the difficult work of looking at ourselves. As a religious society we face the obstacle of pride. Real power will come if we cease to be merely “good respectable people” and be a community that knows weakness and frailty. We must learn our weaknesses and those of our Friends to live with one another. Through our tears we can find power.

We have started our journey in different places and with different experiences. As we have laboured together on understanding privilege, we are journeying from guilt, shame and grief, to speaking of accountability and responsibility, and then to the desire for action. We are impatient: we identified both sustainability, and diversity and inclusion as urgent concerns two years ago, and we want to see change and growth.

We are fearful of the monsters of war and climate breakdown that are hurting our fragile Earth. We know there is pain around inclusion in our meetings. Fear is holding us back. We fear being misjudged or being seen as preaching, and so we fail to challenge the norm. We fear losing our status. We need to address our fear to begin to do something positive. We have seen signs of hope, but we have to work to do, to transform ourselves, our communities and our world.

Our exploration and our journey are not complete. We have examined the privileges we have; the next steps are to see the effects they have on us, and how they make us behave.

We can take passion back to our meetings: our passionate connection to the Earth. We can take a desire to listen to those who do not share our own privileges, and to walk alongside people who are fearful of what we hope for. We can share the emotions from the inspiration and challenge we have felt as we have journeyed together.

We call on Friends throughout our Yearly Meeting to continue this work in our meeting communities, to deepen and extend the work we have done, so that we can be the community we need to be to face the future. We encourage local and area meetings to share their insights.

We ask Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to discern further how we can take the next steps to meaningful action, to be put before our Yearly Meeting Gathering next year.

Monday 27 May

*Afternoon*

**Minute 34: Receipt of the Yearly Meeting draft Epistle**

The Epistle Drafting Committee appointed by minute 7 has submitted a draft Epistle which has been read and accepted after amendment.

**Minute 35: Tabular Statement**

We receive and accept the Tabular statement as at 31 December 2018, as printed in *Patterns of Membership*.

**Minute 36: Epistles from other Yearly Meetings**

We have received greetings from Friends around the world via epistles from 40 Yearly Meetings and other bodies, available on the website of Friends World Committee for Consultation and listed in *Testimonies* (page 5).

**Minute 37: Testimonies**

The following testimonies to the Grace of God as shown in the life of deceased Friends have been received (pages 8 - 52 of the printed edition of *Testimonies)* in addition to those from which extracts have been read in our sessions.

James (Jim) Anderton

Vernon Baker

Bunty Biggs (Ida Alanur née Harman)

Robert Clark

Peter Cottingham

Stephen Doncaster

Marjorie Milne Farquharson

Joan Frik

Geoffrey Edward (Ted) Hoare

John Alan Ingram

Huw Waring Maw

David Morrish

Eileen Noakes

Joyce Pickard

Geoffrey Rendle

Dorothy A. Richardson

Mary Ridley

Brian & Kathleen Robson

Sheila Savill

Betty Stutz

Kenneth Charles Crosby Walch

**Minute 38: Visitors from other yearly meetings**

We have welcomed 42 representatives and other visitors from yearly meetings and Friends’ groups around the world.

**Minute 39: Inter-church and interfaith and belief visitors**

We have welcomed:

Andrew Copson, Chief Executive, Humanists UK,

Joey Williams, Community of Christ Mission Centre President, Europe Church,

as visitors to this Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 40: Meeting for Sufferings: interim membership changes since Yearly Meeting 2018**

We note that a number of appointments to and releases from the membership of Meeting for Sufferings have occurred since Yearly Meeting 2018. Table 5 of the schedule of nominations appended to these minutes records the membership of Meeting for Sufferings, excluding those who serve ex officio, as advised to the Recording Clerk’s Office and appointed by Meeting for Sufferings, as of its meeting on 6 April 2019.

**Minute 41: Acceptance of reports from Quaker Stewardship Committee and Meeting for Sufferings**

We have received and now accept the report, including the compliance report, of Quaker Stewardship Committee (see minute 31) and the report of Meeting for Sufferings (see minute 20).

We give thanks for the work of these bodies, and all those involved.

**Minute 42: Yearly Meeting Nominating Group: appointment and nominations required**

Further to minute 11, the following nominations are received for service on the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group from the end of Yearly Meeting 2019 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2020.

Margaret Burtt, London West AM

Rachel Frith, South East Scotland AM

Sasha Lawson-Frost, Young Friends General Meeting/Oxford LM

Janet Scott, Cambridgeshire AM

John Sheldon, Central England AM

Kellie Turner, Manchester & Warrington AM

Robert Wilson, North of Scotland AM

These nominations being acceptable, the Friends named are appointed to work with their convener, Elizabeth Backhouse, who was appointed by our minute 10.

We ask the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group to bring nominations to Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020 as specified in Table 6 of the schedule of nominations appended to these minutes.

**Minute 43: Thanks**

We record our thanks to all our staff and volunteers who have served us so well both during this meeting and over the past year. We uphold those working on the planning for our Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2020 and those commencing service on the Book of Discipline Revision Committee.

**Minute 44: Receipt of minutes from the Children and Young People’s Programmes**

We have received and heard read minutes from the groups of the Children’s and Young People’s Programme of this Yearly Meeting as follows:-

**New Shoots (0-1s)**

We formed a warm, caring worshipping group as part of a community which loved and looked after us. This community included our daily helpers who helped to create our happy, safe, fun-filled time.

We enjoyed seeing ourselves and others through glass doors, mirrors and through the play tunnel.

Together we learned about ourselves and our Friends through sharing our toys and spending time together.

**Fox Cubs (2-4s)**

This weekend we have enjoyed making friends and thought about how to look after each other, and our world. We have had a lot of playtime with games, craft and music, and make rockets and trains out of parachutes and cardboard boxes. Today we have given tasty treats to some of our older friends.

Every day we have spent a little bit of time being quiet, and a little bit more time being noisy. We know lots of songs now – there was even some dancing! We have been very thankful to have help from lots of people from around the Meeting who have read us stories and given us snacks.

Lots of us have had different needs, so we know it is important to think about how to be kind to one another. It was fun to join grown-ups yesterday but we enjoyed playing outside too. It has been a happy time together.

**Penn Friends (5-7s)**

We are the Penn Friends. Our theme this weekend was caring and including. We started our weekend by coming up with ways that we could care for and include each other in our group.

We listened to a Godly Play story about war and why we should stop war. We made folders to organise everything we made this weekend and started our journals.

We had our first meeting for worship where we held objects to help us stay still and quiet.

In the afternoon we were visited by Paul Parker and we visited the park where we played parachute games and ball games. We saw a statue of Gandhi and learned about Ramadan. We made collages using objects found in the park with lots and lots of feathers and leaves.

On Sunday we listened to a story called Fragile Earth in all-age worship and wrote about it in our journals. We made and decorated shakers to share with the New Shoots. We started our nominations process.

In the afternoon we went to the library where we made posters and saw lots of books. We also went to the basement where we saw tiny books that belonged to Elizabeth Fry and a very old teddy bear and the *Book of Sufferings*.

We sang songs and played our shakers with the New Shoots and they shared their biscuits with us.

We heard a story about caring for our earth and saw an Extinction Rebellion protest from the window.

We completed our nominations process and decided on our writers and readers.

On Monday we made collages about the environment and tried Morris Dancing.

**The Spiritual Adventurers (8-11s)**

We are the Spiritual Adventurers (the 8-11 year olds) and we met together as part of Yearly Meeting 2019.

We have been reflecting on how we care for ourselves, others, the environment and allowing others to care for us.

We have enjoyed ourselves over the weekend.

We met together on Saturday morning and got to know each other. We learned about caring and including; we had worship and a reading from *Living our Beliefs*, the book created by Quaker young people. A Godly Play story about John Woolman helped us to think about caring for the environment and each other.

In the afternoon we learned about Captain Coram who created the Foundling Hospital, helping orphans and homeless children all through their childhood, and we went to visit Coram’s Fields. Whilst we were there, we played, did yoga and parachute games. We experienced being together and - in playing the Wolf game - being on the outside and working together. It was a cared-for environment with animals. We enjoyed walking there and back, which was good for us and the environment.

On Sunday morning we visited the Library at Friends House where we did an I-Spy quiz, a treasure hunt and practised poster making, which were all related to our theme. We saw an eight- two year old teddy bear made by Friends for Spanish refugee children. There was also a hundred-year old bread roll that was a sample of the bread that Quakers used to feed hungry German children after the First World War.

In the afternoon, Paul Parker, the Recording Clerk, came to visit us and helped us think about the complex nature of privilege. Then we made ‘Plosters’ (plate posters) as ways of expressing our feelings about the themes.

On Monday morning we put sharing, caring and being looked after into practice by visiting the Fox Cubs and including each other in songs and food.

The weekend was fun, educational and tasty!

Signed in and on behalf of the Spiritual Adventurers

Rose Eccles, Poppy Deighton, Zoe Pittam and Edith Yaxley

Clerks

**Young People’s Programme**

To all Friends everywhere,

From the 24 to the 27 May 2019, 29 young people met at the High Leigh centre in Hoddesdon, to consider the theme: ‘Opening our hearts and minds to transform the world’.

Over the weekend we enjoyed numerous sessions from the various speakers which informed us about Quaker outreach projects and various social and economic issues. An opening session run by one of our adult volunteers prompted us to think about how we enact our Quaker ideals in our daily lives and how much our Quaker faith affects what we wear, the music we listen to, the food we eat and our political opinions. Lee Lester, Quaker Youth Development Worker for Sheffield and Yorkshire, ran a thought-provoking worship about privilege. They invited us to consider the ways in which we are privileged, and the ways we are not, in terms of gender, class, ability, age, race, economic status and sexuality. We filled in identity wheels where we realised which forms of privilege we are most aware of in ourselves, and which ones we overlook; we also took part in an activity where we were given one thousand pounds to ‘spend’ on various privileges we decided on as a group. The need for representation and diversity in what we see in society became clear through these activities. As Lee reminded us, “our society is only as strong as our least privileged member”.

Kirsty Philbrick, the Quaker Youth Development Worker for the West of England, joined us to run a session on climate justice. We were able to choose whether the current climate crisis made us feel mostly fearful, sad, angry or powerless and to talk about how we might use these emotions to empower us and take action. Some of us have recently been involved with the Extinction Rebellion movement, climate marches and school strikes. We were encouraged by Kirsty saying that it only takes 1-2% of the populations getting involved in a movement for it to have real, tangible effects. During a session on diversity and tolerance we all paired up and conducted assumption interviews, wherein we had to guess things like each other’s favourite music, food, hobbies, place of birth and languages spoken without talking. It was interesting to explore the preconceptions we had about each other and we enjoyed learning more about our friends in the process. We then discovered how many similarities we share despite our differences by playing Quaker Bingo!

Small groups gathered in chatrooms on Sunday to discuss issues about animals and climate change, gender diversity, and inclusion. We enjoyed this method of hearing different people’s opinions and found the atmosphere really open and non-judgemental.

Eden Grace, the Swarthmore lecturer, visited us on Sunday and shared lots of interesting stories about Quakers around the world, especially in Cuba and Palestine. She reminded us that “trying to change the world is an awfully big responsibility to place on ourselves” and acknowledged that this can discourage us from doing anything. However, she emphasised that it is important to remember that we are all a part of something much bigger than just ourselves, and even the smallest actions by just one individual can set off a whole chain of events. As Eden said, “I don’t have to do everything …. just the piece that is authentically mine” – we simply need to turn up and be a part of it!

We met in smaller Base Groups across the weekend, and valued these times of connection, reflection and fun. We met in worship in the mornings and evenings, finding the darkness and quietness of epilogues particularly meaningful. We also had lots of opportunities for fun over the weekend, competing in challenges, quizzes and whole group activities, such as rounders, Capture the Flag, board games and giant Jenga. A particular fever for the card game “Unable, Unwilling” spread throughout the event! We were also able to entertain each other on Sunday evening and share our many talents, including a perplexing brain teaser, comedy, singing, acting and piano playing.

Over the course of the weekend we have enjoyed opening our hearts to each other and to the issues in our world and feel motivated to open our minds to take action on the issues that we care about, in both public and personal ways.

Signed in and on behalf of the Young People’s Programme

Freya Stoppard English and Benny Froggett

Clerks

**Minute 45: Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting**

To all Friends everywhere,

From 12 to 15 April 2019 70 participants and 13 adult team members met at the Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire for a weekend of inward and outward reflection on the theme “Diversity and Inclusivity: how can we use our ideals to change our reality?”

A strong undercurrent of this event has been privilege. Many of our sessions have had elements of examining privilege within them. This has led us to look at our own privilege and how it varies for different aspects of our identity. One of our early theme sessions included choosing different colour beads to represent our privilege.

Alison Mitchel, Libby Adams, Maud Grainger, Sadhya Darr, Teresa Parker and Matt Alton ran workshops that enabled us to look at different aspects of privilege in our society. These discussions have been difficult for some, examining our own privilege is difficult due to our unawareness of it. Our lack of diversity prevents us from sometimes seeing our own privileges, but our denial of its existence doesn’t remove the inequality caused by it.

After discussing Quaker business processes and having a Meeting for Worship for Business, we wrote a minute addressing the question “What is our reality as a Quaker community and how does our privilege affect how we understand it?” In preparation for this, adult team members facilitated sessions that explored this question in different learning styles, allowing everyone to engage in the question in a way that was comfortable to them.

A point was made that if we do not allow for a diverse way of engaging certain topics, we are excluding those who don’t thrive in conventional learning environments.

In addition to theme sessions we have had a multitude of fun social sessions. Base groups (small groups) fostered community and inclusivity throughout the weekend and a quiz on Friday night broke the ice and allowed us to get to know each other better. The Easter Egg Eggstravaganza was a social activity that was for everyone as it had aspects for all to engage in, for example the competitive, sporty, or quiet in us. Our venue had activities on offer, so on Saturday some participants did archery, kayaking or went on the king swing whilst others watched the film Freedom Writers. The Open Mic was a resounding success with so many people signing up that later on in the day we had Open Mic 2.0. Dress up drama brought much hilarity and allowed us to reinvent classic fairy tales with a spin on different aspects of privilege. A highlight of all recent JYMs is the Ceilidh, with mocktails named with Quaker puns and this year was no different.

We began and ended our days with Meeting for Worship, giving us the opportunity to be calmed, settled and spiritual. Some focuses of these worship sessions were Kenyan Quaker hymns, the ocean and a bonfire. These helped us to centre down, providing some Friends new experiences.

Throughout the weekend, we were joined by several guests. Georgina Bailey, Clare Scott Booth, Iain Law, Max Kirk, Paul Parker and Naomi Major joined us in discussions, worship and games and provided insight to their aspect of Quakerism. Kai Weynberg and James Jenkins joined us as ecumenical guests from the United Reformed Church and the Methodists.

We have had an insightful weekend full of learning experiences and hope to go away and apply our new perspectives in making Quakers as inclusive as possible. We hope that the rest of Yearly Meeting takes the opportunity to listen to the opinions and perspectives of younger Friends, and other minority groups within Quakers and actively absorb our ideas. We ask older Friends to be open to change and differences in experience, recognising the diversity of lived experience within us all, just as we as JYM have been learning to do. We feel that all Quakers, young and old, must use our privilege for the betterment of society. It’s encouraging to see young Friends inclusion in national Quaker bodies and we wish for this to continue.

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Yearly Meeting 2019,

Anya Nanning-Ramamurthy Lucy Cox Dodgson

Junior Yearly Meeting Clerks 2019

**Minute 46: General Epistle**

The General Epistle approved by minute 34 has been read and signed by the clerk on behalf of the meeting. It reads as follows:

Loving greetings to Friends everywhere,

Our themes have encouraged us to look through the lens of privilege at climate justice, and at diversity and inclusion. The opening session was one of tenderness and love. We heard about the need to be a trusting and trusted community, sharing our insights and experience, perhaps bringing to light what has been hidden. In their introduction, our Clerks acknowledged that we are confronting difficult and potentially alienating topics. There is a risk of becoming mired in introspection and failing to address the challenges presented to us.

Each of us is at a different stage of this journey and has different understandings of the issues involved. The word ‘privilege’ has been used in two distinct ways this weekend: as a blessing we experience and as the unearned advantages a person can inherit from birth and/or accumulate over time. This has brought some frustrations. Our identities are complex and multifaceted. We need to be aware of the ways in which we can simultaneously have, and lack, privilege.

The words of Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) frame the challenge we face:

*“We recognise the exclusion we may create is not intentional but it doesn’t mean we aren’t responsible for it. There is a feeling Quakers are passively inclusive. Our testimony to equality makes us complacent.”* (from JYM 2019, Minute 1)

We need to be gentle with Friends who feel uncertain about how to engage whilst moving with a sense of urgency, knowing that these issues are an everyday source of pain for some of us.

Over 1,200 Friends have participated. Our twin themes have been woven together in main sessions, parallel sessions, special interest groups, programmed and unprogrammed worship, across different age groups and in the buzz of our shared spaces. The Children’s programme focused on Caring and Including. Exploring the themes worshipfully through dance and singing has been a gentle way to make friends and build our spiritual community.

During our time together, we’ve shed tears of joy, of emotion and of sadness. We are thankful to Friends who were able to share the riches and vulnerabilities in their life stories. Listening to these stories in the Spirit helps us to reflect on how we need to change.

*“There is nothing that age, experience and status can do to pre-judge where and how the Light will appear”.* (*Quaker faith & practice*, 23.32)

We recognise that the Light may not be warm and comfortable but be a spotlight exposing our vulnerability, complicity and fear. It is from such discomfort, even being broken, that spiritual growth can come alive. We want to stay with the struggle and hold the tension.

Guilt and shame emerged as strong themes in our opening worship: guilt for what we’ve done and shame for who we are and for what we’ve inherited. By sitting with overwhelming feelings we have the hope of transformation: anger and fear can become passion and love. Helplessness can trigger us to learn. Accountability and responsibility can guide us to make changes in our lives. In the Swarthmore Lecture, “On earth as it is in heaven; the kingdom of God and the yearning of creation”, we were challenged that the more we give ourselves over, the more we are given.

We have heard how our sense of being ‘Quakerly’ can itself be a barrier. As Quakers, we are not called simply to be good - how instead, in our frailty, are we called to live faithfully?

*“Somewhere beyond right and wrong there is a garden. I will meet you there.”* (Rumi)

Let us begin to understand what it means to be in unity with others and with the whole of creation, acting out of love rather than duty or fear. It’s all about Love.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting

Clare Scott Booth

Clerk

**Minute 47: Naming of clerks for Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020.**

The Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks expects to bring the following names to serve as Yearly Meeting clerks for 2020:

Clerk: Clare Scott Booth London West AM

First Assistant Clerk: Siobhan Haire North London AM

Second Assistant Clerk: Adwoa Bittle East Scotland AM

**Minute 48: Concluding Minute**

Keep in the wisdom of God that spreads over all the earth, the wisdom of the creation that is pure. Live in it; that is the word of the Lord God to you all, do not abuse it; and keep down and low; and take heed of the false joys that will change.

Bring all in to the worship of God. Plough up the fallow ground… And none are ploughed up but he who comes to the principle of God in him which he hath transgressed. Then he doth service to God; then the planting and the watering and in increase from God cometh. (*Quaker faith & practice* 19.32)

There being no further business for the Yearly Meeting, we separate, hoping to meet again at the University of Bath, 1-7 August 2020, should nothing occur to prevent.

**Schedule of Nominations**

**Table 1: Report of Central Nominations Committee**

Appointments and Releases made by Meeting for Sufferings on behalf of Yearly Meeting.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Committee** | **Released** | **Appointed**  |
| Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees | Roy Love, York AM |  |
| Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee | Roger Bartlett, Southern Marches AM | Noel Staples, Cambridgeshire AM until May 2019 |

Appointments for this Yearly Meeting

**Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Area Meeting** |  **Nominated to serve** |
| Robert Card | Northumbria | during this Yearly Meeting |
| Ruth McCarthy | York | during this Yearly Meeting |

Serving with the three Yearly Meeting Clerks and Peter Fishpool, Liz Brooks and Rebecca Mattingly of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

**Yearly Meeting Elders**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Area Meeting** | **Nominated to serve**  |
| Jane Mace | Gloucestershire | From the beginning of Yearly Meeting 2019 until the end of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020  |
| Gloria Dobbin | Luton & Leighton |
| Tess James | Dorset & South Wiltshire |
| Barney Smith | Bristol |

Serving with those Friends appointed in 2018.

Barney Smith, Bristol AM is nominated to serve as convener of Yearly Meeting Elders for Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020

**Yearly Meeting Epistle Drafting Committee**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Area Meeting** |  **Nominated to serve** |
| Wendy Sender | London West | For a 2nd term during this Yearly Meeting  |
| Vicky Cowell | Central England | For a 1st term during this Yearly Meeting |
| Rici Marshal CrossTo serve as convener | South East Scotland |
| Barbara Davey | East Scotland |
| Robin Davis | West Scotland |
| Frances Rutter | South Wales |

Appointments and other changes to committees and groups for work outside Yearly Meeting in session

**Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Area Meeting** | **Nominated for 1st term, from/to** | **Renominated for 2nd term, from/to** |
| Danielle Walker Palmour  | York | End of YM 2019/31 Dec 2022 |  |
| Nick Eyre | Lincolnshire |  | 1 Jan 2020/31 Dec 2022 |
| Jenny Brierley | York | 1 Jan 2020/31 Dec 2022 |  |
| Kate Gulliver | West Scotland |  |

**Quaker Stewardship Committee**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Area Meeting** | **Renominated for 2nd term** |
| Yvonne Dickson | Wirral & Chester | From the end of YM 2019 to the of end YM 2022 |
| Mary Aiston | Kingston & Wandsworth |
| Fred Ashmore | Kingston & Wandsworth |

Ursula Fuller East Kent AM, is re-nominated to serve as clerk for a fifth term and Martin Ford, Leeds AM, is re-nominated to serve as assistant clerk for a third term, from the end of Yearly Meeting 2019 until the end of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020

**Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Area Meeting** | **Nominated for 1st term, from/to** | **Renominated for 2nd term, from/to** |
| Noel Staples | Cambridgeshire  |  | End of YM2019/end YM 2022 |
| James McCarthy | York | End of YM2019/end YM 2022 |  |
| Laura Kerr | Sheffield & Balby |  |
| Yvonne R Estop-Wood | North East Thames |  |
| Bridget Dunbar | East Cheshire  |  |
| *vacancy* |

**Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Area Meeting** | **Renominated for 2nd term, from/to** |
| Anthony Woolhouse | Bournemouth Coastal | End YM 2019/end YM 2022 |

**Yearly Meeting Publications Group for *Quaker faith & practice***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Area Meeting** | **Nominated for 1st term, from/to** |
| Kate Macdonald | West Wiltshire & East Somerset  | End YM 2019/end YM 2022 |

**Table 3 Report of Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks**

**Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Position** | **Name** | **Area Meeting** | **Nominated for 1st term from/to** | **Nominated for 2nd term from/to** |
| Clerk | Caroline Nursey | London West  |  | 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2020 |
| Assistant Clerk | Graham Torr | York | 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2020 |  |
| YM Treasurer | Linda Batten | Sheffield & Balby |  | 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2020. |

**Table 4 Report of Yearly Meeting Nominating Group**

Appointments and Releases made by Meeting for Sufferings on behalf of Yearly Meeting.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Committee** | **Released** | **Appointed**  |
| Central Nominations Committee | Heather Lister | Beryl Milner, Leeds AM until end YMG 2020. |
| Strawberry Roth | Fran Hicks, West Somerset AM until end YM 2021. |
| Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks | Oliver Robertson |  |

**Central Nominations Committee**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Area Meeting** | **Nominated for 1st term, from/to** | **Renominated for 2nd term, from/to** |
| David Day | Cumberland |  | End YM 2019/end YM 2022 |
| Sandra Horsfall | London West |  | End YM 2019/end YM 2022 |
| David Beale | Cumberland  |  | End YM2019/end YMG 2020 |
| Kathy Bell | Notts & Derby | End YM 2019 to end YM 2022 |  |
| Bronwyn Harwood | Sussex East | End YM2019 to end YM2022 |  |

**Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Area Meeting** | **Nominated for 1st term, from/to** | **Renominated for 2nd term, from/to** |
| Andrew Backhouse | East Cheshire |  | End YM 2019/end YM 2022 |
| Gethin Evans | Mid Wales/CCR Canolbarth Cymru |  | End YM 2019/end YM 2022 |
| Judith Thompson | Devon |  | End YM 2019/end YM 2022 |
| Ann Gimpel | Leicester | End YM 2019 to end YM 2022 |  |
| Gill Greenfield | Mid Somerset | End YM 2019 to end YM 2022 |  |
| *vacancy* |  |  |  |

**Convener of the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group**

Nominated to serve from the end of Yearly Meeting 2019 until the end of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020:

Elizabeth Backhouse Brighouse, West Yorkshire AM