

**YEARLY MEETING  
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN BRITAIN**

**AT THE YEARLY MEETING  
HELD IN LONDON AT FRIENDS HOUSE  
4 - 7 May 2007**

Friday 4 May 2007

*Evening*

**Minute 1: Clerks**

The Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks nominates the following Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerks for Yearly Meeting 2007:

Clerk:	Martin Ward	York MM
Assistant Clerks:	Richard Ogden	York MM
	Lis Burch	Witney MM

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

**Minute 2: Permission for non-members to attend**

Permission has been given for the attendance of 85 non-members, and we welcome them to this Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 3: Report of Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee (Yearly Meeting 2006 – Yearly Meeting 2007)**

Further to minute 8 of Yearly Meeting held 26 – 29 May 2006, the Nominations Committee appointed at Yearly Meeting 2006 brings forward the following nominations:

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

To serve from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2007 until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2010

*Renominated:*

Laurie Michaelis	Witney MM
------------------	-----------

*Nominated:*

Jane Chattell	Kendal & Sedbergh MM
Niladri	Brighthouse MM

Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee

To serve during this Yearly Meeting

John Capper	Thaxted MM
Peter Kennedy	East of Scotland MM

Yearly Meeting Accessibility & Support Group

To serve until Yearly Meeting 2010

Debbie Abel	Westminster MM
-------------	----------------

Yearly Meeting Publications Group for Quaker faith & practice

To serve until Yearly Meeting 2010

*Renominated:*

Gil Skidmore Reading MM

Epistle Drafting Committee

To serve during this Yearly Meeting

Sarah Donaldson (convener)	Hardshaw East MM
Paul Casey	Hampstead MM
Margaret Heathfield	Southampton & Portsmouth MM
David M Robson	Brighthouse MM
Anita Thistlethwaite	York MM

Yearly Meeting elders

To serve for Yearly Meeting 2007 (in addition to those appointed in 2006) and Yearly Meeting 2008

Margaret Mortimer	South-East Scotland MM
Jane Muers	Leicester MM
Gwen Schaffer	Notts & Derbys MM
Linda Wood	Luton & Leighton MM

Yearly Meeting overseers

To serve for Yearly Meeting 2007 (in addition to those appointed in 2006) and Yearly Meeting 2008

Sue Flemons	Westminster MM
Viki Grainger	Colchester & Coggeshall MM
Margaret Gravely	York MM
Stuart Wallace	Kingston & Wandsworth MM

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

The following requests for release from service are approved:

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (service from Yearly Meeting 2005 to Yearly Meeting 2008)

*Released:*

Sylvia Hilken East Devon MM

Yearly Meeting Summer Gathering Planning Committee

*Released:*

Imogen Wedd Ipswich & Diss MM

We thank our Friends for their service.





### **Minute 7: 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:

Lucy Pollard	Ipswich & Diss MM
Jane Taylor	Lancaster MM
Judith Thompson	East Devon MM
Jane Pearn	South-East Scotland MM
Su Johnston	Dorking & Horsham MM
Alastair Reid	South-East Scotland MM
Catherine James	North Wales MM
Lisa Shend'ge	Hampstead MM
Seren Wildwood	Gloucester & Nailsworth MM
Colin McKenzie	Warwickshire MM

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

### **Minute 8: Matters arising**

Some of the matters from Yearly Meeting in 2006 that required follow up action are referred to in sections 4, 5 and 7 of the Trustees Report (of Meeting for Sufferings) for 2006 (see *Quaker work in 2006*, pages 11-15 and 259). Several of the matters taken under the broad umbrella of 'constitutional issues' are before us this evening, and others are elsewhere on the agenda for this Yearly Meeting.

- a. Progress on action in relation to the RECAST report  
Further to minute 35 of Yearly Meeting in 2005 (RECAST Report – consideration 4), a progress report on action regarding decisions from the report of the Working Group on Representation, Communication and Accountability in our Structures (RECAST) was before Meeting for Sufferings on 2 December 2006. Minute 7 of that meeting, with the progress report, may be found as an appendix on page 51 of *Documents in advance*.
- b. Reviews of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and Meeting for Sufferings  
Further to minute 20 of Yearly Meeting in 2006 (Constitutional issues – Trustees for Britain Yearly Meeting – continued), proposals for a future review of both the functioning of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and Meeting for Sufferings in its new role will be brought to a future Yearly Meeting, by Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee.
- c. Governing Document for Britain Yearly Meeting  
Further to minute 28 of Yearly Meeting in 2006 (Constitutional issues – charitable status), Quaker Stewardship Committee has checked the text of the Governing Document for Britain Yearly Meeting as requested. Meeting for Sufferings was given authority to approve the final document on behalf of Yearly Meeting and did so by minute 4 of its meeting held 2 December 2006. A draft of the text is printed on pages 37 - 48 of the church government *Supplement to Documents in advance*.

We endorse Meeting for Sufferings' decision, and agree that the amended text should be used as the basis for charitable registration when this is done.

d. Amendments to chapters 6, 7 & 8 of *Quaker faith & practice*

Further to minute 29 of Yearly Meeting in 2006 (Constitutional Issues – Trustees continued; *Quaker faith & practice* working text and terms of reference), the Yearly Meeting *Quaker faith & practice* Drafting Group has brought back to this Yearly Meeting final proposed amendments to chapters 6, 7 & 8 reflecting the constitutional changes approved by Yearly Meeting in the last two years. The text is printed on pages 48 – 71 of the church government *Supplement to Documents in advance*, and has been checked by Meeting for Sufferings, the Church Government Advisory Group and the Yearly Meeting Publications Group for *Quaker faith & practice*.

We approve this text.

e. Terms of reference for Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Also further to minute 29 of Yearly Meeting in 2006, the *Quaker faith & practice* Drafting Group has brought back to this Yearly Meeting revised terms of reference for Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees. The text is printed on pages 71 – 75 of the church government *Supplement to Documents in advance*.

We approve these revised terms of reference, with exception of the first paragraph 1.1 where, for clarity, the same wording should be used as in paragraph 8.01 of *Quaker faith & practice*: “the centrally held and managed policy, property, employment and work of Britain Yearly Meeting” rather than just “the centrally-managed work of Britain Yearly Meeting”.

**Minute 9: Reports and accounts received**

The annual report of Meeting for Sufferings and its committees for the year ended 31 December 2006 and the annual reports of Yearly Meeting committees, including that of the Quaker Stewardship Committee, as printed in *Quaker work in 2006*, the *Trustees’ annual report and accounts* and the Tabular Statement for the year 2006 have been received and laid before us.

The report of Meeting for Sufferings has been introduced by its clerk. We are grateful for all of the work which has been done in our name during 2006 and encourage Friends to take the opportunity to ask questions and offer comments at the Special Interest Group on Sunday lunch time.

**Minute 10: Epistle from Ireland Yearly Meeting**

The Epistle from the Yearly Meeting of Friends in Ireland, held at Friends School, Lisburn, from 12 to 15 April 2007, has been read as follows:

To Friends everywhere.

We greet you as we meet at Friends' School, Lisburn, in Northern Ireland, on sunny spring days, with the cherry blossom already visible. This message comes from Ireland Yearly Meeting held from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Epistles have been received from eighteen Yearly Meetings worldwide. It gladdens our hearts to hear from Friends in other countries and to identify with them as a world family of Friends.

It has been a positive year for the communities on this island, who have come to realize that demands are being made to revise self-perceptions. This much has been achieved and progress is being made towards new modes of co-operation.

A great opportunity opens up before us in Ireland as a Religious Society of Friends, a family of Friends in a creative discourse with this ever-changing world where the mistrust, fear and isolation that have inhibited us in the discourse will fade away under the influence of Divine caring Love. We are learning an inter-dependency as global issues become localized and local issues become globalized.

We have heard of the political situation in Sri Lanka and have been given insight into the causes of the ongoing Arab/Israeli conflict and their implications for the single world we share. The desire to have a focused and united movement for peace that will dissolve our sense of isolation has encouraged Friends north and south to hold seminars and make progress away from the negativity of communal strife.

The Quaker family in Ireland also has to come to terms with change. Much as society has fostered isolation and self-containment so has the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland tended to reflect this in theological and social terms. There must be a desire for, and a passionate zeal for truth by Friends on all sides and from different perspectives. We need to be in relation with God and with the challenges offered by different people to us, not merely by 'doing' but by 'waiting'.

Some Friends speak of the 'Blood of the Lamb' and some of 'Holding in the Light' and might find it hard to accept an identity with one or the other expression, but there needs to be a trust that the same kindness, care and love is in the intention implied even where there is no agreement in words or image. If it is not possible to agree we can lovingly disagree but with greater understanding.

An effort should be made to accept the working possibilities offered by translation or paraphrase if our lives are to be opened to the transforming power of love and trust. Thus there can be a developing relationship, a core-partnership with a loving God seen operative in Jesus Christ. There can be the same intention to struggle through to truth on the 'path of inter-relatedness'.

We may know abandonment, the winter of godless despair, but can also know joy unbounded, the summer warmth of God's presence. Our future is to be 'tied in a single garment' of mutuality, of destiny. We cannot be half-involved like the Laodiceans. The half-committed may be more of a hindrance than a help. We must not lead lives that compromise our relationship with our Creator.

We face into this New Year with a positive sense that we can participate in the Divine Presence and transmit it to our communities in word and life. As we celebrate 38 years of work of the Ulster Quaker Service Committee and 25 years of activity from Quaker House Belfast we also look forward to welcoming Friends from all over the world who will participate in the Triennial Meeting of Friends' World Committee for Consultation to be held in Dublin this August.

Signed on behalf of Ireland Yearly Meeting,  
Rachel M Bewley-Bateman. *Clerk.*

Saturday 5 May 2007

*Morning*

**Minute 11: Epistle**

Part of the Epistle received from Intermountain Yearly Meeting (pages 9-11 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

**Minute 12: Yearly Meeting Nominating Group: nominations**

The names of 7\* Friends suggested in this session for service on the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group to serve from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2007 until the beginning of Yearly Meeting 2008 have been listed. These Friends will meet with the appointed convener to consider the service required and the balance of the group. Should any changes be necessary in this list, it will be brought back to us for further nomination(s). Following reflection by those suggested and the Meeting, the nominations will return to us on Monday afternoon for appointment.

We ask the group when appointed to bring to Yearly Meeting 2008:

Nine Friends to serve on the Central Nominations Committee from Yearly Meeting 2008 to Yearly Meeting 2011;

Four Friends to serve on the Committee on Clerks from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2008 until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2009;

Four Friends to serve on the Committee on Clerks from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2008 until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2010;

Four Friends to serve on the Committee on Clerks from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2008 until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2011;

One Friend to serve as convener of the Nominating Group from the beginning of Yearly Meeting 2008 until Yearly Meeting 2009.

\* footnote: one of the Friends named on Saturday morning was not able to serve, but a further name was added from the floor of the meeting on Sunday morning.

**Minute 13: The report of the Quaker Stewardship Committee Review Group**

Yearly Meeting in 2006, by minute 3, asked Meeting for Sufferings to undertake a review of the work of the Quaker Stewardship Committee and to report back this year.

The summary of purpose from the terms of reference for the review group set up by Meeting for Sufferings states that 'the Review Group shall carry out an interim review on the work of Quaker Stewardship Committee in the context of its terms of reference and current operation and make any recommendations for future practice appropriate at this time'. The full terms of reference are to be found as Appendix F on pages 77–80 in *Quaker work in 2006*. Its report is to be found as Appendix 2 on pages 52–54 of *Documents in advance*. The work of Quaker Stewardship Committee is defined in sections 14.27–14.30 of *Quaker faith & practice* (3rd edition).

Appreciation has been expressed for the work of Quaker Stewardship Committee, and we have been reminded that Quaker Stewardship Committee is not resourced to carry out the detailed stewardship in local meetings, which is the responsibility of us all. We are pleased

to hear of planned Quaker Stewardship Committee input to the forthcoming Conference of Treasurers.

**Minute 14: The report of the Quaker Stewardship Committee**

The printed report of the Quaker Stewardship Committee is found on pages 257-258 of *Quaker work in 2006*. We have been reminded of the difficulty of identifying and supporting those willing and able to act as treasurers in our meetings and, more positively, of the valuable service offered by Woodbrooke in training trustees and treasurers.

We have received the following minute from Quaker Stewardship Committee (part of QSC 07/01/9):

Certifying compliance to Yearly Meeting

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain comprises a number of charities that are currently excepted from registration with the Charity Commission. Like other charities, all parts of the Yearly Meeting are required to keep proper accounting and property records and it is Quaker Stewardship Committee's duty to certify that this is being done to a satisfactory standard. Since 2004 the committee has been asking all parts of the Yearly Meeting that are not registered to submit their Annual Reports and Accounts for its scrutiny. These parts include:

- The centrally managed work
- General meetings
- Monthly meetings
- Some listed informal groups
- Any other Quaker bodies that are charitable but not registered.

The Committee is now in contact with all parts of the Yearly Meeting, but, as last year, we are not yet able to certify compliance.

The Committee has concentrated on working with monthly meetings. Ninety-seven per cent have submitted their accounts for the financial year 2004\*. Members of the committee are working with local treasurers to ensure that the set is completed. Seventy-six per cent of monthly meetings have submitted their accounts for 2005\*. Awareness of the importance of completing this task satisfactorily has risen and treasurers are being offered more help and support by their meetings (including professional assistance in some cases).

Nevertheless, many monthly meetings have yet to undertake the task of consolidating their accounts to show financial outcomes for all parts of the meeting (ie including all local meetings). In addition, the presentation of the Reports and Accounts of many monthly meetings does not yet reach the standard required by SORP (the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting by charities). Stewardship Committee is working with staff at Friends House to offer a programme of support for these monthly meetings.

Stewardship Committee has received at least one set of accounts from most informal groups and other bodies from which it expects submissions. The Committee expects to be able to offer more support to these groups in the future.

\*Percentages of monthly meetings that have submitted their accounts were inserted in February 2007.

*John Phillips, clerk*

We uphold the committee in this work.

**Minute 15: Under-19 Programme**

We have been informed of the programmes being run for 78 Yearly Meeting participants aged under 19, complementing the agenda which is before adult Friends. We send greetings to all those participating; we look forward to meeting and worshipping with them at various times during the weekend, and to receiving their minutes on Monday.

We also send our greetings to the 8 attending the Transitional Group of 19 –25-year-old Friends who will be sharing many of our sessions this weekend.

**Minute 16: Equality and inclusion (1)**

We have heard in our introduction to this subject that Quaker testimony, including the strand of testimony on equality, comes from a place of love, although anger too can be a powerful initial stimulus to action.

Our testimony comes from God and points back to God. It is how we feel called to behave as we live the values we are trying to bring about and make present the Kingdom of God.

Working in pairs and together in session we have explored times when we have felt excluded or included, or when we have excluded others. We are called to reject exclusivity, to challenge our prejudices and to allow one another to be who we are.

We will return to a consideration of this subject later in the weekend.

*Afternoon*

**Minute 17: Testimony**

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Frances Dagnell (pages 40-42 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

**Minute 18: A world transformed: Quaker ways of working**

We have spent time this afternoon considering Quaker ways of working, hearing examples of working for Quakers, working as individual Quakers under concern, working as Quakers in secular organisations which may have a very different culture, and working together as Quaker communities.

We have heard of challenges on many different scales – from seeking truth with power when influencing a vision for the future of Europe to personal encounters on the street.

We may be overwhelmed to the point of paralysis by injustice and the legacy of injustice we see around us – the forms of slavery which persists 200 years after the abolition of the slave trade, which was achieved partly with the help of the efficient Quaker communications networks of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. We may be fearful that in a world transformed some of the privileges we enjoy will not be sustainable.

Do we need to be transformed ourselves before we begin to transform the world? We gain strength by working collectively in our meetings rather than as individuals and we need to work with churches and the organisations on commonly held concerns, looking for the niche where Quakers have something particular to offer.

The little bit of the world in our neighbourhood may be the best place to start. Anger at injustice can be tendered into love by worship and discipleship. We must be moved by the Spirit, and we will find it comforting and terrifying to be open to the Spirit.

“all that we ever say or think or do – however seemingly unremarkable – may set the whole web of existence trembling, and affect the living and dead, and the unborn”. (George Mackay Brown)

Sunday 6 May 2007

*Morning*

**Minute 19: Epistle**

Parts of the Epistle received from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (pages 19-21 of *Epistles & testimonies*) have been read.

**Minute 20: Constitutional issues – local, monthly and general meetings**

Further to minutes 25 and 35 of Yearly Meeting held 30 July – 6 August 2005 we receive from the Yearly Meeting *Quaker faith & practice* Drafting Group draft amendments to chapters 4 and 5 of *Quaker faith & practice*.

We welcome the draft and agree to adopt it as working text for the guidance of our meetings to be refined in the light of comments made in this session, and any written comments received, into a text which might be agreed by Yearly Meeting 2008 as definitive for the time being.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to record general meetings that are laid down and those continuing, including the names under which they are continuing.

We agree that the term Area Meeting should be adopted in the text instead of Monthly Meeting, but with a suitable cross-reference to the historical term to be added during refinement of the text.

We recognise that legal changes to the names of specific meetings will take time and that meanwhile they may continue to be known for some purposes under their old names. For the purpose of charitable registration there would be benefits in adopting the uniform term “Area Quaker Meeting”. We recommend that our Area meetings consider adopting specific meaningful names to reflect the geographic areas which they cover, following the principles set out in paragraphs 9 and 13 of the RECAST report.

RECAST paragraph 9:

We have followed our testimony to truth and simplicity in deciding that names should be accurate, clear and simple. We consider the titles for all Quaker bodies should be meaningful, not requiring explanation, even if this results in new names that break with tradition. There is a strong case for changing inaccurate titles that have declined into misleading Quaker jargon. Preparative meetings do not primarily meet to prepare for monthly meeting. The terms ‘Recognised’ and ‘Notified’ cause unnecessary confusion. Few Monthly Meetings meet every month and the name emphasises the event rather than the community. We propose names for the ongoing spiritual communities; Friends who want to distinguish between meeting for worship for business and the spiritual community will decide locally how they refer to the event of business meeting.

We have applied the same principle of meaningful simplicity to our consideration of all names.

RECAST paragraph 13:

For Monthly Meetings **we recommend** the full form of **Y Area Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends** with the corresponding short form of: **Y Area Quaker Meeting**. In both the word 'Area' could be omitted if that fact was clear from the context. Collectively, all would be known as **Area Meetings**, including the word 'Quaker' if necessary.

### **Minute 21: Reflections from the Recording Clerk**

The twentieth Recording Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, Elsa Dicks, has worked quietly since 1998 to help integrate the centrally managed work and to make it more responsive to the needs of Friends and meetings in the twenty-first century. Our organisation is stronger and fitter as a result.

In this eightieth year of being in Friends House, a building on which Elsa has worked hard to make it more what we need to represent ourselves to the world, the concluding minute (82) of Yearly Meeting in 1927 is apposite to her departure:

'Meeting this year in our new house in London, with some thought of all that we have left behind us, and much more for all that is before us, we have faith that as we keep tender to the leadings and guidings of God and surrender ourselves to them as they come, He will open to us fresh service for the world.'

We have been very grateful to hear from Elsa some reflections on her time in office, of lighter moments and real difficulties she has helped us wrestle with as we move forward on a voyage of discovery – of becoming the people we could be: the market place witness for the spiritual consciousness in everyone.

We wish Elsa a long and active retirement and thank her for her service to us.

*Afternoon*

### **Minute 22: Testimony**

Parts of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Duncan Wood (pages 71-77 of *Epistles & testimonies*) have been read.

### **Minute 23: Epistle from Junior Yearly Meeting**

The Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting held 10-13 April 2007 at the Pioneer Centre, Cleobury Mortimer has been read as follows:

To all Friends everywhere,

Junior Yearly Meeting, held at the Pioneer Centre near Kidderminster from 10-13 April, brought together 170 young Quakers to explore the theme:

Diversity...  
A cause of conflict?  
A cause for celebration?

Twenty four hours before participants arrived a team of over twenties and under twenties met to work together and build relationships which would form the backbone of the event. This led to an enthusiastic and energetic atmosphere into which the participants were greeted.

To open up the theme there were several approaches one of which was a set of slides with pictures and questions composed by the Elders. Many participants felt this helped them focus on the theme in general before looking at specific aspects in more detail.

The fact that we had a non-Quaker speaker, Deepak Naik, made us realise that although we come from different faiths and backgrounds, human core beliefs are often very similar. We explored the theme further by watching a film, *Inside I'm Dancing*, which was considered by many participants to be not only controversial but also thought provoking and moving.

Socials provided a welcome release from an often challenging theme. The cowboy themed disco encouraged participants to mix and get to know one another in a friendly and inclusive environment. This was balanced by epilogues which provided space for much needed reflection and introspection.

In a business meeting we considered the question "Is the Religious Society of Friends as diverse as it could (or should) be; how can we respond to conflict and take the celebration of diversity into the wider world?"

During the meeting we felt that although as a Society we welcome diversity we are in ourselves not the most diverse faith group and this can affect our outreach potential as we do not appear to embody the values which we support.

It was felt that if as individuals we can embrace diversity then as a Society we can make a difference to the wider community. Friends felt that the Gandhi quote "*Be the change you wish to see in the world*" was especially useful in helping us to lead by example and bring this celebration to humanity. It was suggested that a good method to do so is for the Society to work with other groups and faiths in order to address conflict.

We go from being a majority group at JYM to being a minority in the wider world, yet we can use our influence to move from conflict towards celebration of the diversity we see in our world.

*Signed in and on behalf of Junior Yearly Meeting 2007*  
Harriet Jackson, Atticus Harris, Clerks

## **Minute 24: Matters Arising continued**

### **f. Membership Procedures Group Report**

Further to minute 23 of Yearly Meeting in 2006 (The Membership Procedures Group Report), draft amendments to chapter 11 of *Quaker faith & practice* have been prepared as requested by Yearly Meeting. Meeting for Sufferings has asked Quaker Life Central Committee to prepare a report on the implications of parents applying for membership for their children in relation to the principle that applications for membership of those of all ages are treated in the same way. This report is expected to be before Yearly Meeting in 2008.

We receive minute S/07/03/ 11 of Meeting for Sufferings held 31 March 2007 (Changes to *Quaker faith & practice*), which forwards the draft text and notes that issues were raised at the Meeting (pages 13-37 of the church government Supplement to *Documents in advance*). We note that Meeting for Sufferings has raised issues about the wording of Chapter 11

which are referred to this Yearly Meeting. Meeting for Sufferings discussed whether further consideration needs to be given to ensuring the involvement of a wider representation from the Monthly Meeting in the application process.

Following circulation of a suggested amendment to members of the former Membership Procedures Group, the Yearly Meeting Publications Group and the Church Government Advisory Group, the following underlined words were added as follows to the original draft of the first paragraph of section 11.11 for printing in the church government Supplement to *Documents in advance*:

11.11 The process of discernment that membership is right for both the applicant and the meeting is at the heart of the acquisition of membership. Once it has been discerned that it is right for the application process to be taken forward, monthly meetings may offer a number of options. For example: it may be that the traditional process of a letter from the applicant to the monthly meeting clerk and the appointment of two Friends, one from the applicant's meeting and the other from a different meeting within the monthly meeting, to visit the applicant and report back is followed; in other cases supporting Friends may hold discussions with the attender and together they may write an application letter or a minute which is taken to monthly meeting; for some a meeting for clearness may be right.

We agree the proposed text as amended in this way, commending the guidance on involvement of the wider community in the Area/Monthly Meeting, not just the applicant's own meeting.

Monday 6 May 2007

*Morning*

**Minute 25: Testimony**

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Barbara Millard (pages 53-54 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

**Minute 26: Civil liberty - the Kingdom and the state**

There is a concern arising within our YM that civil liberties are being gradually but insidiously eroded. Our 14-18 year group has already considered the issue and we have received their minute, which is appended.

We have heard details of the increasing powers of the State and individual cases of abuse of those powers. We have been reminded of the catastrophic consequences which can follow for the vulnerable when the powers of a State are not kept accountable and effectively overseen. Technological developments add a new range of possibilities: some may bring us benefits but others can be oppressive to ourselves or our neighbours.

We unite with this concern and agree to do further work on it. In responding we need to start from the truth: the facts about what government is doing, the experiences which stand behind those actions and the theological truth which can tell us why some of those actions are wrong.

Media reporting tends to heighten fear of the other in our communities, and that fear creates enormous pressure on politicians and officials who know they will be blamed if there is a failure of security. We have been reminded, by contrast, how few representations MPs receive on the subject of civil liberties.

Part of our prophetic message for today may be that we are willing to live with greater insecurity, recovering a sense of the fallibility of the world and living with things going wrong. We cannot demand perfect safety nor be perfectly safe if we are to live with adventure.

We need to research, understand and influence developments at local, national, European and global levels. Appreciation has been expressed for the work of our Parliamentary Liaison Secretary. We ask Meeting for Sufferings and our Trustees to consider what more we may be called to do corporately or with some central co-ordination.

Individually and in our local and area meetings we need to inform ourselves and ask awkward questions. What are the truths to which we testify and how much will we suffer to maintain them? Who are the partners who will promote with us the kind of Kingdom and State we want to live in? How much information about ourselves are we willing to share and with whom? How, for what and when will we “stand in the gap” between our testimony and the State? How are we led?

When identity cards are introduced, some Friends may refuse to carry them on grounds of conscience. Others may seek out shops where there are no surveillance cameras. But we must also talk to our shopkeepers and our politicians to find out how we have got where we are, showing love to those who are trapped in fear. They, too, are open to the leadings of the Spirit.

We do not yet see a clear way forward or a simple focus for a campaign. We know though, that the Kingdom of God is here present among us, and that our task is to make it more visible.

### **Minute 27: Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees - a forward look**

We have been pleased to hear from the clerks of Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and learn how they have begun working together since the trusteeship function transferred and Meeting for Sufferings started to develop its new role.

We have received a minute from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees as follows to inform us of their intention to explore proposals to set up a wholly owned trading subsidiary.

#### **BYMT/07/03/27 Formation of a trading company**

By our minute BYMT/07/03/14 we agree in principle to the formation of a wholly owned trading subsidiary. The group set up by Quaker Finance and Property Central Committee and to BYM Trustees in due course. We forward this minute to Yearly Meeting for information.

Gillian Waddilove, *clerk*

**Minute 28: Meeting for Sufferings review**

Yearly Meeting held 30 July–6 August 2005 agreed to a changed role for Meeting for Sufferings and the setting up of a smaller body, now established as Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, to carry out its former trustee function. By minute 35, Yearly Meeting in 2005 also agreed not to change the composition of Meeting for Sufferings for the time being as it envisaged an expanded role for this representative meeting in communication between Friends. It agreed that these arrangements should be reviewed by Yearly Meeting after the end of the next triennium in 2009.

We now agree that that review be deferred until, and may be combined with, the reviews in paragraph 10 of minute 20 of Yearly Meeting 2006. We ask our Agenda Committee to take soundings and report back to our next meeting, on how Yearly Meeting might address the planning of these reviews.

**Minute 29: Equality and inclusion (2)**

Minute 16 refers. The strand of testimony which focuses on equality emerges from our experience of worship – the light may shine out from anyone. We all have to “re-spect” (to look again, to pay proper attention to) so that we do not exclude people because we assume either that their difference is irrelevant, or that they should become or pretend to be like us.

We have heard a summary of comments made over the weekend on flipcharts. We don't always exclude people on obvious grounds: the commonest forms of exclusion that we have identified relate to how we welcome visitors and engage attenders, and around family life. We can foster inclusion through small acts, especially being careful in the words we use, and finding ways to enable others to do things and take an active part in our communities.

Inequalities of wealth and power damage our wider community and part of our testimony is to challenge those inequalities in society. We have been invited to take away something for ourselves from this session to prompt us to another step in making our meetings more inclusive.

Spirit of love from whom compassion flows help us to see, help us to hear, help us to listen with our hearts. Teach us to be still until we act only in love, only in compassion.

*Afternoon*

**Minute 30: Yearly Meeting *Quaker faith & practice* Drafting Group**

The *Quaker faith & practice* Drafting Group was appointed by minute 46 of Yearly Meeting held 30 July – 6 August 2005 to prepare necessary amendments to church government arising from sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the report of the Working Group on Representation, Communication and Accountability in our Structures (RECAST).

Although its term of service is currently fixed to end at this Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting *Quaker faith & practice* Drafting Group recommends that it be laid down at the end of December 2007 to allow time for its ‘finishing off’ tasks to be completed, particularly to complete the work of reviewing chapters 4 and 5 of *Quaker faith & practice*. We agree to their request and thank the group for their work.

### **Minute 31: Appointment of Recording Clerk**

We welcome the appointment by Meeting for Sufferings on 2 December 2006 of Gillian Ashmore of Kingston & Wandsworth Monthly Meeting as the twenty first Recording Clerk. The appointment takes effect from 8 June 2007 on the retirement of Elsa Dicks, although Gillian will begin work at Friends House on 1 June.

### **Minute 32: Amendments to *Quaker faith & practice***

We agree the following amendments in *Quaker faith & practice*, except for the first sentence of paragraph 9.12 which we refer back to Meeting for Sufferings and Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations, to improve clarity.

- a. Advice on preparing testimonies to the grace of God in the lives of deceased Friends. By minute 6, Meeting for Sufferings held 2 December 2006 forwards an amendment to insert the following text within section 4.26 (line 10 between 'advice' and 'The testimony' – third edition):

Meetings deciding to prepare a testimony, and particularly those Friends doing the drafting, are encouraged to consult the advice in the paper *Testimonies to the grace of God in lives – an enduring presence*, available from the Recording Clerk.

- b. Amendments to chapter 9 – Beyond Britain Yearly Meeting  
These changes are necessary to reflect the changes in structure of Churches Together in Britain & Ireland (CTBI) and are forwarded by minute S/07/03/ 11 of Meeting for Sufferings held 31 March 2007.

#### **BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING AND THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT**

9.08, 9.09, 9.10 as before. The current sections 9.11 and 9.12 to be replaced as below.

- 9.11 After some reorganisation in 2006, the CTBI now holds two regular meetings:

An annual general meeting called the Senior Representative Forum, lasting 2-3 days and attended by the administrative heads and ecumenical officers of the churches; it provides an opportunity for those attending to meet and talk;

A meeting every two years for the "spiritual leaders" of each church to study, worship and talk together. This Summit of Church Leaders is held over a period of twenty four hours and provides a steer for the work of CTBI. Members of the Senior Representative Forum are also invited to attend summit meetings.

It is a principle of CTBI that authority remains rooted in the decision-making bodies of the member churches. ACTS, CTE and Cytûn have become more significant, and CTBI has now become their agency rather than their organisational superior.

- 9.12 Meeting for Sufferings appoints Britain Yearly Meeting's representatives to CTBI and CTE. It has agreed in principle that Britain Yearly Meeting should be represented at CTBI as follows:

- a. at the Senior Representative Forum by the Recording Clerk or a Quaker member of staff delegated by her/him;

- b. at the biennial Summit of Church Leaders by one or two Friends appointed on the basis of their relevant experience on the nomination of Central Nominations Committee.

General Meeting for Scotland makes appointments to ACTS; the Meeting of Friends in Wales makes appointments to Cytûn.

Representatives report to the appointing body and maintain contact with the Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations and any reference group set up to support them.

**Minute 33: Letter of greeting: Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennial (Dublin 11–19 August 2007)**

Quaker World Relations Committee forwards to us as follows a draft letter of greeting to the 22nd FWCC Triennial, to be held in Dublin, Ireland, 11-19 August 2007.

**Finding the Prophetic Voice for our Time**

Dear Friends,

We send you loving greetings as you gather for the 22nd FWCC Triennial in Dublin, Ireland, 11-19 August 2007, with the theme *'Finding the Prophetic Voice for our Time'*. Once again there is the challenge and the precious opportunity of experiencing God's loving Spirit as manifested in the diversity of our world-wide family of Friends. As we find in I Corinthians 14:1, *"It is love, then, that you should strive for"*. Love requires a listening spirituality. We pray that you will minister and receive the spiritual gift of prophecy both as individuals and corporately as a committee, and that these gifts will be taken back to your worshipping communities as seeds of inspiration.

The travel arrangements for our Britain Yearly Meeting representatives are easy in terms of both distance and entry requirements and we feel outrage that this ease of entry is not extended to all the representatives. FWCC and some of our yearly meetings have faced financial and strategic costs in acquiring the visas that will hopefully enable full participation at the gathering. This reflects yet again the inequalities that exist in our world today.

This world is in a crisis, which we hope and pray can be helped toward healing if we can discern, in George Fox's words, how to *'let our lives preach'* and become *'patterns and examples'*. We know that you will be focussing on particular issues: Civil Liberties and Human Rights; HIV and AIDS; The Environment; Young Friends; Outreach; and Growth and Facing Violence in our societies. Prophetic ministry can be challenging, confrontational and often received with hostility. Knowing that we are being upheld by a caring community becomes essential.

We pray that the Triennial gathering will be blessed with the Love of God and that your consultation will inspire and empower you to find the prophetic voice for our time.

We are grateful for this draft, which we approve, and ask the clerk to sign and send on our behalf.

### **Minute 34: Receipt of the Yearly Meeting General Epistle**

The Epistle Drafting Committee appointed by minute 4 has submitted a draft Epistle, which has been read and accepted after amendment as the General Epistle.

### **Minute 35: Yearly Meeting Gathering 2009**

We receive minute S/07/02/15e of Meeting for Sufferings held 3-4 February 2007 recommending that Britain Yearly Meeting in 2009 is held combined with Summer Gathering from 25 July–1 August 2009 at the University of York. This experimental event will be known as 'Yearly Meeting Gathering'.

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee forwards background information to the proposed event, as printed in appendix C in *Quaker work in 2006*, page 62. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to approve the draft terms of reference for the planning committee on our behalf.

We receive the following nominations to the Planning Committee to serve from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2007 until Yearly Meeting 2010:

On the nomination of the Committee on Clerks, two clerks to serve both for the Gathering and the Planning Committee:

Paul Parker	Thaxted MM
Lizz Roe	Hereford & Mid-Wales MM

On the nomination of Quakers in Yorkshire (Yorkshire General Meeting):

Linda Batten	Balby MM
John Ling	Brighouse MM
Margaret Nunnerley	Leeds MM

On the nomination of York Monthly Meeting:

Ros Batchelor  
Margaret Bryan  
James McCarthy

On the nomination of Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee:

Ian Arnott	South-East Scotland MM
Julia Gordon	Northumbria MM
Kate Gulliver	West Scotland MM
Michael Phipps	Jordans MM

On the nomination of Young Friends General Meeting:

*(One name to come)*

On the nomination of Quaker Life Children & Young People's Committee:

Morgan Lucas	Brant Broughton PM
Claire Wilkinson	Cotherstone PM

We note that these nominations are both of young Friends nominated through Junior Yearly Meeting and we amend the terms of reference for this nomination from 'one' to 'two'.

On the nomination of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee from its membership:

simon gray  
David Lewis  
Sarah Richards

These nominations being acceptable to the meeting, we appoint the Friends named accordingly. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to make any interim appointments required on our behalf.

**Minute 36: Meeting for Sufferings: interim membership changes since last Yearly Meeting**

The following changes to the membership of Meeting for Sufferings have occurred since Yearly Meeting 2006:

<b>Added</b>	<b>Released</b>	<b>Nominating Body</b>
	David Edmonds	Balby MM
	Richard Porter	Mid-Somerset MM
Jonathan Doering		Hampstead MM
Bernard Cremieu-Alcan		Mid-Somerset MM
Richard Wood		Leicester MM
	Hazel Arlidge	Southwark, Lewisham & Bromley MM
Una Freeston		Southwark, Lewisham & Bromley MM
Roger Hill		Notts & Derbys MM
Janet Lynch		Ex officio
Ron Barden		Ex officio
	Sue Hammond-Lovatt	West Somerset MM
	Dana Adler	West Kent MM
	Rosalie Bridge	Ratcliff & Barking MM
	Jane Pearn	Hardshaw West MM
Jane Beaton		North Wales MM
Anthony Gimpel		Leicester MM
David Jeffery		Ratcliff & Barking MM
Barry Watkins		Norwich & Lynn MM
	Richard Bartholomew	Worcestershire & Shropshire MM
	Fiona Burt	Ex officio
	Ann Fox	Jordans MM
	John Lewis	Ex officio
	Freda Mansfield	Sussex East MM
	Michael Phipps	Ex-officio
	Donald Robertson	Ex-officio
	Helen Rowlands	Ex-officio
Mandy Goddard		West Somerset MM
Nicholas Sims		Jordans MM
Margaret Williams		North Somerset MM
David Harries		South Wales MM
James Eddington		Ex officio Assistant MfS Clerk
Mo Kelly		Lancaster MM
Henrica Takens-Milne		Quaker World Relations Committee
	Marlène Cantan-Taylor	Warwickshire MM
	Ann Mason	Ratcliff & Barking MM
	Lesley Moreland	Cornwall MM
	Marion Morton	South-East Scotland MM
	Patricia Roberts	Ex officio
Esther Boyd		Warwickshire MM
Rachel Frith		South-East Scotland MM
David Rolfe		Worcs & Shropshire MM
Elizabeth Rowland-Elliott		Hardshaw West MM
Jeffery Smith		Ratcliff & Barking MM

Helen Rowlands		Ex officio
Peter Smith		Ex officio
David Heathfield		Ex officio
	Bill Agnew	West Scotland MM
	Ron Barden	Northampton & Wellingborough MM
Matthew Keen		Northampton & Wellingborough MM
Vernon White		Cornwall MM
Margaret Mortimer		Ex officio
	Esther Boyd	Ex officio
	Jeffrey Dean	Ex officio
	Janice Johnson	Ex officio
	John Melling	Ex officio
	Diana Morrison-Smith	Ex officio
	Jim Putz	Ex officio
	Eric Rigby	Ex officio
	David Saunderson	Ex officio
	Wendy Ward	Ex officio

**Minute 37: Membership of Meeting for Sufferings: General Meeting for Scotland and Meeting of Friends in Wales**

We receive minute 16 of Meeting for Sufferings held 2 December 2006 as follows:

General Meeting for Scotland and Meeting of Friends in Wales.

Further to our minute 11 of 2 September 2006 and minute 8 b) today, the Assistant Recording Clerk has introduced proposals for the administrative support for and representation on Meeting for Sufferings of General Meeting for Scotland and Meeting of Friends in Wales (paper S 06/12/ I). Minute MSC 06/128 of Meeting for Sufferings Committee held 9 November 2006 refers.

We agree in principle, and recommend to Yearly Meeting 2007, that both General Meeting for Scotland and Meeting of Friends in Wales should be represented on Meeting for Sufferings. We unite with Meeting for Sufferings Committee's recommendation that this should be implemented on an interim basis following Yearly Meeting 2007 by inviting General Meeting for Scotland and Meeting of Friends in Wales each to nominate up to two Friends as their representatives. These arrangements should be included in the review of the size and composition of Meeting for Sufferings for the triennium commencing in 2009.

We also agree that financial support for administrative costs should be provided to General Meeting for Scotland as well as to Meeting of Friends in Wales. We ask Management Meeting to bring proposals for accommodating this in the 2007 budget to Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees. We suggest that this financial support be reviewed in 2009.

*Rachel Carmichael, clerk*

We approve these arrangements. Planning of the reviews will be included in the planning of other reviews described in minute 28.

**Minute 38: Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees - appointments**

a) The following interim changes to the membership of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees have been made by Meeting for Sufferings since Yearly Meeting in 2006:

*Released:*

Fiona Burt	Westminster MM
John Lewis	Colchester & Coggeshall MM
Patricia Roberts	Purley & Sutton MM
Donald Robertson	Luton & Leighton MM

*Released as assistant clerk on 2 December 2006:*

Helen Rowlands	Warwickshire MM
----------------	-----------------

To serve until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2007:

*Appointed:*

David Heathfield	Southampton & Portsmouth MM
Janet Lynch	Cornwall MM
Margaret Mortimer	South-East Scotland MM
Peter Smith	Norwich & Lynn MM

*Appointed as assistant clerk on 3-4 February 2007:*

Helen Rowlands	Warwickshire MM
----------------	-----------------

We thank the Friends released for their service.

b) Meeting for Sufferings Nominations Committee and Yearly Meeting Nominations acting jointly bring the following nominations to serve as Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees:

To serve from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2007 until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2008:

*Renominated:*

David Heathfield	Southampton & Portsmouth MM
------------------	-----------------------------

To serve from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2007 until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2009

*Renominated:*

Margaret Mortimer	South-East Scotland MM
-------------------	------------------------

To serve from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2007 until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2010:

*Renominated:*

Janet Lynch	Cornwall MM
Peter Smith	Norwich & Lynn MM
Alan York	South Wales MM

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

c) The Committee on Clerks bring the following renominations as clerks to Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees to serve from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2007 until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2008:

To serve as clerk:

Gillian Waddilove

Warwickshire MM

To serve as assistant clerk:

Helen Rowlands

Warwickshire MM

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

### **Minute 39: Appointments**

Further to minute 6, Central Nominations Committee brings in the following nominations:

As convener of Yearly Meeting elders for Yearly Meeting 2008:

Jane Muers

Leicester MM

As convener of Yearly Meeting overseers for Yearly Meeting 2008:

Stuart Wallace

Kingston & Wandsworth MM

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

### **Minute 40: Central Nominations Committee**

Further to minute 5, we encourage Central Nominations Committee from time to time to invite to its meeting the convener of Young Friends General Meeting Nominations Committee or other representative of Young Friends General Meeting.

We look forward to receiving draft terms of reference for Central Nominations Committee in due course.

### **Minute 41: Yearly Meeting Nominating Group: appointment**

Further to minute 12, we appoint as the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group to serve from the rise of Yearly Meeting 2007 until the beginning of Yearly Meeting 2008:

Jenny Buffery

Witney MM

Robin Davis

West Scotland MM

Jane Harries

South Wales MM

Judith Jenner

Warwickshire MM

Gill Sewell

Westminster MM

Eleanor Tew

West Somerset MM

James Woolgrove

Lancaster MM

These Friends will serve with Roy Stephenson, appointed as convener by minute 5.

### **Minute 42: Interchurch and interfaith visitors**

We have welcomed Peter Hammond of the Moravian Church and Brian Pearce, Director of the Interfaith Network as interchurch and interfaith visitors to this Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 43: Epistles from other yearly meetings**

We have received Epistles from 18 yearly meetings and other bodies (pages 3-31 in *Epistles & testimonies*), extracts from 2 of which have been read in our sessions.

**Minute 44: Testimonies**

The following Testimonies to the Grace of God as shown in the life of deceased Friends, in addition to those from which extracts have been read in our sessions, have been received:

<u>Names</u>	<u>Epistles &amp; testimonies page no</u>
Josephine Barber	35
Maurice Creasey	36
Thomas Ewan Faulkner	42
Nancy K Fraser and William R Fraser	45
Carole Hamer	47
Lewis Westcott Headley	48
Robert John Allen Jackson	50
Barbara Moodie	54
Harold Nichols	56
Kathleen Mary (Molly) Packer	57
Lorna Vincent Paulin	60
William Antony Reynolds	62
Ronald Rule and Gwynneth Rule	64
Alfred Stewart	65
Renate Warner	67
Eileen Joyce Wragge	77

**Minute 45: Welcome to visitors from other Yearly Meetings**

We have welcomed visitors from other yearly meetings and other Friends' groups as follows:

Baltimore YM

(Friend in Residence at Woodbrooke) Evelyn Jadin

Canadian YM Kirsten Ebsen

Evangelical Friends Church

– Eastern Region Wess Daniels

France YM Dennis Tomlin (representative)

France YM Francoise Tomlin

German YM Lutz Caspers (representative)

Ireland YM Ian S Woods (representative)

Ireland YM Aidan McCartney

Ireland YM John Fitzgerald

Netherlands YM Marielke Nieuwerth (representative)

New York YM Liesse Chable

Norway YM Trond Sviland (representative)

Pacific YM Charles Martin

Philadelphia YM Thomas Swain

Philadelphia YM Vanessa Julye

Philadelphia YM Viv Hawkins

Sweden YM Wilhelm Dahllöf (representative)

Switzerland YM Joan Alaoui (representative)

Switzerland YM Jackie Leach Scully

**Minute 46: Acceptance of Reports and Accounts**

The annual report of Meeting for Sufferings and its committees for the year ended 31 December 2006 (printed in *Quaker work 2006* pages 7-254 & 263-277) and the Trustees' annual report and accounts 2006 are now accepted.

The report of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, Quaker Stewardship Committee and other Yearly Meeting committees (pages 254-263) and the Tabular Statement for the year 2006 are also accepted.

**Minute 47: Thanks**

We record our thanks to all the people who have worked to enable this yearly meeting to take place.

**Minute 48: Receipt of Under 19 Programme minutes**

We have received minutes from the groups of the Under 19 Programme of this yearly meeting as follows:

**Wiggly Worms, 0-4 year olds**

Five Wiggly worms have been enjoying each others company for the past three days. We have spent our time at BYM playing together both in our room and on the balcony. Through play we have learnt to share and have got to know each other really well.

We have been really busy painting and sticking wolly worms onto a big poster. We revisited RECAST by playing with gloope which fascinated toddlers and Core Team alike.

We developed favourites like playdough and the house, which provided plenty of tea for our Core Team which were soon "all gone" only to be replenished.

We also had quiet times with lots of stories and our own Meeting for Worship.

A particular highlight was our trip to Coram Fields where we enjoyed the slides and swings all set in a large sand area, big enough to be called "a beach".

Having sung 'ba ba black sheep and ba ba pink sheep', it was exciting to see two large black sheep but no pink ones. We were grateful to have the extra volunteers so we could all do what we wanted safely.

We haven't been part of the Over 19s Programme but we have been very involved with the other two 5-11 groups visiting them three times for all age Meeting for Worship, singing and games.

The Core Team have been impressed that the children have been so relaxed and pleasant, on so little sleep.

We've enjoyed watching them grow in confidence.

**Bright Sparks, 5-7 year olds**

We drew ourselves and met each other.

We remembered and talked about how to stay safe.

We liked going in the garden and finding the flowers. Then we made our own gardens.

We played lots of games like DDG, or Duck-Duck-Goose and had fun with Lego.

John came to talk about Quakers in Bolivia and Kenya.

We made peppermint balls and chocolate crispies, and shared them with the Wiggly Worms and the Light Fantastic after Meeting.

Nessa sang songs with us and the Wiggly Worms.

We walked to Coram's Fields and had fun in the playground.

We talked about the things that make us the same and make us different. At the end we always had a quiet circle, and then played pass-the-squeeze.

### **The Light Fantastic, 7-11 year olds**

On our first day here we started making our lighthouse while also getting to know each other. Now we know each other better we are not shy and we feel like a team.

We started by talking about laws. Why they are set and if we should obey them. We tried making our own laws for the weekend (we called them "boundaries") and they were much easier to keep.

We thought we knew about slavery but the story Chris Nickolay told us made us feel sad, shocked and surprised. He didn't just tell the story, he acted it out as well. It made it feel real and very scary.

After that we nominated (not voted) people for jobs. It was quite difficult to choose people and took a long time. No one got jobs they didn't want but everyone who wanted a job got one.

Some people were nominated for our all age Meeting for Worship on Sunday. We enjoyed the activities and felt drawn to God in Meeting. It was our meeting and we felt proud because we had made it happen. We like the food that the Bright Sparks brought.

On Sunday afternoon we went to Coram Fields adventure playground. We played trust games and football. We had fun but the dust got in our eyes and throat.

This morning Beth Allen came to talk about worms and how they can help in our garden. We saw baby worms in an eggshell. She told us that if our life got bad we could turn the dark into light and spring up again.

### **Ealing Broadway Stars, 11-14 year olds**

The Ealing Broadway Stars (11-14s group) spent the weekend looking at the issues of equality, inclusion and civil liberties, and how it affects us and others.

Throughout the weekend we got to know each other, tried to be as inclusive as possible, and had a lot of fun. We did this through a range of things such as: talks and activities, games, tube journeys, and splitting into smaller groups to discuss issues and get to know one another. All age worship and epilogues helped as well.

We had a talk by Andrew Clark about slavery which put into perspective how equality can be, and still is, neglected by some people. It was an incredibly thought provoking session. All age worship with Ealing Friends gave us an opportunity to think about and reflect on what equality means to us and others. It helped us to feel included with a different group of people.

We joined the Over 19s for themed groups in Friends House. Although the sessions were interesting and informative, some of the titles could have better explained what the sessions were actually about. We also felt in some sessions that people went quite off topic resulting in some people feeling excluded.

We had an epilogue each evening which were calming and provided space for reflection. They were held inside and outside and we used meditation, listening to music and listening to leadings.

During our time at Ealing Meeting House we did a range of fun activities such as: a birthday party; a trash fashion show using designers and models; and, of course, bedtime stories, especially those read by the young people themselves.

All round we've had a brilliant weekend. We will all be taking away a wonderful experience, and a new understanding of equality and inclusion.

### **The Sausage Factory, 14-18 year olds**

What? Under 19s in main session? Although this may seem unusual, we felt privileged for the opportunity to participate and offer minutes and ministry in main session. Everyone in our group commented on this with many finding it a valuable experience, especially when seeing the decision making process in action on a large scale. This was reflected in our own business meeting, where as we had a smaller group, we were able to see the progression to a decision more clearly.

We thank Barbara Forbes and Caroline Westgate for our session on civil liberties, it was eye opening and useful as it helped us understand the basics before it was developed further in main session. Many participants felt inspired to research further into this issue and expressed the desire to see action.

We found Friends House to have a purposeful and accepting atmosphere and would have loved to have share more conversations with over 20s; we're not that scary really!

The Swarthmore lecture was, as always, thought provoking and we found the singing particularly moving. It was interesting to have an insight into someone else's spiritual life.

We have enjoyed the opportunity to listen to many stories, ranging from Winnie the Pooh, told by the transitional group at all age epilogue, to Paddington Bear at bed time. Our favourite one had to be the one told by the awe inspiring Simon Haywood, a fantastic story which included a rendition of the entire bible with a few tweaks in just 10 minutes. We highly recommend him for the role of "Official Quaker Storyteller"

The most exciting development at Muswell was definitely the introduction of showers and we thank both local Friends and the wardens for permitting us to stay at the beautiful meeting house. The building has provided us with a stable base in which friendships were formed and strengthened.

We were visited by several bloggers of varying nationalities. We thought that this was a great idea and we are glad to see that Quakers are finally becoming technologically savvy. Conversing with the bloggers themselves was very interesting, as they practiced Quakerism in a difference way, for example some attend programmed meetings.

The trip to Camden was really enjoyable, it was a welcome break from the weightiness of main session.

We are looking forward to coming back next year and seeing the decisions taken this time carried through. We hope that the over 20s at BYM valued our contribution as much as we valued giving them.

We are grateful to these groups for their preparation and presentation of these minutes.

**Minute 49: Receipt of minute from the Transitional Group**

We have received a minute from our 19 – 25 year old transitional group as follows:

This Yearly Meeting, the Transitional Group met again after the success of last year. 7 Friends between the ages of 19 and 25 met on Friday evening at Hampstead Meeting House.

We have found this Yearly Meeting a welcoming and hospitable environment to come into. This weekend has been an inspiring break from our regular lives and studies.

As a group our timetable was flexible to help facilitate our transition into the Yearly Meeting structures. This allowed us to respond to the feeling of the group; resulting in us attending more sessions than anticipated. The interesting discussions of the afternoon sessions were engaging and provocative, yet we came away feeling slightly dispirited. We found many of the worship sharing contributions powerful, but upholding the clerks during minute writing was a challenge, which led us to question how Yearly Meeting can further test its calling to ministry.

An important role of the Transitional Group this weekend has been to extend the Yearly Meeting experience beyond that of main session. This gave opportunity for discussion led from personal reflection, worship and social time together as a community. We appreciated the invitation to lead a cross age epilogue, and enjoyed sharing the philosophy of Winne the Pooh with the wider community. This helped us feel further included at Yearly Meeting. We also visited the sausage factory where we ate sausages with the 14-18s.

Many of us thought we wouldn't have come to Yearly Meeting but the Transitional group offered a familiar framework that gave us confidence to embark on a new part of our spiritual journey. We believe that the Transitional Group should be a permanent fixture of Yearly Meeting. It acts as a map to help prevent young people feeling lost from the society, and this weekend has helped us to see Yearly Meeting from a new perspective.

We leave Yearly Meeting grateful for the support we have received enabling us to make our group happen. We hope that Yearly Meeting will provide further support to allow the Transitional Group to become an integral part of Britain Yearly Meeting's future.

**Minute 50: Yearly Meeting 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:

To all Friends everywhere,

Loving greetings from Britain Yearly Meeting 2007.

After two years of looking at our structures, we have accepted the changes proposed in 2005 and inserted them into the text of *Quaker faith and practice*. We have had time to reflect on Quaker ways of working. We have been encouraged to be grounded and rooted in the springs of God's love.

"Don't talk while other people are talking – listen!" These words from the 7s to 11s group are important to us all. Let us listen faithfully to each other and to God.

There may seem to be a paradox between taking action and reflecting deeply on that action. The answer may lie in the words of Frances Dagnell shortly before her death, "We always think we know best and we don't... Sit down, shut up and listen to God".

Before we act it is important to look within and examine our motivation. Initially, we may be prompted by anger, guilt or fear – we need help to transform these into love. The road of transformation is not easy; worship and discipleship will show us the way. Only then will we become truly open to the guidance of the Spirit and our work will become love in action.

But worshipping together is not enough. We also have to work together and with others to make a better world. In working together we find a greater unity, strength of purpose and the courage to make sacrifices when necessary.

We sense a great longing for a clear call to united action by our Yearly Meeting.

A number of profound themes were explored in the sessions, including: 21st century forms of slavery; the legacies of the Transatlantic slave trade in our own communities; the increasing erosion of civil liberties; the unjust treatment of those on the edge of society. The current exercise of Britain Yearly Meeting on these subjects is only just beginning.

Let us not be overwhelmed. Through quiet, listening prayer we can discover what is required of us.

The Spirit may be both comforting and terrifying – we may find ourselves in what was described as an "unnerving, compelling and unsought place". Can we take a risk and make ourselves vulnerable so that we truly engage with other people, both young and old, on the deepest level? When we get things wrong and make a mess, time and love will be able to heal and recreate.

For each of us our part in transforming the world will be different, but as long as we hold true to the Spirit in our everyday lives then we are Quakers in action. We cannot all be a Woolman or a Wilberforce but we can create ripples which spread from our small circles to the wider world.

*Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting*  
MARTIN WARD, *Clerk*

**Minute 51: Concluding Minute**

There being no further business for the Yearly Meeting, we separate, hoping to meet again in London from 23 – 26 May 2008.

MARTIN WARD, *Clerk*