

# **Book of Discipline Revision Committee Report to Meeting for Sufferings**

**December 2025**

## **Contents**

Paper circulated to Meeting for Sufferings .....	1
Spoken Introduction to Meeting for Sufferings .....	5
Minute of Meeting for Sufferings .....	10

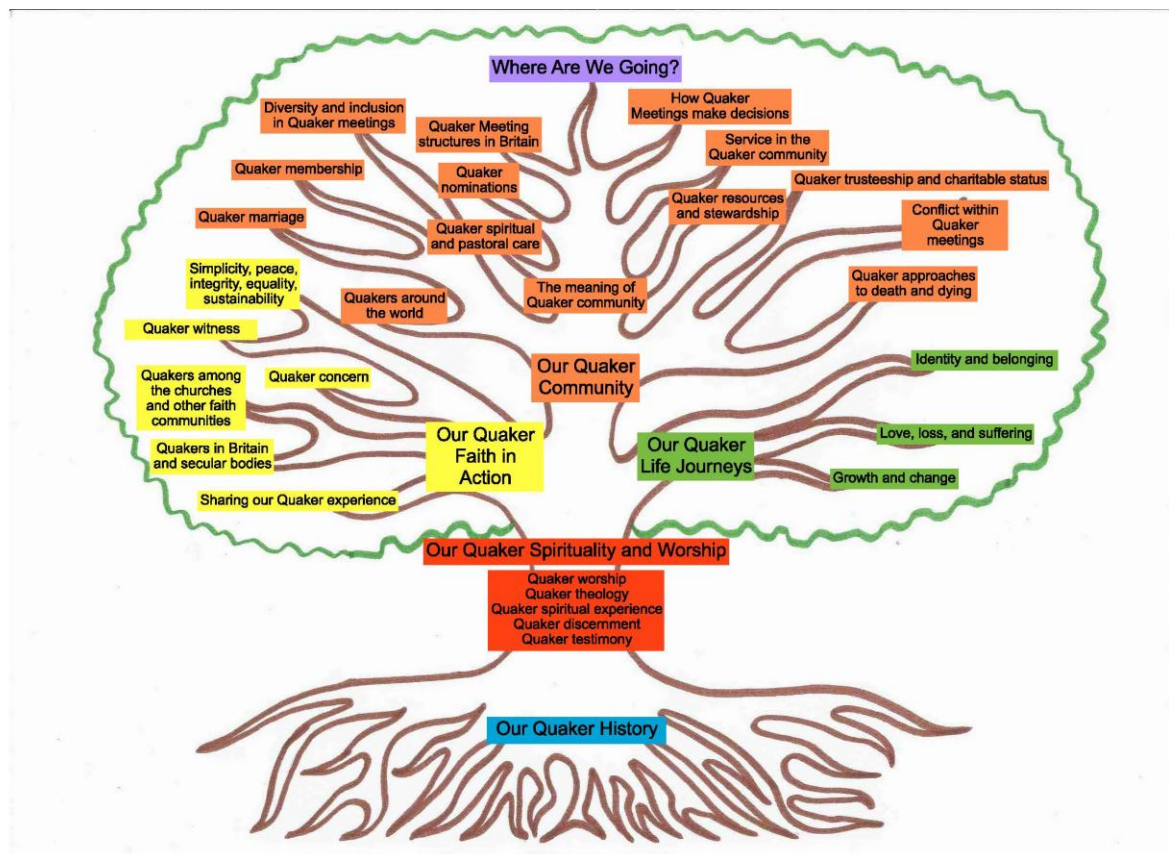
## **Paper circulated to Meeting for Sufferings Sixth report to Meeting for Sufferings**

### **Introduction**

1. This is the sixth annual progress report from the Book of Discipline Revision Committee to Meeting for Sufferings. It is also our last report to you, as future reports will be directly to Yearly Meeting in place of Meeting for Sufferings. We are very grateful to Meeting for Sufferings for all its support to us during our work over the past six years.

### **Our work so far**

2. BDRC is tasked to bring to Yearly Meeting draft text for adoption as BYM's book of discipline, together with proposals for its publication. We are a diverse committee of 24 members now (listed at the end of this report). Since last year's report, two of our members have been released: one following her appointment to a BYM staff role (though we will continue to enjoy her help through that role), and one for health reasons. Two other members have temporarily stepped back from BDRC work. To date we have held 24 meetings of the full committee in person or online, as well as working individually and in small groups.
3. Earlier this year we finished the initial drafting of all the 30 or so discrete major topics to be included as core material in the new book of discipline. We have provisionally structured them in accordance with our vision below of a tree – with spiritual roots nourishing a strong trunk of faith and experience from which grow branches of living communities that can worship, witness and work together. (The detail and layout of this tree structure might change as we complete the editing of the whole book.)



4. During the latter part of 2025 we have been reviewing and refining this overall text to identify gaps, duplication, inconsistencies in content and style, and scope for shortening. Following a recruitment process, an external reader – Craig Barnett (Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting) - was appointed in September under contract for a time-limited period to help us in taking this work forward.

### Our next steps

5. Early in 2026, resulting from that work, we anticipate that the Committee will agree a complete first draft of the new book. We will then hand this over to the BYM Publications Team staff (with whom we have been liaising closely) for copy editing and typesetting, ready for publication around the end of 2026. We have, after an extended period of discernment, given the book the working title “Our Quaker Way”, with the sub-title “the spiritual discipline of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain”.
6. This timescale should allow for thorough reading and discussion in preparation for Yearly Meeting in July 2027. We will be asking Friends to “read, reflect and respond”. We are working with the Agenda Planning Committee for YM, Woodbrooke and BYM staff on how this will be supported, which might entail providing various resources, study guides, webinars etc. We expect to share further details of this later in 2026. The text itself should be accompanied by explanatory material on why the book is as it is, the processes for familiarisation and eventual decision, and proposed

arrangements for the separate preparation and authorisation of supplementary material. We envisage that the complete first draft might initially be made available in versions that can be accessed by computer or mobile device, on paper, and (for some parts) to be listened to. Work is in hand on the details of how to achieve this at reasonable cost. We do not expect the complete first draft to be perfect, but we hope it will be good enough to offer to the yearly meeting for your help in improving it.

7. We intend to present:

- a. to YM in July 2027 the complete first draft text of the new Book of Discipline for the start of the process of corporate discernment, engaging Friends with the text and our approach to the book, resulting in clear guidance to BDRC on the next steps; and
- b. (after a period of further revision and engagement in the light of feedback from YM in 2027), to a YM in 2030 a complete final text for adoption.

8. We would like YM in 2027 to give BDRC clear guidance on

- the “voice of the book” (the tone and style of the narrative and explanatory text written by the Committee, alongside anthology quotations from other writers);
- its accessibility;
- whether we have correctly identified the “core” content (the spiritual basis of what we do and why) that must be in the book, and the detail to be published separately as “supplementary material” which can be updated when necessary;
- any gaps needing to be filled or unnecessary material to be removed.

We would then hope to work with Agenda Planning Committee and others on managing the further revision and engagement process after YM in 2027, leading up to preparation of revised text for preparatory consideration by Friends throughout Britain, and eventual presentation of a complete final text and design to a YM in 2030 for adoption and publication. At this point we expect the final version to be available as a website or through other media platforms, as a printed book, as a downloadable pdf or ebook, and as an audio version.

## How can Friends get involved?

9. As always you can:

- pray for and uphold the Committee
- look at our webpage at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/quaker-faith-and-practice/revising-quaker-faith-practice>
- contribute to our online creative project “Open to New Light”  
<https://padlet.com/bdrc/OpenToNewLight>
- still share ideas for the new book, including telling us of inspirational and helpful pieces of writing. These can be offered using an online form (<https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qfp-idea/>) or by contacting the Committee Secretary by email ([gfp@quaker.org.uk](mailto:gfp@quaker.org.uk)) or writing to Friends House
- engage with our social media accounts via Revising Quaker faith & practice pages on
  - facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/revisingqfp/>
  - instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/revisingqfp>

## Conclusion

10. We remain hugely grateful to our Secretary and other BYM staff and external consultants for all their work and support for us. We ask Meeting for Sufferings and Friends generally to continue to uphold us.

Rosie Carnall and Catherine Brewer (Co-Clerks), Michael Phipps (Assistant Clerk)  
Michael S Booth: Committee Secretary

Other members of the Committee during 2025: Tas Cooper, Ben Pink Dandelion, Joycelin Dawes, Lucy Faulkner-Gawlinski, Rhiannon Grant [released April 2025], Jessica Hubbard-Bailey, Catherine James, Pearl Johns, Jennifer Kavanagh, Sally Kikaya, Stevie Krayner, Michael Long [released October 2025], Matt Moore, Rachel Muers, Anya Nanning Ramamurthy, Finola O'Sullivan, Alastair Reid, Antonia Swinson, Judith Thompson, Nuala Watt, Marcie White, Andrew Williams, Mary Woodward.

## Spoken Introduction to Meeting for Sufferings

Co-clerks Rosie Carnall and Catherine Brewer introduced the written paper with a spoken introduction that included some slides:

*Rosie:*

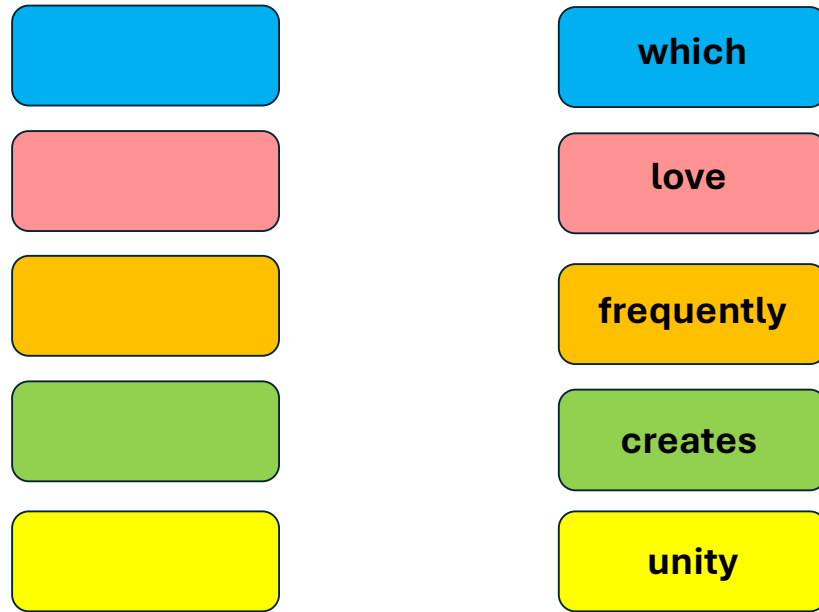
When we came to MfS last year to report to you, there was a children's programme running alongside of the adult sessions. So having been with you in the morning, in the afternoon I went to spend time with them. It's important for us that we engage with people from all parts of our community in our work.

We played some thinking games and talked about what they might expect to find in the new book; about what stories and ideas would be important for Quakers to find in there. One of the games we played is a word choice game. The standard version is called BROGY – blue, red, orange, green, yellow - and it's been created to help children who find it hard learning about how to write sentences. It's basically loads of cards – blue, red, orange, green and yellow ones - with words written on. You play the game by choosing a card of each of the colours and magically it makes a sentence. We were playing with a homemade version, in which all the words were relevant to Quaker faith and practice.

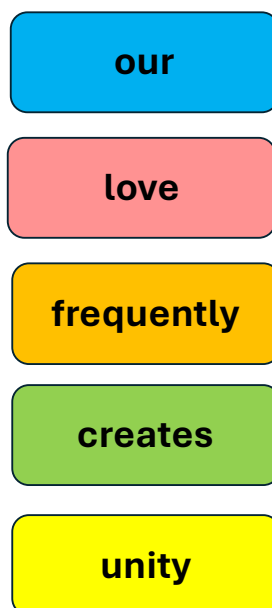
The children took turns picking the different coloured cards to create these random 'Quaker' sentences. Sentences like 'my peace often celebrates reality' or 'a community always is faith'. And then we spent a bit of time talking, about the sentences, the ideas in them and what it's like writing a book.



One of the sentences that had been created was 'which love frequently creates unity'. While we were chatting, one of the children, who I think was about 6 or 7, was still looking at the game, and he quietly reached out and took out the 'which' at the start of this sentence and replaced it with the word 'our'.



Our love frequently creates unity.



This felt like a quiet but profound act of ministry. And I carried the sense of it away with me, in the way that we do when ministry speaks to us, deep in our heart. So that months later, when we came to tussle with the right title for the section of the book about what we learn and how we act as Quakers in the life experiences that are given to us, that 'our' came through me to the committee – Our Quaker Life Journeys – and then we found that in fact, it's framed the book as a whole.

In the committee's discernment to find a working title to share with you, we became clear that this book is a description of Our Quaker Way. That this title distinguishes our understanding of there being other Quaker ways and that we are a community of

seekers and fellow travellers, with a shared understanding of a spiritual discipline that we can describe as Our Quaker Way.

We offer you the working title, and the description of the structure, in the same way that we will be offering you the draft text, this time next year. These are living drafts. We have listened and thought and discerned together as a committee. We are not saying that we've got it right; we're offering in love what we hope will be acceptable for you to work with us on. We will need you to read, reflect and respond to us, for us to be able together to find the way forward to our new book.

Link to Tree structure <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/working-title-and-structure-december-2025> (See page 2 for the diagram)

*Catherine:*

We gave you a glimpse of the structure last year, and we've shared it with you now so that you can take it away and reflect on it. It is still a work in progress: things are changing as we work on editing our draft content. Not every heading on the twigs here will reflect a chapter in the draft we share next year. But it shows you the topics that we are covering and our current thinking about how they are grouped together.

We came up with the image of the tree when we were looking for a non-linear way to visualise how the different parts of the book fit together. You can see the link between our working title for the book as a whole, and our titles for the main parts of the book. We have the roots of our history, the trunk which is our experience of the spirit: Our Quaker Spirituality and Worship, and then the branches growing from that are how our experience and understanding are expressed in Our Quaker Community, Our Quaker Faith in Action and Our Quaker Life Journeys. And at the top, because our faith and practice, like a tree, is always growing: where are we going?

We have content drafted for all of the topics shown on the tree, though Membership is a very rough draft. We know that there are some significant conversations happening in the YM about this, and it's not yet clear what the book of discipline will need to say. For this reason there may be a placeholder for this chapter rather than detailed content when we issue the draft.

The eagle eyed among you may have spotted that Advices and queries are not shown as a heading on the tree. But fear not: they will exist! Advices and queries are not a separate topic, but a distillation of the book as a whole. This structure, or at least the main branches, also reflect the way we are thinking about the content of Advices and queries. As with the rest of the book, we have been trying out writing new content rather than simply editing the current text. Last year we suggested that you try writing A&Qs with your meeting, to get a sense of what it might be like to approach this task. Finding the voice for A&Q in the new book is a continuing part of our work.

Alongside the work on Advices and Queries, another significant part of our current activity is working with our external reader to edit the rest of the material into a cohesive whole. Our draft topics were written by different groups over an extended

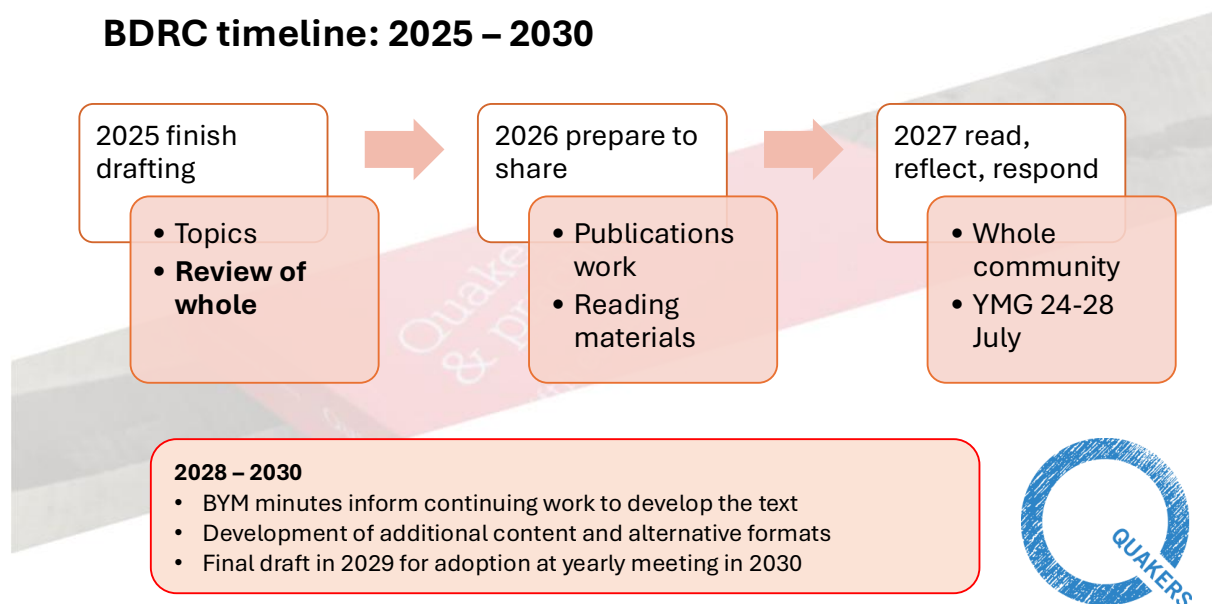
period, and over that time we have been developing and refining our understanding of what the voice of the book should be. As a result, there is a lot of work to remove duplication and make sure the voice is consistent throughout. We are expecting to receive a fully edited draft at our next meeting in February. At that meeting we will agree on any further edits that are needed before passing the text to the publications team to prepare for sharing with you at the end of the year.

Another part of our current work is thinking about what you will need to accompany that first draft, to help you read, reflect and respond to it. We are very clear that this will be a first draft, and not the finished product. At Yearly Meeting in July 2027 we will not be asking the Yearly Meeting to unite with the whole draft as it stands - though it would be helpful to know where we have got it right or 'good enough'. We will be asking for your input to help us shape it further where it needs to be changed, before bringing it back in 2030. We are working with BYM staff and Woodbrooke to prepare materials to help with the read, reflect and respond process.

*Rosie:*

Exciting times. For us, and hopefully for you too. We hope you are looking forward to receiving the draft text and really want you to engage with reading it, reflecting on what you find and sharing your responses. Sharing with each other and sharing with us too.

### BDRC timeline: 2025 – 2030



As Catherine said, Our Quaker Way is going to be available for you by the end of 2026. It will be published as part of Yearly Meeting Documents in Advance. That is, not as a fully designed and finished product but as a *draft* – ready to be explored and developed by us as a whole community. It's exciting, but we're understandably nervous.

We're asking you to put some time aside ready to read, reflect and respond. We know that Friends will need to do this in different ways. Are you the kind of person



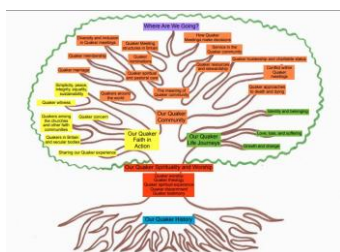
who will read the whole thing, cover to cover within a week of it being available online? Or will you want to order a print copy and dip into different parts of it and write notes in the margins? Perhaps you already know that it's very unlikely you'll read the whole thing, but you're really interested to see how the new theology section turned out.

We'll be developing some reading materials to go alongside the draft publication – pathways of reading if you can't read it all, questions for reflection and session plans for discussion groups. We're working with Woodbrooke to develop and deliver these – watch this space for more information.

We're also working on our plan for receiving responses. We want to understand what's working in the new book and where we could do better. And we want this to be a manageable and constructive process that will help us to take forward our work to 2030. We'll be working with the new Agenda Planning Committee, so that we can be sure that your responses will help us to prepare for the July 2027 Yearly Meeting sessions. That's when we'll have time to reflect and respond together and to discern what we need to do next.

So, January – July 2027. Make space in your diary. You'll need time to read. And make space in your meeting's calendar of events and your Area Meeting agenda. We would really appreciate it if you can report back to your meeting with a 'save the date' message. We know that six months isn't very long for this process, so we're hoping that giving you advance notice will help to make it manageable.

## Exploring the new book – where do you see new growth?



- Share the tree diagram with Friends in your meeting (there is a version with an 'alt text' description on the website here: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/workingtitle-and-structure-december-2025>)
- Where do you see new growth in the structure and content of the book?
- Where do you find new growth in your lived experience of our Quaker way?
- Practice listening to one another through 'new growth' discussions
  - Use the section headings as themes for a series of 'new growth' discussions:
    - Our Quaker spirituality and worship
    - Our Quaker community
    - Our Quaker faith in action
    - Our Quaker life journeys
  - Practice expressing your ideas about what our Quaker way is like now, what's at the core of it for you and practice listening to one another.

As a warm-up, to follow on from trying out writing Advices & Queries, why not share the tree structure with Friends back home? Get to know it a bit and consider how it's different from our current book of discipline. We think it could be fruitful to explore where you see new growth – in the structure of the book, but also in your lived experience of our Quaker way. Each of the headings could provide a theme for a 'new growth' discussion – and an opportunity to practice expressing your ideas about

what our Quaker way is like now, what's at the core of it for you and most importantly to practice listening to each other.

For this process of receiving and adopting our new book of discipline, we don't all have to agree about everything, but we do need to be ready to listen to each other with open minds and open hearts. It is Our Quaker Way – not mine or yours, but ours. We need to find the way forward in love.

Because, remember, our love frequently creates unity.

## **Minute of Meeting for Sufferings**

### **MfS/25/12/13      Book of Discipline Revision Committee**

We receive a report from the Book of Discipline Revision Committee (BDRC) on its activity for the past year, and the clerks of the committee have spoken to it.

We have heard how the developing book of discipline, now with the working title of *Our Quaker Way: the spiritual discipline of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*, has been shaped by wide community engagement, including a moment of ministry from a child that helped inspire its framing. They have outlined the evolving structure of the book – imagined as a tree with roots, trunk and branches – and explain the ongoing work of drafting, editing and preparing supporting materials for Friends to read, reflect and respond to the first draft in 2027. We are invited to prepare for this communal discernment process, emphasising open-hearted listening, shared responsibility, and the insight that “our love frequently creates unity.”

We are excited to hear about the progress the committee has made with this work. We look forward to seeing a full draft of the new book next year. When Meeting for Sufferings is laid down BDRC will report directly to Yearly Meeting. That will allow every Friend to share explicitly in the responsibility and the joy of supporting this work.