



Book of Discipline Revision Committee: spoken update from clerks to Britain Yearly Meeting, May 2026

Hello Friends. I'm Rosie Carnall, one of the co-clerks of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee and I'm with Catherine Brewer, the other co-clerk. We're here to update you on our work, which will soon involve all of you.



[Image: Skippy, a black puppy with folded ears sits on some grass. Photo by Ben Pink Dandelion.]

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Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) | Registered charity number 1127633

But I wanted to start by introducing Skippy. He's our newest associate – occasionally seen or heard on zoom calls. A cute puppy pic is a good to get attention, but also, he represents all the life changes we've known in the seven years we've been working together. Over that time, we've had births and bereavements, a marriage, exams, degrees, job changes, health challenges, a pandemic, and most recently, the arrival of a new puppy.

Alongside all of this *life*, we came up with a plan and drafted a new book for you. A more detailed report of our process can be found in our annual reports to Meeting for Sufferings. But more-or-less, we made a list of 'things we need to find in our book of discipline' and then set about writing them. We've generally drafted topics in small groups and then agreed them as a whole committee. Our 'Voice of the Book' writing style developed as we went along. At the end of the process, we worked with a paid editor who helped us to bring all these parts together.

We've given it a working title of *Our Quaker Way: the book of spiritual discipline of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers in Britain)*. We felt we needed to offer a working title at this point to be clear that, as requested, this is a completely new book, not a 'dots and commas' revised version of the current one. Our discernment to reach unity on a new title took quite some time. We hope it conveys the approach we've taken throughout the draft text, of explaining as straight-forwardly as possible the experience, faith and practice of our religious society. We recently held our 25th meeting, during which it happened to be me who read the minute to the meeting which said, "We accept this text..." It was a quite a moment. Followed by an intense period of making the final *final* changes and then at the end of March this year, one day ahead of schedule, we handed the first draft of a new book of discipline to the BYM publications team.

Our work continues... yours is soon to begin.

While the text is prepared for sharing with you, we are working with colleagues from Woodbrooke to complete a set of resources that will support you to read, reflect and respond to the first draft.

We're going to take you through what we're asking of you in each stage of this process.

1. Read

The first part of the programme is our invitation for you to read *Our Quaker Way*. When it comes to you from the publications team, this version will be formatted as a yearly meeting 'document in advance'. So, it won't look exactly like we're expecting the final version to look. Remember, it is a draft, and we expect you will suggest changes and developments. A new title may emerge. In terms of format and publication, this version won't have everything that we expect for the finished book. The final version will have additional visual content. The website is likely to have more features to help you explore the content. We expect the final version to be produced as an audio book, as well as in print and digital formats, but in the first instance only selected parts of the draft will be available in audio

format. In the publication of the draft, we are trying to balance accessibility with good use of resources.

If everything goes according to plan, we will be presenting this first draft to yearly meeting in session on the 21st of November this year. It won't be available with papers online in advance of this date, because this is our book for our community and we would like to share it with you first, before making it available more widely. After that date it will be possible to read it online or to order printed copies. Details are yet to be finalised, but we anticipate there being a few print copies sent to each meeting, with further copies available to purchase at cost.

We know that not everyone will read the whole thing cover-to-cover, but we hope at least some of you will. We will provide resources that support reading via guided pathways to help you find your way through. Or it might be that you want to dip in, to see where the pages fall open and what catches your attention.

We would be glad of you reading however much of the draft as you can. Friends, we need to know what you think of where we've got to.

2. Reflect

We know that receiving the draft of the new book will be part of an ongoing process of letting go of our current book and we recognise that this, like any process of change, holds challenges. We know this experientially from our work as a committee.

Our book is not our faith or our community, but because it represents our faith community it challenges us to think about what being part of our Quaker community means to us. We know that some Friends are looking forward to something new, while for others the change is more unsettling. Within the committee, we too have experienced a variety of emotions at the prospect of changing different aspects of the book and have found that we must hold our differences tenderly. As a committee, we've had more time to live with the new book that has emerged, and to grow in confidence in letting go of the old one. In sharing the draft with you, we are also inviting you to share this journey...

When you have read it, or parts of it, we invite you to reflect on what you find. We hope that this will be a community process and that you will reflect together. This might be in a reading group in your meeting or area meeting or as part of a course facilitated by Woodbrooke. You might want to invite a member of the committee to visit. If we can, we'd be glad to come to area meetings or regional groupings.

We hope you will find this process of reflecting together enriching and enlivening. Yearly meeting – you – requested that “The revision should draw on the richness of theological thought in our yearly meeting, now and historically, seeing diversity as fundamental to our community, not as a flaw.” We hope that reflecting on whether we have managed to do that will encourage you to get to know each other in the things that are eternal.

We were asked to be, 'Prayerful, joyful, creative and bold' in approaching our work. We hope you will also practice this discipline. As a committee we have a sense of the draft book being our ministry, we hope you will receive it in this way.

3. Respond

And finally, we will want you to respond to us, to let us know what you think.

We'll be asking you to respond to some key questions and there will be resources available to support you to do this. Questions such as 'Do you feel your Quaker experience is reflected in the book? Is there any Quaker experience you think isn't reflected?'

There will be a range of ways to respond. We will welcome minutes from your local or area meeting as well as more creative responses. Ideally, we would like you to focus on the big picture of your experience of reading the draft text and your reflections on what development is necessary for it to become our next book of discipline.

The whole of the read, reflect and respond process will help to prepare for Yearly Meeting in July 2027 which will be devoted to considering the draft book. You're going to hear a bit more information about that in a moment. But for our part, we hope that Yearly Meeting will be led by the Spirit to give, in its minutes, clear and broad guidance on: whether the draft book is generally on the right lines, and what further work may be needed to add extra material or remove or rewrite existing material. It's this guidance that will enable us to do the necessary work to produce a final text in 2029 for you to read again. This would be ready for a Yearly Meeting in 2030 which could approve the new book for publication in a variety of formats.



[Image: a table laid with a shared meal, with many different dishes and eight people sitting around. Photo by Fauxels on Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/group-of-people-eating-together-3184195/>]

We close by sharing again this picture of a shared meal. This is an important image for us in how we see the new book. When you join a shared meal, you expect a variety of dishes to cater for everyone present, and you don't need to be able to eat everything on the table in order to have a satisfying meal.

We hope you will be satisfied by the draft of *Our Quaker way*, and that you will find in it the sustenance you need.

Following this report, the Yearly Meeting minuted:

At a meeting of

Britain Yearly Meeting

Held on 1-4 May 2026

at Friends House, London; Northampton and online.

Minute 30: Book of Discipline revision update

We have heard a reflection from the Book of Discipline Revision Committee about their work to date. We note that a complete first draft is expected to be published at the end of 2026. We are encouraged to read, reflect and respond to this draft as preparation for consideration at the residential Yearly Meeting session planned for 24-28 July 2027 at the University of Hull.

Clerk

Fred Langridge