

# Junior Yearly Meeting 2026

## Who, where, when, what?

Junior Yearly Meeting 2026 took place over the Easter weekend from 3-7 April, with an additional preparation day on Thu 2 April for the organising team. The venue was the Pioneer Centre in Shropshire; the nearest train station was Kidderminster.

49 young people (including the Arrangements Committee) attended JYM 2026. 41 were nominated by their Area Meetings; 26 Area Meetings nominated representatives. Two participants booked an open place – both had attended JYM before. The adult team comprised three staff members and six adult volunteers, all of whom had previously volunteered at JYM in either 2024 or 2025. On Saturday and Sunday a member of the Comms team also joined the gathering to photograph the event.

The theme of Junior Yearly Meeting, as discerned by the Arrangements Committee, was: *In a divided world, are we living our values to foster acceptance and belonging?*

The programme included worship to start and close each day, base groups, theme sessions, social activities, free time, and a Meeting for Worship for Business where the community discerned a minute in response to their theme. Both the JYM minute and Epistle were shared at Yearly Meeting in May 2026.

JYM 2026 welcomed multiple visitors. Paul Ingram, Emily Provance and Lorna McNeill facilitated theme sessions; Sasha Lawson-Frost held a 'Quaker 101' session on ministry; Daniel Longley was hired to run a ceilidh for evening entertainment; and Paul Parker (Recording Clerk of Quakers in Britain), Rick Stuart-Sheppard (on behalf of Quaker Life Central Committee) and Simon Hardie (Team Leader – Youth Children and Families) visited throughout the event.

JYM had exclusive use of seven rooms at the Pioneer Centre, including a main room and a large lounge for the evening social space. This allowed for a consistent quiet room and team room for staff, volunteers and Arrangements Committee.

## Arrangements Committee and adult volunteers

JYM is planned and facilitated by an Arrangements Committee of six young people, discerned by a nominations committee of their peers and appointed by the whole of JYM. The 2026 Arrangements Committee had three in-person planning weekends (one fewer than in previous years) plus the Facilitation and Leadership course, along with monthly Zoom calls, Zoom meetings with their adult volunteer pair, and preparation day onsite with the whole JYM team.

The adult volunteer team attended one in-person planning weekend (although some were prevented due to illness), online Zoom meetings and the preparation day. One adult volunteer also attended the December planning weekend in her role as overall Arrangements Committee support.

## Overall feedback from participants, parents/carers, Arrangements Committee and adult volunteers

Feedback from all groups was extremely positive, with a handful of areas highlighted for improvement. Some participants and parents/carers spoke positively of changes from last year, such as moving the date to Easter (instead of May) and the extra day. All volunteers who completed feedback forms said they would volunteer again.

### Sense of community, time with other young Quakers, making friends

A major theme of feedback from all groups was the feeling of a gathered community. **Participants** enjoyed meeting other young Quakers and developing new and existing friendships:

*“Great energy, positive, accepting and loving environment”*

*“Very good experience where I got the chance to meet so many amazing Quakers and rekindle my friendships with others.”*

*“It was an amazing experience, in which so many relevant themes were explored in safe, supportive and collaborative environments. I loved meeting so many kind souls and having this time to enjoy this community.”*

**Adult volunteers** also observed the sense of community felt by participants:

*“JYM seems to have gone really well this year, and I'm really happy with how the community seems to have bonded.”*

This feeling was shared with **parents/carers**, who were not present during the event:

*“It is an opportunity for them to grow as a person, surrounded by supportive and relatable adults. They feel safe, heard, included and nurtured as well as challenged in a positive way.”*

### Safe space – accepting and inclusive

**Participants** highlighted the inclusive nature of the event as key to the feeling of community they had experienced. The words *belonging* and *acceptance*, part of the theme of the event, were used frequently in feedback: many participants felt that the theme was not just a discussion question but reflected the overall environment created.

*“It was my first one so I can't draw comparisons but I got the impression that it is a really safe space where people can feel accepted as themselves which can be hard to find elsewhere”*

*“I really enjoyed JYM it was welcoming and open. We weren't made to feel judged when changing my opinion or asking a question.”*

*"Acceptance, the fact that EVERYONE knew that some people need to fidget or can't sit for over half an hour. This knowledge of difference instead of attempt to control creates an inspiring community for all to be a part of."*

**Adult volunteers** felt proud of the work they and the whole team had put in to support young people – and also felt supported themselves:

*"I have been really impressed at how well we've been able to support YP's participation, taking into account various needs and wants. The team has done really well making this event inclusive."*

*"Really positive and warm :) This year's JYM has felt like an incredible community has formed... I have felt very supported and cared (for) and the ethos of community, care and inclusivity has shown clearly"*

**Parents/carers** mentioned specific areas that made JYM feel inclusive to participants, including an ethos of trans inclusion and flexibility for young people with health conditions/disabilities:

[In response to what went well at JYM]: *"The careful use of correct pronouns and allowing the young people to identify as they wish."*

*"She liked... the ability to have a sleep in the afternoon when she needed to."*

However, one **Arrangements Committee** member mentioned that adults could continue to work on their use of pronouns:

*"Be careful with pronouns, don't be patronising, I love y'all loads <3"*

## **Time away from 'normal' life**

**Participants** appreciated having a space away from everyday stresses:

*"I feel a sense of release and peace from this event and think that it was really good for me to come."*

*"I really enjoyed this year's JYM as it gave me a break from life to reflect and feel part of the community of young Quakers."*

*"I loved it so so much it felt like a breath after being underwater for years. I made so many lovely friends and laughed often."*

One **parent/carer** felt that it had been an especially valuable experience for their young person in their A level year:

*"I know the incredible Light led work you do to give our young people this offer and that he can come back ready for his A levels feeling so grounded is just amazing!"*

This theme may be important to highlight in future communications with young people and Area Meetings, especially when the event takes place over Easter, which is often close to A Level and GCSE exams.

## Deep discussion and consideration of values/views

**Participants** valued the opportunity to consider 'big' questions about Quaker values and the wider world together:

*"I particularly enjoyed the speaker sessions and the fascinating conversations we had as a group"*

Some also felt that this had helped them to build friendships:

*"It is a lovely community space where young Quakers can interact, discuss spirituality and important ideas about the theme and form meaningful connections"*

*"I've loved all the interactive sessions and how they helped me reconstruct my views. I also feel like the interactive ones helped me form connections with people I otherwise wouldn't."*

## Spirituality and worship

Although most **participants** discussed their spiritual experience elsewhere on the form (in answer to specific questions about this), it was also mentioned as a key part of the JYM experience (in answer to their "thoughts and feelings about JYM"):

*"I feel complete --> I am very hopeful for my future all of a sudden. It was such a deep and spiritual experience you cannot replicate elsewhere - the friends I have made will be forever."*

This was also felt by **parents/carers**:

*"Becoming involved in JYM has been an emotionally and spiritually enriching experience for our daughter. She has formed and sustained meaningful friendships and felt well supported by the adult volunteers."*

## Participant reflections on the theme: "In a divided world, are we living our values to foster acceptance and belonging?"

When asked to identify what they had learnt through considering the 2026 theme, young people spoke about four main ideas:

- **The importance of understanding others/being open to different viewpoints** – most participants shared something along these lines

*"I learnt how many people can have similar beliefs and values, but express them differently and form completely different outlooks, so maybe we should look past exactly what people are saying and understand their intentions by listening."*

*"You must understand that you might be mistaken, and remain open to new perspectives entirely - you must question and discuss diverse opinions in order to empathise and reach common ground."*

- **Creating community takes work**

*"I found that I really connected with the idea of intentional communities and grassroots organisation to create acceptance and belonging"*

*"Creating community is an active choice"*

- **Making a difference can start small**

*"I have learned that any small interactions we have can work to foster acceptance and belonging and that for change on a large level we need to start small."*

*"I have been reminded of what I could be doing everyday in my interactions to make others feel belonging and more accepted."*

- **The process is more important than the outcome** – this is a quote from Paul Ingram's speaker session

*"I have learned that vulnerability and curiosity are the ways to foster acceptance and strengthen community, and that the process is more important than the outcome."*

## **What helps to create a feeling of community at JYM?**

Most answers covered at least two of the following aspects of JYM:

- **Base groups**
- **Free time**
- **The people at JYM**
- **Mealtimes**
- **Social spaces and activities**

These were often interconnected thoughts, which indicates that they are all key to **participants'** experience of community at this year's JYM:

*"base groups, social and free time, the very people here"*

*"Free time allowed me to talk to people and foster relationships."*

*"The social time at the end of the day contributed well and going into base groups"*

One participant identified different types of friendships as important to JYM:

*"I think that being thrown together with strangers helps form friendships but being with familiar people deepens friendships. There is a balance to be struck and I think JYM does it mostly right."*

## **Worship**

Multiple **participants** mentioned worship in their answer to this question. They saw it as central to, rather than separate from, the feeling of community at the event:

*"I especially felt connected at lunch tables and in meetings for worship - this strengthened connections - big circles of all members was great."*

*"I found the meetings for worship very powerful as they held a feeling of love and connection with no pressure to minister or not to!"*

*"Shared worship and chances to talk about important and spirituality related things created that feeling."*

## **Work of AC/team**

Some **participants** specifically mentioned the work of the Arrangements Committee and the wider team, including staff and volunteers:

*"The AC fostered such a great community and everyone was so kind and welcoming."*

*"Everyone involved, particularly those facilitating and volunteering, showed so much openness and support to those participating - there was always someone available to help and accommodate."*

Other aspects mentioned by one or two participants include:

- **Size of event** – *"having a community that wasn't overwhelmingly large"*
- **Community space** *"that is big enough for everyone"*
- **Sharing bedrooms (dorms)** – this is unlikely to be possible at JYM 2027, so it will be important to consider the impact this could have on the sense of community

## **Would anything else have helped to create a feeling of community at JYM?**

### **More free time and discussions with different people**

Although many **participants** enjoyed the amount of free time at JYM 2026, some felt that more free time would have helped the sense of community:

*"Being able to talk to lots of different people, having more free time would have helped."*

*"I would have liked to have longer free time sections to nurture developing friendships."*

*"I didn't find there was as much time and space to connect with my friends who I don't see outside of the event"*

## Arrangements Committee experience

Feedback from the **Arrangements Committee** was overwhelmingly positive, even when they acknowledged elements of the planning process which had been stressful. The key takeaways from their general feedback were:

- **Friendships within the committee**

*"Loved it so much. Made lifelong friends and am really thankful I got the chance to create such a special event."*

*"I've really loved being on the AC, getting to know the others and working together towards JYM."*

- **Personal development**

*"I have loved it. It has changed me massively as a person and I am more than grateful to have been given this experience."*

*"I will never forget this past year. I have grown so much and am unbelievably honoured to have had this experience. I love you all..."*

- **Support**

*"The experience has been amazing <3 Throughout the process I feel I've been able to breathe without stress. The staff and AVs have supported all of us, so thank you so much!!!!"*

*"This has been one of the most emotionally challenging, rewarding, beautiful things I've ever experienced. The 5 others I have had the pleasure of knowing I love so much. Spending time with Jenny and Jon [staff members] was so supportive and loving."*

One **parent** highlighted the amount of work that being on the Arrangements Committee entails, but felt that it had been managed well:

*"Our daughter was on the Arrangements Committee which was a significant commitment during her A-level year, but communication was clear throughout and the planning meetings were overall a positive experience for her. She did come home quite exhausted from these weekends, but I'm not sure how this could have been mitigated."*

## Adult volunteer experience

**Adult volunteers** also spoke positively about the event:

*"JYM was a very rewarding and powerful experience. I feel very fulfilled and positive about the whole weekend."*

*"The team (AC, AV and staff) have all worked so well together."*

## Parent/carer experience – communication

**Parents/carers** were specifically asked about their experience with communication before the event. Nearly all the feedback about communication was positive:

*“The communication before the event was good, particularly the way it included both of us, just in case a little chivvying up was needed!”*

*“The information sent to parents was helpful and clear; our daughter is 18 and very confident using public transport, so we didn't need any further information but had we wanted to follow up with organisers we could have done so.”*

*“The contact with Jenny [staff member] beforehand about [young person's] health/mental health was reassuring to [young person] and us. It was good to receive the welcome pack by email the day before in case it didn't come by post (then it suddenly arrived at the last minute!)”*

More than half of parents/carers who completed feedback answered “nothing”, “N/A” or similar when asked what could have improved their/their young person's experience. (See “Improvements for the future” below for suggestions that were made.)

## Timing, location and practicalities

**Parents/carers** mentioned a number of differences between JYM 2025, JYM 2026 and the (planned) JYM 2027, which are important to take into consideration:

*“Making it Easter rather than May made it accessible for those in A-level year. It would have been really sad if it was in May.”*

JYM 2025 was held at the same time as BYM, which meant it was during exams for many young people. The current plan for future JYMs is to hold the event over Easter, except for years where there is a Yearly Meeting Gathering (e.g. 2027), when JYM will be held as part of this.

*“I think JYM is in Hull next year. If so this will make travelling much easier and maybe make it more accessible to those outwith the London area”*

JYM 2027 will be held in Hull, as this is the venue for YMG 2027. It is important to note that while this will be more accessible for northern and Scottish young Quakers, it will be less accessible for others, especially those from the south of England and Wales.

One member of the **Arrangements Committee** spoke about practical arrangements which had improved the event for them, and might be helpful for the 2027 team:

*“Team room was very helpful to have. Liked that we had prep day and longer than last year.”*

## Improvements for the future

### Food

A small number of **participants** and **parents/carers** mentioned that the food “wasn’t great”, although the plain food alternatives provided by the centre (bread, pasta, ham and cheese) were praised. Negative feedback about the food is significantly lower than in recent years.

### Cozy glows

Some **participants** and **parents/carers** spoke about “cozy glows”, where participants write kind messages to each other at the end of the event. The Arrangements Committee had thought deeply about how to do this in a way that did not make newer or shyer participants feel left out, and had decided these would be called “letters of light” and only written in base groups.

This change was difficult for a small number of participants, who requested “cozy glow rebirth”! It is important to note that JYM 2024 did not have any opportunity for cozy glows; participants may bring expectations from other events as to if and how these are done. Staff will revisit this conversation with the 2027 Arrangements Committee.

### Welcome

A parent suggested that the welcome experience could be improved:

*I think if a young person had shown her to her room rather than just pointing her in the direction.*

The 2027 Arrangements Committee could consider how to help participants find their rooms, within the capacity of the whole JYM team.

### Transition out of JYM

A number of parents/carers identified their young person aging out of JYM in answer to the “what could be improved” question:

*Being able to attend! They will have aged out before the next meeting. A disappointment as they would love to attend again.*

*Having JYM coincide with BYM so all Under 19s have fun during BYM without feeling kicked out because they are over 17 but not quite ready to attend BYM.*

Although the age limit for JYM cannot be raised, staff could think about how to support participants towards the end of their time at YCF events. The revived Accompaniment programme might also help young people to make this transition.

## Arrangements Committee experience

Arrangements Committee members highlighted a number of challenges throughout the planning process, and at the event itself:

*Working with people I didn't previously know was tricky to start with.*

*Managing tiredness, stress and the need to be 'on' or have answers, even in meals/free time.*

*Stopping :( Both giving the role up - and at the event switching from being in a role and being a participant.*

One member of the committee also mentioned the theme presentation (prepared ministry by each AC member) as a source of stress or difficulty.

An adult volunteer at the event suggested having a large copy of the timetable on the wall of the team room, where members of the team could mark out sections for being 'off duty'/taking a break. A visible reminder of time off could be helpful for everyone, including helping staff to ensure everyone is able to have time to rest.

## Adult volunteer experience

Adult volunteers had some specific suggestions, especially around timetabling:

*Adult meetings are very valuable and should not be skipped.*

*Art activities should have significant setup and cleanup time, also should be venue specific.*

*I think some pre-event organisation felt a bit rushed (for obvious reasons) but I'm really happy that it all went as smoothly as it did*

*could we have less biscuit control :)*

## Parent/carer experience – communication

Although most parents/carers spoke positively about the communications they had received before the event, some felt that there was still room for improvement:

*Make sure there is an automatic acknowledgement when forms have been submitted, ideally giving a timescale when further information will be sent.*

It is worth noting that there should already be an automatic acknowledgement set up, so staff should test this again on next year's form, and perhaps make parents/carers aware on the form that it may sometimes be sent to spam.

*A reminder of the activity chosen just before the event would have helped with packing appropriate clothing.*

The JYM 2027 timetable is likely to look quite different to 2026 as it is alongside Yearly Meeting Gathering, so this feedback should be carried forward to future Easter events.

# Aims of the programme

## Participants

Aim	Not really	A little	A bit	A lot
<b>Spiritual Development</b> - how well has this event helped you to explore your spirituality?	1	5	17	17
<b>Understanding Quakerism</b> - how well has this event helped your understanding - have you learnt more about what Quakers believe and live out their faith?	1	3	22	14
<b>Exploring issues</b> - how well has JYM and main YM sessions helped you to explore issues of relevance to you and Quakerism?	0	1	14	25
<b>Personal growth</b> - how much has Accompaniment helped you to learn more about yourself and change how you see yourself and the world?	0	7	16	17
<b>Participation and integration</b> - how well has this event helped you to feel able to be part of Quakerism?	0	4	8	28

## Adult volunteers – responding to how well they felt JYM met its aims

Aim	Not really	A little	Some	A lot
<b>Spiritual Development</b>				4
<b>Understanding Quakerism</b>			2	2
<b>Exploring issues</b>			2	2
<b>Personal growth</b>				4
<b>Participation and integration</b>			1	3

### Spiritual development

**Participants** and **adult volunteers** highlighted elements of the programme and of the event itself which helped to meet this aim:

- **Ministry workshop**
- **Worship sessions in general**
  - **Epilogue, especially bonfire epilogue**
- **Experience of Meeting for Worship for Business and Nominations**
- **Being in peer community:**

*“Because the space is filled with like-minded/aged friends, I felt extremely comfortable sharing and participating”*

Others found the spiritual aspect of the event “hard to connect with”, or “felt more a sense of community rather than spirituality at this event.”

## Understanding Quakerism

Most **participants** who did not give the highest rating in answer to this question clarified that they found it useful but they knew quite a bit before coming to the event:

*"I think it was good, I just already have a pretty good understanding of Quakerism"*

The Quaker 101/ministry workshop was also referenced here:

*"I loved the Quaker 101 session as it allowed me to hear many people's thoughts about ministry, which I thought about for the rest of the event."*

Although all participants who left feedback about this session were positive about it, some **adult volunteers** felt it might not have been approachable for new participants:

*"I would say it is not a Quaker 101 and participants first time it would be challenging with a lot of expected knowledge required from many participants"*

**Participants** especially valued hearing from a range of voices about Quakerism:

*"I enjoyed learning about how our visiting speakers lived their values as well as how the adult volunteers and other young Quakers live out their faith, it has helped to more appreciate the diversity of experience within the Quaker community"*

## Exploring issues

Theme sessions were widely praised in helping to meet this aim:

*"All the theme sessions were so interesting and engaging"*

*"Paul Ingram's session really helped me explore issues I'd felt very intimidated by"*

*"I think that the sessions were very applicable to many aspects of life. They have been very thought-provoking."*

**Adult volunteers** also felt positively about the theme sessions offered:

*"The theme sessions were great at meeting the YP where they were at and encouraging spiritual reflections."*

*"Everyone I spoke to seems to have got a lot out of the theme sessions, and it provided the right balance"*

However, some **participants** found the theme harder to engage with, and would have appreciated a range of different formats for theme and speaker sessions:

*"The theme didn't feel personal to me and I found it hard to focus solely on the theme"*

*"I feel the theme sessions felt like I was being talked at. It would be nice if they were more interactive."*

## **Personal growth:**

Many **participants** reported that their confidence had grown as a result of the event, or that they now see themselves in a different way:

*"It has made me feel more confident in myself and my spirituality."*

*"I've definitely grown in confidence with who I am and who I would like to be."*

*"It has allowed me to see myself as a person who brings value to communities"*

**Adult volunteers** also saw these changes in the young people, especially the Arrangements Committee:

*"It's been a joy watching the AC grow. Other YP have also really come into themselves. It's been so heartwarming to watch. Ministry in Epilogue has really shown how special this event has been for YP."*

*"Individual YP have grown in confidence and gained a sense of acceptance - going from frowns to smiles and jokes"*

## **Participation and integration**

Many **participants** cited the "strong community" formed at JYM in response to this aim. For some, JYM also helped them to feel more connected to the wider Quaker community:

*"I learnt about more opportunities to get involved in Quaker events and how you don't have to do everything but you can get stuck in in different ways"*

*"I've definitely felt more active and included within Quaker society."*

However, others felt that their experience at JYM didn't necessarily translate to feeling part of Quakerism more broadly:

*"I feel a part of the community created at JYM but not necessarily all quakers."*

*"Obviously the lack of overlap with BYM meant this wasn't possible but it could be nice to integrate occasionally with adult Quakers."*

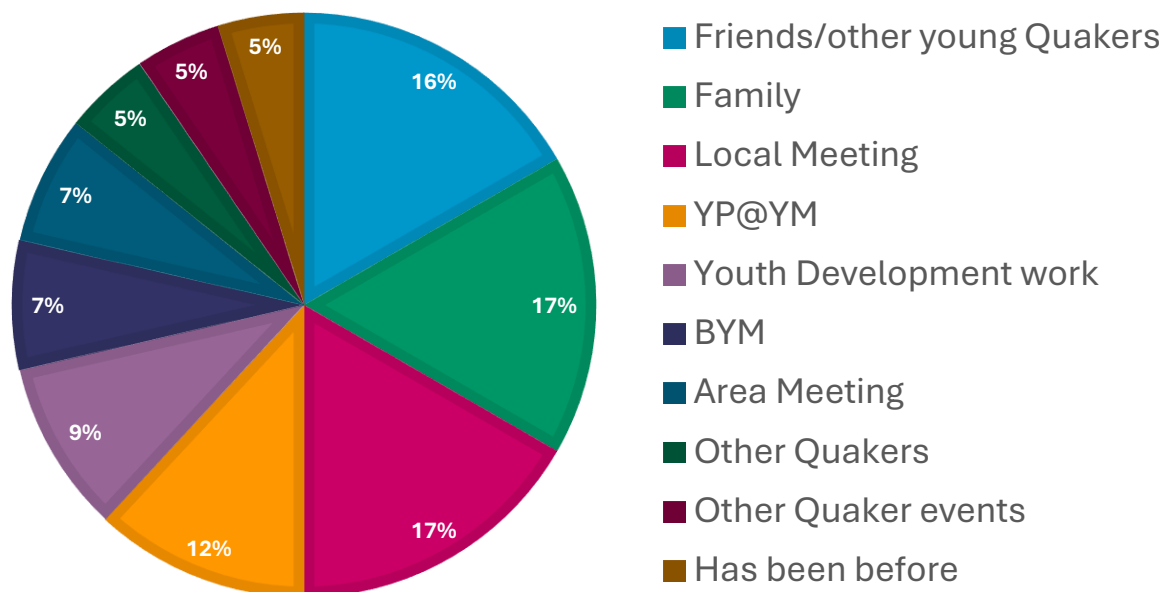
It is encouraging to hear that there is a desire to spend time with adult Quakers, especially ahead of Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2027, which will offer significant opportunities for participant and integration with an all-age Quaker community.

## **Where did you hear about JYM?**

The chart below shows the range of answers that participants gave to this question. It is important to note that (including the Arrangements Committee) nearly 50% of participants had attended JYM before, which is not reflected in their answers – although many may have been indicating where they first heard about JYM!

Most attendees were also nominated by their Area Meeting, although only 5% said this was where they had heard about JYM.

### WHERE DID YOU HEAR ABOUT JYM?



### Arrangements Committee experience

Aim	Not really	A little	A bit	A lot
"I developed through being on the AC"			0.5	5.5
Teamwork - "As a mixed age team we worked well together on this event"			1	5
Planning, facilitation and organisation - "I developed my planning, facilitation and organisation skills through my role at this event"			0.5	5.5
Support - "I felt supported by the staff"				6
"I felt supported by my adult volunteer"			0.5	5.5

All members of the Arrangements Committee felt that the event had met its aims for them either "a bit" or "a lot".

On personal development:

*"I've gotten much more comfortable joining and contributing to discussions and feel much more confident."*

On teamwork:

*"Bonding as a whole team is so important - once you know each other and have had fun then you can be productive."*

*"Having connections as people will lead to a strong team. Allowing time to bond and come together is vital."*

(re. adults/mixed age team): *“They've been awesome - without looking down on us AC. We respect them because they respect us.”*

On support from staff and adult volunteers:

*“They are all absolutely legends. Jenny, Jon, and all the AVs are so loving and supportive always.”*

*“I found it super helpful and reassuring to have someone there and ready to help me when I needed it :)”*

## Adult volunteer experience

Aim	Not really	A little	Some	A lot
Preparation and information - "I feel I had the information and support required to get alongside young people at the event"				4
Teamwork - "As a volunteer and staff team we worked well together on this event"				4
Development - "I developed my skills through my role at this event"			2	2
Support - "I was able to support the development and reflection of the young person I was supporting."			1	3

Some adult volunteers were unable to attend the planning weekend, but did not feel that they were missing information:

*“Despite missing the planning weekend, I felt supported and had all the relevant info. The zooms beforehand were useful for this, and the fact we were a strong team.”*

The planning cycle for 2027 includes a planning weekend for the Arrangements Committee with adult volunteers, a final online planning day, and a preparation day directly before the event at the venue itself.

Most adult volunteers spoke extremely positively about their experience of the 2026 team, and echoed the Arrangements Committee’s comments about the importance of strong relationships within the team:

*“The flexibility we had as a team allowed us all to support one another and meet our needs. Having the time to laugh and vent together was really helpful for bringing us together and allowing us time to decompress.”*

One volunteer highlighted the “unspoken” work of an experienced volunteer co-ordinating snacks and evening activities.

In terms of developing their own skills, one volunteer mentioned the careful balance of supporting the AC to ‘own’ the event whilst also taking care of them as young people:

*“Balancing supporting AC to facilitate the space, with also recognising when they needed a break has been a useful skill to have developed further which I feel we did well as a team.”*

Multiple volunteers spoke about the need for more ‘pairs’ time with their assigned Arrangements Committee member in order to support them most effectively:

*“I would note I felt pairs time was quite limited at 15 mins every day. Over a long weekend I think a longer period would have been very useful in the middle of a day, etc.”*

*“Having regular check-ins helped with this. Having a bit more time in morning check-ins would have helped to have more time to do wider reflections. Often we just had time to go through plans for the day ahead.”*

The 2026 JYM team was made up of 5 volunteers who had volunteered together at JYM 2025, and one who had volunteered at JYM 2024. When putting together a team for the 2027 cycle, it will be important to consider the balance of experience (and a team that already works well together) with continuing to recruit and develop newer volunteers.

## Parent/carer experience

Aim	Not at all	A bit	Some	A lot
Did having a young person attending JYM make you feel part of the wider community of Friends?	1	3	2	5
Did having a young person attending JYM draw on or strengthen your spiritual life?	3	2	3	3

Parents/carers particularly commented on how well-supported their young person had been:

*“They were very concerned about attending as has had some mental health issues recently, however, found the experience to be enjoyable, informative and supportive. They came back in a much more positive mindset and with a new enthusiasm for Quakers”*

*“The support was fantastic – seriously I can't think of any improvements and my young person has extremely high standards!”*

One parent explained why they had given the lowest rating in answer to the second question:

*“I'm an atheist, so don't really consider my own 'spiritual life', but I can see how beneficial this is to my daughter and that JYM strengthens her sense of herself as a member of a Quaker community, and her spiritual growth, both of which are valuable to her.”*

## Strengths – to keep!

- Feeling of a gathered community supported by:
  - Base groups
  - Free time
  - Mealtimes
  - Social spaces and activities – including a community space that is big enough for everyone
  - ‘The people’ at JYM (could this be a mixture of returning participants, newcomers, and those who attend a wide range of other Quaker events?)
  - Worship – especially in a peer community
  - Arrangements Committee of young people (supported by staff and adult volunteers)
- Inclusive event, especially around neurodivergence, disability and gender diversity – quiet room was appreciated throughout the event
- A break from normal life, especially during exams
  - Easter is significantly better than May for those with exams
- Opportunities for deep discussion around Quaker values and world issues
  - Some form of ‘Quaker 101’ session is likely to be appreciated
  - Engaging speakers with a range of life experiences
  - Hearing from Arrangements Committee and adult volunteers
- Programme grounded in worship
- Highlighting opportunities to get involved in other Quaker events (“What’s Next”)
- For the **Arrangements Committee:**
  - Friendships within the committee, which support good teamwork
  - Significant personal development and growth throughout the year
  - Support from staff and adult volunteers
  - Team room and prep day
  - Opportunity to meet new AC during the event and hand over!
- For **parents/carers:**
  - Communication – including both young people and parents/carers in emails; responsive staff; follow-up conversations in advance for participants with identified particular needs

## Weaknesses – to change/improve/add

- More free time to talk to more/different people, and nurture developing friendships
- More interactive theme sessions/discussions with different groups of people
- Food – although an improvement on recent years! Plain options were appreciated
- Welcome – how are people shown to rooms?
- For the **Arrangements Committee:**
  - Planning weekends can be exhausting – but most felt the balance of work, play and rest was about right this year
  - Continued support to manage tiredness and stress during the event
  - Cozy glows – revisit conversation with 2027 AC

- For **adult volunteers:**
  - Adult team meetings are very valuable – don't timetable where they might be missed/cut short
  - Art activities need significant setup and cleanup time
  - More pairs time in the timetable, especially at a longer event
- For the whole team:
  - Large copy of event programme on wall of team room where everyone can mark time 'off duty'
- For **parents/carers:**
  - Send a reminder of activity chosen just before the event to help with packing appropriate clothing!

## Opportunities – looking ahead to JYM 2027

- Theme – this is both an opportunity and a challenge with the changes to Yearly Meeting. Participants seem to get a lot out of considering a theme chosen by the AC – what might this look like in 2027 and beyond?
- Yearly Meeting Gathering in July – some participants are already keen to integrate with adult Quakers!
  - Transition support – all-age community could help those aging out of JYM, along with developing Accompaniment programme
- For the **Arrangements Committee:**
  - Additional planning weekend in 2027 cycle, alongside adult committees and YP@YM AC – chance to shape all-age gathering

## Challenges – looking ahead to JYM 2027

- JYM at YMG hasn't happened in a decade – hard to predict what it will look like, how many participants to expect, etc! Balance of preserving what was appreciated and worked well at JYM 2025/6 while making the most of opportunities for all-age community at YMG
  - Venue will look very different. No dorms (some participants found sharing rooms helpful for building community), flats layout, potential distance between bedrooms and daytime spaces – will need careful planning both for safeguarding and to support participants who may need rest and flexibility throughout the day
- For the **Arrangements Committee:**
  - Planning timeline of Agenda Planning Committee and 2027 JYM AC may not always align – how can staff support meaningful conversation and collaboration between these groups?
- For **adult volunteers:**
  - Adult volunteer team will not have the opportunity to visit the venue in advance, unlike in 2025/6 – how can staff and Arrangements Committee help to prepare the whole team for what the site will look and feel like?