

Calling Letter



Yearly Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

21st March 2019

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Dear Friends,

We meet again on Saturday 6th April in the Small Meeting House (Sarah Fell) at Friends House, London. You will see in the attached agenda and papers that we have continued to use the idea of sharing a suggested draft minute for the more straight-forward items.

Our meeting this month requires us to engage with two programmes that are key to the health and growth of our local meetings. First of all we will hear from Edwina Peart about the work on inclusion and diversity within the Society of Friends, consider what her findings mean for us all and how we may go forward with this concern. We were asked to do this by Yearly Meeting 2017 and there will be more opportunity to pursue the theme further at Yearly Meeting in May. We expect to do some work in small groups and return in plenary after the lunch break. Then we will hear from the team involved in the Vibrancy in Meetings project. There has been a professional evaluation of this project and we will be able to consider our response. Our discernment is needed to help guide BYM trustees who will have to make decisions about this at their June meeting. On the agenda we also have Area Meeting minutes to receive, the BYM trustees' regular report to us and other general matters.

If you have any thoughts or queries about the agenda (this one or in the future) do please talk with members of the MfS Arrangements Group. However if your query is about something practical or about our worship together, then the MfS Support Group are the Friends with whom you should discuss the matter. Please note that any tabled papers will be available for you to collect in the Hilda Clark Room (which is where the refreshments are located).

If you have any specific comments or queries about any of the papers or supporting documents sent to you for this meeting, then it is helpful if you email sufferings@quaker.org.uk by the end of the Thursday before the meeting so that we can respond directly if necessary or at least be better prepared!

In peace and friendship,



Anne Ullathorne, Clerk

Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

MfS Arrangements Group February 2019 meeting minutes

MfS 2019 04 05	Court & Prison Register
MfS 2019 04 06	BYM Trustees minutes and report
MfS 2019 04 07	Diversity and Inclusion
MfS 2019 04 08	Home Groups
MfS 2019 04 09	Minutes received
MfS 2019 04 11	Quaker Recognised Bodies
MfS 2019 04 12	Letter of Greeting to Ireland YM
MfS 2019 04 13	Vibrancy in Meetings

n.b. the following papers will be available on the day of the meeting:

MfS 2019 04 03	Membership
MfS 2019 04 10	Appointments

A reminder of how you can prepare for the meeting

- Register (to help staff prepare rooms and refreshments)
- Go through the 'Essential Information'
- Read the agenda papers in good time
- Contact the other representative/alternate from your area meeting or body
- Consider possible names for a standing nominations group
- Send any comments or questions to the clerks, before the meeting



Meeting for Sufferings 6 April 2019

Sarah Fell, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ

Britain Yearly Meeting
of the Religious
Society of Friends

Agenda

	Item	Paper
09.00	Arrivals	
10.00	Session starts	
1	Opening worship	
2	Welcome and introductions	
3	Membership (Tabled Paper)	MfS 2019 04 03 to note
4	Agenda Adoption and acceptance of the agenda.	
5	Court and Prison Register	MfS 2019 04 05 for decision
6	BYM Trustees To receive a report from the clerk of Trustees, including minute BYMT-2019-02-15 Strategic Priorities	MfS 2019 04 06 for information
	Short Break (please hold the silence in the meeting room)	
7	Diversity and Inclusion To receive a report from Edwina Peart, the BYM Inclusion and diversity co-ordinator	MfS 2019 04 07 for information and reflection
8	Home Groups To reflect together on Diversity and Inclusion.	MfS 2019 04 08
12.30	Lunch	
	Informal lunchtime gatherings Opportunities to meet with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BYM Trustees (over lunch in the restaurant) • The Inclusion and diversity co-ordinator in the Hilda Clark room. • The Vibrancy in Meetings programme co-ordinator in the Hilda Clark room. 	
13:30	Session starts	
8	Diversity and Inclusion Further consideration in plenary	
9	Minutes received <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bournemouth Coastal AM regarding the AM's concerns about the National Health Service (NHS). 	MfS 2019 04 09 for consideration

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting of Friends in Wales regarding a statement of Meeting of Friends in Wales about Brexit 	
10	Appointments (Tabled Paper)	MfS 2019 04 10 for approval
11	Quaker Recognised Bodies To approve and register further Quaker Recognised Bodies.	MfS 2019 04 11 for approval
12	Letter of Greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting To approve a Letter of Greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting in 2019	MfS 2019 04 12 for approval
	Short Break (please hold the silence in the meeting room)	
13	Vibrancy in Meetings To receive a progress report from the Vibrancy in Meetings programme co-ordinator	MfS 2019 04 13 for consideration
	Closing worship	
16.00	Close. Tea, coffee and departures	



Yearly Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends (Quakers) in
Britain

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

18 February 2019 at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

Present: Margaret Bryan (convenor), Karen Draycott, Gill Greenfield, Sherry-Ann Mitchell, Juliet Prager, Anne Ullathorne

Prevented: Mark Lilley

1. Reflections on February Meeting for Sufferings

We have received comments from the Support Group and individual Friends. There seemed to be plenty of time to deal with business in a worshipful way.

2. Meetings attended by the clerks

- Sam McNair and Liz Eddington (Meeting for Sufferings Support Group) attended the Diversity and Inclusion gathering at Woodbrooke, 18-20 January
- Anne Ullathorne and Paul Parker will meet with Kingston & Wandsworth Area Meeting on 12 March
- Gill Greenfield will attend Quaker World Relations Forum on 23 March
- Anne Ullathorne will attend 3 Clerks' meetings in April and will visit the Quaker Life Representative Council 26-28 April.

3. Forward agenda

We have reviewed our forward agenda which informs our planning.

4. Agenda planning for the next meeting in April 2019

We have planned the agenda for our April meeting.

5. Yearly Meeting 2019

All members of MfSAG will be at Yearly Meeting in May. Our report is scheduled for Saturday PM session and there is also a special interest group. We envisage that this will be a fairly open session of Q&A. We hope the short film of MfS may be available to view.

6. Review of the representatives and alternates

We received minutes MfS/19/02/14 referring the matter back to MfSAG. We heard a clear call to leave things as they are, but recognise that the success of the reps' experience depends on communication between reps and alternates and the support they receive at AM level.

7. Date and time of next meetings 2019

Thursday 30 May 2019 (11-3.30pm)

Thursday 22 August 2019 (11-3.30pm)

Thursday 31 October 2019 (11-3.30pm)

Margaret Bryan

Convenor

Court and Prison Register

Introduction

Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) was established in 1676, to consider the sufferings experienced by Quakers for their faith. Gradually the practice of recording Friends' names in the 'Great book of Sufferings' lapsed; but in 1997 MfS decided to maintain a register of Friends before the courts or imprisoned for matters of conscience. This enables us to record events, as well as to uphold the Friends concerned and to share information about their witness.

This time we have three possible entries to consider:

1. The sentencing of Lyndsay Burtonshaw, a Quaker member of the 'Stansted 15'
2. The arrest of Marita Over, in an Extinction Rebellion action
3. 2. A situation concerning Christine Abbott of York Area Meeting.

1. Lyndsay Burtonshaw (Stansted 15)

Friends are likely to have heard that the 'Stansted 15', including Lyndsay Burtonshaw, an attender at Brighton Meeting, received suspended sentences or community orders on 6 February 2019.

A draft minute might read:

Further to our minute MfS 2019/02/05, we are reminded that last December Lyndsay Burtonshaw, an attender at Brighton Meeting, along with 14 others known together as the Stansted 15, was found guilty of intentional disruption of services and endangerment at an aerodrome under the 1990 Aviation and Maritime Security Act.. We note that Lyndsay received a 12-month community order with 100 hours of unpaid work. We agree to record this information in the Court and Prison Register, and uphold Lyndsay Burtonshaw.

2. Marita Over (Extinction Rebellion)

Mid-Wales AM has sent the following minute. Extinction Rebellion is a movement concerned about climate change. It is encouraging acts of civil disobedience with the aim of changing the political, economic and social landscape.

Minute 10/19 of mid-Wales Area Meeting held on 17/03/2019 (part)

We report to Meeting for Sufferings that Marita Over, an attender at Llanidloes Meeting was arrested in Cardiff as part of the Extinction Rebellion protest. She is accused of aggravated trespass and will appear in court on 9th April. We ask for this to be included in the Court and Prison Register.

A draft minute might read:

We have heard that Marita Over, an attender at Llanidloes Meeting, was arrested in Cardiff as part of an Extinction Rebellion protest. She has been charged with aggravated trespass and will appear in court on 9th April. We agree to record this information in the Court and Prison Register, and uphold Marita Over.

3. York AM held at Harrogate on 12th January 2019

Minute 4/2019 Court & Prison Register:

The clerk's introduction to this item outlined the origins and use of Meeting for Sufferings Court and Prison Register, a record created to enable Friends to recognise those 'suffering for conscience sake' and to support them materially or spiritually. She reminded us that York sent to MfS a minute of Barbara Penny's suffering, which was recorded in 2015 with follow up in 2017.

She then told the meeting how our Attender Christine Abbott of Friargate Meeting lost her contract with the Church Commissioners in 2017, following a year's successful work, without right of appeal, on the grounds that she was attending Quaker worship and refused to give any assurance that she would cease to do so.

In considering this matter we have concluded that it is right to record our support for Christine's action, not just as individuals but as an Area Meeting. This does not fall within the usual parameters of the Court and Prison Register [no court or prison being involved]. It does however involve 'suffering' significant loss of income (of Quakers suffering distraint of property and requisitioning of tithes in earlier centuries) and the cause is clearly a conflict of conscience and lawful employment.

We therefore bring this matter to Meeting for Sufferings. We ask MfS to re-examine the present parameters of the Court and Prison Register, in order to be able to record at Meeting for Sufferings such examples of suffering for conscience's sake as this one.

We would also value further exploration of the standing of canon law Vis a Vis the law of the land.

We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

Barbara Windle
Clerk

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group suggests it would be appropriate to:

- a) consider re-naming the register as 'Register of Sufferings'
- b) include this information about Christine Abbot in the register

If MfS agrees, a draft minute might read:

We receive minute 4/2019 of York Area Meeting informing us that Christine Abbot, an attender at Friargate Meeting, lost a contract for paid employment with the Church Commissioners in 2017, following a year's successful work, without right of appeal, on the grounds that she was attending Quaker worship and refused to give any assurance that she would cease to do so.

York Area Meeting has asked us to re-examine the parameters of the Court and Prison Register. We agree it is appropriate to record examples of suffering for the sake of conscience in the register. We agree the register could be re-named Register of Sufferings, recognising that it will generally be used to record situations where Friends face court or prison sentences as a result of their faith; but may include similar situations, where an institution's formal proceedings adversely affect an individual Friend.

We agree to include this information in the Register.

BYM Trustees

Introduction and draft minute

The minutes of BYM Trustees' meeting held in February are copied below.

Minute BYMT 2019/02/15 Strategic Priorities has been sent to Meeting for Sufferings.

Minute BYMT 2019/02/10 Vibrancy in Meetings may be of interest, as we will be hearing about the pilot project later.

Trustees will also be meeting on Friday 5th April, the day before Meeting for Sufferings, to adopt the Trustees' Annual Report and financial statements. We can expect to hear a verbal update; the full document will be available for Yearly Meeting 2019.

Part of a draft minute might read:

MfS 2019/04/XX BYM Trustees

Caroline Nursey, clerk of BYM Trustees, has reported on the Trustees meeting held on 15-16 February 2019.

Further to our minute MfS 2018/11/13 we receive and note minute BYMT 2019/02/15 regarding the adoption of strategic priorities for centrally-managed work.

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Friday 15 February to Saturday 16 February 2019 at Friends House

Minutes

Present: Georgina Bailey, Linda Batten (Treasurer), Alison Breadon, Sarah Donaldson, Nick Eyre, Ellie Harding, Carolyn Hayman, Caroline Nursey (Clerk), David Olver (Assistant Clerk), Alastair Reid, Hazel Shellens, Graham Torr, Frances Voelcker, Chris Willmore.

In attendance: Roger Clarke, Clerk of Vibrancy in Meetings Steering Group (minute BYMT-2019-02-10); Helen Drewery, Head of Witness & Worship (except minutes BYMT-2019-02-18 & 19); Paul Grey, Head of Operations (except minutes BYMT-2019-02-18 & 19); Sarah Griffith, Project Development Officer (minute BYMT-2019-02-10); Suzanne Ismail, Head of Networking and Engagement Quaker Peace & Social Witness, (minute BYMT-2019-02-10); Lisa Kiew, Head of Finance & Resources (except minutes BYMT-2019-02-18 & 19); Paul Parker, Recording Clerk (except minute 2019-02-19); Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk, (except minutes BYMT-2019-02-18 & 19)

Visitors: Oliver Robertson, incoming Head of Witness & Worship (minutes BYMT-2019-02-01 to 11). Gretchen Castle, General Secretary Friends World Committee for Consultation, Ann Floyd, Clerk of Quaker World Relations Committee, Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary FWCC Europe & Middle East Section; Susanna Mattingly, Sustainability Communications Office Friends World Committee for Consultation/Quaker Life (Minute BYMT-2019-02-11). Mary Aiston, Quaker Stewardship Committee (minute QSC-2019-02-12)

BYMT-2019-02-01 Welcome, agenda check, conflicts of interest check, minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held 16 November 2018 will be signed by the then Clerk and will be placed in the minute book.

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest.

We confirm our agenda.

We welcome Oliver Robertson to our meeting.

During our periods of worship, we have heard read paragraphs 19.57 and 28.7 from Quaker faith & practice.

BYMT-2019-02-02 Minutes received

We receive the following minutes:

- Continued minutes (BYMT-2019-02-02a);
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee 9-11xi18 (BYMT-2019-02-02b);
- Friends House (London) Hospitality Ltd 15xi18 (BYMT-2019-02-02c);
- Quaker Life Central Committee 16-18xi18 (BYMT-2019-02-02d);
- BYMT Employment Committee 28xi18 (BYMT-2019-02-02e);
- Property Development Steering Group 13xii18 (BYMT-2019-02-02f);
- BYMT Audit Committee 11xii18 (BYMT-2019-02-02g).

BYMT-2019-02-03 Items taken on draft minute

(a) Insurance report

We receive the Insurance report (BYMT-2019-02-03a) which gives the summary of principal general insurances as at 1 January 2019.

(b) Whistleblowing annual report

We receive the Whistleblowing annual report (BYMT-2019-02-03b).

There has been one whistleblowing report this year on concerns over safeguarding. An update on the action taken on this is given under minute BYMT-2019-02-14 below.

(c) Giving and Fundraising Development Group

Further to minute BYMT-2018-09-14 we receive the proposed terms of reference for the Giving and Fundraising Development Group (BYMT-2019-02-03c).

We agree these terms of reference.

We ask our Nominations Group to find 2 trustees and up to 3 others with appropriate experience to serve on this group.

(d) Operational Plan

We receive the report on the 2018 Operational Plan (BYMT-2019-02-03d) (a copy of the plan is in the BYM Trustees' "Group area" of QGroups).

(e) BYMT Trustee Appointments

We receive a list of BYM Trustee appointments as at 1 January 2019 (BYMT-2019-02-03e).

(f) Appointments

Our Nominations Group brings forward the following names for appointment:

- **Finance and Property Committee**
To confirm the in-between meeting appointment of Carolyn Hayman to serve on Finance & Property Committee from 01-01-2019 to 31-12-2020.
- **Working Group to review terms of reference of QCCIR and QWRC**
Nick Eyre and Ellie Harding to form a working group for the triennial review of the terms of reference of QCCIR and QWRC in conjunction with staff and clerks.
- **Legacy Funded Projects Group**
Georgina Bailey to join the Legacy Funded Projects Group from 15-02-2019 to 31-12-2021.
- **Quaker World Relations Consultative Forum 2019**
Frances Voelcker to attend the 2019 Quaker World Relations Consultative Forum on behalf of Trustees.
- **Property Support Reference Group**
Martin Ford (Leeds AM), representing Quaker Stewardship Committee, from the start of the Project to completion.
- **Friends House (London) Hospitality Company**
Further to minute BYMT-2018-11-08 we record that Matthew Baker is now a member of Bristol Area Meeting and so we confirm that he is appointed as a Director from 15-02-2019 to 31-12-2021.
- **Library Governance Group**
We confirm that we wish James Eddington to continue as a member of the Library Governance Group until it completes its work, although his term of service as a Trustee has ended.

We agree to these appointments and thank the Friends for their service.

(g) HS2 Monitoring Group

We receive the minutes of the HS2 Monitoring Group of 6 December (BYMT-2019-02-03g). The Group feels that the important front-end work of the Group has been completed and recommends to Trustees that the Group be laid down.

The Head of Operations will include a briefing on HS2 matters as a contribution in the Recording Clerk's Report. If, in the future, any matters of a major nature arise, such as any issues around the legal agreements between the HS2 Company and BYM, a new Group could be established.

We agree to lay down the Group and thank the members for their service.

(h) Head of Witness & Worship

We record the appointment of Oliver Robertson as Head of Witness & Worship from 18 March 2019. Oliver will replace Helen Drewery in this role.

Helen retires on 5 April 2019. She started work for BYM in 1984 as temporary Assistant Secretary of Quaker Social Responsibility and Education. She served as General Secretary of Quaker Peace and Social Witness from 2009 and then Head of Witness and Work from 2016. We celebrate all her service to Britain Yearly Meeting and wish her a long and fruitful retirement.

(i) Simpler Meetings

We receive Meeting for Sufferings minute MfS/2019/02/17 on simpler meetings (BYMT-2019-02-03i) which will be helpful to us in our work on strategic priorities. We note that this is a developing area which is central to our work and likely to become more significant in the future.

BYMT-2019-02-04 Recording Clerk's report to Trustees

We receive the Recording Clerk's report to Trustees (BYMT-2019-02-04) which covers the work of Management Meeting since we last met:

- **Recording Clerk:** Sustaining church and faith (Yearly Meeting, Book of discipline revision, Simpler structures and practices); Governance (Strategic priorities, Reviews, Relationship with the hospitality company); Organisational effectiveness and risk (Safeguarding, Brexit); External relations (Civil society space and the Lobbying Act, Quaker Centres, Visits to meetings, World relations, Other churches and faiths); Head of Witness and Worship.
- **Deputy Recording Clerk:** Communications, Diversity and inclusion, Effective management, Impact.
- **Finance and resources:** Data protection and management, IT, Employment, Finance, Procurement, Property management, Fundraising.
- **Operations:** Trading and managed services, Catering and sustainable aspirations, Swarthmoor Hall, Bookshop, Health and safety, Facilities, Committee Services & Events, Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering, Community.
- **Witness and Worship:** Sustainability, All age community, peacebuilding, Support for meetings, Outreach.

The appendices are the Staff report and Strategic-level Risk Management record. We have received Management Meeting minutes for 27 November, 5 and 11 December, 8 and 22 January and 5 February.

BYMT-2019-02-05 Trustees' news

We receive a report of the activities of Trustees since our last meeting (BYMT-2019-02-05). This also includes a report from the Charity IT Conference attended by David Olver.

BYMT-2019-02-06 Scheme of Delegation

We receive paper BYMT-2019-02-06 which brings a Scheme of Delegation for us to consider. This draws on the governing document, terms of reference for the relevant committees, role descriptions and other documents set out in the paper.

We adopt this Scheme of Delegation as amended in this meeting, asking that it be reviewed at least every two years.

We agree to lay down the Group which developed the Scheme and thank them for their work.

BYMT-2019-02-07 Finance and resources reports

(a) Interim Quarter 4 2018 Financial report

We receive paper BYMT-2019-02-07a. Linda Batten (Treasurer) and Lisa Kiew (Head of Finance and Resources) have explained the main points on the year end position. We note that the level of contributions in 2018 from members and meetings has fallen back to near the £2 million level. We hope that our Fundraising Strategy will start to address the issues.

(b) Finance & Property Committee minutes

We receive the minutes of the BYMT Finance & Property Committee held 24 January 2019 (BYMT-2019-02-07b).

(c) Health, Safety & Environmental Committee annual report 2018

We receive the annual report of the Health, Safety & Environmental Committee which also includes future actions (BYMT-2019-02-07c).

BYMT-2019-02-08 Employment Committee annual report

We receive the annual report of the BYMT Employment Committee 2018 (BYMT-2019-02-08).

BYMT-2019-02-09 Support for Meetings Strategy

Further to minute BYMT-2018-06-11 we receive the Support for Meetings Strategy (BYMT-2019-02-09). This covers all aspects of the centrally managed work which are intended to directly support local and area meetings in Britain. It is proposed that Quaker Life Central Committee has broad oversight of the work.

We adopt this Strategy, recognising - as QLCC did - that a lot of the arrangements are potentially quite fluid so we may need to return to it soon.

We send this minute to Quaker Life Central Committee.

BYMT-2019-02-10 Vibrancy in meetings

Roger Clarke, Clerk of the Vibrancy in Meetings Steering Group, Suzanne Ismail, Head of Networking and Engagement, Quaker Peace & Social Witness, and Sarah Griffith, Project Development Officer, have joined us for this item.

(a) Vibrancy in Meetings Steering Group report

We receive a report from the Vibrancy in Meetings Steering Group (BYMT-2019-02-10a), that Roger Clarke has introduced, together with the Vibrancy in Meetings Project Evaluation Main Report produced by NCVO Charities Evaluation Services in January 2019. Most of us have joined a webinar to hear directly from the evaluator. The Steering Group concludes that the Vibrancy in Meetings programme works. Local Meetings, and Quakers in the pilot regions, feel stronger, more confident, more connected and more sustainable as a result of the activity of the local development workers. The evaluation of the Charities Evaluation Services is unequivocal in highlighting the benefits, and we celebrate this achievement.

(b) Vibrancy Beyond the Pilot update

We receive a paper to update us, and the Woodbrooke Trustees, on progress made in developing and testing options for locally-based work at the end of the current Vibrancy in Meetings pilot programme that Suzanne Ismael has introduced.

(c) Consideration of options

We are grateful for the work to date of the Vibrancy workers, the Vibrancy in Meetings Steering Group and the Beyond the Pilot Group. We recognise the value of the work in pilot regions and we must find a way to take forward the benefits.

The central question for us is how best the essence of the vibrancy work can help us achieve the priorities that we have identified towards "A simple church supported by a simple charity to re-invigorate Quakerism". We have to find an affordable, sustainable and spirit-led solution for the whole of the yearly meeting and not only in the pilot areas.

We ask that work continues on the options to bring costed possibilities to our June 2019 meeting where we can consider them alongside Woodbrooke trustees. We are pleased to hear of the consultation with other bodies that continues to take place. We are not sure that any of the options are yet quite right. Option 3 (full Yearly Meeting coverage of present model) may not provide enough support to the local workers who need to benefit from each other's support and skills. Options 4 (local & Yearly Meeting team) and 5 (regional teams) may be too heavily weighted with specialised skills to meet the local needs, but we have heard that there may be a sweet spot within them that should be developed and tested.

We have worried that there may not be enough Friends available with the community-based skills needed to carry out the vibrancy work across the country, but we are reassured that there are many talented people who would welcome the chance to work for BYM outside London.

We have also discussed management and are sure that any future vibrancy workers should be part of a clear management structure meeting local needs within a nationally agreed framework. Like many people working in the voluntary sector, they would be living out their values within their working life. Specialist skills will still be needed.

We ask that the modelling explores the inter-relationship between a national programme of local vibrancy work and centrally delivered services. It should also look at how the transition could happen from the current model to a future model. It should also explore the cost implications, ensuring that the long-term model is affordable and sustainable and that any short term overall increase in costs can be appropriately covered from reserves.

We send this minute to the Vibrancy in Meetings Steering Group, Woodbrooke Trustees and Quaker Life Central Committee.

BYMT-2019-02-11 Discussion with Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and FWCC Europe and Middle East Section (EMES)

Gretchen Castle, General Secretary FWCC, Ann Floyd, Clerk of Quaker World Relations Committee, Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary EMES; Susanna Mattingly, Sustainability Communications Officer FWCC, have joined us for this item. We heard of the aims and activities of FWCC which they describe under the heading of "Connecting Friends, Crossing Cultures, Changing Lives...through Faith". Also of the work of the EMES which is one of four independent regions of FWCC. We were pleased to hear of the progress of the FWCC Sustainability Programme which is part legacy funded by BYM. This complements and expands on the work of BYM to use the Quaker voice to increase engagement with the consequences of climate change. We thank the Friends for sharing their work with us.

BYMT-2019-02-12 Relationship between BYM and Area Meetings

Mary Aiston of Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC) joins us for this item.

(a) Risk appetite for compliance

We receive a discussion paper (BYMT-2019-02-12) on the relationship between Britain Yearly Meetings and area meetings.

In September 2018 QSC considered a paper, drafted by Mary Aiston, which asked the Committee to consider its appetite for risk in relation to area meetings' compliance with statutory requirements. This paper was sent to BYM Trustees in November (minute BYMT-2018-11-10b refers) and Quaker Life Central Committee (who have yet to consider it). Mary Aiston has explained to us what prompted her to draft the original paper for QSC.

Friends in many parts of the yearly meeting are thinking radically about doing things differently - amalgamating area meetings or reinventing larger regional units to hold trustee responsibilities. We have asked ourselves if our church structures need to change. We want to encourage informed experimentation.

There is risk of going round and round in circles. As a minimum, we need to ensure that ideas are shared between Friends in different parts of the country who are thinking about these things. We are doing this, but wonder if we should do more. As BYM Trustees we do not have legal responsibility for area meetings but we know that any serious issues in an area meeting could affect the whole of the Society of Friends. We do, therefore, need to be aware and ask how we appropriately provide support.

We know that Friends do want support in practical terms including templates and key documents. Trustees need to help identify what actually matters and where real risk lies. Currently, we have a legacy funded project on Simpler Meetings which includes some of this. We recognise that professional support may be needed in the long term and we will need to identify where that should lie.

We wonder if there are ways to make voluntary Quaker expertise more accessible so that Friends can support each other.

We want to encourage soft governance which is good enough - through support - rather than hard governance which is all about enforcement.

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.
Isaac Penington, 1667, Qf&p 10.01

(b) Review of Terms of Reference

Yearly Meeting 2018 asked for a review of Quaker Stewardship Committee and a review of the terms of reference for BYM Trustees; this has yet to begin. There is therefore an opportunity to consider how best in future to locate responsibility for support for compliance in BYM's national structures.

We ask our Nominations Group to bring names of 2 Friends to engage with the forthcoming review of the terms of reference of Quaker Stewardship Committee and BYM Trustees. These Friends will feed in the more detailed thinking from this session.

We send this minute to Quaker Stewardship Committee and Quaker Life Central Committee.

BYMT-2019-02-13 Data protection annual report

We receive the annual report for 2018 from the Staff Data Protection Group (BYMT-2019-02-13).

BYMT-2019-02-14 Safeguarding review update

Further to minute BYMT-2018-11-03, we receive an update on the external review of safeguarding (BYMT-2019-02-14). This review has been conducted by The Athena Project; their report will be made available to us when finalised. Juliet Prager has explained the background to this item to us.

The paper sets out the key findings of the report, which we note. We ask Management Meeting to bring recommendations for action to our next meeting, drawing on the external report and the thinking that is already taking place. We will consider this item fully at our next meeting. We recognise that this is a very important matter.

We agree to appoint a lead trustee for safeguarding, and ask our Nominations Group to bring forward a name to serve for a year in the first instance, expecting that this appointment will be made between meetings. The safeguarding lead trustee would:

- Monitor progress;
- Ask questions of Management Meeting;
- Be available for informal conversations with senior staff if needed;
- Ensure this remains on Trustees' agenda;
- Encourage other trustees;
- Be prepared to have a criminal record check.

We expect to review the role of lead trustee for safeguarding in a year's time.

BYMT-2019-02-15 Strategic Priorities

We receive paper BYMT-2019-02-15 outlining a set of Strategic Priorities for the next 5-10 years. These set out how BYM's centrally managed work will contribute to achieving Meeting for Sufferings vision of Our Faith in the Future. The Strategic Priorities have now been considered by Meeting for Sufferings and both central committees. The draft Strategic Priorities have been welcomed by Quakers, who have told us they are simple, clear and relevant.

We adopt these Strategic Priorities. We see them as having the following purposes:

- To inform planning, so that committees and staff use resources effectively;
- To prioritise work in order to make the most difference with available resource;
- To fundraise by letting Quakers and non-Quakers know what their money is needed for;
- To enable us to review so that we know our work is making a difference;
- To improve two-way communication between Quakers locally and our national structures, strengthening a sense of shared purpose.

We recognise that many bodies, including ourselves, Management Meeting and Central and Standing Committees, will have a role to play in making these Strategic Priorities real across the centrally managed work of Britain Yearly Meeting over the coming years.

We will identify at future meetings which items relate directly to delivering the Strategic Priorities as well as using them a lens through which we consider everything that we do. We want the Strategic Priorities to help drive change.

We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings, Management Meeting and to the Central and other Standing Committees.

BYMT-2019-02-16 Meeting for Sufferings preparation

We have discussed our input into Meeting for Sufferings on 6 April 2019.

BYMT-2019-02-17 Reviewing the meeting

We have reviewed the meeting.

BYMT-2019-02-18 Time with Recording Clerk

We have spent time with the Recording Clerk.

BYMT-2019-02-19 Time without staff

We have spent time without staff.

We part, hoping to meet again on 5 April 2019 for training and to accept the BYM Trustees' Annual Report & Financial Statements.

Caroline Nursey
Clerk

Diversity & Inclusion

Background

In 2017, Yearly Meeting asked Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) to consider diversity in our committee and organisational structures, and particularly to look at how Quakers can remove barriers and actively seek wider participation in the full life of our meetings.

Area Meetings and committees were asked to consider this, using three questions. To help MfS with this work, BYM employed an Inclusion and Diversity Co-ordinator. The purpose of this temporary post is to help all Quakers in Britain consider diversity and how best to be fully inclusive; and to decide what needs to be done next.

Edwina Peart started work in June 2018. Since then she has:

- collected responses from AMs and committees
- conducted a survey
- organised a national gathering
- met with and listened to Quaker meetings, committees, groups and individuals
- provided advice, guidance and practical help
- supported Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee which has been preparing a Yearly Meeting to examine our privileges and assumptions of privilege
- worked closely with Woodbrooke and with Nim Njuguna whose Eva Koch scholarship focused on 'Becoming Diversity Champions'
- researched previous Quaker discernment and action
- gathered insights and ideas from other faith groups, Yearly Meetings and organisations

Edwina Peart brought an interim report to MfS in October last year. MfS/18/10/11 noted *'Meetings and committees are strongly encouraged to start or continue how we can remove barriers and seek wider participation...'*

This is Edwina's second report to MfS. At our meeting she will explain more about her work and insights, and we will have time to reflect together in small groups as well as in plenary.

Introduction

Thank you for inviting me back to Meeting for Sufferings. I appreciate it and want to make the best use of this opportunity to update you on what I have been doing; share information on what I have learned about who we are as Quakers; give some indication as to what needs to happen to continue to support and develop this area of work further.

This paper builds on my first report and offers a definition of diversity that I have found useful as a working tool. It provides an update on additional responses received to the three questions initially sent out by MfS. The diversity and inclusion survey, its shortcomings and some provisional findings will be discussed. The national gathering on diversity and inclusion held at Woodbrooke in January 2019 will also be addressed, both as an important piece of work that I have organised and in terms of its impact and reception based on evaluation reports and written comments received so far.

I present this information as sources of data that contribute to building a nuanced picture of where we are as a faith community, which in turn speaks to our potential direction of travel. I will give a brief overview of what I have been doing, including areas of work I have wished to develop but have been unable to. The final section will suggest some principles for moving forward.

Defining diversity and inclusion

Without a clear definition it is difficult to form goals, develop strategies or measure progress. My working definition is:

Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate individuals and groups of people from one another. This can be in terms of protected characteristics outlined in the 2010 Equalities Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) and also dimensions such as language and class. When we embrace and celebrate our rich differences, power is unleashed.

Inclusion describes the efforts and practices that enable and support the equal treatment of difference, including those that are self-evident or inherent. Diversity and inclusion involve inward and outward perspectives.

Responses to MfS questions

As a reminder the questions were

1. In what ways is your meeting already diverse?
2. In what ways could it be more diverse?
3. What would help it become more diverse? What are the opportunities and barriers?

These questions were sent to all meetings/groups/committees. Responses were varied ranging from individual to area, a minute to a report of a workshop held to discuss the issues. The following brief analysis has to be read alongside the initial analysis (in my October 2018 report to MfS) offered. I have received 11 additional responses taking the overall total to 49. The detail reflects my developing understanding of Quaker structure and practices, as well as my own observations and ongoing conversations with Friends.

1. In what ways is your meeting already diverse?

Quaker groups that are convened around specific issues, or for particular constituents often assert greater diversity than areas or local meetings do. Women are well represented, as is sexuality and geographical location. There is some diversity in age range, career stage, personal experience and urban and rural settings. Much is made of the difference between urban and rural communities and the implications this has for diversity. There is a tendency to claim diversity as something we do, i.e. in various aspects of our work, rather than who we are.

2. In what ways could it be more diverse?

We do not represent the diversity of British society, however beneath our superficial similarities lie a range of diverse identities, experiences and perspectives. I find this point very interesting. It picks up what cultural critic Stuart Hall, called “gross physical signifiers” and suggests we cannot rely upon them as indicators of diversity. They often mask less visible differences and do not necessarily reflect power and privilege. We are not racially or socially diverse.

3. What would help it become more diverse? What are the opportunities and barriers?

Barriers to diversity that are frequently mentioned are the restrictions imposed by the social, cultural and geographical environment and infrastructure. These include physical location of the meeting house, the social and economic composition of the surrounding area and services such as public transport. Quaker organisation in terms of day and time of meeting, the length of service required and the intensity of commitment demanded of role holders are all raised as factors that restrict wide participation.

Reading through the ideas listed that might help increase diversity, it struck me that these can also be the benefits of diversity. For example, encouraging family activities, older Friends becoming more computer literate, encouraging more discussion about spirituality and Quaker structure. A recurring underlying point is that change will only happen when diversity is made a priority. There is good practice that already exists.

Some committees have a specified number of young adult Quakers in their membership. This approach could be widely adopted by nominations committees who could seek to assess diversity as is currently represented and the gaps. The difficulty of such a process does not mean we shouldn't try. Rich conversation and deep worship can be experienced in meetings that are not face to face. It is liberating to experience this and include it as an additional way of working together. New ways of sharing information, different styles of engagement can be imagined more creatively as a way of facilitating greater inclusion.

Some response spoke poignantly of the ways in which particular practices, such as the creation of a minute that captures the sense of a meeting, can also leave a wider information gap. This is filled by informal reporting and sharing of experiences within what is often perceived as an inner circle. This isolates newcomers and those outside of this network. Transparency in structure and decision making promotes inclusion. Prioritising diversity could allow our work to reach more groups and increase social inclusion within British society.

Diversity and inclusion survey

I initiated and ran the survey as an important part of scoping the Quaker community. The purpose is to provide a baseline audit, to tell us something about Quakers in Britain today. It requests individual responses. The following analysis of the data gathered from the survey is preliminary. At the time of writing this report, the survey is still open. More importantly, I have not had the time necessary for detailed examination. However, I wanted to give a flavour of the issues the survey has raised, the responses, and to start the process of considering what this might mean and what it might indicate for future work. 1693 people responded. A handful spoilt their forms with nursery rhymes and “none of your business” as answers. The vast majority, over 99% engaged with the questions even when they felt it was impossible to answer them all. I found many of the comments in the additional information box illuminating.

The first thing to note is that I make no claims of representation. It is a self-selecting sample. This means that everything that follows is not true of the Quaker community, but only of the less than 10% of the community that responded to the survey. Within this, it is the largest survey that I am aware of that has been undertaken with British Quakers. As part of this, later I will try to plot the geographical spread of answers, possibly correlating this to the spread of meetings that responded to the initial three questions. Question 7, which requests information on physical, sensory, learning or mental health impairments has provided rich detail. I cannot do this justice here, but will analyse and write this up as part of a full report on the survey. For this paper I want to introduce the range of answers given to some questions and comment briefly on the implications of this.

Q1 Ethnicity

Responses were almost completely white British/European, including Welsh, Scottish and Irish. This category also included white mixed. 26 respondents identified as mixed race, black British, British Asian, British Chinese, black Caribbean and black African. This is roughly 1.5%. 14 respondents identified as Jewish, 0.8% roughly. Two points of interest arise for me. Firstly, the mixed race population is young, which corresponds to anecdotal evidence gathered on my visits to meetings. Many people spoke of their mixed race grandchildren. Secondly, the category was completely open and many comments were made about the irrelevance of this question, yet the answers were surprisingly uniform. There was only one response that I had to look up.

Q2 Nationality

As expected, this category was mostly British, which includes Welsh, Scottish and Irish. 47 respondents identified as European nationals, just over 2.5%. American, Canadian, Australian and a sprinkling of South African nationalities are also present. The greater presence of “other” white nationalities compared to British black or Asian people is worth noting. Is race more significant than culture?

Q3 Age

187 respondents are aged under 40, this is just over 11%. I found this figure surprising. It may be that those under 40 are more comfortable with surveys and divulging personal information. More work needs to be done on this question with possible comparisons made to the data held in the tabular statement.

Q5 Sexual orientation

251 respondents identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, queer and fluid. This is over 14% of respondents. Clearly this is an area in which a range of difference finds a place. It is a difference that is not necessarily apparent. It is an area in which Quakers have done a lot of work and have led the faith community on same sex marriage. I feel that the very public support that Quakers have demonstrated in this area of inequality and the many discussions that have taken place in the community have contributed to this being a welcoming and safe space. It is impossible to know whether gay, lesbian and bisexual people have carved a space for themselves within Quakers or the community more widely created a space within which these groups feel welcome. Either way this has implications for where we choose to focus our energy in the future.

Q6 Gender

31 people identified as non-binary, transgender, agender, intersex, gender fluid and androgynous. This is just under 2%. Some respondents chose terms such as cisgender indicating their awareness of current debates and emerging terms for engaging with this. Others identified as "normal." The range suggests that the gender diversity debate is not an issue that exists only in the wider society and it is one we can't choose to ignore.

Q7 Class

128 people identified as working class, 7.5%. This fits in with the self-image of Quakers as a middle class, well-educated community. Of interest to me is the fact that many who identified as working class included prefixes such as educated, or justifications for claiming this such as housing situation. I am reminded that on visits to Quaker meetings I am often told that an assumption is made regarding the class of members and attenders that is not necessarily correct. However, as the default it is difficult to refute. This also has implications for how information is shared and the reimbursement process for expenses. In my own work I have tried to access funds prior to spending on travel, childcare and necessary purchases and this has been difficult.

Q8 Additional information

314 people provided additional information. Roughly 66% did not say what they thought of the survey overall. Of the remaining 33%, this was evenly split between those thinking it was a waste of time and those thanking me. Many people used this section to identify other aspects of diversity that were not raised. Language is one that is mentioned frequently, north and south disparities, the lack of conservatives (party political and theological) and a background or connection to Quakers. Many lamented the use of and need for labels. A feeling emerging from this information is that Quakers who are interested in diversity and inclusion can satisfy this urge through activism, for example, through work in prisons or in specific campaigns. Others are focussed on searching for spiritual understanding and community. I think these aspects can be usefully combined to the benefit of both.

The following is an excerpt from an email that was shared with me.

“I want community, moral guidance, space to think, and above all responsibility for myself, my thoughts and actions. For me, the core message of Quaker meeting is love – love yourself, love your fellow people, love the planet – and I think the world today is in desperate need of this message. Using the meeting as a welcoming and safe space to start an inward dialogue and feel supported and accepted by a group would be an amazing thing for so many.”

For me, this strikes at the heart of diversity and inclusion.

National gathering on diversity and inclusion

The advert for the event read:

“A diverse and inclusive community where all are welcomed has been an ever present aspiration for Quakers. This conference aims to equip Friends to make it a reality, offering key note speeches, workshops and opportunities for informal discussion. It aims to raise and explore issues of inclusion and diversity paying particular attention to current manifestations. It does this within a larger context of faith organisations and individual responsibility. We welcome everyone with an interest in this area.”

50 people attended the gathering. The aim was to raise awareness and start a conversation. It was challenging and uncomfortable, but I feel the aims were met. The following quotes have been taken from the reports we were sent and evaluations forms. My sense is that they capture the essence of the gathering more clearly than my words can and include thoughts from conversations that I was not a part of.

“Throughout the weekend we constantly returned to the realisation that the way in which class, gender, race, physical or mental impairment create gateways are all just symptoms of the same malaise, the difficulty people have in treating others with respect, dignity, love, that Jesus demanded of us, the need to answer that of God in everybody. If sin is falling short, then we have all sinned, can we take such a realisation into the silence and hold it in the light? Can we forgive ourselves and change our attitudes, give up our undeserved invisible power, and gain the true power of community?”

“On Sunday, reeling from Saturday’s information overload, we turned to how to take things forward.

We had recognised the mission and leadership of our speakers – and asked why do Friends struggle with the whole idea of leadership these days, when historically we have named and respected leaders? We found it is becoming more difficult to locate Quakers in a shared Spirituality, but perhaps more in our shared behaviour. So is our white, middle classness (etc.) important, can we break out of it? Some asked, how do we really feel about evangelism? Do we want more, or different Quakers?

Someone said, “It’s not just what we do that matters, it is how we are.” We do need leaders from wider backgrounds. We cannot change our own backgrounds, BUT we can become gateways, not gatekeepers.”

“The last day was challenging in relation to the robust discussion held during worship on the Sunday morning. I reflected on this for about a week afterwards. This said, it was also good, however uncomfortable to hear both sides and to just feel the anger and emotion of the person. On reflection, I feel that this could actually have been an example of the Spirit ‘doing stuff’. It’s reality. Gritty realism confronting an issue directly, not something we Brits are typically good at.”

“Friends are aware of race and gender issues, but often remarkably uniformed about class issues. Middle class people tend to think that ours is the ‘default’ position and that our values are the right values. We need our eyes to be opened.”

“A first step is to examine our personal perspectives in relation to issues of equality and diversity in the public realm, to take seriously the information that casts light upon our own prejudices and privileges and thereby shows us something about our unearned advantages and the power these give us. Becoming aware of our invisible badges is a first step to seeing how these might deter others.

In the gathering we were prompted to recognise aspects of inequality and injustice in our history and currently; I realised later that the prompts were mostly reminders rather than new information. This made me wonder: do we really not know about – or do we turn a blind eye to – the impact of inequality and exclusion in our society and within the Society of Friends in particular? Do we not notice, because we are used to living within the comfort zone of our familiar lives and Meetings, the ways in which systems have come to disadvantage many and to privilege a few?”

Diversity and inclusion project

What else have I done?

In addition to the survey and national gathering I have visited a number of local and area meetings, both leading and participating in workshops and discussions. I am working with Brighton to run a series of meetings exploring gender diversity in a faith based and loving way. We have held the first of these sessions successfully. Two more are planned. I am working with Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (and have found this fruitful and informative) and am scheduled to run a parallel session on the work of this project at Yearly Meeting. I act as a point of contact for staff and members of the wider Quaker community on issues of diversity and inclusion. This includes suggesting materials, discussing formats, providing advice and listening to the concerns that are expressed.

I have developed links with the Vibrancy Project, Quaker Life and Young Adults Project. This is deepening my understanding of the range of views and positions held on these issues across the community. I am also developing my ability to cultivate specific approaches for different contexts. There is much work to be done, but there is also a genuine wish to meaningfully engage with issues of equality. The pace, support offered and way topics are raised is critical.

I have yet to develop pilot projects in the manner I initially envisaged. This is still something I think is important. I would like to initiate work on some of the ideas generated from the gathering, alongside contributing to racial justice Sunday, for example, and work with Nim Njuguna to develop diversity allies. I want to do further work on the data gathered from the survey and work with Woodbrooke to develop a programme that supports this area of work. I have already committed to a course in 2020.

I believe that the project is having a positive impact and that important work is being initiated. I would like to see this continue. I would like to be a part of embedding it in the Quaker faith community. It is part of Quaker values. Expectations have been raised and a process begun, I want to build upon this momentum. The principles that I believe should guide this are

- Nuanced, bespoke activities that start where we are. This differs across the country, committees and across issues
- An approach that comprises individual, community, country and international elements. All of these are important and the links between them strengthens each element
- Consistence in maintaining diversity and inclusion as a priority, albeit with a flexible emphasis that takes account of changing circumstances.

I have learned from working with Friends that listening and walking alongside them as they think about and act on their personal promptings brings beautiful results. Results that go further and reach deeper than I have imagined.

Edwina Peart
Diversity and Inclusion Co-ordinator

Home Groups

Please note:

These groups are slightly different from last time. Anyone who feels they'd prefer to join a different group is welcome to do that – but please keep groups to a manageable maximum size of 15.

Friends who aren't representing an AM (BYM Trustees, and representatives of Central and standing committees, members of YFGM and young Friends) are asked to join whichever group seems most appropriate.

1. Ada Salter 1

1. North East Thames AM – Anne Smith or Jane Natai
2. North London AM – Anna Sharman or Arthur Charlton
3. North West London AM – Ruth Hawthorn or Emily Milner
4. Cambridgeshire AM – Sue Brock-Hollinshead or Hannah Morrow
5. Ipswich & Diss AM – Elaine Green or Avril Dawson
6. Mid-Essex AM – Deirdre Haslam or Brian Wardrop
7. Norfolk & Waveney AM – Jenny Routledge or Silas Price
8. Thaxted AM – Sue Moloney or Margaret Somerville

2. Ada Salter 2

1. South East London AM – Rowena Loverance or Jo-Anne Fraser
2. South London AM – Bob Rogers or Eva Kalmus
3. West Kent AM – Jill Clarke or Janet Ferguson
4. East Kent AM – Danny Chesterman or Caroline Howden
5. Sussex East AM – Peter Bolwekk or Peter Aviss
6. Sussex West AM – Colin Holliday or Neil MacDonald
7. West Weald AM – Mariu Hurriaga or Rosemary Elias
8. Surrey & Hampshire Border AM – Ivan Hutnik
9. Kingston & Wandsworth AM – Keith Walton or Kim Boyd
10. London West AM – Simon Risley or Sandra Horsfall

3. Ada Salter 3

1. Brighouse West Yorkshire AM – Rosemary Daley or Ann Banks
2. Central Yorkshire AM – Ruth McTighe or Jane Pinder
3. Craven & Keighley AM – Richard Vesey or Keith Reeves
4. Leeds AM – Martin Ford or Richard Levitt
5. Pickering & Hull AM – Sam McNair or Christine Fellowes
6. Sheffield & Balby AM – Rosemary Roberts or Craig Barnett
7. York AM – James McCarthy or Sarah Allen
8. Northumbria AM – Barbara Bone or Steve Pullan
9. Teesdale & Cleveland AM – Mary Wilkinson or Gaynor Hemming
10. Wensleydale & Swaledale AM – Edna Rossiter or Ian Hunter Smart

4. Waldo Williams 1

1. East Scotland AM – Alyson Buchan or Robert Thompson
2. North Scotland AM – Bridgid Hess or Mary Dower
3. South East Scotland AM – Henry Thompson or Kate Arnot
4. West Scotland AM – Barbara Robinson or Ed Tyler
5. General Meeting for Scotland – Ann Kerr or Mike Shilson
6. Cumberland AM – Bob Pritchard or David Day
7. Kendal & Sedbergh AM – Chris Bullard or Pamela Coren
8. Swarthmoor (SW Cumbria) AM – Sue Tompkins or Cindy Metcalfe
9. Lancashire Central & North AM – Liz Eddington or Elizabeth Guar

5. Waldo Williams 2

1. Mid Wales AM – David Jones or Carol Satterthwaite
2. North Wales AM – Helen Still or Ros Morley
3. South Wales AM – Julia Lim or Carol Rakodi
4. Southern Marches AM – Julian Rutherford or Maggie Taylor-Sanders
5. Meeting of Friends in Wales – Gethin Evans
6. Worcestershire & Shropshire AM – Andrew Jameson or David Bowgett
7. Gloucestershire AM – Colin Brown or Pat Beard
8. East Cheshire AM – Jacqui Moore
9. Hardshaw and Mann AM – Maureen Jackson or Diana Jeter
10. Manchester & Warrington AM – Marion McNaughton or Steven Johnson
11. Pendle Hill AM – Gordon Benson or Pip Swancott
12. Wirral & Chester AM – Alan Vernon or Sheila Houldin

6. Sarah Fell

1. Banbury & Evesham AM – Susie Tombs or Lynne Richardson
2. Central England AM – Cathy Khurana or Claire Bowman
3. Leicester AM – Fiona Cownie or Chris Myers
4. Lincolnshire AM – Mark Lilley or David Howard
5. Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM – Maggie Lightowler Cook or Judith Green
6. Southern East Anglia AM – Robert Parkes
7. Staffordshire AM – Win Sutton or Rosemary Barnett
8. Northamptonshire AM – Karen Draycott or Sally Lewis
9. Luton & Leighton AM – Jayne Meadows or Neil Morgan
10. Hertford & Hitchin AM – Kathy Hindle or Katey Earle
11. Chilterns AM – Jane Edmonds or Anthony Philpott

7. Abraham Darby

1. Devon AM – Jacqui Poole or Sally Hartog
2. Bristol AM – Heather Lister or Helen Chambers
3. Cornwall AM – Julie Taylor-Brown or Glynis Davies
4. Dorset & South Wiltshire AM – Jane Fowles or Rachel Celia
5. Mid-Somerset AM – Gill Greenfield or Andy Hall
6. North Somerset AM – Shella Parry or Shena Deuchars
7. West Somerset AM – Fran Hicks or Kathy Gollin
8. West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM – Jane Stephenson or Ruth Cook
9. Bournemouth Coastal AM – Anthony Woolhouse or Kate Mellor
10. Hampshire & Islands AM – sarah coote or Jane Wilde
11. Mid-Thames AM – Doreen Osborne or Jean Scott-Barr
12. Oxford & Swindon AM – Bridget Walker or Tina Leonard

Meeting for Sufferings 2019 04 06 – minutes received

1. National Health Service

Bournemouth Coastal AM held on 26 January 2019

2. Brexit

Meeting of Friends in Wales held on 23 February 2019

1. National Health Service

Bournemouth Coastal AM held 26th January 2019

Minute 19.02) NHS Concern

Our calling to uphold a universal, publicly provided Health Service (last brought to our November 2018 meeting)

We accept the wording brought forward by the drafting group (attached).

We ask our Clerk to forward our Concern to Juliet Prager of the Recording Clerk's Office for possible future consideration at Meeting for Sufferings.

The Clerk agrees to follow Juliet Prager's advice for further circulation.

This is an urgent, Quakerly message about a widespread, national issue.

We all have our contacts and are encouraged to use them.

Healthcare in the UK is not fully joined up, so Members of Parliament, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Councillors all have influence and would benefit from hearing from us. Personal contact is better than e-mail.

Sowing small seeds is effective, especially when supported by Swanage Friends' booklet of stories.

We encourage Friends to do all they can at whatever level and to share what they have done with the Meeting.

37,000 people, 9 councils and 2 MPs have given support to the local campaign, Defend Dorset NHS.

Debby Monkhouse, of Swanage Meeting, who originally brought the Concern, thanks Friends for their support.

Could we, at a future meeting, think further about action, both already taken and proposed?

In Friendship,

Tom Sanders
Clerk

Arrangements Group has considered this carefully. It knows that AM agendas are full and believes there is limited appetite for another significant 'consultation' at this time.

Friends in local meetings are working to address inequalities in very many ways; circumstances vary widely and while some meetings may feel inspired by Bournemouth Coastal AM to take similar action, others may not.

Members of MfS will recall that Quaker Peace and Social Witness has programmes working on behalf of and with Friends, focusing on economic and social justice; and staff can work alongside and support local Quakers in their witness.

So, Arrangements Group suggests MfS could encourage AMs to reflect on this, and consider whether to take action, or to link up with Bournemouth Coastal AM – but that this should be optional, and without any expectation that the matter would come back to Meeting for Sufferings.

Bournemouth Coastal AM has prepared three documents which may be helpful, which are all available from the Bournemouth and Coastal AM website

<http://www.quakerbournemouth.org/upcoming-events/>

- Our calling to uphold a universal, public provided Health service – a summary of the concern, its substance and history
- Facts and Figures related to the concern
- 'What the NHS Means to Me' – stories and poems collected at a Swanage Quaker outreach event in June 2018

A draft minute might read:

MfS 2019/04/XX NHS: Bournemouth Coastal Area Meeting concern

We receive minute XXX of Bournemouth Coastal Area Meeting which has adopted a concern to uphold a universal, publicly provided Health Service. This has grown from and builds on local circumstances, including proposed changes to health services in Dorset.

We forward Bournemouth Coastal AM's minute to Area Meetings, encouraging them if appropriate to learn more about the concern and to consider taking action. AM clerks are welcome to read documents available on the Bournemouth and Coastal AM website, and to contact the AM's clerk for further information.

2. Brexit

Meeting of Friends in Wales at Aberystwyth on Saturday 23 February 2019

2019.08 Reports

a) ii) A statement on Brexit: what should we do?

Focus Group has brought us a statement on Brexit: (Britain's withdrawal from the European Union)

Meeting of Friends in Wales and Brexit

Meeting of Friends in Wales represents all Quakers living or working in Wales. The core belief of Quakers is that there is something in all people which may be referred to as "that of God". Consequently we try to live in such a way that reflects our experience of the potential of all people. This is why, throughout our over 350 year history, we have spoken out for peace, equality, truth, simplicity and sustainability.

Welsh Quakers who voted in the referendum on membership of the European Union will have voted for both Leave and Remain. There will not be a consensus for how the country should act with regard to its trade arrangements in future.

However this discussion has made us aware of both the hostile nature of the discourse and of concerns which are shared by all about our society. There is a strong consensus among Friends of concern for many aspects of our present situation.

Alistair and Gill Nelson (Bridgend LQM) have reminded us that whatever may be right or wrong with the European Union its original purpose was defined by Robert Schuman, its founder in 1950 as "*to make war not only unthinkable but materially impossible*". It was created just a few years after the second of two world wars where many millions of people had perished, and where people dreaded that this would happen again. The whole reason for the existence of the EU was to keep the peace in Europe and the Nobel Prize was given to the EU in recognition that this had been achieved, some 62 years later. We must never underestimate what peace means, and how little economics and tariffs matter if we do not have it.

The EU, with the UK as one of its leading members, has been instrumental in achieving that peace and also the standards of work practice and food safety that we enjoy today. It is essential that the UK finds ways of maintaining those standards and working with our neighbours to continue to improve the conditions of life for all.

The United Kingdom has become an unequal society. We are distressed by the inequality of there being a few extremely wealthy people while huge numbers are finding it ever harder to manage and far too many are pushed over the brink into oppressive poverty, having to depend on food banks. We are proud of the progressive nature of the Welsh Government and the way in which they have

prioritised the well-being of future generations, but many present policies of the UK Government give us cause for concern.

We are distressed when we see people who have lived here, and contributed generously to our communities for many years, possibly for most, or even all, of their lives, having to apply for permission to stay in the country that has become their home. People who have been living and working here for years should not have to apply for “settled status”.

We are appalled by the concept of the “hostile environment”, in particular in the way it has been applied to people who came to the UK on their parents’ passports and are now being hounded to produce proof of their British citizenship, proof which is often difficult to find because of previous actions by the Home Office. Many people will believe that this scandal came to an end with the publicity some months ago of the stories of people being deported, known as the scandal of the Windrush Generation, but this is still going on.

For the Wales Focus Group of MFW

Peter Hussey

Clerk

We are grateful to the group for their work and send this statement as amended to Meeting for Sufferings for their consideration.

Mewn Cyfeillgarwch / In Friendship

Catherine James and Tricia Jones co-clerks

Note from the clerks

This minute reached us a few days before the agenda was finalised. We are aware that the political situation is changing day by day, although at the time of writing this note, little political progress is being made. We will be meeting shortly after the long-planned ‘Brexit date’ of 29th March.

At the same time, core Quaker concerns named in this minute – our call to work for peace, equality, and a welcoming and inclusive society – will remain with us.

We’re also mindful that Yearly Meeting, at the end of May, is another opportunity for Friends to gather and reflect together.

So we are including this minute in the MfS papers. We will reflect together before the meeting and propose a way to respond, bearing in mind the situation at the time and other pressures on our agenda. It may be helpful to allocate time for full consideration at our July meeting.

Organisations applying to become Quaker recognised bodies

Introduction

This paper gives details of applications for registration as Quaker recognised bodies. Staff have looked at the documentation provided by each of the organisations and consider that the criteria for listing them as Quaker recognised bodies have been met.

Background

In 2015, Meeting for Sufferings agreed a new way for BYM to relate to other Quaker bodies (minute MfS 2015/12/17).

- The guidelines for groups that would like to be a QRB are also on the BYM Website www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/quaker-groups
- Paper MfS 2018/07/15 gives a full introduction to Quaker recognised bodies.

A Quaker recognised body (QRB) is an independent group where concerned Friends explore a common interest, seek affirmation, or carry out witness. It wishes to be recognised as a Quaker body because its Quaker roots are an important part of its identity or constitution.

The process aims to clarify benefits and responsibilities for QRBs and BYM. It's also a way to strengthen links between centrally-managed work and the wide range of exciting Quaker work being done by other groups, helping build a vibrant Society of Friends.

So far, Meeting for Sufferings has registered 61 Quaker recognised bodies.

Request for registration

The following organisations have applied to become Quaker recognised bodies.

This organisation appeared in the 2016 Book of Meetings in the list of schools:

1. The Mount School, York

This organisation is five years old; it hasn't previously appeared in the Book of Meetings. It is the result of personal contacts between Quakers here and abroad:

2. Green Olive Trust

One free-standing group which grew out of The Leaveners:

3. Quaker Music Network

Meeting for Sufferings is asked to approve these organisations as Quaker recognised bodies.

Michael S Booth
Church Government Adviser
Recording Clerk's Office

1 **The Mount School York**

Aims: The Mount School is an independent Quaker School that educates girls from 2 to 18 and boys from aged 2 to 4. It is a day and boarding School of approximately 230 pupils aged 2 to 18.

Governance: The school is owned by Quakers in Yorkshire. The school is governed by a local Governing Body which is appointed by Quakers in Yorkshire. The business of meetings is conducted according to the Quaker business model.

Constitution: The school has a formal constitution as laid out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association. It is a company limited by guarantee no:01686186 and a registered charity no: 513646.

Type of Group: External

Foundation: 1785

Publications and activities: Education, teaching to GCSE and A Level

Membership: 230 pupils 100+staff

Finance: Income of £4million and similar turnover. Accounts are audited and available on the Charity Commission website.

Winding up: Provision is made in the company' memorandum of association for winding up if necessary. Any remaining assets would be passed Quakers in Yorkshire. Archives: Held in School and at Borthwick Institute York University

Current contact details: Adrienne Richmond, Principal, The Mount School, Dalton Terrace, York, YO24 4DD

Email: principal@mountschoolyork.co.uk

Tel: 01904 66 7500

Website: www.mountschoolyork.co.uk

Staff link: Recording Clerk, Paul Parker

2 Green Olive Trust

Aims: The Green Olive Trust UK provides educational opportunities for orphans and other disadvantaged children in rural Western Kenya. This is an area where there is widespread poverty. Many children are orphaned as a result of violent conflict, and AIDS and other diseases. Primary education is free in Kenya but many bright children are prevented by lack of funding from progressing to high school and university. The project arises out of personal contacts between Quakers in Lewes, UK and Quakers in Kenya. The Green Olive Foundation in Kenya works closely with the schools in the region and acts as our administrator in Kakamega. Donations will support suitably qualified students through high school, college or university so they have the opportunity to reach their true potential.

Governance: Green Olive Trust has sent BYM their Trust deed, risk assessment and safeguarding policy. Registered charity no. 1165906.

Constitution: The Green Olive Trust has sent its Trust deed.

Type of Group: External

Foundation: 2014

Publications and activities: Website and annual newsletters

Membership: Six trustees and an informal group of supporters

Finance: Funded by individual donors giving regular or one-off donations, local meeting collections and one or two fundraising events each year. They have sent BYM their accounts for 2016 and 2017.

Winding up: Included in the Trust deed.

Current contact details: Bronwyn Harwood, Secretary

Email: admin@greenolivetrust.co.uk

Website: www.greenolivetrust.co.uk

Staff link: Ann Pfeiffer, Grants Programme Officer

3 Quaker Music Network

Aims: The Quaker Music Network was formed out of the Leaveners with the intention initially of keeping the tradition of Choral and Chamber Music weekends alive. These have been held since 1994 and enable both instrumentalists and singers to make music together in a Quaker atmosphere. Once fully established with regular events it may be possible to become an umbrella for other Quaker music-making projects.

Governance: A committee nominated to and appointed by a General Meeting act as the Trustees.

Constitution: Charitable constitution adopted by the first General Meeting in February 2018.

Type of Group: Free-standing

Foundation: 2017

Publications and activities: The first Choral and Chamber weekend was held in February 2018 at Charney Manor, the second in February 2019 at Cober Hill and a further event is already planned for February 2020 at High Leigh.

Membership: Approximately 90 members at present.

Finance: Approximately £8,000 per year income and expenditure. The Leaveners transferred £3,000 for the general fund, and £9,766 consisting of the Will Wallis Bursary Fund, to Quaker Music Network.

Winding up: Any decision to wind up must be made at a General Meeting. Any money or property remaining after payment of debts will be given to another Quaker charity.

Current contact details: Jackie Fowler, Committee member
Email: quakermusicnetwork@gmail.com

Staff link: Alistair Fuller, Head of Ministry and Outreach.

Our draft minute might read:

MfS 2019/04/XX Quaker Recognised Bodies

Further to minute MfS/15/12/17, we receive paper MfS 2019/02/12 recommending groups for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies.

We agree to register the following groups for five years, with registration to be reviewed by April 2024:

External

The Mount School, York

Green Olive Trust

Free-standing

Quaker Music Network

Draft Letter of Greeting from Britain Yearly Meeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting 2019

Introduction

Introduction Each year, representatives of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) attend Yearly Meetings in other parts of Europe. BYM also sends a letter of greetings, drafted by Quaker World Relations Committee and signed by the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings (MfS).

Recently, recognising that BYM and Ireland Yearly Meeting (IYM) have a particular relationship, MfS has approved the letter to IYM.

This year, IYM will be held at The High School, Rathgar, Dublin on 25–28 April 2019. The Ireland Yearly Meeting website is at: <https://quakers-in-ireland.ie>

Europe and Middle East Section (EMES) of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) has a website gives information about Quakers in other parts of Europe - <http://fwccemes.org>

If you want to suggest amendments to the draft letter, please email them to sufferings@quaker.org.uk to reach us **by the end of Thursday 4th April**.

A draft minute might read:

MfS 2019/04/XX Letter of greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting

We receive from Quaker World Relations Committee a draft for our letter of greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting to be held at The High School, Rathgar, Dublin on 25–28 April 2019 (paper MfS 2019/04/12).

We ask the clerk to sign the letter on our behalf.

Draft letter of greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting

Dear Friends

We send our loving greetings to Friends at Ireland Yearly Meeting, holding you in the light as you gather together. We offer our prayerful support and fellowship as you meet. Britain Yearly Meeting greatly values being part of the European family of Friends and we will continue to be European Friends come what may.

At a time of political and religious turmoil, early Friends as a people were gathered, guided and ordered by God. From their experience of the immediacy of the presence of Christ sprang the form of worship and the way of life which became the distinctive testimonies of Friends, and which were upheld with courage in the face of great persecution.

(from the beginning of Qf&p chapter 19)

Britain Yearly Meeting is embarking upon the creation of a new Book of Discipline to replace *Quaker faith & practice*. We have asked our revision committee to be prayerful, joyful, creative and bold. We hope that the process of revision will help us to be more resilient for an uncertain future and that it will act as a catalyst for renewal and a prompt to work on matters around sustainability.

Quakers are diverse in matters of belief and the language we use to describe them: that is to be celebrated. We also experience in our meetings, unity and one-ness in the depths of our worship together. We are starting to explore how we might become a simple church supported by a simple charity, in the expectation that being distinctively Quaker, integrated and well-governed in all we do will reinvigorate British Quakerism.

We hope and pray that your time together will be inspirational, and you will find ways of being faithful to your spiritual calling.

We commend our representatives, <names>, to your loving care.

Yours, in Friendship,

Anne Ullathorne
Clerk Meeting for Sufferings

N.b. the last sentence will be omitted if we don't know the names of both representatives.

Vibrancy in Meetings: beyond the pilot

This paper is to update Meeting for Sufferings on the Vibrancy in Meetings pilot programme, recent evaluation findings, and on the options being considered by Woodbrooke and BYM trustees to build on the pilot.

This session will be a chance for Trustees to hear from Sufferings reps before making decisions about the future of this work in June.

1. Background

The Vibrancy in Meetings (ViM) pilot programme is exploring whether having locally-based staff can help meetings to thrive, becoming stronger, more connected, confident, engaged, and sustainable.

The project was set up as joint initiative between Woodbrooke and Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM). It is one response to some of the challenges faced by the yearly meeting, such as declining and aging membership patterns, the growing demand placed on role holders at local and area meeting level, and research indicating an uncomfortable disconnect between some aspects of local and national work.

The ViM pilot is staffed by a national co-ordinator and four Local Development Workers (LDWs) who are based in: Devon, Cornwall & West Somerset; the North West of England; Wales & Southern Marches; and Sussex, Surrey & Kent. The pilot runs until December 2019¹.

2. What difference is ViM making?

The programme is being externally evaluated by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) Charities Evaluation Services. An evaluation report was published in March 2019². Key findings included:

- Extremely high satisfaction rates: 96% of the 130 Friends surveyed rated support as “good” or “excellent”, with 90% reporting that support met local or area meeting needs.

¹ More detailed information about how the programme works was shared with Meeting for Sufferings in September 2018 and can be found at www.woodbrooke.org.uk/vibrancy

² A copy of the executive summary has been circulated in this mailing. The full report *NCVO CES Vibrancy main evaluation report (March 2019)* can be downloaded at <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/learn/about/vibrancy-in-meetings/#mainreport>

- Improved outcomes for meetings: over half of meetings reported they had made – or were in the process of making changes – for example trying new ways of running meeting for worship, making meetings more accessible, improved provision for children and young people, increased opportunities for social time or to reduce the demands on role holders.
- Improved outcomes for Friends: For example 10 out of 16 roleholders interviewed reported that LDW support had helped them to enjoy the role more. A further four Friends stated that support had helped them to feel better about the role in another way – for example by making it easier.
- Support given by LDWs was seen as different – but often complemented – that given at a ‘Yearly Meeting-wide’³ level by Woodbrooke and BYM.
- Friends who received support from an LDW particularly appreciated long term support from someone who was accessible and knew the local context. The ability to build personal, trusting relationships with the same person over time was felt to be particularly important.
- The pilot is starting to change the way BYM and Woodbrooke support Friends at a yearly meeting-wide level so that this better reflects Friends’ and meetings’ needs. For example LDW feedback resulted in a new charging structure for Woodbrooke-on-the-road courses. Learning from ViM was instrumental in setting up Quaker Life’s ‘simpler meetings’ project and LDWs are now contributing to reviews of Quaker Life’s work on conflict and of the children and young people’s work. However the evaluation also noted that the nature of the pilot limited what was possible in terms of joint working between ViM and other parts of BYM and Woodbrooke.
- There is no evidence - as yet - that the pilot has increased diversity, member or attender numbers or meeting attendance levels. This could be due to these changes not having happened yet. These are significant – and potentially long term - changes and the evaluation also points out that some of them might be anticipated in the longer term.

3. Building on the pilot

BYM and Woodbrooke Trustees met in February and March 2019 to consider the evaluation findings and options for the future. Sessions have also been held with Quaker Life and Quaker Peace & Social Witness central committees.

³ By yearly meeting-wide services we mean services that are provided ‘centrally’ or on a national basis and which all Friends and meetings within BYM have access to (as opposed to services delivered locally and which are designed to support Friends and Meetings in a specific geographical area.) Examples of services currently delivered on a yearly meeting-wide basis would include grants programmes administered by Quaker Peace & Social Witness, Quaker Life representative council and the programme of courses delivered by Woodbrooke in Birmingham.

There is a clear sense that it is important to build on the pilot and the two trustee bodies have asked staff to develop and cost a number of models so that the benefits of a more 'meeting centred' approach can be experienced by the whole Yearly Meeting. The two trustee bodies are keen to explore these questions together and to continue working in partnership.

Although the ViM pilot has had mainly excellent outcomes, there have been some limitations including isolation of Local Development Workers, difficulties in managing 'peaks and troughs' in requests for support, and challenges in exploiting synergies between locally delivered support for meetings and that delivered on a yearly meeting wide level. These suggest that we shouldn't simply replicate the pilot on a larger scale but adapt it slightly to overcome these weaknesses while retaining the positive elements of the pilot.

Trustees are considering two main options for building on the ViM pilot. These options are not mutually exclusive.

4. Rolling out and integrating local development work

The first model being considered would be a phased roll-out so that all local and area meetings have access to an LDW within a reasonable period. Some support for meetings would continue to be delivered at a yearly meeting-wide level. However, there would be better integration of local and national services, with the strategy for all of this work being more explicitly driven by needs and experience at local level.

More work needs to be done to determine the right balance and division of responsibilities between locally based and yearly meeting-wide services. However, in general we would expect local workers to respond creatively and flexibly to local needs and agendas, with yearly-meeting wide services focusing on things that benefit from a more consistent 'national' approach. Over time the balance between locally and centrally delivered services would change so that a greater proportion would be delivered locally.

Transition: If we take this path a transition period of around 5 years is envisaged, with gradual roll out of LDWs over this period.

Decisions about where to place LDWs and about the pattern of any roll-out would need to be based on a range of criteria including: the level of local need for support, the presence (or otherwise) of other BYM and Woodbrooke staff, and interest expressed by Friends in those areas. Although we would not anticipate asking local or area meetings to formally 'bid' for a LDW, BYM and Woodbrooke would expect to work collaboratively with local structures to explore the demand for, feasibility and best shape of delivering services locally.

5. Further decentralisation opportunities

Building on ViM could present the Yearly Meeting with other opportunities to further 'decentralise' BYM's centrally managed work and Woodbrooke's learning delivery. This approach could be piloted alongside the roll-out of Local Development Workers described in section 4. As well as more support for meetings being delivered locally, this would involve further decentralisation so that more yearly meeting-wide services were provided from locations outside Birmingham and London.

While some BYM and Woodbrooke activities (e.g. advocacy directed at the Westminster parliament) do need to be tied to a particular location, many others could – given appropriate technology/infrastructure – be delivered from anywhere in Britain. At the same time, we know that for many Friends there is a disconnect between what happens at their local and area meetings and what happens at 'Friends House' or Woodbrooke. This is not conducive to building a strong, connected, confident and sustainable Yearly Meeting.

Trustees of both BYM and Woodbrooke are now starting to consider whether, *as well as* growing the number of Local Development Workers, we need to move away from a model of working which is centred on two national facilities located in London and Birmingham, towards something more 'meeting-centred'.

In some respects this has already started to happen with a small (but increasing) number of 'Friends House' staff physically working from locations other than London. Similarly, Woodbrooke has been steadily expanding its 'on the road' and online learning opportunities. However, particularly in the case of BYM, this limited form of decentralisation has often happened as opportunities arise, rather than by design. Trustees are now considering whether we should be continuing this trend but in a more planned and strategic way.

One option for 'decentralising' the work of BYM and Woodbrooke would be to start a process of systematically identifying other functions/services that could be delivered from locations other than London and Birmingham. Over time there could be a process of shifting these functions so that they were delivered out of a network of regional Quaker centres or 'hubs'.

The current thinking is that, in order to ensure financial and practical viability, regional centres would need to be used as a base by a combination of local development and yearly-meeting wide staff. Where (and if) there was local demand there could also be opportunities for sharing space with other Quaker groups, or staff employed to work for local and area meetings.

Transition: Although there is some evidence to suggest that a decentralised way of working would bring benefits across the yearly meeting⁴, it will be important to do more to test this hypothesis before making widespread changes.

⁴ As well as informal feedback from Friends, one important indicator comes from Woodbrooke's recent learning survey. This drew responses from over 700 Friends who told us that they greatly valued the

One way of doing this could be to pilot one or more regional hubs/centres for a period of around 3 years, evaluating the difference that this makes both to the 'quality' of service provision and to the experience of Friends in that region. If the pilot was found to be successful, a plan could be developed to build up the number of centres over approximately a longer period.

More work needs to be done to identify a location for any pilot centre. However, if a decision is taken to go down this path, it would make sense to locate a pilot in an area where the yearly meeting already has regionally/locally based staff, and where there is energy for doing so from the local Quaker community.

6. Implications

Any shift towards a more 'meeting centred' approach to the work will inevitably have implications for existing work carried out by BYM and Woodbrooke. Meetings, Friends and staff would all need to adapt to a different way of doing things and almost inevitably there would be a period of uncertainty.

One important consideration will be financial cost and sustainability. Initial financial modelling shows that the cost of enabling all meetings to have access to a Local Development Worker is likely to be in the range of £500,000 to £1 million per year (equivalent to 6 to 12 % of the Yearly Meeting expenditure on charitable activities in 2017). In the medium to long term a proportion of this could be offset by changes made to other aspects of service provision. However, there will inevitably be a shortfall which would need to be met by a combination or drawing on reserves, increased income generation (perhaps from freeing up further space in Friends House and possibly Woodbrooke), or increased giving – most likely from Quaker sources.

7. Question for Sufferings reps

- How might the options outlined in sections 4 and 5 support Quakerism to thrive in your area?

Simon Best – Head of Learning - Woodbrooke
Sarah Griffith – Project Development Officer – BYM
Suzanne Ismail – Head of Networking and Engagement - BYM
March 2019

learning Woodbrooke could provide. They also said how much time and money were barriers to accessing that learning, and that they would like to see more learning delivered nearer where Friends are.

Vibrancy in Meetings programme evaluation main report: Executive summary

Background

Vibrancy in Meetings (Vibrancy) is a three-year pilot programme that forms part of the support structure offered to Quaker meetings. It is being provided jointly by the national body of Quakers (Britain Yearly Meeting, BYM¹) and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (Woodbrooke) in four regions between March 2016 and December 2019. Vibrancy aims to support local and area meetings to become strong, connected, confident and sustainable and to contribute to a vibrant yearly meeting. This is delivered through support from four development workers, managed by a national programme co-ordinator, all part time. It is also hoped that Vibrancy will help improve the support offered by BYM and Woodbrooke.

In October 2016, BYM commissioned NCVO Charities Evaluation Services (NCVO CES) to conduct a three-year evaluation of the programme. This is the main report of this evaluation and is to be used primarily for internal decision making.

This report is based on: a survey of 141 Friends with whom the programme has worked; telephone interviews with 18 Friends; interviews with the Vibrancy team and other BYM and Woodbrooke staff; a review of Vibrancy monitoring data and central data from BYM and Woodbrooke.

What Vibrancy offers to Friends

1. Over the course of the programme, **the Vibrancy team have extended their reach to most meetings in their regions.**
 - Development workers have worked with at least 60% of local meetings in their regions, with one reaching almost 100%.
 - Workers have supported all area meetings in their regions. Contacts with area meetings make up between 23% and 43% of all logged contacts.
2. **The majority of worker contacts with Friends are relatively brief** (up to two hours). However, workers



¹ The term 'BYM' describes the whole organisation of Quakers in Britain. The term can refer to the whole organisation, but also to the teams of staff (mainly based at Friends House), and Friends who offer service (such as through the Quaker Life network, members of Quaker Stewardship Committee, Quaker Life clusters, Turning the Tide trainers). Where possible, the text indicates which use of the term is meant. Services delivered by Woodbrooke may be through staff, or the Woodbrooke tutors' network.

are also offering longer contacts (of more than three days, in total), some over months; this is a significant investment of time from workers with part-time roles.

3. **Vibrancy staff are now delivering much of the direct support work to Friends themselves**, rather than simply 'signposting' to BYM and Woodbrooke. Where needed, Vibrancy can involve the relevant part of BYM or Woodbrooke for additional – sometimes specialist – support.
4. While workers are offering support on all areas described in *Our faith in the future*,² the themes of *community* and *Quaker discipline* comprise almost 40% of all presenting needs.

Presenting needs



Satisfaction

Vibrancy is rated very highly by Friends: **96% of Friends in our survey rated support from Vibrancy as 'excellent' or 'good'**, and all said the Vibrancy worker was approachable. Almost all respondents felt the worker had a good level of knowledge around the issues they had offered Friends support on, and had met their meeting's needs.

In particular, Friends valued: the ability of workers to connect them with other people and meetings; the accessibility of the workers; their personal qualities and skills. They appreciated the workers' ability to listen to Friends, understand the issues they were facing and provide high-quality support.

I think the most helpful thing about the Vibrancy programme is that each of us knows that she is there for us, is easily contactable and is willing to do what we would like. That's a first for us and I think everyone appreciates that. (Friend interviewee)

² <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/our-faith-in-the-future>

Learning from support delivery

1. An important part of the development worker role is listening to and encouraging meetings. Increasingly, workers are involved in in-depth support projects.
2. Workers are often dealing with practical problems that may be hampering spiritual growth and preventing a meeting becoming more vibrant.
3. The development worker role is emerging as one that needs to be a topic generalist, to enable the correct identification of needs. But workers also need to have specialist skills in supporting meetings and encouraging spiritual growth.
4. Some effective joint work is being undertaken by Vibrancy with BYM and Woodbrooke. However, Vibrancy staff have sometimes had difficulties in referring Friends on to BYM and Woodbrooke because of lack of capacity in the two organisations or the nature of the support offered.
5. Workload continues to be a significant problem for Vibrancy staff. Several Friends were concerned that the development workers were spread too thinly across large regions; as a result they might wear themselves out in the role, or at the least be unable to provide in-depth support.

Satisfaction



Felt the Vibrancy worker was approachable.



Said the worker had a good level of knowledge around the issues that they had supported with.



Felt the worker provided support that met their local/area meeting or group's needs.



Felt the support provided met their own needs.

Outcomes for Friends

Outcomes for individuals

Friends report significant personal outcomes as a result of Vibrancy support.

- **Feeling supported:** Almost 90% of 130 survey respondents felt supported by their worker; 81% felt better able to support their local/area meeting or group.
- **Happier, more confident role holders:** 10 of 16 role holders we interviewed said Vibrancy had helped them enjoy their role more; a further four said their experience of their role had improved.

My role has become easier because the workload has reduced. That works out as being more enjoyable. The job was getting in the way of family life, so it's also eased situations at home for me. (Friend interviewee)
- **Changed thinking:** 79% of 129 survey respondents said the Vibrancy worker had helped their meeting or group generate ideas about its future direction. Some noted that the worker's skills in facilitation had helped, for example by gently drawing out Friends' own ideas.

Outcomes for meetings

Outcomes for meetings were reported across all the theory of change³ outcome areas of *community, Quaker discipline, active values, collaboration, visibility* and *meeting for worship*. Friends said they had had access to a wide range of support on these topics, from Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke. All were thought to have contributed to the outcomes, although respondents felt that Vibrancy was the biggest contributor.

The largest number of reported changes, and those most directly linked to the effects of Vibrancy, were in the areas of community, Quaker discipline, and collaboration. Examples of changes reported⁴ include:

- The majority (26 of 32 meetings for which it was relevant) felt more confident in **making meetings more accessible to newcomers**; a third had implemented changes.
She has made us think about where we hold our meetings – are they on good public transport routes, and when we’re holding them. We usually hold meeting on Saturday, but one was on a Sunday. But Sunday is more difficult for public transport, but [our Vibrancy worker] has kept us alert to thinking about that.
(Friend interviewee)
- About half (17 of 39 meetings) said they were now **spending more time together outside of meeting for worship**.
The Vibrancy project opens the possibilities for wider and different ways to relate through my spirituality, without having to go outside of Quakers. (Friend interviewee)
- Just over half (16 of 27 meetings for which this was relevant) had **improved their support for people in or considering roles**. Fifteen of 26 reported **better acknowledgement, and using, of Friends’ gifts**. One explained how, following Vibrancy support, they now try and fit the roles round Friends’ gifts, rather than the other way around.
- Just over half (14 of 26 meetings for which this was relevant) said they had become **better at handling conflict**.
We’ve appreciated the role of elders more – how they need to be more visible and active in their roles. They traditionally just shake hands at the end of the meeting but there’s also the question of their role in maintaining discipline in the meeting. Making sure that people give space and listen between contributions and avoid hurtful things. We had let that part of the role slip a bit and we’re focusing on it more now. (Friend interviewee)
- About three-quarters (14 of the 19 meetings for which this was relevant) reported **more shared projects with other meetings or organisations**.
- About half (8 of 17 meetings for which this was relevant) had taken **more action on social**

³ The theory of change was developed by NCVO CES with the Vibrancy team and other BYM and Woodbrooke staff members in early 2017. It sets out the changes and benefits that may come about for Quaker meetings, and for BYM and Woodbrooke, through Vibrancy support. It is based around the themes set out in *Our faith in the future*. Note that as a pilot programme, Vibrancy was intended to be open and responsive to meetings’ needs, rather than seeking only achievement of these outcomes.

⁴ Our evaluation was unable to gather within-meeting consensus. Where an outcome was reported, it means one person from that meeting has reported it. Other Friends from that meeting may not have reported the same thing.

issues. The same number reported running **more events or outreach activities to increase visibility.**

- About half (17 of 33 meetings) reported a **deeper quality of ministry** at their meetings.
- A small number of meetings worked with by Vibrancy have not yet experienced any outcomes.

According to BYM monitoring data, there is no evidence as yet that Vibrancy has affected overall statistics on diversity, member or attender numbers or meeting attendance levels. This could be due to these changes not having happened yet; some of them might be anticipated in the longer term. However, there is also concern that central monitoring is not able to capture changes adequately, perhaps because of limitations in systems or because the systems were not designed to collect this data.

What helps or hinders change

Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke were all thought to have contributed to these outcomes, although respondents felt that Vibrancy was the biggest contributor⁵ in all areas except active values, where BYM played a greater part. Vibrancy has the most effect on community and Quaker discipline outcomes, where most support has been given.

The nature of Vibrancy delivery enables outcomes. Some Friends said they were likely to act on suggestions made by their Vibrancy worker because they were credible and known. Support provided locally over time was also considered important for change, spurring Friends on 'through hiccups'.

Lack of resilience within meetings hampers change. For Friends, barriers to change included lack of time or energy, an ageing membership and a small number of people within the meeting being prepared to take action. Some Friends were continuing to struggle with accessibility issues, particularly for children and young people.

Work with BYM and Woodbrooke

The amount of joint work between Vibrancy and BYM and Woodbrooke has been increasing, and relevant staff are meeting more frequently. Work with Woodbrooke has focused on supporting meetings through events, including some that have been co-created with the Vibrancy team. Vibrancy staff have also provided local intelligence to Woodbrooke prior to support provision. Joint work with BYM teams has included: shared planning; developing new resources; supporting meetings together, in particular on conflict; Vibrancy contributing to BYM events.

To date, partnership working has been limited by a lack of time, for both the Vibrancy team

⁵ Note that this was a survey to people who had received Vibrancy support and chosen to engage with the survey. This sample might be more likely to describe Vibrancy as having more effect on their work. There may be other Friends who have had a different experience.

and other BYM and Woodbrooke staff. The nature of Vibrancy, in term of its presence in only a few regions and the relatively short-term nature of the pilot, have limited some options for joint working. Some BYM staff noted that the organisation hadn't fully been prepared for Vibrancy before it started, and that this had hampered its integration. BYM and Woodbrooke may not yet have fully adapted to the different and new way that Vibrancy works, in particular remote, regional working.

Some relationships between Vibrancy and central staff at both organisations are strong. However some members of the Vibrancy team felt that some BYM staff have been reluctant to work with them, and felt that there was sometimes a divide between them and the central teams. One Vibrancy team member reported feeling undervalued by BYM.

Further work is needed to ensure the Vibrancy team becomes – and feels – more integrated within BYM and Woodbrooke teams, and that joint working with both BYM and Woodbrooke is undertaken where appropriate to best meet the needs of Friends. Despite this, a number of staff respondents from across Vibrancy, central BYM and Woodbrooke talked with excitement about the potential for more future working.

Outcomes for BYM and Woodbrooke

As a result of Vibrancy, Friends are learning more about BYM and Woodbrooke; Vibrancy is also beginning to promote mutual understanding between Friends and the two central organisations, with BYM and Woodbrooke staff developing and building on their existing knowledge of Friends' needs through their Vibrancy colleagues.

There was strong evidence from the evaluation survey and interviews that Vibrancy is increasing Friends' use of BYM and Woodbrooke resources. However, central monitoring data does not show this yet, except for a small increase in Woodbrooke on-the-road course bookings; there is also no evidence in the geography of BYM/Woodbrooke delivery as a result of Vibrancy. Possible reasons include: Vibrancy is now doing more of the delivery itself; limitations to central monitoring; insufficient time for on-the-ground changes to be felt.

Evaluation data suggests Vibrancy workers are articulating meetings' needs and best practice to BYM and Woodbrooke on their behalf, rather than meetings doing this directly themselves, as had been initially suggested.

There are some promising indications of Vibrancy affecting Woodbrooke's events delivery. Several of the development workers have been working with BYM staff around conflict in meetings, and new approaches are being developed as a result. Vibrancy workers have a particular role to play in identifying a shared need across their area and bringing those Friends together to access BYM or Woodbrooke support. There is also early evidence that support from Vibrancy has enabled some Friends to get more out of BYM or Woodbrooke support, or access it more easily, than they might otherwise have done.

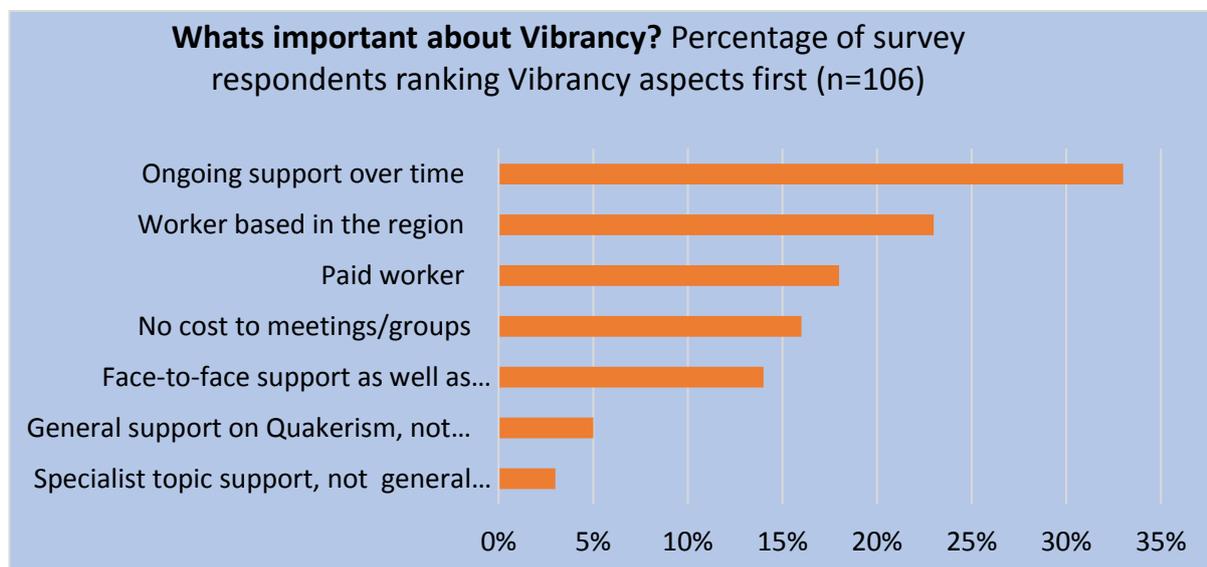
There is very limited evidence that Vibrancy has affected Friends' active engagement in wider

Quaker society, although it would be very early for such changes to be seen. Joint working was already taking place between BYM and Woodbrooke and the data for this report does not indicate any effect from Vibrancy on the amount of this joint working.

What is important about Vibrancy?

Friends value the long-term support of someone who is accessible and knows the local context, and the ability to build personal, trusting relationships with the same individual over time. These relationships are felt important for Vibrancy workers to really understand the needs of meetings. Still significant, but of lesser importance to Friends are having a worker who is paid, and who is a skilled generalist. Topic specialisms are welcome, but not regarded as essential. Overall, respondents found Vibrancy support very different from that available from BYM and Woodbrooke. This is to be expected given the very different nature of the two types of support, but there may be some positive learning from Vibrancy around accessibility and approachability.

This long-term personal support, delivered by a skilled worker and based on deep understanding of local meetings and the local context, has meant that rather than simply signposting to BYM and Woodbrooke, Vibrancy staff are now delivering much of the work themselves. However, Friends described using support from Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke on the same issues, and reported that the three all contribute significantly to outcomes. Many Friends were clear that, although Vibrancy is different, the contrasting forms of support could also work together; it may be that acting together, they are more than the sum of their parts.



Summary and recommendations

Vibrancy is a successful programme, well received by the Friends it has supported, and bringing about significant outcomes for the meetings with which it has worked. This evaluation has found evidence that Vibrancy has contributed to outcomes for local and area meetings in all six of the outcome areas described in the programme theory of change.

Recommendations for the remainder of the pilot

1. Consider ways to engage with Friends about what Vibrancy might look like beyond the pilot, and/or exit planning, as appropriate.
2. Agree on what good integration of the Vibrancy team into other BYM and Woodbrooke structures might look like, and what levels of joint working between Vibrancy and BYM/Woodbrooke teams are desirable.
3. Nurture, support and promote the good joint working that has recently started between Vibrancy and BYM/Woodbrooke teams. Find ways to ensure the Vibrancy team are, and feel, valued by and integral to the two organisations.
4. Find ways to reduce development worker workload.
5. Consider ways to improve BYM and Woodbrooke monitoring to better track the longer-term outcomes of Vibrancy. This could include finding different ways to measure Vibrancy success, rather than, for example, uptake of BYM or Woodbrooke resources.
6. Consider a brief review of the theory of change, in particular the outcomes for BYM and Woodbrooke. For a few of these, there is no evidence that they have occurred (for example that Vibrancy will increase joint working between BYM and Woodbrooke), and it may be that they are no longer relevant.

Recommendations for beyond the pilot

1. For staffing any future programme, BYM and Woodbrooke should consider:
 - The skills required for development workers and the definition of, and interplay between, specialist and generalist skills.
 - The ideal team size. The current Vibrancy team size appears to work well, given the nature of remote working. How would a larger team affect this?
 - Whether locally-based, skilled Friends offering unpaid service might appropriately complement the work of paid development staff.
2. The following aspects of a future programme's delivery would merit consideration:
 - Whether workers' geographical boundaries could be flexible according to Friends' needs and workers' capacity.
 - Whether an alternative approach to day-to-day monitoring might be appropriate. The Vibrancy workers have sometimes struggled with the monitoring spreadsheet developed with NCVO CES.
3. The intended outputs and outcomes of any new programme should be considered carefully.
 - The current theory of change would be a good starting point but needs a deep review. As Vibrancy has changed and evolved, the underlying theory may need to follow suit.
 - The Vibrancy pilot has shown there is considerable need around the basics of Quakerism, meetings and processes. A new programme should address this focus.
 - It might be helpful to consider the anticipated timescales of anticipated outcomes; the view of a number of respondents in this evaluation was that some of the outcomes were long term, some beyond the lifetime of the pilot.
4. Any new programme should have an extensive internal planning and communications phase prior to the work starting.