

Follow up Letter



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

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings 4-6 October 2019

Dear Friends

Meeting at Woodbrooke over the weekend enabled us to consider prayerfully the items before us and we are thankful for the deep ministry that was offered – the minutes are attached.

Items that you might wish to share with your area meeting are:

1. Our review of all the work and action that is taking place because of our commitment to sustainability and to address the reality of climate breakdown and environmental degradation and its underlying cycle of injustice. Remind friends of the 2019 Swarthmore lecture (now available in book form from the Quaker Bookshop and as a video on <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/learn/about/swarthmore-lecture/> and you may like to review all that Quaker Peace & Social Witness is doing as detailed by Chris Walker in his *Overview of QPSW's climate work* - or further information at www.quaker.org.uk/climatejustice. Please share any ideas that came to you that are appropriate for your meeting.
2. Our conclusions about the court and prison register and how your meeting might support friends who are prompted by the Spirit to take action that brings them into conflict with the state.
3. Report back about our consideration of assisted dying and if there is particular interest in your area meeting, you could be in touch with Staffordshire or North West London Area Meetings. I certainly recommend the Leeds booklet as a useful resource – the Quaker bookshop has copies.
4. There was a lot of information in the trustees report and we also heard about Woodbrooke's new approach to learning – report back what you feel is of interest.
5. Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC) left us with some questions to mull over for our own information. We also know that there is a review taking place of this committee and the review group would welcome comments from anyone who has had contact with the work of the committee. The questions asked are:
 - How do we help our meetings to keep sight of the spiritual basis of our stewardship?
 - How do we manage the dual responsibilities of AM in session and AM trustees, in setting the strategic direction of our area meetings?

- How much diversity in the organisation of AMs can BYM support?
6. We heard a lot about the advocacy and speaking out that takes place on our behalf from the media relations and Public Affairs staff at Friends House. Try to encourage friends to sign up to blogs and podcasts and the monthly Quake!
<https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/newsletters/quake>

Committee reviews:

A small review group has been appointed to review QSC, as part of the regular programme of reviewing all committees. The group is consulting with those currently serving on the committee and others, but would welcome comments from anyone who has had contact with the work of the committee.

- What support which you have received from QSC has been most helpful?
- What other support would trustees, treasurers or others like from QSC?
- Have you anything else you would like to tell us about, relating to this review?

The group is also reviewing the Terms of Reference for BYM Trustees and would also welcome any comments about this.

Please pass this information on to others in your area meeting such as treasurers and trustees who may wish to respond. Please reply by the end of November to: neilj@quaker.org.uk or deborahjrowlands@gmail.com

I personally felt blessed that we were able to worship as we did in Woodbrooke's peaceful and historic surroundings – if you had this experience too, you may like to encourage other friends in your meeting to book time away there.

We will meet again in London on Saturday 7th December when we will be joined in worship by young friends who are alongside us on the Young People's Participation Day – do encourage young friends from your area to come along.

Until then, peace be with you.

In peace



Anne Ullathorne
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

The following papers are included in this mailing:

- Functions checklist
- Overview of QPSW's climate work
- Minutes of the Meeting held 4-6 October 2019

Meeting for Sufferings: Functions Checklist (Quaker faith & practice Chapter 7.02)

Requirement	Oct 19	Comments
A To set the priorities for the centrally managed work		
B To issue public statements in the name of BYM		
C To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees	6	
D To receive the BYM trustees' annual report & accounts for information		
E To make a report on its own activities to YM		
F To determine the dates of YM		
G To deliberate on how best to support the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and to further the development of its visionary and prophetic role	5 9	Sustainability Court & prison register
H To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns referred to it by AMs and others	5	Sustainability
I To foster communication throughout the yearly meeting	8 10 11 14	QSC Safeguarding QRB Speaking out/advocacy
J To receive minutes from area meetings	13	Assisted dying
K To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register	9	
L To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings	7	Appointments
M To receive information about changes in the composition or status of general meetings/gatherings		
N To make changes in the composition of area meetings		
O To give assistance to area meetings in the amicable settlement of disputes	12	Appeal group
P To hear appeals against area meeting decisions		
Q To give guidance on policy matters referred to it by the BYM trustees from time to time		
R To authorise action and minute as required under other sections of Quaker Faith and Practice		
S To set up an arrangements group and support and working groups to assist its own work as it sees fit		

Receiving reports from central committees adds to our understanding and decisions regarding both A, priorities and G, supporting the spiritual life of the YM.



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

Quaker Peace & Social Witness's Climate activism and advocacy work

Report for Meeting for Sufferings October 2019

Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW)'s climate activism and advocacy work is overseen by the Economics and Sustainability (ES) Subcommittee and managed by the ES staff team. Programme Managers Olivia Hanks and Chris Walker will soon be joined by two new coordinators (soon to be recruited) and are regularly supported by communications and advocacy colleagues.

The ES Subcommittee and staff team has recently decided to consolidate almost all its resources to focus on climate justice. This reflects the urgency of our climate crisis and our desire to 'do more of less' to improve our impact. Whilst work on economic justice will continue, this will be on the basis that it clearly links to our climate concern. We see our role among Friends and the climate movement as leading and supporting activism and advocacy that highlights the need for systemic change to avert climate breakdown, and build a fundamentally more sustainable and just economic system.

Our work consists of a variety of projects that both support Friends' witness, and speaks out on their behalf. We work in partnership with campaigners and activist groups, and increasingly with other faith groups. Here are some highlights from the last three years.

Climate advocacy

In 2017, we renewed our work to engage directly with government on climate change. After writing a series of letters calling for climate ambition, we were asked by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS) to convene a small group of faith leaders to meet Claire Perry, then Minister for Energy and Clean Growth. This led to continued meetings with civil servants. Recording Clerk Paul Parker has been closely involved in this work. We have successfully encouraged DBEIS to engage with youth activists too.

In 2019, we have been active in the Climate Coalition in their successful campaign to call on the Government to commit to net-zero emissions. In May, Theresa May committed the UK to net-zero by 2050. Whilst this is deeply inadequate and lacks policy detail, it does show the mounting pressure from a growing climate movement.

This year, we are working more closely with Mairi Campbell-Jack, BYM's Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer, and the Friends in Scotland's Parliamentary Engagement Working Group. This has included joining Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, a civil society coalition, to call for more ambition in the Scottish Climate Change bill.

Alongside this, we have supported Friends to engage with MPs and decision makers. Friends across the country have been engaging with MPs on climate policy and calling on local authorities to declare climate emergencies and divest pension funds from fossil fuels. In 2018, we started a series of trainings in partnership with Hope for the Future on engaging with decision makers on climate change. More trainings are planned. In June this year, over 120 Friends attended the Time is Now mass climate lobby of Parliament.

Interfaith work

QPSW is recognising a clear role for Quakers in supporting and convening interfaith climate advocacy and activism. Central faith bodies are working out how to represent and respond to the growing concern in their communities, and explore their role in political change.

In 2016, QPSW collaborated with Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) to hold two lunch events for faith leaders to hear from scientists from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. This helped us led to joint advocacy work. In 2010, we hope to hold similar events exploring the economic and political change needed to end the UK's contribution to climate change. In 2019, we have become a more active member of the Faith for the Climate network, a group of grassroots faith activists.

Activism support

Part of QPSW's work is about supporting Friends in their own witness, including to deliver their own locally-led initiatives. This can be one-off instances of sharing news and advice, or sometime closer involvement in supporting local projects. Alongside our support for Friends' engagement with decision makers, here are some highlights:

- Following Meeting for Suffering's 2017 minute on fracking, we have worked with a range of local groups to support anti-fracking resistance. This included supporting local Friends to hold a Meeting for Worship on Pendle Hill in 2017 to highlight to highlight the risks that fracking pose on the area, and the regular No Faith in Fracking gatherings at Preston New Road site led by local Friends.
- 2019 has seen Friends across Britain getting involved in new movements like Extinction Rebellion and the Climate Strikes. Much of the engagement and

support for this has come from local meetings. We have helped network Friends to share stories and ideas of how to support these groups and highlighted their actions in our communications work. In April 2019, we worked with UK Student Climate Network (UKSCN), Greenpeace and the Guardian to host Greta Thunberg, Anna Taylor (from UKSCN) and Caroline Lucas MP to speak to 100 mostly young activists. In June, Anya Nanning Ramamurthy (who was then 16) represented Quakers in Britain when she spoke alongside Rowan Williams and other faith leaders at a faith event on climate action. In September Friends House staff were supported by our management team to join the global climate strike.

- The New Economy project, launched in 2016, has supported Friends to explore what an economy that upholds our testimony would look like. Central the series of 7 booklets that we produced, and subsequent workshops, was the question of our economy can operate with our ecological limits. We hope to continue to support Friends in developing their analysis and understand of climate economics and climate justice.

Looking ahead

Friends are engaging with climate justice like never before, and getting involved with our work as part of this. Here are some plans for 2020 and beyond:

- In November next year the UK will host the Conference of the Parties (COP26) UN climate talks in Glasgow. We will be working with local Friends, campaigns groups and faith groups to call for bold action for climate justice. We hope that we will have official observer status at the talks alongside QUNO. We will be joining others to support grassroots activism around the talks.
- We hope to build our work engaging with parliament and the government and work with other faith groups to demand bold climate action, and run more trainings for Quakers to engage with MPs and others.
- We will be work with Turning the Tide and others in QPSW to develop our support for Friends in their witness. As demonstrated through the Quaker Activist Gathering, the support that Friends often look for is not always topic-specific and relates to cross-cutting skills and confidence relating to strategy, working together, sustaining our commitment, political and social analysis, communications and mobilising. We are looking forward to help develop a more integrated QPSW approach to this.

You can find out more about our work at www.quaker.org.uk/climatejustice or contact Chris Walker at chrisw@quaker.org.uk.

Chris Walker,
3 October 2019



Yearly Meeting of the
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(Quakers) in Britain

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings

Held at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham on Friday 4 – Sunday 6
October 2019

Minutes

MfS/2019/10/01 Opening Worship

During opening worship we have heard *Quaker faith & practice* 23.08 read.

MfS/2019/10/02 Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

Since our last meeting we have received the following nominations and requests for release from Meeting for Sufferings until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2021:

Release:

Zoe Marquis – young adult Friend
Yenni Millar – young adult Friend
Doreen Osborne – Mid-Thames AM
Steve Pullan – Northumbria AM

Nominated:

Barbara Adshead – Northumbria AM representative
Jenny Gordon – Mid-Thames AM representative

We appoint the Friends named and thank the Friends released for their service.

Visitors invited to represent area meetings/committees in the absence of the appointed representative or alternate:

Helen Johnson – South London AM
Caro Kelly – Lancashire Central & North AM
Tracey Martin – Quaker World Relations Committee

Other visitors:

Grace DaCosta – BYM Staff, Public Affairs and Advocacy Manager
Neil Jarvis - BYM Staff, Recording Clerk's Office
Sherry-Ann Mitchell – BYM Staff, Recording Clerk's Office
Anne van Staveren – BYM staff, Media Relations Officer
Ursula Fuller - Clerk, Quaker Stewardship Committee
Michael Hutchinson – Woodbrooke, clerk of trustees
Sandra Berry – Woodbrooke Director
Simon Best – Woodbrooke Head of Learning

MfS/2019/10/03 Apologies

We receive apologies from East Scotland, North Scotland and Northumbria Area Meetings which have not been able to send a representative on this occasion.

MfS/19/10/04 Agenda

The Clerk has introduced the draft agenda, and we have agreed to this.

MfS/19/10/05 Sustainability

Meeting for Sufferings holds oversight of our YM-wide commitment to work towards becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community. In 2017, we adopted revised recommendations for action (MfS/17/02/06) and in 2018 we confirmed mechanisms for oversight (MfS/18/11/18).

We receive paper MfS 2019 10 07 which provides examples of how the recommendations are being taken forward, and we have heard more in spoken introductions about the five strands:

- Eldership (Eden Grace and the Swarthmore Lecture)
- Oversight (Frances Voelcker, Meeting of Friends in Wales)
- Living Faithfully (Cotteridge Friends)
- Right ordering (Martin Ford, Quaker Stewardship Committee)
- Witness (Ruth Tod, Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee)

At its heart our commitment to sustainability is about a right relationship with the earth. And as with many successful relationships, we have to bring our whole selves into it.

We will be stronger if we fully commit together, as a whole community – not just a community of Quakers – to address the reality of climate breakdown and environmental degradation and its underlying cycle of injustice.

Part of our discipline is the loving testing of concerns, and we must be active in doing this, both personally and in our meetings, so that we can support Friends in their witness.

We have spent time in groups considering what is being done within our local and area meetings, and what more we could do.

We have heard the need for us to act in the world and that our own individual activities underpin this witness. We have been reminded that the spiritual focus of our concern is rooted in love. We are pleased to see the national work taking place on our behalf and we would like to work further at local level. We have an opportunity next year when the UN Climate Summit is held in Glasgow and we have heard of plans already being made in preparation for this.

MfS/19/10/06 Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees Report

We have received the minutes of Trustees' meeting held on 6-7 September 2019, and Caroline Nursey, clerk of BYM Trustees, has spoken to us today. BYM Trustees' recent work has been focussed on progressing the strategic priorities shared with Meeting for Sufferings and agreed earlier in the year:

- **Thriving Quaker Communities:** supporting Quaker meetings and other groups to be diverse, to thrive and grow
- **A sustainable and peaceful world** working with and on behalf of Quakers
- **Simple structures and practices** in our local and national organisation
- And for all the work to be distinctively Quaker; integrated locally, nationally and internationally; and well-governed.

There has been further work by Management Meeting in planning towards 'meeting-centred support' and moving towards a more decentralised organisation.

BYM and Woodbrooke are working together in a number of ways, and there is a Memorandum of Understanding between BYM Trustees and Woodbrooke. Today we have heard from Michael Hutchinson, clerk of Woodbrooke trustees, about Woodbrooke's new learning strategy.

Michael Hutchinson has explained the historic role of Woodbrooke in supporting Friends in their ministry and its focus on renewal and re-development. The pattern of delivering learning may need to be changed as fewer Friends are coming to Woodbrooke for residential courses. There are opportunities for bringing learning to the Quaker communities to the nations and regions. *Our Faith in the Future* naturally underpins Woodbrooke's new strategy.

BYM Trustees have also been considering simplifying central governance structures. We need the right numbers of Friends taking responsibility appropriately. They have also met with the trustees of Meeting of Friends in Wales and General Meeting for Scotland to consider how best to work together on devolved matters.

We note that BYM Trustees have agreed to contribute to the legal costs of a coalition of charities and others who are seeking a court declaration of the law relating to charity trustee duties in relation to responsible investments and public benefit, following engagement with the Charity Commission. The hope is that the law will be clarified to require charity trustees to take into account the impact of their investments on climate change.

Trustees have also considered an initial report on BYM's strategy for the use of its properties in the long term – no decisions will be taken until there have been feasibility studies and further exploration, including with Meeting for Sufferings.

We thank the Trustees for their work.

MfS/19/10/07 Appointments

a) Central Nominations Committee

Brings forward the following names for service as indicated:

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

To serve from 1 January 2020 to Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020:

Sam Challis – London West AM (1st term)

BYM Representatives to European Meetings

Appointed by between-meetings decision of MfS clerks:

BYM Representative to France YM

Lesley Grahame – Norfolk & Waveney AM (2nd term)

BYM Representative to Belgium & Luxembourg YM

Haifa Rashed – North London AM (1st term)

Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (QCCIR)

To serve from 1 May 2020 until 30 April 2023:

Kim Ashcroft – Sussex East AM (3rd term - 1st term was for 1 year)

Clayton Cameron – South East Scotland AM (1st term)

Elaine Green – Ipswich & Diss AM (1st term)

Quaker Housing Trust (QHT)

To serve from ARM 2020 until ARM 2023:

Mary Hammond – South Wales AM (2nd term)

Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC)

To serve from 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2022:

Harry Albright – Leicester AM (1st term)

Marilyn Higgins – South East Scotland AM (2nd term)

Alan Pearmain – Oxford & Swindon AM (2nd term)

Laura Wirtz – South East London AM (1st term)

Pendle Hill Friends in Residence

To serve from September 2020 until December 2020:

Anne Ullathorne – Central England AM

Peter Ullathorne – Central England AM

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC)

To serve with immediate effect until 31 December 2021:

Tim Landsman – North East Thames AM (1st term)

To serve from 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2022:

Jeff Beatty – Southern Marches AM (2nd term)

Alan Keith – West Somerset AM (1st term)

Joel Wallenberg – Northumbria AM (1st term)

For immediate release:

Robert Thompson – East Scotland AM

These names being acceptable, the Friends are appointed or released and we thank them for their service.

b) Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

Brings forward the following names for release as indicated:

Central Nominations Committee

For immediate release:

Beryl Milner – Leeds AM

Helen Percy – Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM

Committee on Clerks

For immediate release:
Ann Gimpel – Leicester AM
Bob Lovett – Devon AM

We release these Friends and thank them for their service.

c) Meeting for Sufferings Nominating Group

Brings forward the following names for service or release as indicated:

Sustainability Monitoring Group

For immediate release:
Tina Leonard – Oxford & Swindon AM

To serve with immediate effect until 31 December 2021:
Caroline Howden – East Kent AM

This being acceptable, the Friends are appointed or released and we thank them for their service.

MfS/19/10/08 Quaker Stewardship Committee

Ursula Fuller, Clerk of Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC), has spoken to the committee's report (paper MfS 2019 10 10). She began explaining that QSC has a dual role: both to monitor compliance and to support trustees and treasurers. Their purpose is to give help and guidance to meetings in their stewardship of finance and property and we have been reminded that 'our Quaker business method, in which the way forward is discerned by the worshipping group as a whole, is fundamental to the way in which we operate'.

Stewardship is about making sure that our assets – property, cash and people – are doing God's work. Trustees are particularly responsible for these and in making sure that they are working for us.

Ursula explained that the paper's questions to representatives of Meeting for Sufferings are for reflection and to bear in mind in the ongoing work of Meeting for Sufferings.

They are as follows:

1. How do we help our meetings to keep sight of the spiritual basis of our stewardship?
2. How do we manage the dual responsibilities of AM in session and AM trustees, in setting the strategic direction of our area meetings?
3. How much diversity in the organisation of AMs can BYM support?

We have considered the paper's questions.

We thank QSC for their report and Ursula for being with us today.

MfS/2019/10/09 Court and Prison Register

a) Parameters of the Court and Prison Register

Further to minute MfS/19/04/05(b) we receive minute QCCIR/19/31. Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) suggests that the basis of the issue referenced by York AM is in employment law and emphasises the need for care and sensitivity when relating the details of cases which will be in the public domain.

We also receive paper MfS 2019 10 05b, which the Recording Clerk has introduced. It sets out the historical origins of the Quaker 'books of sufferings' and our practice over recent years.

We considered the three questions in the paper; briefly:

1. Should the court and prison register normally record only instances of the state interfering with Friends' ability to worship and witness by taking them to court, imprisoning or otherwise punishing them?
2. Do we agree that the responsibility for establishing that Friends are acting under concern lies with Area Meetings, or are there other bodies that do or could fulfil this purpose?
3. Do we accept the two purposes set out for the register?

We confirm that the purposes of recording an entry in the court and prison register are:

1. To enter the details of the matter into the permanent records of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), acknowledging Friends' witness and their willingness to face its consequences
2. To remind ourselves that being a Quaker does not come without cost
3. To record the Society's prayerful upholding of Friends who are suffering for their faith, and
4. To serve as a record of the actions of the State in restricting our freedom to worship and witness.

Inclusion of information in the court and prison register does not imply that Meeting for Sufferings itself has tested the Friend's concern and necessarily agrees with or condones their action.

Consequently we will continue to maintain a register of the names of Friends who have been before the courts for matters of conscience, i.e. Friends who come into conflict with the law when acting under concern and bearing witness to the truth as revealed to them.

We have been reminded of *Advices and Queries* 35 which reads:

Respect the laws of the state but let your first loyalty be to God's purposes. If you feel impelled by strong conviction to break the law, search your conscience deeply. Ask your meeting for prayerful support which will give you strength as a right way becomes clear.

We are clear that acting 'under concern' requires a degree of discernment. We agree that the responsibility for establishing that Friends are or were acting under concern and that they wish the matter to be recorded, normally lies with their area meeting.

The local and area meeting may prayerfully help such a Friend in their own discernment as they seek to follow their Spiritual Guide and may help in holding Meetings for Clearness with the Friend and continually uphold them as necessary. Friends are reminded of the guidance that may be found in Qfp chapter 13.

We note that the court and prison register is a public document. Area meetings should take care therefore also to establish the facts, and to assure themselves that the Friend consents to this information being recorded and placed in the public domain, before forwarding details to Meeting for Sufferings.

b) Entry in the Court and Prison Register

We have been informed that a number of Friends were arrested during the 'No Faith in War' day of action held outside the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) arms fair at the ExCeL centre in London on Tuesday 3rd September. To date no Friends have been charged.

Further to minute MfS/18/07/11, we have been informed that following action at Extinction Rebellion events in April, Ian Bray (Brighthouse West Yorkshire AM) has been charged and the case has now been passed to Southwark Crown Court.

He is due to appear at City of London Magistrates Court on 17 October 2019 for the spray chalking of Downing Street in November 2018 and also to be tried at Inner London Crown Court from 11 May 2020 in relation to occupation of the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) April 2019.

We agree to include this information in the Court and Prison Register, and hold Ian Bray in the Light.

MfS/19/10/10 Safeguarding

We receive paper MfS 2019 10 06. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) has asked the Religious Society of Friends, along with many other faith bodies, to contribute to an investigation into child protection. The aim of this investigation is to look at whether there are common issues across religious organisations and settings and how they can be addressed.

The investigation asks for a written response to questions, which will draw on the policies, procedures and practice in our national organisation and in local and area meetings. The Recording Clerk will sign the submission. There will be a public hearing next March, and IICSA expects to publish recommendations towards the end of 2020.

Although this investigation is about policies and practices in faith organisations, not about individual cases, we are aware that IICSA has been set up to learn from the past, and particularly from the experience of survivors, in order to make sure children are safer in future. We see this as important work and we uphold everyone involved.

We have been glad to be reminded of the commitment set out in the BYM safeguarding policy:

Quakers are committed to: the care, respect and nurture of all vulnerable groups encountered within Quaker activities; the safeguarding and protection of children and other vulnerable people; the promotion of a culture of good practice in relation to activities promoted by Quaker meetings and groups; and maintaining and developing procedures and good practice guidelines.

We thank staff for working with local and area meetings to draw together the information required by IICSA, and affirm the importance of area meetings working together with BYM.

We recognise there will be much to learn from this process as we go forward, and commit to continuing to improve our safeguarding practice.

MfS 19/10/11 Quaker Recognised Bodies

Further to minute MfS/15/12/17, we receive paper MfS 2019 10 11 recommending one group for registration as a Quaker Recognised Body.

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

External

Quaker Family History Society

MfS/19/10/12 Meeting for Sufferings Appeal Group

In November 2018 we agreed to establish a group to consider an appeal made under the guidance set out in Quaker faith and practice chapter 4 (minute MfS/18/11/05 refers). The appeal group has carried out its work and reported its findings both to the appellant and the Area Meeting concerned. Accordingly, we lay down this group and thank its members for their service.

MfS/19/10/13 Assisted Dying

We receive minute 19.05.06 of North West London AM held on 22 May 2019 and minute 8 of Staffordshire AM held on 7 July 2019. Both Area Meetings have adopted a concern to work for a change in the law in relation to assisted dying in the UK, although the AMs have slightly different views in relation to the details. They have asked Meeting for Sufferings to support a process of discernment more widely among Quakers in Britain.

We have been able to have a deep worshipful time, in a spirit of listening and exploring and we have focused today on the principle 'what can we, as Quakers, say about this that is different from the debate in the world around us?' Our understanding of that of God in each person enables us to consider what love requires in each individual circumstance rather than leading to a united response.

We have heard that Friends do want to explore these issues further (both assisted dying and dying and death more generally) and Friends want to talk about these issues within their meetings, but knowing that there are differing and deeply-held views.

We do not necessarily expect to come to unity: a failure to unite is not a failure. There is a value and a beauty in being able to find neither for nor against; but what love requires - and to ask questions.

Our explorations need to be respectful and loving, and we need to be aware that our position is often one of privilege.

We encourage area meetings to explore this issue, and we hope to return to it at a future meeting. We ask for simple materials to support this exploration.

We send this minute to Quaker Life Central Committee.

MfS/19/10/14 Speaking out and advocacy

We have heard from Anne van Staveren (Media Relations Officer) and Grace Da Costa (Public Affairs and Advocacy Manager) about how our Yearly Meeting speaks out on matters of concern: only speaking out on what is already a clearly discerned position.

There are many ways of telling the Quaker story; through national print, broadcast and social media, blogs, podcasts and our website, collaboration, engagement and publications. It is important to be clear about our audience and the key message.

We have heard about recent examples including collaboration with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Climate Change, hosting Greta Thunberg at Friends House, supporting the Global Climate Strike on 20th September, working with 'Stop the Arms Fair' and Roots of Resistance against DSEI, joining with other voluntary organisations in a statement warning of the danger of prorogation and producing materials to help our preparation before the next general election.

We thank Anne and Grace for their report to us today.

MfS/19/07/15 Closing minute

We closed our time together with worship.

Anne Ullathorne
Clerk