



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

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings 7 December 2019

Dear Friends,

What a full meeting we had to end the year! I hope you can report to your area meeting some of the joy we shared with the young people on their Participation Day – how lucky we are that there are such youngsters who want to join and worship with us. We also remembered the Book of Discipline revision committee who were meeting in Woodbrooke at the same time – and all the staff who work to help us in our work together.

Other main topics to report may help you also to explain just what Meeting for Sufferings is and does:

1. Networking and communicating for the whole yearly meeting - we heard from each of the four standing committees about their work and we particularly heard about current issues that are of concern – there may be some of these that you wish to develop further with your area meeting.
 - **Quaker Life Central Committee** – I have attached the quotations that Emma Roberts used to help us understand better the difficulties involved in acknowledging gender diversity and developing our loving response to all persons.
 - **Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee** - We heard of what is being done to help us towards a sustainable world and some of the resources mentioned in ministry may be found at the end of this letter.
 - **Quaker World Relations Committee** - We heard about opportunities for welcoming Quakers from other parts of the world to our meetings
 - **Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations** – We also heard more about the current situation with Churches Together in England.
I hope the minutes are helpful for explaining the truth of the situation to your meeting and that you will let them know of our reaffirmation of the importance of all committed relationships as equal in the eyes of God and of the value of maintaining ecumenical relationships.

2. MfS received minutes from Area Meetings, and our receipt of the minute from Central Yorkshire about the use of the term 'overseer' will be of interest to many Friends – this is the very beginning of an exploration but there will be many strongly-held opinions, I am sure.
3. MfS also deals with organisational issues on behalf of Yearly Meeting and we agreed revised terms of reference for the Central Nominations Committee (to be forwarded to YM next year) and we agreed the terms of reference for the Review of Yearly Meeting.
4. We heard from the BYM trustees – both the treasurer and the clerk – and need to remind Friends of the importance of our responsibility for funding the work that we want to see happen.

Finally, may I repeat here what I said in our meeting: thank you for allowing me to serve as your clerk, which has been a humbling and rewarding experience for me personally and spiritually. My one personal wish is that Quakers would talk more simply and openly about the truths and experiences they have of the Holy Spirit, so that these can be shared with many other people, to help us all negotiate the complexities of our ordinary lives and remain always loving of each other.

May the peace and love of God be with you all.

In peace



Anne Ullathorne

Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

Useful links

Climate emergency: some resources were mentioned in ministry:

- Zero-Carbon Britain report www.cat.org.uk/info-resources/zero-carbon-britain
- Ecological Footprint: *Managing our Biocapacity Budget* by Mathis Wackernagel and Bert Beyers (New Society Publishers September 2019) www.footprintnetwork.org
- Global Footprint Network www.overshootday.org

You may also be interested to read QPSW's briefing on zero carbon policy www.quaker.org.uk/climatejustice

Quakers around the world directory - www.fwcc.directory

The following papers are included in this mailing:

- Functions checklist
- QLCC Gender reflections
- MfS minutes December 2019

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

	Requirement	Dec 19	Comments
A	To set the priorities for the centrally managed work	7,8,9,11	
B	To issue public statements in the name of BYM		
C	To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees	16	
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	12,18 7,8,9,11	
H	To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns referred to it by AMs and others	7,8,9,11	
I	To foster communication throughout the yearly meeting	17	
J	To receive minutes from area meetings	14	
K	To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register	6	
L	To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings	10	
M	To receive information about changes in the composition or status of general meetings and gatherings		
N	To make changes in the composition of area meetings		
O	To give assistance to area meetings in the amicable settlement of disputes		
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	15,19	
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.



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Experiences of discernment from Quaker Life Central Committee members 2019

I am a member of a meeting that is experiencing division over issues related to gender identity. One organization that uses our meeting house has been criticized by some young-adult Friends as being trans-exclusionary, and they feel so strongly about the matter that they will not meet in the meeting house so long as that group remains, although it does not violate any of the criteria the Area Meeting has established for lettings.

I fear that we shall lose contact with a very important part of our Quaker community if the rift is not healed. I hope that the young-adult Friends will come to Area Meeting and persuade it to change the letting criteria in the way they wish. We are a broad-minded and loving community, happily including trans and non-binary Friends, and I trust our business method will allow us to find unity over this matter.

I am 21 and non-binary, with a very masculine outward presentation and my pronouns are they/them*. I first began to question my gender as a teenager and, with the support of many friends and Friends alike, I first felt truly myself at JYM a few years ago.

I fear that fear and hate will consume us; I fear that I will lose the precious community and home I have here, as a Quaker. I hope that I have the endurance to stay on Quaker Life CC, because the work matters deeply to me. I hope that we will accept all of our trans siblings, whether Friends or not, and that it will not take us half a century. Sometimes it is good to be reminded that gender diversity is not exclusively an 'issue' or an academic discussion, but this is the reality of my life.

*The use of singular they has precedent that dates back to the 14th century and is grammatically correct, if uncomfortable to say in the beginning.

I am the mother of 3 daughters. When the youngest was 7, she decided that she wanted to be a boy. We supported her in this. Her primary school coped, her

Secondary school made her time there very difficult, but she persevered. Her sisters accepted her choice and called her their little brother. To everyone's surprise at 15 she gradually reverted to being a girl.

My fear is about the medicalisation of gender diversity. That intervening in children's lives with irreversible medication or surgery will take away their choices. My hope is that we become less binary as a society so that young people can experiment and express themselves as what is most comfortable for them without being pigeon-holed.

My final thought is that I am proud to be a member of The Religious Society of Friends where we are prepared to struggle with our different experiences and perspectives, to find ways forward that recognise that of God in everyone and welcome all to our Meetings.

I am in a same sex marriage. I have lived with dysmorphia and gender non-conformity all my life and cope with it much better since my 30s and 40s. I am continually surprised that some of my challenge to others in similar positions are viewed as transphobic and perhaps irrelevant rather than being from lived experience.

My fears are that increasingly right-wing views across wider society will threaten the protections we have achieved. I also worry about the mental health of our younger generations and how communities like ours provide support, wisdom and structure that helps. Our Quaker communities all strive to be welcoming spaces but they should never be expected to be without challenge: we are all naked before God and a spiritual life asks deep questions of us all.

I hope that Friends can model holding various views on gender non-conformity and feminism in a way that is tolerant, slow to take offence and shows deep concern for each other.

I am a gay man with adult children, now happily married to my husband. When younger found gender nonconformity disturbing but now enjoy exploring it in myself. I am in meeting where there is deep division on gender issues among Friends I love.

I fear for the people involved, and for meeting; I fear for myself as I find it hard to worship in meeting. I fear for a world where discussion can quickly become insult & threat. I hope I have the strength to remain friends and be a Friend; I hope Quakers can find a way to love each other with the difference and pain; I hope neither my granddaughter nor anyone else has to suffer the pain I have seen in my Friends.

I am a retired married man with no direct experience of gender diversity myself or in my family. As a Quaker my first experience of gender diversity was in visiting an applicant for membership of our Area Meeting and who is transgender, and who was accepted into membership. It started me considering the implications of our commitment to finding that of God in each one of us. Our sexuality is an integral part of our humanity and a strong and important part of our sense of identity, which can change and grow over a lifetime. When we are able to accept the leadings of the Spirit in our lives we can be more accepting of how others change and develop in their lives.

It has been eye opening and sad for me to hear from the experience of others as QLCC has explored this issue together. Where I have come across trans and non-binary people in Quakers, my experience has been that they have been welcomed and accepted and I have been surprised to hear that some feel rejected. I have some sympathies with older women who fear the loss of female-only spaces and see that it is possible to retain this as well as providing other gender-neutral spaces and facilities. I hope that Quakers can find a way to come together rather than be divided over this issue as I am sure we are all committed to seeing the inner person rather than the outward appearance of others.



Yearly Meeting of the
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At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings

Held Saturday 7 December 2019 at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

Minutes

MfS/19/12/01 Opening Worship

During opening worship we have heard Quaker faith & practice 21.06 read.

MfS/19/12/02 Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

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

Release requests received:

Jocelyn Bell-Burnell – Quaker Life Central Committee alternate
Glynis Davies – Cornwall AM alternate
Roy Stephenson – Quaker Life Central Committee representative
Julie Taylor-Browne – Cornwall AM representative
Sue Tompkins – Swarthmoor (South West Cumbria) AM representative

Nominated:

Glynis Davies – Cornwall AM representative
Jeffrey Dean – Quaker Life Central Committee representative
Alan Pearmain – Quaker Life Central Committee alternate

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

Visitors:

Marigold Bentley – BYM Staff, Quaker Peace & Social Witness
Trevor Evans - Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee
Ann Floyd – Quaker World Relations Committee
Caroline Howden – Sustainability Monitoring Group
Neil Jarvis – BYM Staff, Recording Clerk's Office
Margaret Mortimer – Committee on Clerks
Emma Roberts – Quaker Life Central Committee

Mark Tod – Church Government Advisory Group
Anne van Staveren – BYM staff, Media Relations Officer

MfS/19/12/03 Apologies

We receive apologies from Hardshaw and Mann, London West and Swarthmoor (SW Cumbria) Area Meetings which have not been able to send a representative on this occasion.

MfS/19/12/04 Young People's Participation Day

We are meeting today with and alongside the Young People's Participation Day. Young Friends have joined us in our opening worship. They will spend some of the day in their own programme, sharing lunch with members of Meeting for Sufferings, and joining us again later in the day.

Young Friends have invited us to consider questions together, as a way of building connections between generations, and this has helped us to get to know each other better.

MfS/19/12/05 Agenda

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

MfS/19/12/06 Court and Prison Register

Further to our minute MfS/2019/07/04, Justin Kenrick (South East Scotland AM) appeared at the City of London Magistrates Court on 29 October 2019. He was found guilty under section 14 of the Public order Act, in relation to a protest in April. He was given a conditional discharge and ordered to pay costs amounting to £415.

Also further to our minute MfS/2019/07/04, Justin Kenrick appeared in Sheriff Court in Edinburgh on 30 October, in relation to an Extinction Rebellion protest in April. The case has been delayed until 24-26 February 2020.

We thank South East Scotland AM for forwarding this information. We agree to include it in the Court and Prison register, and hold Justin Kenrick in the light.

MfS/19/12/07 Report from Quaker Life Central Committee

Emma Roberts, clerk of Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC), has spoken to the committee's report (paper MfS 2019 11 07a).

QLCC oversees a wide range of work including:

- Our commitment to exploring issues of Diversity and Inclusion. QLCC has a diverse membership with a wide range of views and perspectives.
- The roll-out of Local Development Workers (LDWs), with the aim of employing one based within reach of every Quaker community in Britain within the next five years, and ensuring that all its work supporting Quaker communities is more 'meeting centred'.

- Ways of supporting unattached Friends, and helping young people transitioning to adulthood. It is experimenting with different ways to work with both young people (aged 11-18) and young adults.
- The Library. There is a new Collections Strategy, intended to ensure that the story of Quakerism is documented, and shared and understood as widely as possible.
- The Simpler Meetings project, which is helping meetings reduce the burden of administration.

Emma concentrated on two things in her introduction. First, the excitement generated in the committee by the Local Development Worker programme. Secondly, the issue of gender diversity. Emma shared statements made by members of QLCC which demonstrate the range of experience Friends bring to their consideration.

Quaker Life's consultation on gender diversity is still open, and we encourage Friends to engage with it.

MfS/19/12/08 Report from Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee

Trevor Evans, member of Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC), has spoken to the committee's report (paper MfS 2019 11 7b).

The report sets out a wide range of work being done with, for, and on behalf of Quakers in Britain, including the Sanctuary Everywhere project; supporting activists challenging economic inequality and militarism; peace education; speaking out on the climate emergency; and conciliation.

QPSW has reframed its international work, and is ensuring that work in Britain and internationally complement each other. Trevor has explained that the committee is in the process of completing its strategic review.

The questions posed by the meeting were helpful in teasing out what QPSW is doing in the interfaith context, and the many opportunities we have for local community working on issues of climate justice and economic sustainability. We heard about the careful judgement necessary as we decide when and how best to speak out on matters of concern.

We thank QPSWCC for their report and Trevor for being with us today.

MfS/19/12/09 Report from Quaker World Relations Committee

Ann Floyd, clerk of Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC), has spoken to the committee's report (paper MfS 2019 12 07c).

QWRC works to enrich understanding between British Friends and Friends worldwide; and to engage Quakers in Britain with the issues and concerns of Friends

around the globe. We remind ourselves that Quakers in Europe (including Britain) number only about ten per cent of Quakers worldwide and worship traditions vary.

We have been encouraged to consider what experience we have had visiting Friends elsewhere or meeting visitors here, and how this may be facilitated further.

We thank QWRC for their report and Ann for being with us today.

MfS/19/12/10 Reports from BYM Representatives attending European YMs

Britain Yearly Meeting is the largest in the Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation and each year we are invited to send representatives to the European YMs.

We receive paper MfS/19/12/07ci with written reports and epistles from representatives to other European Yearly Meetings:

Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting – Haifa Rashed
Finland Yearly Meeting – Mary Woodward
France Yearly Meeting – Lesley Grahame
German Yearly Meeting – Annette Duensing
Ireland Yearly Meeting – Marie McCusker & Tina Cunningham
Netherlands Yearly Meeting – Silas Price
Sweden Yearly Meeting – Matt Alton
Switzerland Yearly Meeting – Harry Albright

We thank the Friends concerned for visiting on our behalf, and for their reports.

MfS/19/12/11 Report from Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

Stephanie Grant, member of Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) has spoken to the committee's report (paper MfS 2019 12 07d).

The main event in 2019 was an extended meeting held in Limerick, which was a rich gathering full of thought provoking discussion and deep listening. The event established relationships with key Friends involved in ecumenical and interfaith work which should bear fruit in the future.

Our papers included the December edition of CIRcular and the press statements issued on 22nd November concerning Churches Together in England (CTE). Hannah Brock Womack, our CTE presidential nominee, has been with us to answer to explain further. She has told us of the pain of the disagreement but also the opportunities that it presents, in particular to model the love of God to and in all people.

We thank QCCIR for their report and Stephanie and Hannah for being with us today.

MfS/19/12/12 Relationship with Churches Together in England

Through the Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations, Britain Yearly Meeting is a member of the four ecumenical instruments: Churches Together in Britain & Ireland, Churches Together in England, Cytûn: Eglwysi Ynghyd yng Nghymru/Churches Together in Wales, and Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS).

QCCIR now reports that the relationship between Quakers and Churches Together in England is under considerable strain at the present time. From time to time it falls to QCCIR to nominate a president of CTE to represent our grouping of reformed churches (currently comprising the Religious Society of Friends, the Lutheran and German-speaking churches and the Church of Scotland (Presbytery of England) and known as the 4th Presidency Group). This president serves for four years alongside five others to represent the broad diversity of Christian churches in England. In June 2018 QCCIR agreed to nominate Hannah Brock Womack to serve as 4th president. In May 2019 her appointment was confirmed at a meeting of representatives of the 4th Presidency Group in accordance with CTE's constitution.

However, Hannah Brock Womack's appointment has proved unacceptable to some other churches in membership of CTE, due to the fact she is married to a person of the same sex. In September 2019, her appointment was considered by CTE's Enabling Group (at which all member churches are represented) and the 4th Presidency Group asked to show restraint by not exercising the office of their president. We have made it clear that we do not take marriage status into account in our nominations process. Instead, there will be an empty chair for the 4th president when the other five presidents meet; CTE intends this to serve as a symbol of the work needed to be done to reach unity.

We know that this decision has caused grief amongst Friends. We have heard that QCCIR is committed to finding ways to heal the pain. QCCIR remains confident that the ecumenical movement will continue to serve as a model of cooperation and mutual understanding that recognises the unique gifts of each member.

We reaffirm the importance we place on seeing all committed relationships as equal in the eyes of God. We do not consider sexuality a relevant consideration in discerning any Friend's rightness to serve as our representative to ecumenical bodies.

We reaffirm the value of maintaining ecumenical relationships as a way of bringing our Quaker insights to the table, as well as an opportunity to learn from the experience of other faith communities.

We are grateful to QCCIR for their careful work, and uphold them and Hannah Brock Womack as they continue to maintain our relationship with Churches Together in England, encouraging them to return to us for further guidance in due course if required.

MfS/19/12/13 Appointments

a) Central Nominations Committee has brought forward the following names for service or release as indicated:

Church Government Advisory Group

To serve from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022:

Kate Green – North East Thames AM - 1st term

Friends World Committee for Consultation / Quaker World Relations Committee

To serve from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022:

Antony Froggett – Manchester & Warrington AM - 1st term

Annie Brock Womack – Sheffield & Balby AM - 1st term

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

Request for immediate release:

Sue Beardon – Sheffield & Balby AM

To serve from 1 May 2020 to 30 April 2023:

Rosemary Field – Devon AM - 1st term

Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC)

Request for immediate release:

Jen Hampton – Pendle Hill AM

Marion McNaughton – Manchester & Warrington AM

Quaker Housing Trust

To serve from ARM 2020 to ARM 2023:

Wendy Gerard – Gloucestershire AM (re-nomination) - 2nd term

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC)

To serve from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022:

Robert Almond – Sheffield & Balby AM (re-nomination) - 2nd term

Ann Bettys – Brighouse West Yorkshire AM (re-nomination) - 2nd term

Quaker United Nations Committee – Geneva

To serve from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022:

Colm Ó Cuanacháin – Luton & Leighton AM (re-nomination) - 3rd term

First term was for 1 year.

Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group

To serve from 1 January 2020 to 7 August 2020:

Ade Couper – Worcestershire & Shropshire AM - 1st term

Alick Munro – Kingston & Wandsworth AM - 1st term

Becky Riddell – Oxford & Swindon AM - 1st term

Sasha Lawson-Frost – Oxford & Swindon AM / YFGM - 1st term

We appoint and release the Friends named accordingly, and thank them for their service.

b) Yearly Meeting Nominating Group has brought forward the following names for service or release as indicated:

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

Request for immediate release:

Robert Wilson – North Scotland AM

We release the Friend named, and thank him for his service.

MfS/19/12/14 Use of the term 'overseer'

We receive minute 11 of Central Yorkshire Area Meeting held on 10th September 2019, regarding the use of the term 'overseer' to describe those in our meetings who hold responsibilities for oversight (paper MfS 2019 12 09).

Central Yorkshire AM notes that there are differing views. We reflect today that the term 'overseer' carries some unhelpful connotations, particularly in relation to slavery, in industry, in psychology and in religious contexts. Looking at this term may prompt us to consider other words we use in our organisation.

We forward this minute to QLCC asking it to return to us with advice when it is ready. We also forward this minute for information to the Book of Discipline Revision Committee.

MfS 19/12/15 Central Nominations Committee review

In November 2018, Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) asked Central Nominations Committee (CNC) to review its terms of reference and bring back any recommendations for change (minute MfS/18/11/17 refers). At the same meeting, MfS considered a review of the YM Committee on Clerks (CoC), agreeing a number of recommendations, and deferring consideration of others.

In 2018 we accepted four recommendations which were regarding the nomination and appointment of BYM clerks and treasurers. We receive and note BYM Trustees' minute 2019/11/04 which confirms that, if Yearly Meeting adopts these recommendations concerning the appointment of BYM Trustees' clerks and the Yearly Meeting Treasurer, Trustees can make them work successfully.

During 2019 CNC and CoC have been considering ways forward. We now receive and note minute 2019/09/30 of Central Nominations Committee and 2019/09/02b of Committee on Clerks which are supportive of the new proposals.

We receive paper MfS 2019/12/10 which makes new recommendations, following the work that CNC and CoC have undertaken, together.

We now accept the two recommendations made in the paper:

- Central Nominations Committee should take on the work of both CNC and CoC.
- This committee will establish subgroups and standing search groups, with additional Friends brought in to serve on them as needed. This will enable expertise and capacity to nurture Friends before and during service.

We have considered draft terms of reference for the new Central Nominations Committee, and agree that they reflect the accepted recommendations, subject to amendments at 1.1 and 3.3.

We forward this matter to Yearly Meeting for approval.

MfS/19/12/16 BYM Trustees' report

Linda Batten, Yearly Meeting Treasurer, has spoken to us about the BYM budget for 2020. This year there is a deficit budget with additional planned expenditure on support for Quaker meetings and communities. There will also be further capital expenditure in 2020 for Swarthmore Hall and for improving IT systems. Reserves will be decreased this year but we are pleased to hear that the companies that we invest in produce only 78 tonnes of carbon per £1million invested compared with the FTSE 350, which produce 217 tonnes of carbon per £1m.

We do not have endless resources for funding our work, and we need to look at both the work that we do, and the funds that we can raise, to ensure we have a thriving Quaker community in Britain in the future.

We have received the minutes of Trustees' meeting held on 15 November 2019. Caroline Nursey, clerk of BYM Trustees, has spoken to them.

Further to our minute MfS 2018/11/18, we note minute BYMT 2019-11-10 Legacy-funded project: Climate crisis - spiritual nurture and learning. We are glad to hear that Trustees have allocated resources to this project on sustainability. This will be delivered by Woodbrooke, helping Quakers in Britain take forward parts of our agreed 'recommendations for action' and meet our commitment to work towards becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community. The work will focus on spiritual nurture and learning, as well as practical ideas. We hope that it will be responsive to changing events over the next five years.

We thank the Trustees for their work, and Caroline and Linda for speaking to us today.

MfS/19/12/17 Quaker Recognised Bodies

Further to minute MfS/15/12/17, we receive paper MfS/19/12/12 recommending one group for registration as Quaker Recognised Body.

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

Free Standing

Quaker Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

MfS/19/12/18 Yearly Meeting review

Yearly Meeting 2019 asked Meeting for Sufferings to carry out a review of Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gatherings, and to bring any recommendations back to Yearly Meeting (minute 6 of Yearly Meeting 2019; our minute MfS 2019/07/05 refers).

The Recording Clerk has spoken to paper MfS 2019/12/13 which proposes a two-stage review. The first stage should consider how well Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering are meeting their purposes, and whether the purposes need to be changed or updated. The second stage should consider how Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gatherings are run and organised, drawing on the findings from the first stage.

We confirm the scope of the review as set out in the paper. We note that the review group will need to consult widely in both stages. We anticipate that any recommendations would be brought back to MfS in 2022, in time to be forwarded to Yearly Meeting 2023.

We approve the draft Terms of Reference for the Review Group. We ask Central Nominations Committee to bring forward the names of Friends to serve, for appointment at a meeting in Spring 2020, and we send this minute to them.

MfS/19/12/19 Minor amendments to *Quaker faith & practice*

We receive paper MfS 2019/12/14 from Church Government Advisory Group (CGAG) with proposed amendments to *Quaker faith and practice*.

Further to our minute MfS/2019/11/07, regarding Children and Young People's Work Advocates, CGAG recommends changes to Qf&p section 4.05.

In November 2018, Quaker Life Central Committee reported to MfS that it had laid down the Library Committee. CGAG recommends amendments to sections 4.39, 4.43, 4.44, and 13.41.

We agree to the changes as set out in the paper.

We note that while a new Book of Discipline is being prepared, Yearly Meeting has delegated responsibility for minor factual amendments to Meeting for Sufferings (YM 2019 minute 21 and our minute MfS/2019/07/05 refer). We ask our clerks to include information about these changes in the next annual report to Yearly Meeting.

MfS/19/12/20 Feedback from the Young People's Participation Day

YPP participants and staff joined us at the end of the day to worship with us. We receive their minute as follows:

YQPD Minute

Friends House, London

On 7th December 2019, 31 young Friends and adult volunteers gathered together at Friends House, London for the Young Quakers Participation Day 2019, which ran alongside Meeting for Sufferings. Throughout the day, we explored the meaning of Discernment.

We started off by joining Meeting for Sufferings in Worship and a getting-to-know-you session in which we shared memories and beliefs about our lives through Quakerism. We then left the Meeting for Sufferings group and heard from Paul Parker about his experiences with being the Recording Clerk and the history behind the role, and used quotes to explore where discernment comes from and where it leads to. We went on to review in small groups, in a practical way, our ideas on what Quakerism means to us personally and what Quakerism means in general in order to explore how the discernment process functions and how we reach a final outcome. We had lunch with our responsible adults which gave us chance to engage with older Quakers and talk about common interests. We came back together and watched a video by QuakerSpeak about discernment and we explored the different methods to make decisions in our own lives, and in what situations these methods are appropriate. After which we thought about the differences between Witness and Discernment. We ended with a reflection on how discernment is used in our own lives and how can we access the support of Quaker communities in this process.

Our responses from the day touched on the meaning of discernment to us as Quakers in corporate decision making, but also in our daily lives, in regards to matters of importance. Reaching a decision through discernment was described as finding a place where we are settled as individuals and as a whole community. We explored where the promptings that lead to discernment come from, is it prompted by God within us or by an extension of our own beliefs?

The Young Quaker Participation day was a great opportunity to explore how discernment can bring together the community in decision making and can support our personal decision making. Participants felt that they were a part of the Quaker community and they were able to reflect on Quaker decision making process.

Signed in and on behalf of YQPD 2019,

Spencer King

Clerk

We have appreciated sharing the day together and strengthening links within our yearly meeting.

MfS/19/02/21 Thanks

We thank Anne Ullathorne for her service, first as assistant clerk, and then clerk, to Meeting for Sufferings during the last six years.

MfS/19/02/22 Closing minute

We closed our time together with worship.

Love one another. Bear one another's burdens, and may the Lord of peace give you peace at all times and in all ways. The Lord be with all of you.

Anne Ullathorne
Clerk