

Follow up letter



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

9 December 2022

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings 3 December 2022

Dear Friends

Every meeting of MfS brings fresh insights and the joy of worshipping together.

We continued our experimentation with agenda planning, arranging for our first session - taking draft minutes and minutes from area meetings – to take place on Thursday afternoon. What did you think of this? The Arrangements Group will be convene next Tuesday (13 December) to review the meeting, and as always your feedback is welcome. Please contact sufferings@quaker.org.uk

Of greatest importance for your reporting back is the decision we made (minute 6) to ask Friends to cease use of the term 'overseer' to describe the caring role in our meetings. Please feel free to share the supporting papers that informed our decision, as it is important that Friends understand how this relates to our earlier minute from 2020 (MfS/20/12/13) which I quote:

Our testimonies to equality and truth demand that we engage in a drive towards real change, turning our declared intentions into reality. We are called to commit to becoming an actively anti-racist church.

This change represents one more step along the road.

On Saturday morning we received the report and recommendations of the Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering Review Group who were additionally tasked with reviewing Meeting for Sufferings. As our minutes explain, we welcomed their conclusions which emphasised the centrality of spirit-led discernment in our lives as Quakers. Four of the recommendations were forwarded to other groups for action, and the remaining two have been referred to Agenda Committee for consideration at Yearly Meeting in 2023.

Our next report was introduced by the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, bringing us news of their work over 2022 and outlining their next steps. The explanatory slides are attached, along with draft texts on Marriage and Nominations for Friends to consider in their meetings. This is the exciting moment we have all been waiting for! The Revision Committee is not looking for specific edits to the text

but for feedback on the voice and tone of the book, so please approach these examples with that in mind. There is a deadline for responses in the papers.

Trustees brought us news of the Yearly Meeting finances and the budget they have agreed for 2023, as well as decisions about grant funding for Woodbrooke and the ongoing work on simplification that trustees are taking to Yearly Meeting in 2023.

We were delighted to hear from the yearly meeting's two standing committees – QCCIR and QWRC – in line with the arrangements agreed in their revised terms of reference. Both committees seek to involve Quakers as they participate in ecumenical and interfaith work (QCCIR) or with Friends in Europe & the Middle East and across the world (QWRC). We are only one of many faith groups in Britain and a very small part of the world family of Friends but all the richer for our engagement with them.

There is one final but important item to mention. Following on from our October consideration of whether to appoint attenders to central committee service, Arrangements Group has proposed a way for us to look at the wider issue of membership. Our minute MfS/22/12/10 poses questions for all in our meetings, and it will be forwarded to area meeting clerks with information about when we hope to return to it – possibly in October 2023. Please feel inspired to help your area meetings to take this matter forward. To support this, we are sending all area meeting clerks a digest of previous central committee and Yearly Meeting minutes relating to membership, which is also attached to this pack to support you if you wish to bring this item to your area meeting.

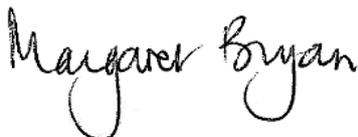
As you were reminded in the meeting, this was my last time at the table after serving first as assistant and then as clerk. It has been an enriching experience, over the course of which I have learnt a great deal.

Thank you all for your prayerful support

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time*

from Little Gidding
T.S.Eliot

In Friendship



Margaret Bryan
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

The following papers are included in this mailing:

- Functions checklist
- MfS minutes December 2022
- Book of Discipline Revision Committee PowerPoint slides
- Book of Discipline Revision Committee draft text on Nominations
- Book of Discipline Revision Committee draft text on Marriage
- Membership – call for discernment by Area Meetings

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

	Requirement	Dec 22
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	12
D	To receive the BYM trustees' annual report & accounts for information	
E	To make a report on its own activities to YM	15
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	9, 10
H	To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns referred to it by AMs and others	5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14
I	To foster communication throughout the yearly meeting	5, 6, 8
J	To receive minutes from area meetings	5, 6
K	To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register	
I	To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings	14
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 <i>Quaker faith & practice</i>	
S	To set up an arrangements group and support and working groups to assist its own work as it sees fit	4



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

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings

Held by video conference on 1 December 2022 and
at Friends House and by video conference on 3 December 2022

Minutes

Thursday 1 December

MfS/22/12/01 Opening Worship

During opening worship *Quaker faith & practice* 3.31 was read.

MfS/22/12/02 Agenda

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

MfS/22/12/03 Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

Since our last meeting we have received the following nominations and requests for release for Meeting for Sufferings until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2024:

Release requests received:

John Bourton – York AM alternate
Na'amat Little – Wirral & Chester AM alternate

Nominated:

Andrew Bird – Cornwall AM alternate
John Bourton – York AM representative
Richard Hawkins – Leeds AM alternate
Teresa Rose – York AM alternate

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

Gwen Clark – Wensleydale & Swaledale AM
Lesley Evans (Saturday) – West Weald AM
Sarah Freeman (Thursday) – West Weald AM
Sue Goodson – Sheffield & Balby AM

Apologies:

London West AM, North West London AM, Wirral & Chester AM, Worcestershire & Shropshire AM

Other visitors:

Judith Baker – BYM staff, Ecumenical & Interfaith Officer
Michael S Booth – BYM staff, Church Government Adviser
Catherine Brewer – Book of Discipline Revision Committee co-clerk
Rosie Carnall – Book of Discipline Revision Committee co-clerk
Grace Da Costa – BYM staff, Public Affairs & Media Manager
Sarah Donaldson – Yearly Meeting Review Group convener
Elaine Green – Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations clerk
Caroline Kibblewhite – Incoming MfS Assistant Clerk
Fred Langridge – Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee clerk
Cato Pedder – BYM staff, Media Officer
Michael Phipps – Book of Discipline Revision Committee assistant clerk
Rhodri Roberts – BYM staff, Governance & Projects Coordinator

MfS/22/12/04 Appointments**a) Central Nominations Committee**

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

Church Government Advisory Group

Re-nominate to serve from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025:

- Kate Green – North East Thames Area Meeting

Quaker Council for European Affairs

Nominate to serve as an alternate from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025:

- Gordon Benson – Pendle Hill Area Meeting

Nominate to serve as a representative with immediate effect to 31 December 2024:

- Rebecca Bellamy – Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting

Quaker Life Central Committee

Re-nominate to serve from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025:

- Harry Albright – Leicester Area Meeting

Re-nominate to serve from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023:

- Laura Wirtz – South East London Area Meeting

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

Re-nominate to serve from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025:

- Alan Keith – West Somerset Area Meeting

Release from service with immediate effect:

- Mark Borthwick – South East Scotland AM
- Abigail Darton – York AM

Quaker World Relations Committee

Re-nominate to serve from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025:

- Antony Froggett – Manchester & Warrington Area Meeting

Nominate to serve with immediate effect to 31 December 2023:

- Susan Seymour – North West London Area Meeting

Group to Review Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering and Meeting for Sufferings

Release from service with immediate effect:

- Joseph Fuller – Gloucestershire AM
- Alexandra Boliver-Brown – Young Friends General Meeting

b) Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings Support Group

- Anna Sharman (North London AM) has requested release with immediate effect.
- Claire Bowman (Central England AM) to be appointed to serve for the remainder of the triennium until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2024.

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

MfS/22/12/05 War in Ukraine

Friends in Oxford & Swindon and Cumberland area meetings have told use of their support of Friends World Committee for Consultation's work in connection with the security concerns of countries bordering Russia and Russia itself. We commend these minutes to all our area meetings so that Friends across our yearly meeting can uphold this work through our prayers and consider other ways of involvement. We send this minute to Quaker World Relations Committee.

MfS/22/12/06 Use of the term 'overseer'

In 2019 Meeting for Sufferings received a minute from Central Yorkshire Area Meeting outlining a concern about the present-day suitability of the term 'overseer' to describe those in our meetings appointed to provide pastoral oversight, support and care of Friends.

We embarked on discernment nationally, at Meeting for Sufferings and in Quaker Life Central Committee, and in our meetings. Today we receive over 40 minutes from area meetings (paper MfS 2022 12 08 and its supplement). Together they express the depth of our discernment.

In April 2022 Meeting for Sufferings united with Quaker Life Central Committee's conclusion that there was general support for a change to the term 'overseer' because of the historical connotations of hierarchy and the oppression of the slave trade. It is clear that many area meetings are now using alternative terms to describe the service Friends give in caring for one another.

Quaker Life Central Committee, in its most recent minute to us (QLCC 22.51), suggests that a flexible approach is advantageous – where our meetings can decide what is right for their communities – and that the focus should be on the service we ask of Friends rather than the terminology we use to describe it.

We unite with this view, and ask all area meetings to cease using the term overseer and to select another suitable term in its place – one example would be pastoral friend – to describe their local arrangements.

We send this minute to the Book of Discipline Revision Committee and Quaker Life Central Committee.

Saturday 1 December

MfS/22/12/07 Worship

In our worship this morning we heard *Quaker faith & practice* 3.05 read.

MfS/22/12/08 Review of Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering and Meeting for Sufferings

We have received the second report of the group appointed to review Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering and Meeting for Sufferings (paper MfS 2022 12 11) and Sarah Donaldson, convenor of the review group, has introduced it to us today. It was the main item for consideration at the preparation meeting held online on 28 November and it focuses on stage two of their work – a review of the current role of Meeting for Sufferings within the structures of Britain Yearly Meeting.

We thank the review group for its clear report and presentation of its principal findings.

In searching for a way to respond to the report's conclusions we recognise that some changes are in our gift. We affirm that spirit-led discernment is central to Meeting for Sufferings' role and that the Clerks and Arrangements Group have a key part to play in enabling it to be done well. We recognise that there may be challenges for the exercise of discernment in a predominantly online meeting for worship for business.

We encourage Arrangements Group to continue experimenting, making use of creative treatment of agenda items and temporary or time-limited working groups so that agendas are planned to provide sufficient time and space, and to allow for more open participation and threshing as needs arise.

The wider education of Friends in the essentials of spirit-led discernment is not a matter for Meeting for Sufferings or the Arrangements Group alone. We ask Quaker Life Central Committee to give serious thought to how to address the need for the continuing education of Friends in this matter.

As the report says, improvement in communication is more problematic. It involves both the yearly meeting externally and internally and also Meeting for Sufferings' role in communicating throughout the structures. All communication needs to reach Friends on the bench effectively. This may mean thinking about the relationship between area meetings, local meetings and Meeting for Sufferings, especially as some area meetings are consolidating. It is therefore a substantial yearly meeting-wide issue, as good communications are crucial to supporting our lives as a worshipping community at every level.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group to consider how to take this recommendation forward and to bring a proposal back to a future meeting.

The relationships between Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings and Trustees are the responsibility of Yearly Meeting. The original impetus for part of this review was a request that we look at how Meeting for Sufferings can work well alongside BYM Trustees without duplication or confusion, and in ways which comply with charity law.

We believe it is right that the recommendations should be taken to the wider forum of the Yearly Meeting for discernment. We therefore ask Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to give agenda time to addressing the relationships between and respective authority of Meeting for Sufferings, Trustees and the Yearly Meeting itself.

We send this minute to Quaker Life Central Committee, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee and the Book of Discipline Revision Committee.

MfS/22/12/09 Revising our book of discipline

We receive a report from the Book of Discipline Revision Committee (MfS 2022 12 12). It reminds us that this Committee is under our care and their report updates us on the monumental task that they are diligently taking forward. We are truly grateful for the Committee's work and continue to uphold them in their task.

We have heard from the Committee's clerks, Rosie Carnall and Catherine Brewer, about its work over the past year, its plans for the year ahead, and the joy of working on this emergent and developing process.

The Committee has now set a timetable for completing the revision and this has been shared with us today.

We have been invited to comment on sample text for marriage and nominations which will be distributed after this meeting. We share the Committee's excitement and encourage members of Sufferings to consider the text with Friends in area meetings and elsewhere and to respond. We note the Committee is interested in hearing views on the voice of the book, language, style, accessibility, and the balance between core and supplementary material, rather than comments on finer details of the content.

We note that the Committee hopes to report back to us in March next year on what they learn from this exercise.

MfS/22/12/10 Quaker membership – the way forward?

In October, we did not reach unity on the question of appointing attenders to central committee service (minute MfS/22/10/12). Arrangements Group was tasked with considering how the broader matter of Quaker membership could return to us before addressing the question again. We accept their proposal to ask members of Meeting for Sufferings, both individually and in their area meetings, to consider the following questions:

- Why do we have membership?
- What is it for?
- Is it still necessary?
- If yes, what form(s) could it take?

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group's forward plan for 2023 indicates the intention to return to this at the October (residential) meeting.

We send this minute to Quaker Life Central Committee for information.

MfS/22/12/11 Quaker recognised bodies

We agree to re-register the following Quaker recognised bodies for a period of five years (to be reviewed in 2027):

1. Experiment with Light Network
2. The Kindlers
3. London Quakers
4. Non-theist Friends Network
5. The Quaker Mental Health Fund (UK)
6. Quaker Universalist Group

We note it has not been possible to contact 'Friends in Tune', a Quaker recognised body due for re-registration. Friends in Tune will be listed as dormant and if it is not possible to review during 2023, Meeting for Sufferings will be invited to remove the group from the official list of Quaker recognised bodies in early 2024.

MfS/22/12/12 Report from BYM trustees

We have heard from Caroline Nursey, Clerk of BYM Trustees and Linda Batten, Yearly Meeting Treasurer about their most recent meeting, held in November (MfS 2022 12 14).

There was an update on the yearly meeting's funding for Woodbrooke's Climate Crisis project and the addition of a grant for their spiritual nurture and learning work, which will be reviewed throughout the grant period.

When looking at the yearly meeting's finances, our treasurer explained that the Unrestricted General Fund covers the majority of BYM spending. This part of the budget is in deficit, with staff costs rising, staff and committee expenses (that is, travel and event costs), but still less than pre-pandemic. Friends' donations continue to be vital. Nevertheless the trustees approved a balanced budget and operational plan for 2023 and the creation of two new designated funds.

We noted trustees decision to request agenda time at Yearly Meeting 2023 to be devoted to considering *Simple, inclusive and sustainable structures and practices*.

We thank trustees for their work on our behalf.

MfS/22/12/13 Report from Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR)

We receive a report from QCCIR on its work since September last year in line with its strategy, which is provided to us for information (MfS 2022 12 15). We note the Committee's work to address Yearly Meeting concerns, its work with other faiths and churches to promote anti-racism, and its involvement in promoting religious concern for the earth's sustainability. This year we see the Committee's representation on the Interfaith Network and the Faith Communities Forum has enabled active dialogue and witness to climate change. We note a conscious shift in the Committee's focus to interfaith work but are pleased to hear that ecumenical relations have been strengthened over the last few years due to the necessity of engaging with challenging issues. We note also the intention to build on the engagement of local Friends in ecumenical and interfaith work.

We commend the Committee's report for explicitly addressing the Yearly Meeting's concerns regarding anti-racism and climate justice.

MfS/22/12/14 Report from Quaker World Relations Committee and reports from representatives to other European Yearly Meetings

Tracey Martin, clerk of Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) introduced their annual report (MfS 2022 12 16). We are members of the European and Middle East Section (EMES) of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), and QWRC develops and maintains relationships with this part of the world family of Quakers through reciprocal attendance at European Yearly Meetings.

We receive reports and epistles from Belgium & Luxembourg, France, German, Ireland, Netherlands, Nordic and Switzerland Yearly Meetings (MfS 2022 12 17).

The Committee also helps to connect Friends in Britain with those from other Yearly Meetings through inviting guests to our Yearly Meeting.

We were asked to consider how QWRC might best be able to help British Friends prepare for and engage with two forthcoming gatherings:

- the annual meeting of EMES at Woodbrooke in May 2023
- the FWCC World Plenary in South Africa in 2024.

We heard about ways in which British Friends have made contact with Friends abroad and the value of personal connections made through visits and worshipping together. Technology has provided so many openings that were previously not available to us.

We thank QWRC for their report.

MfS/22/12/15 Meeting for Sufferings report to Yearly Meeting 2023

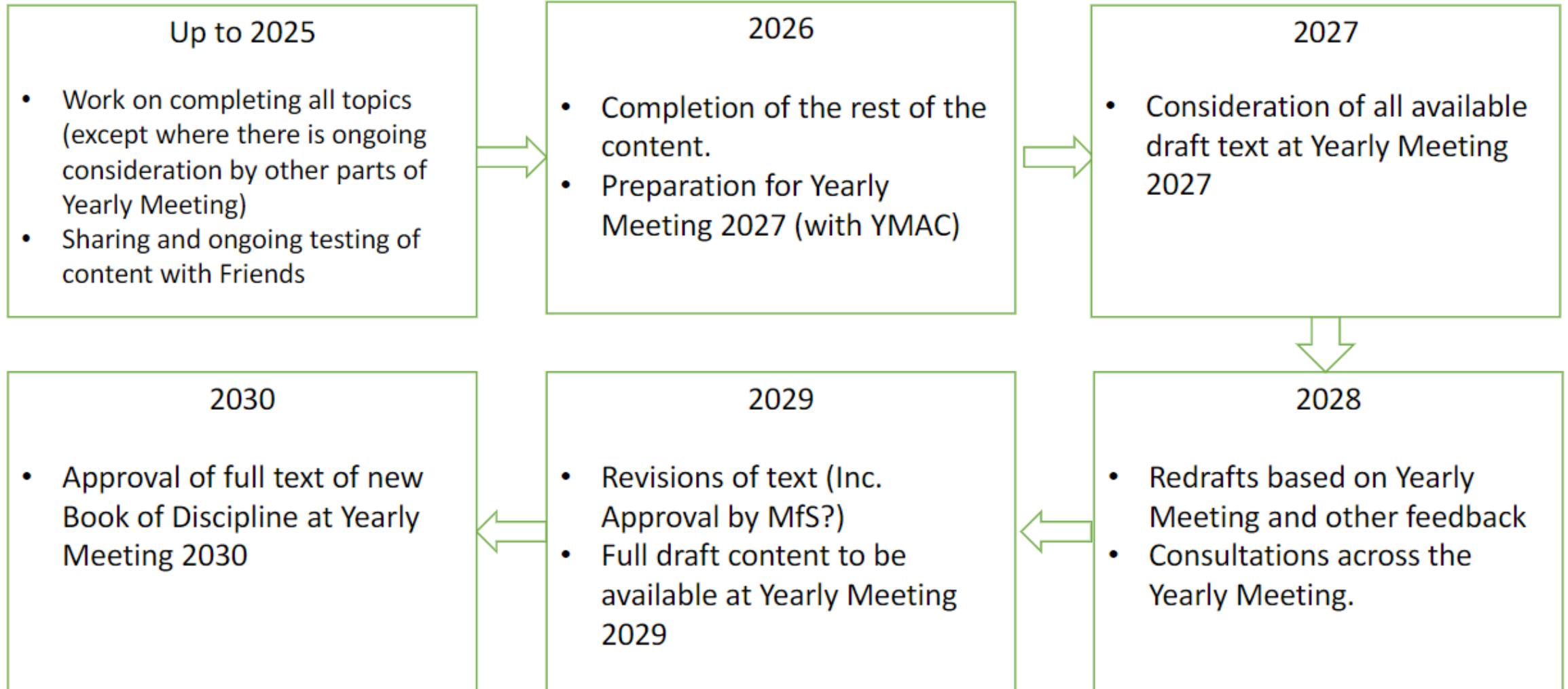
A draft of the annual report to Yearly Meeting will be circulated for comment after the meeting, so as to meet the publication deadline for Yearly Meeting 2023 Documents in Advance. This represents a pragmatic departure from our usual practice.

MfS/22/12/16 Closing worship

We closed our time in worship together

Margaret Bryan
Clerk

Book of Discipline Revision Committee Flowchart



Book of Discipline Revision Committee

Process for sharing draft text

- **December 2022 Meeting for Sufferings** – BDRC 3rd report and an outline explanation of the process for responding to draft text
- **December 2022 Meeting for Sufferings follow up papers** – includes two draft topics with a coversheet that outlines what we are asking Friends to do, including some questions to respond to
- **January / February 2023** – BDRC facilitate an online session (x3) for Meeting for Sufferings reps/alternates provides the opportunity to ask further questions and some ideas for engaging Friends in discussion about the draft texts
- **March 2023 Meeting for Sufferings** – agenda time to reflect and discern on questions we've asked, not to reach a decision, but as part of the feedback process
- **Yearly Meeting 2023** – special interest group offer from BDRC will focus on the draft texts
- **End of May 2023** – the feedback process for these draft texts closes
- **July 2023** – BDRC meet (in person) and reflect on everything we have learned from this process!



Yearly Meeting of the
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Topic 1: Nominations

Introduction to this draft text

This draft material reflects the current thinking of the **Book of Discipline Revision Committee** on how our new book should sound. It is not final but offered for comment. We hope that Friends will provide feedback to help us shape future drafts.

These drafts aim to describe the principles behind our current practice clearly and concisely. They do not try to include detail. They are drafts of the core content which will eventually be accompanied by supplementary material – this can include handbooks, practical guides, and other things which are helpful but do not need to be approved by Yearly Meeting.

In writing these drafts we have needed to make some decisions about language and style. Friends use many different terms for the Light, the Spirit, God, or whatever you call it. We have chosen to use a small list of terms and usually to stick to one term per topic for clarity. We have aimed to keep sentences short and easy to read. We have considered questions about the formality of the text, whether it sounds friendly and welcoming, and what vocabulary to use. Our goal has been to speak plainly and explain these topics peer to peer, as friends.

It would be useful to receive feedback on:

- How these drafts feel to you as a reader
- Anything which seems especially helpful
- Any parts which are jarring, confusing, or difficult to read
- What you would hope to find in the supplementary material for these topics

We will welcome responses to the four points above, but please don't send detailed drafting/redrafting suggestions on the texts at this stage!

We are also circulating an audio version of both texts, which you can access online through our webpage [Revising Quaker faith & practice | Quakers in Britain](#). This is one of the ways we intend to make the text more accessible. If you listen, we'd also like to know what you think of this audio version.

We welcome responses from individuals or groups of Friends.

If you can, please use our online form to send your responses:

<https://forms.quaker.org.uk/bdrc-comment-on-draft-text/>

Or, if you need to, you can send your responses to:

Michael S Booth (BDRC secretary) at gfp@quaker.org.uk or by post to:

BDRC,
Friends House
Euston Road
London
NW1 2BJ

Please can you send responses on this topic by 31 May 2023.

The text in this document is offered to you by members of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee. We look forward to reading and hearing your reactions to it.

Yours, in Friendship

Catherine Brewer, Rosie Carnall, Co-clerks and Michael Phipps, Assistant Clerk
Book of Discipline Revision Committee

1.00 Nominations: How we appoint people to service in different roles

1.00.1

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

1.01 Introduction

In this chapter we explain what is involved in Quaker nominations processes, and why we use these processes.

Through these processes, we seek to make appointments to roles in a way that builds up our community, uses everyone's gifts, and shares authority and responsibility widely.

Our meetings are alive because we are all involved in upholding and running them. The work of keeping our meetings is shared: we share duties, work, responsibility, power and authority amongst our members. We all have a part in deciding what really needs to be done and who will undertake the necessary work for a set period of time. This discernment lies at the core of the nominations process. It helps the Quaker community fulfil its ministry.

1.02 Identifying Individuals' Gifts and Talents

1.02.1

To be without an ordained clergy is not to be without either leadership or ministry. The gifts of the Spirit to us include both. For us, calls to particular ministries are usually for a limited period of time, and those gifts pertain to the task rather than the person. In one lifetime a person may be called to a number of ministries.

London Yearly Meeting, 1986

We all have gifts which can be developed and used to serve the divine purposes. We all need to be ready to be called to take our part in upholding our meetings. We can also be called to work in the wider world. When we feel called to a role we should consider it with open hearts and minds. Are we being led to this by the promptings of love and truth? Each person explores their leadings individually, but we also explore them collectively. It is the responsibility of our Quaker communities to help each of us to discover our gifts and how to develop them.

Our nominations process is part of our understanding that there is that of God in everyone, with the eternal possibility of growth through faithfulness and service. We are equal before God, but each of us brings distinctive gifts and insights which can

be used for the spiritual growth of individuals and meetings, for the service of our communities, and for the wider world. We have a broad understanding of 'gifts'. Gifts can include talents such as communication or generosity, professional and life skills like cooking and book-keeping, and spiritual attributes such as wisdom or a deep prayer life. Throughout life, gifts and their right use can change. The obvious choices (appoint the accountant as treasurer and the school teacher to run children's meeting) may not be those which speak to the spiritual needs of the individual or the community. We need to think widely and deeply about each person's gifts to discern how they can best serve this community at this time.

1.02.2

I can well remember the first time that I was approached to give service in my local meeting, though it was nearly thirty years ago. The person who asked me was a Friend for whom I had a healthy respect and she explained carefully the process that had suggested that I was the right person to join the Catering Committee. I had never come across a similar process anywhere before. I remember clearly too how I felt – a sense of belonging, of being fully accepted, with something to contribute to a community I had tentatively joined as a battered spiritual refugee. I had found my place.

Each time I am asked to do something for Quakers I am filled with apprehension about the challenge but know from experience that I can trust the discernment that suggested my name. I have found that I will be given what I need. Each appointment confirms and strengthens my feeling that I belong to the Religious Society of Friends.

My hope is that when I can no longer take on active roles that I will still grow through the service of upholding, supporting and encouraging those who do.

Judith Thompson, 2016

1.03 The nominations process

The nominations process can be complex. It might be pictured as a machine with four moving parts:

- the Spirit which leads
- the appointing body which asks someone to serve
- the nominations process which finds someone who might be able to serve
- the individual who is asked to serve.

Appointing bodies should be clear about what tasks really need to be done, why they need doing, and how best to divide up the work of supporting our meetings. It can help to review regularly the way we organise ourselves. The appointing body should consider with clarity and common sense whether a post, group or committee is still needed or can realistically be sustained. We should not live beyond our means financially and we should not attempt to live beyond our means in terms of time or strength.

1.04 Discernment in Quaker Nominations

Appointing people to serve in roles in our meetings is a process of co-operative discernment. It requires an open mind and close attention to each other and to the Spirit. Appointments are made by the whole meeting, but many Quaker communities use nominations committees or groups to help with the discernment process leading up to an appointment. At other times, a nomination for a specific role can be taken from those present in a meeting or when someone volunteers.

A good nominations process:

- Involves the whole meeting in sharing responsibility for appointing people to take on work and for managing how it is done.
- Has clarity about what work is needed, why and for how long.
- Is rooted in worship, waiting on the Spirit.
- Is based on knowledge of the present skills and future potential of members and attenders.
- Helps our communities become more diverse and inclusive.
- Recognises present and future needs of the meeting.
- Has a deep understanding of Quaker principles.
- Makes provision for record keeping, safeguarding and other aspects of good process as relevant.

Nominations are an important part of our way of working. Appointments are made as a collective decision, as in all Quaker business, and everyone involved in the appointing body carries responsibility for them. Nominations work is not simply finding people to fill roles. We are following the leadings of the Spirit to grow both the meeting and individuals. We seek to understand the gifts and potential of everyone in the community. It is helpful to identify people who might grow through the service and bring fresh perspectives to the task, not only those who are already experienced in Quaker work.

1.04.1

Where the committee is discerning the actual name to nominate ... trust becomes difficult. Sometimes the pattern of names that comes out is suspicious to some Friends – the same names being cycled through the 'more important' roles, and limited opportunities for meaningful service to other Friends, or those newer to our community. Sometimes there is a strong but frustrated desire to serve that burns in a particular Friend, and the committee seem to be unaware – or uncaring. Sometimes the committee tells the Meeting that they could not find someone willing and able to serve, but a Friend is sat thinking 'I could do that, and they never asked me'. It is important to remember the important role of nominations in bringing people more fully into participation in our community."

Sam Barnett-Cormack, "Understanding and Trusting Quaker Nominations", Openings blog, 27 November 2017

Those making nominations need to take time for reflection. Ideally, a nominating body will learn about everyone in the community, not just those who are able to be

present on a particular occasion. This allows for the consideration of the whole community and its present and future needs, for consideration of Friends' gifts and potential gifts, for encouraging the timid to undertake service in the knowledge that they will be upheld by others in the meeting, and for giving those who have worked hard time off from Quaker roles.

1.05 Who makes the appointment?

A nominations group or committee does not have the power to appoint anyone: that rests with the appointing body which asked them to find a name or names for a particular post. This process grows out of our understanding that power must not lie in the hands of one group or person. Shared power, with each role defined by both a description of the task and a time limit, gives authority to the post holder within the limits of the role.

In their work, nominations bodies need to have both openness and honesty, and complete confidentiality within the group. They need to be well grounded in Quaker ways. They need sensitivity in approaching those who might be appointed for service, and tact where reappointment for a second term is not felt to be right. Keeping confidential minutes of decisions can be helpful for future nominations groups to understand what decisions have been made and why.

1.06 When things don't work out

However prayerful and careful the appointment process has been, there will be times when an appointment does not work out as hoped. In dealing with this, meetings will need tact and sensitivity because the circumstances that lead to this situation will be many and varied. It is at the discretion of the appointing meeting to end an appointment at any time if it is necessary to do so.

1.06.1

The great aim of a Christian community is to enable its members to know what their gift is and then to enable them to exercise it to the glory of God. This may sometimes involve a prolonged and perhaps painful exercise before some members come to accept that the gift they have to offer is not the one they thought.

New life from old roots, 1965

Friends who are unable to continue in their appointed role should ask to be released from service by the appointing meeting, who should usually agree to this request.

1.06.2

I would never have dreamed of volunteering for most of the posts for which I have been nominated. Usually, on being approached about a nomination, my response has been to doubt my capabilities and to wonder why on earth they would think of asking me. Of course, it may be that hard-pressed nominations committees have to 'take what we can get'.... But I would also like to think that

sometimes they have identified some potential in me that could be encouraged to develop through taking on a new role within the Quaker community. This is confirmed to me by the fact that I can't think of a single Quaker 'job' that I have regretted taking on; even though some were extremely challenging, I have always felt enriched by the experience overall. The support of the Friends whom one hopes to serve is crucial in this process; when I have felt upheld by the meeting, I have been able to trust that, with God's help, I will manage to be 'good enough'.

Towards the source, 2014



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

The meaning of Marriage

Introduction to this draft text

This draft material reflects the current thinking of the **Book of Discipline Revision Committee** on how our new book should sound. It is not final but offered for comment. We hope that Friends will provide feedback to help us shape future drafts.

These drafts aim to describe the principles behind our current practice clearly and concisely. They do not try to include detail. They are drafts of the core content which will eventually be accompanied by supplementary material – this can include handbooks, practical guides, and other things which are helpful but do not need to be approved by Yearly Meeting.

In writing these drafts we have needed to make some decisions about language and style. Friends use many different terms for the Light, the Spirit, God, or whatever you call it. We have chosen to use a small list of terms and usually to stick to one term per topic for clarity. We have aimed to keep sentences short and easy to read. We have considered questions about the formality of the text, whether it sounds friendly and welcoming, and what vocabulary to use. Our goal has been to speak plainly and explain these topics peer to peer, as friends.

It would be useful to receive feedback on:

- How these drafts feel to you as a reader
- Anything which seems especially helpful
- Any parts which are jarring, confusing, or difficult to read
- What you would hope to find in the supplementary material for these topics

We will welcome responses to the four points above, but please don't send detailed drafting/redrafting suggestions on the texts at this stage!

We are also circulating an audio version of both texts, which you can access online through our webpage [Revising Quaker faith & practice | Quakers in Britain](#). This is one of the ways we intend to make the text more accessible. If you listen, we'd also like to know what you think of this audio version.

We welcome responses from individuals or groups of Friends.

If you can, please use our online form to send your responses:

<https://forms.quaker.org.uk/bdrc-comment-on-draft-text/>

Or, if you need to, you can send your responses to:

Michael S Booth (BDRC secretary) at gfp@quaker.org.uk or by post to:

BDRC,
Friends House
Euston Road
London
NW1 2BJ

Please can you send responses on this topic by 31 May 2023.

The text in this document is offered to you by members of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee. We look forward to reading and hearing your reactions to it.

Yours, in Friendship

Catherine Brewer, Rosie Carnall, Co-clerks and Michael Phipps, Assistant Clerk
Book of Discipline Revision Committee

2.00 The Meaning of Marriage: we are but witnesses

2.01 Introduction

Marriage is a lifelong, unconditional and serious commitment. It is a spiritual union with important emotional, physical and legal aspects. It joins two people who promise to be and to stay a couple. The declaration of this commitment is made to each other, to the meeting, to the community, to society, and to God in a Meeting for Worship for Marriage. The Quaker community also makes a serious commitment to support the couple on their journey. They are married in the care of the meeting and in accordance with the law.

From the early days, Quakers have stressed how central the Meeting for Worship is in the process. It is in worship that promises are made in the presence of God. We see our way of marriage as expressing the essence of Quakerism: we each have a direct relationship with the divine, and a personal responsibility to keep promises made. This chapter provides an overview of the Quaker understanding of marriage, the legal position of Quaker marriage, and how a Quaker wedding works.

2.02 Spiritual and Legal basis of Quaker Marriage

2.02.1

For the right joining in marriage is the work of the Lord only, and not the priests' or magistrates'; for it is God's ordinance and not man's; and therefore Friends cannot consent that they should join them together: for we marry none; it is the Lord's work, and we are but witnesses.

George Fox, 1669

This quotation from a founder of the Quaker movement expresses our understanding of marriage as 'the work of the Lord'. In England and Wales Quaker marriages were recognised as legal by the Marriage Act of 1753. Scottish law allowed marriages to take place without a priest, so Quaker marriage has always been lawful there. Because some of our early marriages were not recognised in law, we kept very careful records and made sure that everyone who heard the declarations signed the wedding certificate as witnesses.

Quaker marriage is equally available to all unmarried adult Friends, whether in formal membership or not, regardless of the sex of the participants. In a marriage, the couple are equal partners. With the help of God, their love for each other can deepen and grow in a lifetime together.

2.02.2

As human beings we long to experience love, to find it central in our lives; we want not only to be given love but to give it. Love liberates us from the prison of ourselves.

Transient as we are, we long for permanence. Most people, deep down, want relationships that offer that ever-after quality that novels discover on their final

pages. Marriage, tried and tested over centuries, is one of the best ways in which such everlastingness is helped to happen.

Quakers believe that same-sex marriage is important because we believe that we are all equal, and because we believe the quality of the love we offer to our partners is the same as everyone else's. The true measure of an intimate relationship is its degree of selfless love, a love that isn't proprietorial or exploitative, but tender, responsible, committed, equal; a love that feeds its transforming messages of hope and happiness benevolently into society day after day.

Rosie Bailey, 2014

To make the marriage legal and so that proper records are kept, the couple and the meeting must follow the steps agreed by Britain Yearly Meeting which are detailed in the Supplementary Volume. Area Meetings must appoint a Registering Officer who will make sure the marriage takes place according to Quaker practice and according to law.

2.03 Preparation before Marriage

Friends know that it is essential to prepare fully for marriage. The couple and those supporting them should be clear that they have thought carefully about their future life together, and that they have dealt with any problems or obligations from their past lives. Meetings for clearness (see handbook) are a useful process for checking this.

2.04 The Meeting for Worship for the Solemnisation of Marriage

The Meeting for Worship for a Quaker wedding is held, like all our meetings, in silent waiting for the movement of the Spirit. Ideally, in the meeting, the couple will gain help and inspiration to support them in their life together. It is a chance for those present to ask God's blessing on the marriage and to pray for them.

Thomas Ellwood, recalling his own marriage in 1669, wrote of the value of the Meeting for Worship: 'We sensibly felt the Lord with us and joining us, the sense whereof remained with us all our lifetime, and was of good service and very comfortable to us on all occasions.'

Quakers are clear that marriage is not just a civil contract, but a religious act. Those who gather for the Meeting for Worship for Marriage are witnesses and uphold the couple in celebrating their commitment to each other.

2.05 The Declaration

When the Meeting for Worship is gathered, and when they feel led, the couple stand if they are able. Taking each other by the hand, they exchange their declarations of marriage using one of the texts below. They may speak in either order. These exact words must be used.

2.05.1 Declaration

Friends, I take this my friend [full name] to be my spouse, promising, through divine assistance, to be unto him/her/[commonly used name] a loving and faithful spouse, so long as we both on earth shall live.

The following changes to the wording may be made. No other changes are possible.

- After 'Friends' and before the main declaration, the couple may add one of the following two phrases: 'In the presence of God' or 'In the fear of the Lord and in the presence of this assembly'.
- The word 'spouse' may be replaced by 'wife' or 'husband' as appropriate or by 'partner in marriage'.
- The phrase 'through divine assistance' may be replaced by the words 'with God's help'.
- The phrase 'so long as we both on earth shall live' may be replaced by the words 'until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us'.

The choice of alternatives must be agreed in advance by the couple and the registering officer. In any case, both must make their declarations in identical terms (or corresponding terms in the case of 'husband' and 'wife'). This is because their promises must be equal and reciprocal.

2.05.2 Datganiad

Gyfeillion, yr wyf i yn cymryd fy nghyfaill/nghyfeilles [enw llawn] yn briod i mi gan addo, trwy gymorth dwyfol, y byddaf iddo ef/iddi hi/i [enw a arferir yn gyffredin] yn briod cariadus a ffyddlon gyhyd ac y byddom ill dau byw ar y ddaear.

- Gellir cynnwys, fel rhagymadrodd i'r datganiad, y geiriau 'Ym mhresenoldeb Duw' neu'r geiriau 'Yn ofn Duw ac ym mhresenoldeb y gynulleidfa hon'.
- Gellir defnyddio'r gair 'gwraig' neu 'gŵr' yn hytrach na 'priod' fel y bo'n addas, neu 'partner mewn priodas'.
- Yn hytrach na'r geiriau 'trwy gymorth dwyfol' gellir dweud 'trwy gymorth Duw'.
- Yn lle'r geiriau 'gyhyd ac y byddom fyw ar y ddaear' gellir defnyddio 'hyd nes y gwêl yr Arglwydd yn dda ein gwahanu trwy angau'.

Ni oddefir unrhyw newidiadau eraill i'r geiriad. Rhaid i'r cwpwl gytuno ar eu dewis o eiriad gyda'r swyddog cofrestru ymlaen llaw. Ym mhob achos rhaid i'r ddau sy'n priodi ddefnyddio'r union eiriau (neu eiriad cyfatebol wrth ddefnyddio 'gŵr' neu 'gwraig') ac mae'n rhaid i'w haddewidion fod yn gyfartal a chyfatebol.

The marriage of a couple is a legal contract from the moment both have made their declarations.

2.06 The Quaker wedding certificate

At an appropriate stage during the meeting – usually shortly after the declarations have been made - a previously prepared Quaker certificate confirming the declarations is signed by the couple and two or more witnesses. It is then read aloud, usually by the Registering Officer. After the meeting, it is customary for all who heard the declarations made to sign this certificate so that all can declare themselves as witnesses, and mark their commitment to the care of the marriage.

2.07 Declarations in other languages

Should one or other of the couple wish to use any language other than English or Welsh, there must be an interpreter present to affirm that the declaration is an accurate translation of the set wording. In these cases, the English or Welsh declaration should also be made.

2.07.1

It was an extraordinary meeting for worship – in three languages and in a packed meeting room. Tears flowed and laughter did too. The bridegroom was twenty three and Welsh, the bride twenty two and Swedish. Love and support flowed towards the pair as they each in turn made their promises in both Welsh and in English. Others rose to speak of marriage and the journey of the Spirit; of Swedish Friends' love of the bride and of the public witnessing by all present of what was a reality already – the God intended partnership of the two.

Towards the Source, 2014

2.08 Celebration of commitment

Some couples may wish to have a Meeting for Worship in loving support of their commitment which omits the legal requirements. Such meetings are under the care of Elders, but they liaise with the Registering Officer so that it is clear the Meeting for Worship does not have the legal status of a marriage.

2.08.1

I knew I would want a Quaker wedding and also that he couldn't make vows that required use of the word God. I wouldn't want him to either – a life's promise needs to be made authentically.

I said yes to the relationship without knowing how the wedding part would work. Then, having said yes, way opened. I discovered I didn't mind in the least if the paperwork for marriage was done at the town hall; it was the Meeting for Worship with family and friends that would be our wedding.

Our wedding day was completely whole, entirely authentic for us. Our sons (his two, my one) were with us at the town hall, two friends who were our witnesses, and my aunt, his mother. The administrative ceremony was first thing in the morning, we went for lunch in a cafe and then arrived to the Quaker meeting in the early afternoon. Our many guests had been advised to

get a seat early and when we walked into the crammed meeting room a great silence of love held me in its purpose.

We made our vows, a close version of the Quaker words with him omitting the word God. There was some silence, much vocal ministry, laughter and tears. Our relationship was wrought together stronger through the mystery we experience in sitting together in a Quaker meeting. The strength of that mystery helps me every day, helps us, although the paperwork is also good to have.

Rosie Carnall, 2020

2.09 Support for the couple

The responsibility of the Area Meeting to support and uphold the couple continues for the rest of their lives. All Quakers are responsible for upholding married Friends wherever that marriage took place, at a religious or a civil ceremony.

Quaker marriages hope to be founded on love, truth and trust. However, in every relationship the couple may face differences and conflict. The meeting should be aware of the need for support in these difficult times and has a responsibility to be sensitively helpful to all couples.

2.09.1

True love is proven when the loved one begins to be not only the mysterious beckoner of destiny, but becomes also the occasion of dull indubitable duty. At a frontier of life when one partner begins to say to him or herself: 'How can I love any longer? But I must love', then sometimes steadfastness and faith have power to nurse into existence the new being needed as companion and lover. What a triumph when old love is transformed into a deeper surer new love which can accept more fully what each has, and the pair find a rebirth together in those things which are eternal, and through this a renewal of their every-day living.

London Yearly Meeting, 1959

One person cannot keep a marriage alive if their partner has withdrawn their commitment in whatever way. If all efforts at reconciliation and resolution fail, it is right that the marriage ends. This means that there is the possibility of remarriage. This is a sensitive issue. Meetings should be aware of the pain and hurt of promises not kept. Before someone remarries in a Quaker wedding, the individual and the meeting should be clear that the person intending remarriage is genuinely committed to a lifelong partnership with the new spouse. Marriage should not be entered into, or left, lightly.

2.09.2

The simple Quaker wedding where the couple, together with their friends, gather in worship is for Friends the most natural setting for the two concerned

to make a commitment to each other in the presence of God. With their declaration they take each other freely and equally as lifelong partners, committing themselves to joining their lives together in loving companionship, asking God's blessing on their union. Friends have always seen both members of a marriage as 'equal comrades'. With God's help their love for each other can deepen and change in a lifetime of marriage together.

Britain Yearly Meeting, 1994



MEMBERSHIP

Call for discernment by area meetings

Background:

Last year Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) responded to a request from Central Nominations Committee to reconsider the current guidance, from 1992, concerning appointing only members to central committees. We commissioned a review and the review group's report came with a clear recommendation that we could appoint attenders to such roles. However the group noted that in the course of their work they received contributions asking that we first consider the nature and meaning of membership in BYM. Not until we had a clear understanding of membership could we reach a decision on this matter. MfS rejected the recommendation about appointments, wishing to look at membership first

What has happened before?

Membership is not a new theme for the Yearly Meeting. Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) has previously been tasked with reviewing this – Yearly Meeting 2014 minute 40, MfS minutes MfS15/02/08, MfS/18/02/13 and MfS/20/10/15, reproduced below, refer.

What is happening now?

Some of those who identify as Quakers but are not in membership have been known as 'non-geographic' or 'unattached Friends' and more recently the work to consider how we recognise and support such unattached Friends has come under the title 'New Ways of Belonging'. **Quaker Life Central Committee has set up a working group to consider this.**

Looking ahead:

In light of the ministry heard at October's MfS it is clear that the issue of membership is not confined to 'unattached' Friends. Indeed 'unattached Friends' were not mentioned. In addition to those who are not in membership for reasons of geography and therefore not connected to an area meeting, there are also those who are settled in local and area meetings but for whom our current membership processes do not appear to work. The pandemic lockdowns have given us even more new ways to belong, and are challenging some of our previous thinking.

Membership has a central place in our structures but it is being questioned by our nominations committees and there are broader questions to address.

What we are asking of you now:

In December 2022, MfS agreed a minute, asking members of MfS, both individually and in their Area Meetings, to consider the following questions in prayerful discernment:

- Why do we have membership?
- What is it for?
- Is it still necessary?
- If yes, what form(s) could it take?

The aim of this paper is to provide the background you might need. We hope you and your Area Meeting will find time to consider this issue with all who worship in your meetings, whether in membership or not, before it is brought back to Sufferings for discernment

Note to AM clerks: Meeting for Sufferings hopes to return to this matter at its October 2023 residential meeting. It would therefore be helpful if any minutes relating to it could reach us at sufferings@quaker.org.uk by the end of August 2023.

Relevant minutes:

A. Bath Yearly Meeting Gathering – 2014

Minute 40: What it means to be a Quaker today – summing up

Further to minute 10, we have had the opportunity to share our experience through response groups (minute 28 refers), lectures, a talking wall and through small group sessions. We have now heard reflected back to us the experiences shared during this week.

This Yearly Meeting Gathering is the culmination of the consideration over the past three years of the theme 'What it means to be a Quaker today'. This year the focus has been on commitment and belonging: what membership of the Religious Society of Friends means, both for members and non-members. We are on a journey together that is rooted in our worshipping groups. Being a Quaker today means living out our faith in the world, through witness and action. Whether member or attender, we are all equal in human spirit and before God.

Part of the significance of what it means to be a Quaker concerns the institution and processes of membership. We have heard that membership is a spiritual discipline and is valued by large numbers of Friends, although some Friends wish for adjustments in the process. Chapter 11 of *Quaker faith and practice*, which was adopted by the Yearly Meeting in 2007, offers us principles for our membership procedures which allow flexibility about process. We commend to area meetings further exploration of the procedures currently allowed. Their greater flexibility and tender use of language might enable frank and caring conversations with attenders and allow some to consider membership in a new light. We remember that attenders do sometimes have to be asked, and may need accompaniment during this journey.

We recognise that the path of membership will not be right for everyone. Meetings delight in the gifts and leadings of both members and attenders. What is important is the quality of relationships, the sense of community, encouraging one another and offering love to all who come amongst us.

We have heard of a need for a yet more flexible approach to membership for some people, including particularly young adult Friends, whose journeys may preclude them committing to a local or area meeting. We ask Meeting for Sufferings, working with Quaker Life Central Committee, and having sought the views of those concerned on this matter, to consider how to respond to this call.

B. Meeting for Sufferings Minutes

MfS/15/02/08 Membership

In 2014, Yearly Meeting concluded its three-year arc of consideration of 'What it means to be a Quaker today'. Minute YM2014/40 asked Meeting for Sufferings to consider how to respond to a call for a yet more flexible approach to membership for some people, including particularly young adult Friends. Yearly Meeting asked us to work with Quaker Life Central Committee and to seek the views of those concerned on this matter. The Recording Clerk has spoken to paper MfS/2015/02/05. We remind AMs of the flexibility around membership procedures already outlined in chapter 11 of *Quaker faith and practice*. We feel it would be helpful to have an opportunity to share experiences from AMs on this at a future Meeting for Sufferings.

We have considered how we can respond to the question of a more flexible approach to membership for those whose journeys may preclude them from committing to a local or area meeting. We have been reminded that membership is about a relationship between an individual and the Quaker community, and that there are responsibilities on both sides. We

feel it would be useful to look into how Friends and meetings can best provide pastoral and spiritual support to those people (whether in membership or not) who are not able to regularly attend local meetings. We forward this to Quaker Life Central Committee for advice.

MfS/18/02/13 Pastoral care of unattached Friends

Yearly Meeting 2014 (minutes 10 and 40) asked Meeting for Sufferings to work with Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) to seek the views of Friends, particularly young adult Friends, whose life journeys may preclude them committing to a local or area meeting, and to consider how to respond to the call for a more flexible approach to membership in such cases. Our minute MfS 2014/09/07/a Membership refers. QLCC has reported previously that it had set up a working group. QLCC has now reported that this group has been laid down and the Central Committee is continuing its consideration.

MfS/20/10/15 Update on four minutes sent by Meeting for Sufferings

We note the progress of minutes received by Meeting for Sufferings and sent to other bodies (paper 2020 10 13). Two minutes (one regarding poverty of UK public services and the other regarding UK involvement in war and other state initiated violence) were sent to Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee and we note the subsequent action taken. We recognise the steps taken by Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) to improve support for meetings in conflict. We agree with QLCC's minute in January 2020 (QLCC 20.15) that it is the appropriate body to oversee this work and ensure it is part of the integrated strategy for supporting Quaker communities. We note QLCC's work to respond to minutes 10 and 40 Yearly Meeting 2014 concerning the membership of Friends who are not connected to a local or area meeting. We are glad that QLCC has made better progress recently partly through working with other groups, such as Friends World Committee for Consultation and Engaging Young Adult Quakers. We note QLCC is taking forward recommendations from the most recent working group.

C. Quaker Life Central Committee Minute

QLCC 21.30 Unattached Friends

We have received paper 2021 06 12, an article from *Friends Quarterly* about building communities with examples based on digital communities, and its author Jon Martin has led us in consideration of this.

Many people are joining online meetings for worship or attending Quaker events who have no relationship to a local meeting. Are these people just as much Quakers as members of a local meeting? Are we able to care for them? Should we have a form of membership that allows them to become members? There are strong Quaker communities that do not fit our current structures and there were Quakers who were not attached to a local meeting before we developed online meetings. Safeguarding is very difficult for on-line communities. Our model for membership dates from earlier times and may not be appropriate for today. We should consider how it might be changed.

Future changes should not be considered to be either the old structures or a new one but an enhancement of our experience of being a Quaker.

We will return to these matters at a later meeting and would like to invite someone to join us who could be considered an unattached Friend. There must be a wider radical reimagining. This must eventually be a matter for Yearly Meeting. Yearly Meeting should be asked if membership is fit for purpose and what that purpose is. We thanked Jon for his contribution.