

Calling letter



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

17 February 2023

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

I look forward to welcoming you to our first meeting of 2023, to be held online and in person on Saturday 4 March.

It feels like quite a lot has happened both amongst Friends and more generally since our last meeting in December and it will be good to gather once again to see one another and worship together.

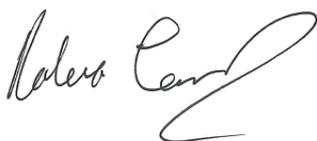
In addition to our normal routine business, which again we hope to take largely on draft minute, we expect to have three fairly substantial items: a report from trustees, which is expected to include a suggestion for how to take the matter of how we might make **reparation** for our role in maintaining the transatlantic slave trade and begin to address the wider institution of slavery; a report on the way in which central committees are responding to **yearly meeting concerns**, including determining what it means to be an anti-racist church; and, an opportunity to hear about the work of **Quaker chaplains** in different contexts.

There are other important matters due to come before us that may not need so much time. These include updates from the **Book of Discipline** Revision Committee and revisions to the current text suggested by the Church Government Advisory Group. We will also receive a proposal for how the work of improving **Meeting for Suffering's place in communication** throughout the yearly meeting might be advanced. We will again hold an online preparation meeting on the evening of Tuesday 28 February and will be focusing on the issue of communications and hope that this will be an opportunity to build connections amongst ourselves as well as looking at wider issues.

Much good work has taken place outwith the structures of the centrally managed work, and we will have opportunities to consider some of this, including in particular an opportunity to give thanks for the work of the Quaker Campaign for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT) as it is laid down.

While we have a full agenda, I hope that it will be possible to give the time necessary for proper discernment. The opportunity to practice discernment and obedience to the promptings of love and truth offered by our meetings for worship for church affairs is one of the aspects of the Quaker way that I most value.

In Truth,



Robert Card
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

Papers enclosed with this mailing

Agenda

MfS Arrangements Group December 2022 and February 2023 meeting minutes	
MfS 2023 03 06	MfS Annual Report to Yearly Meeting
MfS 2023 03 07	Draft Letter of Greeting to other European Yearly Meetings
MfS 2023 03 08	Prison and Court Register
MfS 2023 03 09	Proposal for MfS Communications Group
MfS 2023 03 10	Book of discipline revision update
MfS 2023 03 11	Proposal to form a single charity Wales and the Marches
MfS 2023 03 12	Laying down of Q-CAT
MfS 2023 03 13	Spirit-Led employment
MfS 2023 03 14	BYM Trustees report
MfS 2023 03 15	Central Committee's response to Yearly Meeting's concerns
MfS 2023 03 16	CGAG report
MfS 2023 03 17	Chaplaincy

A reminder of how you can prepare for the meeting

- If you haven't already done so, register for the Meeting and register for the optional online session on 28 February to discuss the issue of communications.
- Read the agenda and papers in good time
- Contact the other representative/alternate from your area meeting or body
- Send any comments or questions to the clerks (sufferings@quaker.org.uk), before the meeting to be received by morning of **1 March**



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

Agenda

Meeting for Sufferings – 4 March 2023

In-person at Friends House and by video conference,
open for arrivals from 9.30am for 10am start

	Item	Paper
10am	Session 1	
1	Opening worship	
2	Welcome and introductions	
3	Agenda Adoption and acceptance of the agenda	
4	Items to be taken on draft minute: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership (To follow) • Appointments (To follow) • Meeting for Sufferings Annual Report to Yearly Meeting • Draft Letter of Greeting to Ireland and other European Yearly Meetings • Prison and Court Register 	For decision
5		For decision
6		MfS 2023 03 06 For information
7		MfS 2023 03 07 For decision
8		MfS 2023 03 08 For decision
9	Proposal for a Meeting for Sufferings Communications Group	MfS 2023 03 09 For decision
10	Book of Discipline Revision Committee To receive an oral update from the committee on the sharing of sample texts	MfS 2023 03 10 For information
	Shuffle break	
11	Proposal to form a single charity in Wales and the Marches	MfS 2023 03 11 For decision
12	Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT) To agree decision of Q-CAT trustees to lay down the charity	MfS 2023 03 12 For decision

	Item	Paper
13	Spirit-led employment To hear from Friends in Lancashire Central and North AM on their work considering employment practices	MfS 2023 03 13 For decision
14	Report from BYM Trustees	MfS 2023 03 14 For information
12.45pm	End of Session 1	

12:45pm Lunch break

1.45pm	Session 2	
15	Central Committees responding to Yearly Meeting concerns	MfS 2023 03 15 For information
16	Church Government Advisory Group To receive recommendations for changes to <i>Quaker faith & practice</i>	MfS 2023 03 16 For decision
	Shuffle break	
17	Quaker chaplains To hear from chaplains about their ministry and from staff on support from BYM	MfS 2023 03 17 For information
18	Closing worship	
4pm	End of Meeting	



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

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Held online from 19:00 – 20:15 on 13 December 2022

Minutes

Present: Margaret Bryan, Robert Card, Jean Scott-Barr, Caroline Kibblewhite, Jane Wilde

Prevented: Ivan Hutnik, Jane Mace, Anthony Woolhouse

In attendance: Siobhán Haire, Neil Jarvis

1. Meeting for Sufferings held 1 and 3 December

We reviewed the December meeting. We note that the additional session on 1 December was helpful because of the volume of business and that this may not be known until relatively close to the time of the scheduled meeting. We agree that it should not become normal practice but that it is a useful option.

We have identified one gold minute (MfS/22/12/06) and three continuing minutes (MfS/22/12/8, 9 and 10). We note that MfS/22/12/8 encourages Arrangements Group to continue experimenting and asks that we bring back to Meeting for Sufferings suggestions for improving communication between the constituent elements of the yearly meeting. We have given some initial consideration to this matter and ask that a proposal comes to our January meeting possibly for a time-limited small group of Meeting for Sufferings representatives and others.

2. Report of the Support Group

The Support Group's report was broadly positive.

We note the concerns about whether sufficient time was given to the matter of the review of Meeting for Sufferings and the comments about the process of agreeing a minute. We will keep these issues under review.

3. Update on Meeting for Sufferings residential

We received a report from staff on the booking for the Meeting for Sufferings Residential in October 2023.

We note that in the Spring of 2023, we will have to plan in some detail the arrangements for this meeting.

4. Meeting for Sufferings report on 2022 to YM 2023

Further to minute MfS/22/12/15, we received a draft of the report of Meeting for Sufferings to Yearly Meeting in 2023. We ask that the Arrangements Group submit comments by Monday so that a revised draft can be circulated for approval at that point before being shared with the full body of Meeting for Sufferings.

5. Date of next meeting

There being no further business for us to take, we part, looking to meet again on Tuesday 31st January, at 19:00 via Zoom to plan Meeting for Sufferings in March 2023.

We note that we expect subsequent meetings in 2023 to be held via Zoom at 19:00 as follows:

- 31 January to plan March MfS
- 14 March to review March MfS
- 30 May to plan July MfS and the residential meeting in October
- 11 July to review July MfS
- 5 September to make final plans for October MfS
- 17 October to review October MfS
- 31 October to plan December MfS
- 12 December to review December MfS

Signed on behalf of the meeting,

Robert Card, Clerk



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

At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

Held online 31 January 2023

Minutes

Present: Robert Card, Caroline Kibblewhite, Jean Scott Barr, Jane Wilde

Prevented: Ivan Hutnik, Anthony Woolhouse

In attendance: Siobhán Haire, Neil Jarvis

1. Opening worship

We spent time in silent worship together remembering our Friend Jane Mace, a member of Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group, who has died since our last meeting.

2. Meetings attended by the Clerks and others

Robert Card attended a meeting regarding the re-registration of Quakers and Business as a Quaker Recognised Body and discussions are ongoing.

The Clerk of Q-CAT notified us of the group's plan to lay down the charity at the end of 2023. Caroline Kibblewhite and Siobhán Haire met the Clerk to consider the implications for Meeting for Sufferings. This matter will be brought to the meeting in March.

3. Forward agenda

We have considered our forward agenda, which informs our planning.

Siobhán Haire met with Lancashire Central and North to consider their minute on ethical employment. We agree that discussions to date have been informative, and note work is ongoing.

4. Meeting for Sufferings in March

We have considered potential business for this meeting and have begun to draft an agenda for the session. We ask the clerks to finalise the agenda in consultation with staff.

We received a suggestion that the discernment on the meaning of membership which Meeting for Sufferings agreed to start at its last meeting in December should be broadened beyond area meetings so that we hear the views of the many people whose Quakerism does not have a living relationship with the local and area meeting – for instance through online worshipping groups or YFGM. We hope Quaker Life Central Committee's non-geographic membership working group will be considering this and will report to Meeting for Sufferings alongside area meetings.

5. Any other matters

There being no further business to conduct, we part planning to meet again on 14 March to review Meeting for Sufferings in March. Thereafter, our meeting dates in 2023 are as follows:

30 May
11 July
5 September
17 October
31 October
12 December

Signed in and on behalf of the meeting,

Caroline Kibblewhite, Clerk

Record of minutes received by Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group

This is a record of all minutes received by Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group since the last Meeting for Sufferings with information about any decisions that have been taken. It also includes minutes received in the past where there are updates. If representatives wish to see a copy of a minute, or wish to contact the Clerks, please email sufferings@quaker.org.uk.

Minutes received since last Meeting for Sufferings

Body sending minute	Minute	Initial steps and decisions	Subsequent steps (if any)	Status
Bristol AM	22.81 Stop Ecocide Campaign	13/11/22 Minute received 31/1/23 Tabled at MfSAG	DRC emailed clerk 6/2/23 to confirm plan: minute to QPSWCC in February, possibly returning to MfS in July (work can continue in the interim depending on QPSWCC discernment of right way forward)	Sent to QPSWCC
Kingston & Wandsworth AM	22/76 Follow up from Yearly Meeting 2022 [Reparations]	20/11/22 Minute received 31/1/23 Tabled at MfSAG	Awaiting discernment from trustees 11/2/23	Trustees reporting in March MfS
Brighthouse West Yorkshire AM	2.11.04 Slavery, exploitation and 'reparations'	22/11/22 Minute received 31/1/23 Tabled at MfSAG	Awaiting discernment from trustees 11/2/23	Trustees reporting in March MfS
Cambridgeshire AM	22.11.78 Loyal Address to Charles Windsor	22/11/22 Minute received 31/1/23 Tabled at MfSAG	DRC responded to Cambridgeshire clerk 6/2/23 giving information about loyal address invitation and process for agreeing delegation and address.	Completed

Body sending minute	Minute	Initial steps and decisions	Subsequent steps (if any)	Status
North West London AM	2022.11.21.9 Assisted Dying	22/11/22 Minute received 31/1/23 Tabled at MfSAG	MfSAG offered to meet with AM Friends to understand more fully AM's reasons for returning to MfS following recent discernment across YM in 2020-2021 and to hear about action taken by AM.	Offer with AM
Southern Marches AM	AM 23/09 Reports and items emanating from them [Meaning of membership]	26/1/23 Minute received	Confirmation of receipt sent.	On hold waiting for item on Membership at future MfS

Updates to previously received minutes:

Body sending minute	Minute	Initial steps and decisions	Subsequent steps (if any)	Status
Lancashire Central and North AM	21.9.1 Employment practices in BYM	8/11/21 Minute received 1/2/22 Tabled at MfSAG MfSAG asked Deputy Recording Clerk to engage with Area Meeting and relevant bodies (eg Employment Committee, Trustees, Management Meeting, QLCC) with aim to return to MfSAG for including in agenda at MfS later in 2022.	31/5/22 MfSAG has noted a report is in preparation and will hopefully be included at MfS in October 30/8/22 MfSAG reconsidered and asked staff to contact the AM to offer a visit and/or meeting to discuss this further	Friends presenting at MfS in March 23

Body sending minute	Minute	Initial steps and decisions	Subsequent steps (if any)	Status
			<p>24/1/23 DRC met with the group, item will come to MfS March with opportunity for other AMs to engage with group's discernment.</p>	
Hampshire & Islands AM	2022/54 Ecocide	<p>17/10/22 Minute received</p> <p>1/11/22 Tabled at MfSAG MfSAG asked for further information and referred the minute to QPSWCC for advice</p>	<p>DRC emailed clerk 6/2/23 to confirm plan: minute to QPSWCC in Feb, perhaps returning to MfS in July (work can continue in the interim depending on outcome of QPSWCC discernment).</p>	Referred to QPSWCC for advice

Annual report from Meeting for Sufferings to Yearly Meeting

Meeting for Sufferings prepares an annual report to Yearly Meeting and this is prepared by the Assistant Clerk and presented to the meeting for comment.

Following Meeting for Sufferings in December, a draft report for Yearly Meeting in 2023 was circulated to all members for comments which were considered and incorporated where appropriate into the final report.

For your information, here is a copy of the report that will be presented to Yearly Meeting. No further comments can be incorporated at this stage.

Meeting for Sufferings report to Yearly Meeting 2023

Meeting for Sufferings is a Committee of up to 100 representatives from across the yearly meeting: 70 area meetings, Scotland, Wales, central and standing committees, Young Friends General Meeting, and trustees. It meets four times a year to carry out business on behalf of the yearly meeting such as appointments, prison and court register, and registration of Quaker recognised bodies. We receive reports from Quaker World Relations Committee and Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations, as well as minutes on matters of concern from area meetings and other bodies. It is empowered to set up groups for specific tasks, for example: Sustainability Monitoring Group, Book of Discipline Revision Committee, groups to review nomination of attenders to central committee service and the role and purposes of Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering and Meeting for Sufferings.

In 2015, Meeting for Sufferings approved a vision statement, *Our faith in the future* (available at: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/our-faith-in-the-future>) providing a point of reference for all Friends to discern their current position and how they might best act to realise that vision. The structure of that document has been adapted to arrange this report.

A future where Meeting for worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker

All our meetings are grounded in worship, often with significant time for worship sharing. The agendas can be very full and we have experimented throughout the year with ways in which to prepare through introductory sessions to give members of Meeting for Sufferings a better understanding of issues to be covered in the forthcoming agenda and the opportunity to ask questions of those presenting

reports. Spirit-led discernment is central to our lives as Quakers and giving time to this must be our priority.

A future where all Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline

During 2022 we commissioned two reviews. The first, at the request of Central Nominations Committee, concerned the possible appointment of attenders to central committee service. The Meeting was unable to reach unity on the idea of allowing this change to established practice without first considering the meaning of membership in greater depth. Meeting for Sufferings has asked area meetings to consider questions on this matter prior to further discernment in 2023. This process is in addition to a parallel consideration by Quaker Life Central Committee of changing patterns of belonging to our communities and we are alive to the need to ensure that these processes are complementary.

The second review was requested by a minute of Yearly Meeting 2021 and concerned Meeting for Sufferings itself; the recommendations arising from it will be coming to Yearly Meeting in 2023.

In December we received the third report of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee. We have now received some draft text for comment. There is a palpable sense of excitement as we see progress towards a contemporary articulation of our discipline.

A future where Quaker communities are loving, inclusive, and all-age

Meeting for Sufferings is now over half way through its triennium. For understandable reasons, and in common with Friends everywhere, we have had to explore new ways of building our community in a virtual space. To create time for this we have experimented with different ways of conducting our business, giving greater emphasis to the use of draft minutes to expedite routine matters, and using online sessions to provide opportunities to consider issues in advance of formal sessions. This has allowed more time for discernment on substantive matters.

One aspect of our focus on the worshipping community has arisen from our minute of December 2020 in which we said, “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”.

We were challenged to address our use of language – specifically that of the word ‘overseer’ – in minutes from area meetings in early 2021. The word has been used over centuries but carries associations with hierarchy and the oppression of slavery. Area meetings were asked to consider this issue, and at our December meeting we concluded that ‘overseer’ was no longer an appropriate term for the church officers responsible for the care of those attending our meetings. While no one term presented itself as an alternative, we noted that variants on “pastoral care” seemed to be prevalent in the existing usage of our area meetings.

We received reports on emerging patterns for area meetings in London and in Wales & the Marches. It was encouraging to hear of the experiments being made to address the challenges faced by our current structures.

A future where Quaker values are active in the world

Our first meeting of 2022 took place shortly after Russia's incursion into Ukraine, and we were able to appreciate the nimble way in which QPSW staff, working with the Communications Team brought concerned friends together to respond and promote action.

In July it was inspiring to hear from General Meeting of Friends in Scotland about how they are furthering the yearly meeting's commitment to work on climate justice, gender diversity and anti-racism. Their newly-revived Truth and Integrity work reflected the interest shown at Meeting for Sufferings last year in the threats to truth, integrity and democracy occasioned by new legislation and other actions by our elected representatives.

As usual, we received a report from our Sustainability Monitoring Group, this year reporting without the input of the Quaker Stewardship Committee. It is encouraging to hear of the range of work being done by Friends at both local and central levels, although sobering to realise how much more needs to be achieved.

Since Quaker Stewardship Committee was laid down in 2022, Meeting for Sufferings is now responsible for reporting to Yearly Meeting on how area meetings are complying with requirements laid on charities relating to accounts, safeguarding, data governance and employment practice. A process is being worked out between Quaker Life staff, who will be compiling information on compliance, Quaker Life Central Committee, and Meeting for Sufferings. We anticipate a report on area meeting compliance will form part of Meeting for Sufferings' report to Yearly Meeting from 2024.

A future where Quakers work collaboratively

We heard about the role yearly meeting staff have taken in convening Civil Society Voices, a significant forum for debating issues affecting charities and social enterprises.

Trustees have kept us informed about the relationship between Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke, a separate Quaker charity, and it has been good to hear of the synergies between these two Quaker bodies and the funding support BYM is able to give to Woodbrooke Education.

A future where Quakers are well known and widely understood

Both Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations and Quaker World Relations Committee now report formally to Meeting for Sufferings rather than the

trustees, and we were pleased to receive their reports. Both these committees remind us that we are only one of many faith groups and a small part of the world family of Friends and that engagement with these wider contexts enriches us considerably.

We received the framework for *Speaking Out*, the policy underlying the activity of staff in presenting Quaker views to the wider society in which we live.

It has been another interesting year for Meeting for Sufferings, one in which most of our meetings have been blended between online participants and those able to attend a physical venue, which has brought both challenges and opportunities and our experimentation continues as we seek to develop new ways of working that assist our process. We look forward, however, to the prospect of a primarily residential meeting in October 2023.

Letter of Greeting to Yearly Meetings in Europe

Britain Yearly Meeting tries to keep in touch with Friends in other parts of Europe. One way we do this is to send a letter of greeting to each of the other Yearly Meetings when they gather. The letter of greeting is drafted by Quaker World Relations Committee, although it is signed by the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings.

Quaker World Relations Committee has agreed the draft letter of greeting which is included in this paper.

Meeting for Sufferings is invited to accept the draft letter of greeting, noting that the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings is able to make any desirable adjustments to the letter.

Tracey Martin, Clerk
Quaker World Relations Committee

Draft Letter of Greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting

Dear Friends,

As you gather for your yearly meeting I send you greetings on behalf of Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting. Over the last year we have faced challenges and joys. We had the joy of meeting together both in person and online for our Yearly Meeting and of holding altogether worship connecting Friends in 78 of our meetings around the country with Friends young and old who were present in Friends House in London.

We face the challenges of witnessing to peace at a time of war in Europe, of calling our government to account for its policies towards those who seek refuge in our country and campaigning against and raising awareness of the changes in government legislation. We are concerned too about the actions of the UK government in recent years to stifle voices of dissent, undermining democracy.

Younger Friends at Junior Yearly Meeting in 2022 reminded us that spiritual engagement and discernment are the basis of our action and we have to apply ourselves now to create positive change. Work and witness around the climate crisis has seen some success at COP27 where a loss and damage fund for countries suffering from the effects of the climate crisis was agreed. We have also supported Friends who have faced criminal convictions as a result of their demonstrations against new fossil fuels, whilst also working in our local communities on sustainability projects and greening our meeting houses. There is still much to be done.

We must work to ensure we are places of openness, active listening, deep communication and connection, of changing to address historical wrongs and becoming the antiracist church we feel called to be. Love and justice require us to

examine our own practices and behaviours and to work for systematic change. We have committed to making reparations for our part in the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and economic exploitation. Together we are learning and discerning what form this may take.

This year our Yearly Meeting sessions focus on simplifying our governing structures and procedures and we are continuing to develop a new book of discipline.

We hope that your Yearly Meeting brings you both joys and challenges.

Robert Card
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

Prison and Court Register

Introduction

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

The purposes of recording an entry in the register are:

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

Normally, area meetings are responsible for establishing the facts, and that Friends are or were acting under concern and wish the matter to be recorded. Including information in the register doesn't imply that MfS itself has tested the Friend's concern and necessarily agrees with or condones their action.

One possible inclusion is brought to this meeting:

Minute from West Wilts and East Somerset AM

Ruth Cook is a member of West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area meeting and is our representative to Meeting for Sufferings. We would like her name to be added to the Meeting for Sufferings Courts & Prison Register as a matter of record.

Ruth has been carrying out nonviolent actions of civil disobedience under conscience, with Insulate Britain (IB) and Just Stop Oil (JSO), and has been arrested 14 times since October 2021. She has spent many hours in police custody – including 30 hours recently.

To date she has received fines of £1,200 and has several other Crown Court jury cases outstanding in which she is pleading not guilty to public nuisance. She was in the Royal Courts of Justice on 21st November for a JSO action on the M25, in which she and 4 others breached an earlier injunction.

She was given a sentence of 4 weeks, suspended for 2 years – which will be brought into effect if she breaches any other injunction. The 5 people in the group were

asked to pay costs of £21,500 within 56 days. There are only 2 of the group who work – the others are all retired.

Signed in and on behalf of West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting in Session,
Sunday, 11 December, 2022

Sarah White and Nick Francis, Clerks

Proposal to form a time-limited group to consider Meeting for Sufferings communications

Background

Meeting for Sufferings in December received a report on the role of Meeting for Sufferings from the group appointed to review Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings. This report covered a broad range of matters and grouped its conclusions into five principle findings.

One of these findings concerned improvement in communication. The group's report described the hope, at the time Trustees were set up, for Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) to expand its role in communication – but this had not been possible. Communication across the yearly meeting about MfS business was not currently successful and it was also felt the way MfS responds to minutes from area meetings is sometimes fuelling a disconnection between national bodies and Friends and meetings who do not feel part of central decision making. The review group felt it may be time 'to look again at the priorities for fostering communication across the yearly meeting, as well as the most appropriate methods for doing it'.

MfS in December agreed with the group's conclusions and asked MfS Arrangements Group to bring back a proposal for action:

MfS/22/12/08 (part)

...

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.

...

MfS Arrangements Group proposes to form a time-limited group made up of representatives from MfS to take this work forwards. Draft terms of reference for this group follow for your agreement.

Terms of reference for a time-limited group

Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) Communications Group

1. Purpose

1.1 The principle objectives of the MfS Communications Group are to consider and bring forward proposals to improve:

- communications across yearly meeting as outlined in the findings of the report from the Group to review Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings (MfS 2022 12 11)
- mutual communication between BYM central bodies and area meeting and local meetings
- how Friends on the bench are involved in communication.

2. Areas for consideration

2.1 The Group to review Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings made the following conclusions about MfS's role in communications which should be considered by the group:

- MfS expanded role in communication with meetings, initiated when Trustees were set up, has not proved possible.
- Communication across the whole yearly meeting about MfS business was felt to be much less successful.
- There is a perception that Friends have different levels of interest in matters beyond their local meeting with some Friends wishing to be more engaged and informed about what is happening at a national level.
- It may be time to look again at the priorities for fostering communication across the yearly meeting, as well as the most appropriate methods for doing it. There may be possibilities in regional solutions through the Local Development Worker programme and using some of the Quaker Recognised Bodies more effectively in reaching Friends interested in particular topics.
- Some area meetings are looking at combining with others, sharing resources or working differently. Significant changes to area meetings will need to be factored in to communication plans.
- MfS's role in receiving minutes from area meetings. Friends want area meetings to be able to communicate their discerned Quaker concerns at a yearly meeting level, although there were different suggestions on how this might best be done. Currently, such minutes are difficult for MfS to engage with, particularly when they are received in isolation or outside of a planning cycle. A request for new work may be valid, but will always have resource implications that cannot easily be looked at on an ad hoc basis without a full context. Friends and meetings often do want to feel part of this kind of decision making and so there need to more appropriate ways for that to happen.

3. Duration of the Group and Membership

3.1 This is a time-limited group and should aim to conclude its work within 12 months.

3.2 Its membership will be drawn from the membership of Meeting for Sufferings of up to 6 members. One member should also be on Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group to serve as a link between the two groups, one member should also be a trustee to advise on any financial implications of matters considered, and, ideally, at least one member should be a representative from a central committee. Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group will bring forward nominations to Meeting for Sufferings for appointment.

3.3 The group will decide to appoint one of its members to act as Clerk or Convener of the group.

3.4 The Meeting for Sufferings Clerk and the Deputy Recording Clerk, serving as secretary to Meeting for Sufferings, may attend meetings. The Group can decide to meet as frequently as it sees fit to fulfil its task and is encouraged to hold most of its meetings electronically to reduce the call on resources.

3.5 To aid their work, the Group may call on the expertise, knowledge and resources of BYM staff with prior agreement with the Recording Clerk. Staff time is limited and any requests will need to be considered against other priorities. The Group may wish to invite members of BYM staff to their meetings for particular items.

4. Accountability and Reporting

4.1 The Group is accountable to Meeting for Sufferings.

4.2 The Group should minute its meetings and send copies to the Clerk of Meeting of Sufferings.

4.3 The Group should aim to conclude its work within 12 months and produce a report on its conclusions and any recommendations to Meeting for Sufferings for further discernment.

4.4 If the Group believes it needs further time to conduct its work, it should raise this at the earliest opportunity with the Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings who can agree an extension.

New book of discipline: update on sharing of sample texts

In December, the Book of Discipline Revision Committee shared with Meeting for Sufferings draft material on two topics reflecting their current thinking on how our new book of discipline should sound.

This material – on nominations and marriage – forms an appendix to this paper.

The Committee encouraged Friends to share the texts, in area meetings and with others, and to send responses to by 31 May 2023. They were particularly interested in hearing feedback to four points:

- 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.

The Committee offered to report back to Meeting for Sufferings at this meeting in March to let representatives know what they have learned so far from the sharing.

Note: Friends are reminded there is also an audio version of both texts, which you can access online through the Committee's webpage [Revising Quaker faith & practice | Quakers in Britain](#). This is one of the ways the Committee intends to make the text more accessible. If you listen, the Committee would also like to know what you think of this audio version.

If you can, please use the 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

Appendix: Sample text on nominations and marriage

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

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

Proposal to form a single charity in Wales and the Marches

In July last year, Meeting for Sufferings heard from Friends in Wales and the Marches about their ongoing discernment concerning their governance arrangements.

There are five existing Quaker charities – four area meetings and Crynwyr Cymru/Quakers in Wales (CCQW) – wishing to form one charity. Meeting for Sufferings was asked if it was content for area meetings (and other bodies) to join together and minuted: “We are content in principle to see significant amalgamations of area meetings and other bodies” (part of MfS/22/07/06).

Since then, Friends in Wales and the Marches have progressed this work and the proposal is now brought to Meeting for Sufferings for endorsement (Quaker faith & practice 7.02 m&n).

The minutes from each of the constituent bodies agreeing to this proposal are provided in an appendix to this paper.

Appendix

Minute of the Symud Ymlaen committee 31 January 2023

We have collected the minutes of Mid Wales AM, North Wales AM, South Wales AM, Southern Marches AM and Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales which give their commitment to join a single Charitable Incorporated Organisation and for their trustees to work with the Symud Ymlaen – Moving Forward Committee in this matter. We forward these minutes to Meeting for Sufferings for their endorsement.

North Wales Area Meeting 13 November 2022

22/80 The Symud Ymlaen working group have drawn up a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which has been available for us to comment on while work was in progress. They then sent us an updated draft in two parts, general and financial, both of which have been circulated. An online discussion was also offered to allow for comments and questions. We have also had sight of the draft constitution, both online, and circulated ahead of this meeting. All this allows us to understand the principles by which a single charity covering Wales and the Southern Marches would operate.

We are now asked to commit in principle to joining with South Wales AM, Mid-Wales AM, Southern Marches AM and Crynwyr Cymru Quakers in Wales to form a single charity (a type of charity called a Charitable Incorporated Organisation or CIO).

We have considered this, with the help of Lesley Richards of Symud Ymlaen who joined us today. We wondered about questions of simplicity, accountability and flexibility, also about the situation of Southern Marches Area Meeting in their more difficult situation of straddling the border.

We agree to the proposal as set out by the Symud Ymlaen group.

We ask our Trustees to engage with the Symud Ymlaen committee as they prepare formal constitutional documents and empower them to contribute to the necessary legal expenses.

South Wales Area Meeting 12 November 2022

We have heard read parts of *Quaker faith & practice* 4.02 and 4.03.

We have received a link to background information about the work carried out by the Symud Ymlaen/Moving Forwards Group on which we are represented by Erica Thomas and Peter Davies. The clerk of the group, Lesley Richards is also with us today for this item. We have also received minutes from the following local meetings: Bridgend, Milford Haven, Swansea, Cardiff, Penarth.

We receive the draft constitution and draft memorandum of understandings covering both general and property matters, prepared by the group which help us to

understand the principles by which a single charity covering Wales and the Southern Marches would operate.

We now commit in principle to joining with AMs in Wales and southern Marches and with Crynwyr Cymru -Quakers in Wales to form a single charity. We recognise that becoming a single charity will require some changes to the constitution and governing document of our existing area meeting charitable registration.

We ask our Trustees to engage with the Symud Ymlaen group as they prepare formal constitutional documents and empower them to contribute to the necessary legal expenses.

We ask the Symud Ymlaen group to present to us and our Trustees final documents for formal approval in due course, having taken legal advice and consulted with the Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting. Our Trustees are the representatives in law of the area meeting as a charitable entity and the final decision will require their formal agreement, acting on our instruction.

We thank all those who have put so much hard work into this process so far, recognising that the work is not yet complete, and there is still much to be done on the detail.

We have been reminded that the purpose of these changes is to release energy for the movement of the Spirit, to enable the area meeting to spend more time on spiritual nurture and witness together. We hope and pray that this will bring vitality and renewed strength to South Wales Area Meeting as a community.

Southern Marches Area Meeting 19 November 2022

Friends have received the draft constitution of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation and draft memoranda of understanding – one of a general nature and the other specifically related to property – recognising that further detail is still to be decided.

We have considered the draft constitution and draft memorandum of understanding prepared by the Symud Ymlaen / Moving Forward (SY/MF) Committee, on which we are represented by Ann Davison and Jeff Beatty.

Lesley Richards, the clerk of the SY/MF Committee has addressed a number of specific issues related to them in a question and answer session, her answers providing greater clarity on the following issues:

- Time scale for implementation
- Ownership of buildings
- Possibilities of leaving the new charity
- Trusteeship is governance and strategy, not management
- Physical distance encompassed by the new charity

Ministries were given on the changes proposed and on their meaning. They are not just about practical matters, but are primarily spiritual – about being a Quaker, doing Quaker, trusting one another, working across geographical boundaries, simplicity, clearing away obstacles and yes living adventurously, yet prudently. One imperfect body is better than five, reducing and not duplicating legal requirements, freeing us for our spiritual home.

We are satisfied that the proposals represent opportunities for us, though we acknowledge some risks, but these can be mitigated by the approach that Quakers take regarding one another, that each one of us has equality of voice and of participation. No one is set above another. We encourage all Friends in our AM to approach the proposals with enthusiastic purpose and to communicate with our representatives during 2023 as the draft proposals evolve, with ideas and suggestions.

We thank members of the SY/MF Committee for their detailed work on our behalf.

Finally:

We understand and have knowledge of the principles by which a single charity covering Wales and Southern Marches would operate.

We now commit in principle to joining with SWAM, NWAM, Mid-Wales AM and Crynwyr Cymru Quakers in Wales (CCQW) to form a single charity, replacing our existing Area Meeting registration.

We ask our Trustees to engage with the SY/MF Committee as they prepare formal constitutional documents and empower them to contribute to the necessary legal expenses.

We ask the SY/MF Committee to present to us and our Trustees final documents for formal approval in due course, having taken legal advice and consulted with the Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings. Our Trustees are the representatives in law of the area meeting as a charitable entity and the final decision will require their formal agreement, acting on our instruction.

Mid Wales Area Meeting 20 November 2022

- We have considered the **draft constitution** and **draft memorandum of understanding** prepared by the Symud Ymlaen committee on which we are represented by Alan Clark and Diana Morrison Smith.
- We understand the principles by which a single Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) covering Wales and the Southern Marches would operate. There is still much work to be done and it is vital that wording is clear and unambiguous. This work will continue throughout 2023 with a view to implementation early in 2024.

- We now commit in principle to joining with NWAM, SWAM, SMAM and Crynwyr Cymru Quakers in Wales to form a single charity. We recognise that becoming a single charity will require some changes to the constitution and governing documents of our existing area meeting charitable registration, but which will free us to do the things we want to do.
- We ask our Trustees to engage with the Symud Ymlaen committee as they prepare formal constitutional documents and empower them to contribute to the necessary legal expenses.
- We ask the Symud Ymlaen committee to present to us, and our Trustees, the final documents for formal approval, in due course, having taken legal advice and consulted with the Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting. Our Trustees are the representatives in law of the area meeting as a charitable entity, and the final decision will require their formal agreement, acting on our instruction.
- We thank Alan Clark and Diana Morison-Smith, our representatives, together with the Symud Ymlaen group for all their hard work over the years. And we thank Lesley Richards, Clerk of Symud Ymlaen, for joining us this afternoon.

Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales January 2023

2023.01.02 Discernment of Symud Ymlaen / Moving Forward Group proposals

Lesley Richards, Clerk of the Symud Ymlaen / Moving Forward Group, has outlined to us the current situation regarding the SY/MF process and the work that lies ahead for the Group.

We note that North Wales Area Meeting, Mid Wales Area Meeting, South Wales Area Meeting and Southern Marches Area Quaker Meeting have minuted their agreement to join together to form a single charity. The details of the SY /MF proposals contained on the SY2 website <https://www.symudymlaen2.org/> have been circulated. These have been prepared by the SY/MF Group (on which we are represented by Frances Voelcker and Huw Meredydd Owen). We understand the principles by which a single charity covering Wales and the Southern Marches would operate.

We have spent time discerning CCQW's role in the on-going SY/MF process. We have shared our concerns and questions about issues such as the implications of change on: our finances, the workload of new Trustees, meeting arrangements and the use and importance of the Welsh Language and culture. We note the quotation 'The road is made by walking on it.' We recognise there is work for us all to commit to together to support the SY/MF Group in seeking to ensure these issues are addressed.

A central tenet of our Quaker faith is that we are open to continuing revelation by the Spirit and we move forward in faith, committing ourselves to be open to the guidance of the Spirit, doing what God wants us to do at each step along the road. We affirm

that we are trying to simplify our administrative processes in order to deepen our worship and witness. We need to give time and energy to planning how that can happen.

We now commit, in principle, to Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales (CCQW) joining with North Wales Area Meeting, Mid Wales Area Meeting, South Wales Area Meeting and Southern Marches Area Quaker Meeting to form a single charity. We recognise that becoming a single charity will require some changes to the constitution and governing documents of our existing charitable registration.

We are open to what opportunities this change to the administrative arrangements of CCQW and associated area meetings might bring. We wish to affirm our identity as Welsh Quakers by working more closely together so that there are opportunities for mutual listening, learning and growth.

2023.01.03. Continuing the SY/MF process

In light of our discernment to join with the area meetings named above to form a single charity, we ask our Trustees to engage with the SY/MF Group as they prepare formal constitutional documents. We note that the SY/MF Group will continue to consult with current trustee bodies to ensure all are in agreement as the documents develop and will be instructing solicitors for legal advice on behalf of those five current charities.

We ask our Trustees to work with the SY/MF Group on the detail of the constitution to ensure the rightful place of CCQW in the new charity. (Trustees' minute 2022.05.02 refers) We empower our Trustees to contribute to the necessary legal expenses and await further information concerning those costs as the process continues.

We ask the SY/MF Group to present to us and our Trustees final documents for formal approval in due course, having taken legal advice and consulted with the Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting. We note that our Trustees are the representatives in law of CCQW as a charitable entity, and the final decision will require their formal agreement, acting on our instruction. We note that the trustees of the new organisation will need to be well supported in their role. We ask the SY/MF Group to share with us, and our associated Area Meetings, how that support will be put in place.

We ask our Clerks to forward this minute to our Trustees and the SY/MF Group for action. We also ask our clerks to send this minute to the clerks of North Wales Area Meeting, Mid Wales Area Meeting, South Wales Area Meeting and Southern Marches Area Quaker Meeting for information.

We thank Lesley and all the Friends serving on the SY/MF Group for their faithful and diligent work.

2023.01.04 Minute to Meeting for Sufferings

We note that Meeting for Sufferings will be updated by the SY/MF Group on the progress of their work, including the decision of CCQW and its associated Area Meetings to join the single charity, as endorsement of the proposals needs to go before MfS in session.

2023.01.05 Minutes to Recording Clerk BYM

We ask our clerks to send these minutes to Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of BYM, for information.

Q-CAT: Quaker concern seeking approval of trustee decision to lay down the charity

Meeting for Sufferings has received a letter from the Trustees of Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT), informing us that they have decided to lay down the charity, as they have been unable to find new trustees, and the present trustees feel unable to continue the charity's work.

Q-CAT holds the discerned concern against torture on behalf of Quakers in Britain and has done since it was set up in 2004, although Quaker work to abolish torture pre-dates that by several decades. Meeting for Sufferings is asked to agree to the laying down of the charity, and may wish to consider how the concern should be continued in the absence of a vehicle to hold it and may agree that the concern can be laid down. The trustees of Q-CAT are keen for Meeting for Sufferings to agree to this, so that they can continue to lay down the charity in an orderly manner. Friends are reminded that concerns can be laid down, and may be picked up again when the time is right.

Q-CAT's constitution makes clear that Meeting for Sufferings must agree to the laying down of the charity, alongside the four Area Meetings who formally support the charity, and Q-CAT is asking for this agreement so they can lay the charity down in an orderly way. The Q-CAT trustees have previously engaged with Meeting for Sufferings and the four supporting Area Meetings in order to encourage further trustees and supporters to come forward, but this has not been successful.

Paper [MfS 2021 10 14](#) refers, and on the last occasion when Q-CAT reported to Meeting for Sufferings, we minuted as follows:

MfS/21/10/12 Abolition of torture

Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT), a Quaker Recognised Body, has provided Meeting for Sufferings with a report on its work.

On previous occasions Meeting for Sufferings minuted its support, and encouraged area meetings to appoint Q-CAT correspondents, suggesting that Friends take up the concern. However, few area meetings have felt able to join Q-CAT in addressing this issue.

The experience of their recent work with staff at BYM has convinced Q-CAT of the value of this mode of collaborative working – enthusiastic local Friends supported by the expertise of specialist staff – and they recommend it to others.

We recognise the personal cost borne by Q-CAT members in taking forward their concern. Their current need is for people who can help, who would be willing to work with them – in their own words – 'to address this obscene use of

power, to stem this corrosion of our human spirit. This is undiluted evil in action.'

We encourage Friends to consider whether they are able to uphold and actively support Q-CAT in its important work to address this concern.

Is Meeting for Sufferings able to agree that Q-CAT should be laid down, and the concern for the abolition of torture be passed to Meeting for Sufferings?

Spirit-led employment practices

Friends from Lancashire Central and North Area Meeting will be speaking at the meeting in March on employment practices. They have provided the following briefing paper in advance of the meeting.

The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic caused many people to reflect upon employment practices and raised many questions about how the relationship between employers and employees should work, such as:

- Is the use of agency staff acceptable?
- Are temporary and/or zero hours contracts appropriate?
- How do we protect staff from bullying and exploitation?
- Should we adopt a four-day week?
- Should all employees receive at least the real living wage?

These questions apply to all employer/employee relationships. In the context of a Quaker workplace, there are additional considerations, such as:

- How can staff be supported when they are working within a community that is also their own faith community?
- How can staff be supported when they are working within a faith community other than their own faith community?

Reflection on such questions led to a concern being brought to Lancaster Meeting in July 2021. As a result, a minute was sent to Lancashire Central and North Area Meeting, which accepted the concern and forwarded the attached minute to Meeting for Sufferings in September 2021.

In response, the Deputy Recording Clerk asked the Area Meeting to nominate a group to prepare a more detailed presentation to Meeting for Sufferings. Four Friends were appointed. They have met to consider these issues further and have formulated a proposal to bring to Meeting for Sufferings.

The group proposes to facilitate a process within the Area Meeting with a view to producing a draft of a resource to help Friends and employers consider questions around spirit-led ethical employment practice. This process would involve starting with a blank page, focusing on the future and creating a series of advices and queries. The group's thinking has been inspired by the *All are welcome: Growing our all-age community resource*. As well as the advices and queries themselves, this resource includes a description of what spirit-led practice might look like in a Quaker context.

The group offers to undertake this process on behalf of Meeting for Sufferings as a way of taking forward this concern, with a view to presenting the draft resource when it is ready. We would welcome contact from other area meetings or Quaker recognised bodies undertaking similar work and contributions from other interested Friends.

Jon Martin, Bailrigg Meeting (Meeting for Sufferings Representative for Lancashire Central & North)

Kathy Chandler, Lancaster Meeting

Phil Chandler, Lancaster Meeting

Lisa Whistlecroft, Bailrigg Meeting

Report from BYM trustees

This covering note directs members of Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) to the most relevant minutes from our meeting though you are welcome to ask questions about any minute at MfS. I will cover some wider points in my introduction and seek your guidance on matters that we will consider at our next trustee meeting.

Our February meeting was held on zoom over 4 sessions on a Saturday and, although it was a less packed agenda than at our November meeting, there was nevertheless a lot to cover.

The second session of the day included several items that have links to each other.

Minute 23/02/08 records our continued consideration of Yearly Meeting 2022's decision that we should find a way to make **reparation for our part in slavery, colonialism and oppressive behaviour**. It is a complex issue and we are acutely conscious that others beyond the Society of Friends are ahead of us in this area, and that we need to hear voices from communities that live with the after-effects of the transatlantic slave trade. We are aware too that other parts of BYM are considering the Yearly Meeting minute and will bring a range of insights. We agreed that there should be a two-phase approach: the first will be focussed on learning, understanding the present situation and its origins, exploring good practice elsewhere and developing our thinking so that we can discern the right response; the second will be to implement whatever emerges.

Minute 23/02/07 recorded progress on our **equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)** plans as they relate to BYM's staff, its programmes of work, and as reflected in local and area meetings that constitute our 'church'. We were pleased to hear how much work is being done on this in many local meetings and we would like to continue to hear about it – probably via Local Development Workers. Support is available to local and area meetings from Local Development Workers and from Edwina Peart (BYM's Inclusion and Diversity Coordinator). We recognise that more staffing may be needed. We are conscious that delivering on what Yearly Meeting has asked, demands a lot from nominations, and that we must ensure that committees are well-supported. In **minute 23/02/10**, we looked at ourselves and **our own diversity**. We agreed to additional steps in monitoring it and hope to work with Central Nominations Committee to sustain and build diversity in the trustee body.

We recognise the need to ensure that our EDI principles tie in with BYM's strategic priorities and move us closer to what we aspire to be, helping us to let go of work that is rooted in an outdated understanding of how we build the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the third session, we prepared for **Yearly Meeting (minute 23/02/12)** and for Meeting for Sufferings. Then we had a report from the **Communications and**

Fundraising team which reports directly to trustees (**minute 23/02/14**). Look at the minute for details and I will say more when I introduce the trustee report at MfS.

Minute 23/02/15 is about clarification that there is a legal basis within data protection legislation to ask area meetings to **share basic information about individual members and regular attenders with BYM** to make it easier for nominations and committee administration, support for meetings, holding events and church governance.

You might also like to look at **minute 23/02/17** Recording Clerk's report as that gives the **highlights of work carried out by staff** over the last couple of months.

Caroline Nursey
Clerk of BYM trustees

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Saturday 11 February 2023, video conference

Minutes

Present: Georgina Bailey, Alison Breadon, Catherine Brown, Kit Fotheringham, Kate Gulliver, Ellie Harding, Carolyn Hayman, Caroline Nursey (Clerk), Silas Price, Graham Torr (Assistant Clerk), Frances Voelcker, Danielle Walker Palmour

Prevented: Paul Whitehouse (Treasurer)

In attendance: Siobhán Haire, Deputy Recording Clerk; Paul Parker, Recording Clerk; Oliver Robertson, Head of Witness and Worship; Lorna Service, Interim Head of Finance and Resources

Visitors: David Loxton, Head of Communications & Fundraising (item BYMT/23/02/14)

BYMT/23/02/01 Welcome and introductions, agenda check, conflicts of interest check

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest.

We confirm our agenda.

During our opening worship, we heard 27.43 from *Quaker faith and practice*.

BYMT/23/02/02 Continuing business

We receive a list of continuing minutes including the extracts from the following minutes of our last meeting: BYMT/22/11/09 Audit committee's report on BYM's response to the Covid pandemic; and BYMT22/11/19 Legal advice on hirings. We will return to the second of these later in this meeting.

BYMT/23/02/03 Minutes received

We receive the following minutes:

- Woodbrooke Trustees' minute 2022:69 from November 2022
- Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee, 20 November 2022 and 27 January 2023
- Quaker World Relations Committee, 21 January 2023. We note minute 2023-01-10 asking BYM to make a financial contribution to the FWCC World Plenary Travel and Digital Transformation Fund. We ask staff to recommend to Finance & Property Committee the sum that BYM might be able to offer.

BYMT/23/02/04 Whistleblowing annual report

We receive the Recording Clerk's annual report on BYM's whistleblowing policy and note there have been no whistleblowing cases in 2022.

BYMT/23/02/05 Finance and property

a) Insurance report

We note the annual summary of principal general insurances for the charity (BYMT 2023 02 05a).

b) Finance reports

1. We receive Finance & Property Committee minutes from 31 January 2023 (BYMT 2023 02 05f).

We note that the committee has met with representatives of Woodbrooke and confirmed the terms of the BYM grant for Woodbrooke Learning and Research. The grant will be restricted to a specific programme of activities. Representatives of Trustees and Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) are discussing with Woodbrooke the nature of reporting on the grant. We note that our Treasurer will receive regular financial reports from Woodbrooke. We also note that a co-clerk of QLCC is a Woodbrooke staff member and that this potential conflict of interest will be managed sensitively.

The committee recommends that we reopen the decision we made in June last year that the Yearly Meeting Treasurer should not sit on the Board of the Quiet Company. The Board of the Quiet Company would welcome this. The company is a wholly owned trading subsidiary of the charity but with separate governance structures. On reflection, we agree that the presence of the YM Treasurer on the Board is helpful to both company and charity and that potential conflicts of interest can be dealt with in other ways. We ask for the terms of reference of Finance & Property Committee to be updated to reflect this change. We forward this minute to the Board of the Quiet Company.

2. We receive a finance report covering year-end matters from the Head of Finance (BYMT 2023 02 05b).

We note that, after the creation of the new designated Risk Management and Operational Development funds, unrestricted funds at the start of 2023 are expected to be around £6.8m. The current reserves policy sets unrestricted reserves to be held at 5.5 to 7 months running costs, equating to £4.95m–£6.3m. This policy will be maintained.

c) Grants Group

We receive minutes GG22/38, GG22/35 and GG22/33 from the Grants Group.

We note the annual report of grants given to individuals and organisations in 2022.

The Grants Group has brought to the attention of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) and Trustees the depletion of funds available for QPS relief grants. We ask QPSWCC and Finance & Property Committee to discuss how this might be addressed in the 2024 budget. We ask Finance & Property Committee to review the use restricted and unrestricted funds by Grants Group.

We note that Grants Group has queried whether it might be used as a channel for the wider work of the BYM commitment to reparations.

d) Drayton House

We receive a report from the Property Development Steering Group and support the proposed negotiation for a short extension to the current lease on Drayton House.

BYMT/23/02/06 Operational plan 2022

We receive a report from Operational Managers on the delivery of the operational plan in 2022. We have already agreed the plan for 2023.

We note that at the end of the year around half of the principal activities in the plan were on or ahead of schedule, meaning also that around half were not. Delays were mainly due to capacity, resourcing and coordination issues including significant infrastructure change (new digital systems and tools and ways of working emerging from the pandemic). We are pleased that causes of delay are being addressed in the 2023 plan and recognise that our planning processes and the broader involvement of staff in planning are still in development, including greater realism in planning. We note that Quaker Peace and Social Witness redirected work to respond to the invasion of Ukraine.

BYMT/23/02/07 Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

The Deputy Recording Clerk has prepared a report to us on equality, diversity and inclusion in three principal areas – equity and justice: as an employer, in our programmes and in our church (BYMT 2023 02 10).

We find the format of the report helpful. We wonder if there are ways of feeding in more fully what Local Development Workers (LDWs) are hearing about what is happening in the disparate parts of the yearly meeting and the experience of Friends and of staff.

We must remember that anti-Semitism exists within the Society of Friends as well as socio-economic disparities.

We wonder what more we can learn from data we already have about the make-up of our membership and the experience of Friends and staff – perhaps through feedback from Yearly Meeting and from staff surveys. LDWs can contribute too.

We understand that some Friends do not want to share some of their experiences or declare their identity status, and we must understand that and have conversations with them about it.

We have considered whether there are additional opportunities. We as trustees need to look out for ways to reflect back and amplify the positive changes that Friends are making. Can we do more to witness to what is right and to tell Friends what we are doing? And can we tell our story better to the wider world about where we are making progress and what is more difficult?

We should consider whether any of our work is in contradiction with our EDI priorities and lay it down if so.

We recognise the complexity outlined in the paper of planning, delivering and evaluating while being responsive and open to the spirit as we feel our way. BYM staff are offering support to local meetings and area meetings as they hold challenging conversations and this is working well in many places. However, staff are not yet aware of everything that is happening, and local meetings and area meetings and other Quaker communities do not all realise that support is available. We recognise that additional staffing may be necessary as demand increases from meetings for help in exploring equity, diversity and inclusion, and we are pleased that Management Team recognise that they need to give support to staff working in this demanding area.

We hope that our EDI work will tie in with the strategic priorities for BYM and that this will shape the choices of what we do. We must ensure that central committees and central nominations committee are supported in this work.

We can see that more staffing is likely to be needed if we are to respond to what the Yearly Meeting has asked and ask staff to include appropriate costs in the budget proposals for 2024.

BYMT/23/02/08 Exploring reparations: next steps

We have considered how to take forward the commitment from Yearly Meeting in 2022 to explore how reparations might be made for the harms of the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and economic exploitation.

A paper (BYMT 2023 02 11) prepared by Danielle Walker Palmour and the Recording Clerk proposes two phases of work: exploration and enactment.

We welcome the paper and the proposal for a two-phase process. We know that many other organisations are far ahead of us in their consideration of reparations. We recognise the risk of simply rebranding what we do anyway at no real cost to ourselves. And we are aware that there are not many Friends who come from communities harmed by slavery so we must talk to those who are to avoid making well-meaning yet wrong decisions. So we need to take time and care to discern the way forward.

We agree that Phase 1 should be an exploratory period including seeking contributions from outside the Society, focused on learning, understanding the present situation and its origins, exploring good practice elsewhere and developing our thinking.

We agree too that Phase 2 should translate this work into a series of actions – perhaps including research and advocacy – to allow us to live up to the commitment made by Yearly Meeting 2022.

We note that other bodies within the yearly meeting are also considering the issues arising from the Yearly Meeting minute: we do not want to reinvent or revisit progress already made. We note also the challenge of finding the right people, including people from communities impacted by the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and their legacy to ensure that they are well-represented in our decision making.

We agree that the reparations work will need staff support both for project management and from Management Meeting, and agree that some of the costs of this may need to be drawn from the Organisational Development Fund.

We have considered whether some kind of coordinating group might be helpful. We agree that this should be wider than just trustees though trustees have a legal responsibility for what work is done. We hope that our anti-oppression champions will be part of the group, someone from Finance & Property Committee and from the central committees. And we hope that we can experiment in opening this more widely to Friends who wish to serve in ways that have emerged from our work on simplification.

BYMT/23/02/09 Advice to Meetings on hirings

At our last meeting we considered the legal advice received on hirings at Friends House (minute BYMT/22/11/19). The Recording Clerk and Kit Fotheringham have updated us further.

BYMT/23/02/10 A diversity policy for the trustee body

We have been considering our effectiveness as a trustee body and recognise the central importance that diversity plays in this. Our assistant clerk, in consultation with Ellie Harding, Danielle Walker Palmour and Alison Breadon, has presented us with a proposal for a diversity policy (paper BYMT 2023 02 13).

We adopt the policy with amendments that our assistant clerk has noted and that will be agreed by the group.

We ask our Nominations Group to initiate a discussion with Central Nominations Committee about the policy.

We would be comfortable to provide information to an annual audit of trustee diversity and agree to broaden the data collected about trustees to include socioeconomic background and care responsibilities (as well as gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and age that are already collected) using a recognised template. We feel it is essential to continue building our diversity over the next few years.

BYMT/23/02/11 Employment committee

We receive a report from our Employment Committee giving an overview of their activity for 2021 and 2022, as well as the latest minutes from the committee (BYMT 2023 02 07a and b). We are grateful for the significant work undertaken in overseeing related policies and issues. The Committee is overseeing valuable work particularly in relation to our commitment to be an anti-racist employer.

The Committee's work relies a great deal on contributions from staff and union representation – we are thankful to the staff who have taken on this task. This committee acts a crucible for considering how our Quaker values and testimonies can be the basis for how we operate our organisation.

BYMT/23/02/12 Spirit-led structures

We have reflected on how we are responding to our leading for a simple church supported by a simple charity. Time at Yearly Meeting this year will be devoted to how our organisation's structures best support what God calls us to do. We have spent time preparing ourselves for the matters under discernment.

BYMT/23/02/13 Preparing for Meeting for Sufferings

We have prepared for Meeting for Sufferings on 4 March.

BYMT/23/02/14 Communications

David Loxton, BYM's head of communications and fundraising, joins us for this item.

David has provided us with a report setting out recent work and future plans across a range of communications activities (BYMT 2023 02 15). It also sets out the proposed way forwards for developing BYM's communications strategy.

We thank David for his paper and the team for all their work and achievements. We are pleased to hear about the launch of the new private Facebook group for Quakers 'Quaker Space – connecting British Quakers' which had more than 500 members posting after the first week. The increased coverage in regional and national media is encouraging as is the increased quality and productivity of our video output.

We look forward to further progress during 2023 as planned. We note that proposed work includes developing a new communications strategy.

We consider the six current strategic objectives to be broadly the right ones (though perhaps reworded) and are pleased that wider conversations on this are planned. We may then be led to do more on some objectives than others over the next few years.

We recognise the challenge of meeting the communication needs of all Friends at different stages in their lives, and using modes of communication that work for them. Some young people are keen to be involved in communicating and need a steer to understand how.

We look forward to receiving the communications strategy for approval later this year.

BYMT/23/02/15 Data collection from Friends by BYM

We receive a paper (BYMT 2023 02 17) regarding Friends' information collected at BYM; its purpose is to clarify the legal basis for holding the necessary data we need to function as a charity and church. Basic information is required primarily for nominations and committee administration, support for meetings, holding events and church governance.

We agree the principles set out in the paper and approve the Legitimate Interest Assessment subject to clarifying for area meetings what is meant by "long term attenders" who are equivalent to members and whose data should be included. This needs to include those attenders who are role holders.

BYMT/23/02/16 Audit committee's plan 2023–25

We receive a proposal from our Audit Committee on work for their next three-year plan covering 2023–25 (paper BYMT 2023 02 05a) and the committee's minutes from January 2023 (BYMT 2023 02 05b).

We note the three-year plan has been brought together in consultation with Management Meeting.

We agree to the plan, but ask them to consider how to include IT in the internal audit cycle.

BYMT/23/02/17 Recording Clerk's report

We receive a report from the Recording Clerk (paper BYMT 2023 02 09). We note that Management Meeting is now a smaller body since Paul Henderson-Grey stepped aside from the leadership of the Quiet Company at the end of December – the General Manager of the Quiet Company will no longer be a Management Meeting position.

The report gives updates and news under the headings of BYM's strategic priorities:

- Thriving Quaker communities: communications, safeguarding, support for Quaker meetings with property, local development
- Sustainable and peaceful world: peace and climate justice, public affairs, Quaker agencies
- Simpler structures and practices: fundraising, governance, vision for BYM in 2026, digital working environment.
- The report also includes an update on other matters: health and safety, Swarthmoor Hall.

We are pleased to hear that recruitment has started for a qualified property management advisor and a finance manager to serve Friends Trusts Ltd and support area meeting trustees. We hope that the fifteenth and final Local Development Worker will be in place soon.

We are pleased too that recruitment for a fixed term Public Affairs Officer to add more capacity for work on truth and integrity has been successful.

We note Quaker Peace & Social Witness's plans for the anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine and – more positively – for the 50th anniversary of the Bradford University Department of Peace Studies.

We are sorry that it will not be possible to re-open Swarthmoor Hall during 2023 as planned, but relieved that it will open in time for the 400th anniversary of George Fox's birth in 2024.

BYMT/23/02/18 Trustees' news

We receive a report of recent activities of trustees (BYMT 2023 02 18).

BYMT/23/02/19 Communicating trustees' work

We have considered how to communicate our work to others.

BYMT/23/02/20 Reviewing the meeting

We have reviewed the meeting. We agree to hold a slightly longer meeting than originally planned on 5 April to have time for careful consideration of an additional item as well as approving the annual report and accounts.

BYMT/23/02/21 Time with Recording Clerk

BYMT/23/02/22 Time without staff

We have spent time without staff.

Caroline Nursey
Clerk

Interim reports from Central Committees on responding to Yearly Meeting concerns

The theme of Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2021 was 'For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis'. Three strands were explored:

- Anti-racism: our Quaker journey
- Acknowledging and welcoming gender diverse people
- Faith-based action for climate justice.

Yearly Meeting concluded in Minute 35:

Yearly Meeting 2021, Minute 35: For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth at a time of crisis

We have approached our theme of living equality and truth through three areas of focus: anti-racism, gender diversity and climate justice. We have been both comforted and discomforted. We have recognised things that we have left undone and things that we ought not to have done and we have resolved to do the work to do better.

Junior Yearly Meeting asked us: How can we become a Religious Society that centres justice and equity in its anti-racism and climate justice work?

We need to love and listen humbly to one another, centering the voices of those who lack privilege. We can bring tools and stand alongside people rather than bringing solutions. We can learn anti-racism, anti-bias and anti-oppression techniques. We can listen and look for where the spirit is moving within other groups of like mind with whom we can work. We have Quaker experience to share, of holding space for people to listen.

If I can see you as other, I can ignore your lived experience, your pain, your truth – because that couldn't happen to me.

If I can see you as like me, it will be deeply discomforting, but your truth and your pain become mine, and I can ally myself with you.

We need to strengthen our worshipping communities from which we all can draw strength for action and service to each other and in the world. We come to worship to meet God and to be changed.

We support and affirm the priority placed by Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC) on work on sustainability and climate justice "In the face of overwhelming evidence of rapidly increasing destruction of the Earth, we are called to work for a world that prioritises ecological repair and well-being. To this end we will call for and work towards a just solution to the

climate crisis; with national and worldwide economies operating within ecological limits and upholding the wellbeing, dignity and equality of all.” (QPSW strategy 2021–2025). We uphold Friends and staff travelling to Glasgow for COP 26 to make sure that call is heard.

We ask Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) to consider how best to support local and area meetings to work on cultivating an inclusive culture of welcome, and on developing a vision for what it means to be an anti-racist faith community.

We ask Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) and Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) to consider how we can work with Friends around the world and with other churches and faith groups to take our work forward.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to receive and consider interim reports on our behalf and to share examples of successful practice.

We ask Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to consider how and when we should return to these matters.

Meeting for Sufferings received reports from QWRC and QCCIR in December last year which, in part, responded to this minute. At this meeting, Meeting for Sufferings will hear from Quaker Life Central Committee and Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee. The latter has provided a written paper in advance.

Update on QPSW climate justice work

This paper provides a brief update on how the centrally managed work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness has been responding to Yearly Meeting minute 21/35.

Our contribution has focussed on the aspects of the minute around sustainability and climate justice.

1 Background

Sustainability and climate justice is one of two key themes identified by QPSW central committee in its [2021-2025 strategy](#).

Although QPSW has been working on these issues for almost 15 years, during this time the work has become more focussed on the climate justice issues. The strategy identifies work on climate justice as “the faith in action expression of our sustainability concern”.

Our approach recognises that the climate crisis has its roots in our unjust economic system, and that the poorest people – who have done the least to cause the crisis, are the hardest hit. Recognising that their wealth is based on the violent (and often racist) exploitation of people and the earth, this means that UK and other wealthy countries have a moral responsibility to do the most to tackle the crisis.¹ We also see this as linking strongly to Yearly Meeting commitments around reparations and becoming an anti-racist church.

We currently have 1.6 FTE staff dedicated to climate justice work². Other staff, particularly from our faith in action and public affairs teams, contribute flexibly to the work where needed, as happened to a significant extent around COP26. The decision to focus our limited staff capacity on climate justice, is enabling us to maximise the impact we can have. However, we recognise that means we are not able to work on other important sustainability issues. It is important to note that other aspects of the wider sustainability concern, are covered by other parts of the Yearly Meeting and by Woodbrooke³.

2. Key activities

2.1 A confident Quaker voice at COP26

A key priority for our work in 2021 was ensuring a strong Quaker presence at the COP26 UN climate summit, held in Glasgow in November of that year. With the UK holding the presidency of COP26, this was a very particular moment for the UK climate movement. Our work included:

- Supporting Quaker climate activists and Quaker meetings with workshops and action resources
- providing spiritual and practical support to Quaker and non-Quaker climate activists in preparation of COP26
- connecting Quaker climate activists in Britain and worldwide
- supporting speaker events in both “blue” and “green”⁴ zones at COP26
- organising mass civil society mobilisations during COP26 in Glasgow and London
- providing resources for the many meetings around Britain who organised vigils or other actions in their own localities.

Staff worked closely with Friends from West of Scotland Area meeting, who opened up Glasgow meeting house, held a successful series of events and helped to provide

¹ A short summary of what we mean by climate justice can be found in the leaflet [Climate justice: a Quaker view](#). Friends can explore this in more depth through the BYM and Woodbrooke exploring faith and climate justice course.

² The main staff contacts for this work are Olivia Hanks (climate justice lead) and Anna Lewis (campaigns coordinator) who can be contacted on climatejustice@quaker.org.uk More information about the work can be found at: [Climate & economic justice | Quakers in Britain](#)

³ Notably the [Woodbrooke Climate Crisis project](#), which has been funded by BYM to provide support for greening buildings and lifestyles, as well as enabling Friends to explore the spiritual underpinning of this concern

⁴ Blue and Green zones refer to different levels of security and access at the conference. The blue zone only accessible by negotiators and other official delegates, whereas the green zone is more open.

accommodation for activists and delegates. We also linked with other Quaker agencies, including the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva whose staff were involved in behind-the-scenes 'quiet diplomacy' work.

This work helped ensure that there was a strong and visible Quaker presence and that Quaker voices were heard both inside and outside the talks.

Although the official outcome of the talks was far from ambitious enough, pressure from civil society was key in producing the small progress that we did see. It also helped to lay the foundations for the future, both within the COP process (see below) and in the longer-term work of building an effective movement for climate justice.

2.2 Interfaith Coalition Work

Since the early days of COP26 preparation, we prioritised interfaith coalition partnerships. Strong coalition work is vital in bringing our messages to larger audiences and ensuring that faiths are an integral part of the movement for climate justice. However, interfaith coalition work often has been overlooked and under resourced.

QPSW staff spent a significant amount of time fostering and helping to build interfaith climate justice networks and coalitions such as [Make COP Count](#), a coalition of representatives of different faiths in the UK and which was set up specifically to coordinate faith asks at COP26.

Within the coalition, QPSW staff led on developing and implementing strategy, and building capacity. We also brought policy and advocacy expertise and capacity to the group. This was aided by having contacts in the climate justice movement and in UN spaces through QUNO.

Our work was greatly appreciated by faith partners, with many commenting that, in 2021 faith voices were more focused and unified than in the past on climate justice issues.

2.3 Progress on 'loss and damage'

Our main policy ask of governments, both in the run up to and since COP 26 is to call for a 'loss and damage' fund to compensate communities who have been devastated by the climate crisis. This has been a long-running demand of developing/global south countries at international climate talks, but until very recently has been resisted by developed countries.

Quaker campaigning and advocacy contributed to raising the profile of loss and damage with the UK, Scottish governments in the run up to COP26. We believe this helped shape the approach of the COP26 presidency, ensuring that there was at least some space on the official agenda for this vital issue. At COP 26 our emphasis was on amplifying the voices of groups and communities and in support of an official proposal from countries representing 85% of the world's population, to set up a new loss and damage financing facility. Since then, we have been one of the two main

coordinating organisations behind the [Make Polluters Pay](#) campaign, and coordinated an interfaith 'walk of witness' for Loss & Damage Action Day. This work continues to raise awareness of the need for more action on loss and damage both with the general public and with elected representatives.

Although the proposal for a new fund was rejected at COP26, it was agreed the following year at COP27. This is a major success for developing countries and the climate justice movement. However, as yet, there is no agreement on where the money for the fund will come from. This will continue to be a focus of our campaigning for the foreseeable future.

Our level of focus on COP26 was exceptional, due to it being held in the UK. While loss and damage is an international issue dealt with as part of the COP process, our focus is primarily on influencing the UK government's position. Working as part of Make Polluters Pay, we expect our work this year to cover Parliamentary advocacy, developing our messaging, and supporting various public actions, principally for Loss & Damage Action Day in September. We do not expect to travel to future COPs or engage in detail with UN processes.

2.4 Insure Our Future campaign

Staff have recently started working with the [Insure Our Future](#) campaign, which is asking the insurance industry to immediately stop insuring new and expanding coal, oil and gas projects. The campaign also aims to phase out existing insurance for coal, oil and gas companies in line with a credible 1.5C pathway.

This reflects the fact that new fossil fuel extraction and infrastructure projects are possible because our finance system continues to support them. Insurance services are significant as they reduce the financial risks associated with such projects and make them more financially viable for investors.

In the last few days, BYM's Recording Clerk has joined the Clerk of Friends World Committee for Consultation Africa Section in writing to the Chair and Chief Executive of Lloyd's of London, highlighting our concerns and specifically asking that the company does not provide insurance services for the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP).

This campaign is at a very early stage, and staff are intending to develop it collaboratively with Friends who have a particular interest in this area. We expect to develop opportunities for more Friends to get involved in due course and encourage Friends to keep an eye out for more information about this.

2.5 Exploring faith and climate justice

Working in partnership with Woodbrooke, staff have been working to deliver a year of learning and reflection on Climate Justice. This was developed in response to

Friends wanting to better understand what climate justice looks like in practice as well as to explore this from a spiritual perspective.

There are two elements to the project, a [set of freely available resources](#) and a [pay-as-led course](#). So far, feedback from both elements of the project have been very positive. As well as helping participants explore the issues, the discussions and ideas emerging from them are helping to shape staff thinking and will feed into future work planning. A number of participants have commented that they welcome the sense of community being built through this course, particularly if they do not find this in their local meeting.

The course is running until July 2023 and Friends are welcome to join it at any time until then.

3 Conclusion

Although our specialist staff resource working on climate justice is small, they are well supported across the QPSW staff teams, including our new Faith in Action staff and by an expanded Central Committee. Central Committee believes that staff have delivered impressive results through COP26 and beyond, enabling activity and coordination across faith and civil society groups.

As we enter explicitly the age of climate change consequences it is for us all to rise to meet the challenge. Building on the year of learning we are preparing to take action in many ways and to do so well informed about the facts and with a confirmed spiritual underpinning to the work. Key to this will be the engagement of Friends and, as shown with our insurance campaign, we are actively looking at the best routes to do this in new and more inclusive ways.

Mike Coote, Co-clerk – QPSW Central Committee
Suzanne Ismail, Head of campaigns, advocacy & faith in action
February 2023

Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) interim report to Meeting for Sufferings

Yearly Meeting asked us “to consider how best to support local and area meetings to work on cultivating an inclusive culture of welcome, and on developing a vision for what it means to be an anti-racist faith community.” (minute 21/35)

So far our main focus was to educate ourselves on this issue.

- In February 2022, a major item on our meeting agenda was to consider Edwina Peart's article “Reflecting on the journey – thus far” (Friends Quarterly 1/22) which had been circulated in advance. Edwina, who is Britain Yearly Meeting's diversity & inclusion officer, joined us for part of our meeting. Amongst other things, we took away: “Inequalities are inherently interconnected – so too must be our response.” (from Edwina Peart's article, quoted in minute QLCC 22.14.2)
- At our meeting in November 2022, we discussed anti-racism and gender diversity, and our relevant minute reads in part: “We have found it helpful to hear about the activities that meetings have undertaken and encourage this information to be shared with other meetings, perhaps by blogs, Quake! and other means. We are all on this journey together. Education is the best way of helping Friends be inclusive, and we encourage Friends to share their experiences. Woodbrooke is offering increased support in this area, including support to local meetings about reparative justice and reparations, where some US meetings have done considerable work.” (QLCC minute 22.47)
- For our meeting in February 2023, we invited Kate McNally to talk to us about her Eva Koch scholarship project, a survey on “Anti-Racism Work among Friends 2022”. In addition to presenting her survey results, Kate also suggested some ways forward, based on her observation that different Meetings are at different stages on the journey. “We heard that there are common stages in the ‘journey’ of anti-racism work and the resources required are different at each stage. Bringing together groups of people who are at the same stage in a supportive environment is an important part of continuing this work. We noted the clear need expressed by Friends for outside facilitators to aid discussion.” (part of QLCC minute 23.12)

Outside our QLCC meetings, the following developments may be worth mentioning:

- Quaker Life Representative Council, in April 2022, included a session entitled “Moving forward – a reflective session on inclusion and community”, run by Helen Oldridge, Local Development Worker for Wales and the Southern Marches

- We learned that BYM staff now receive diversity & inclusion training
- Woodbrooke Learning has taken on board the topics of anti-racism and other aspects of inclusion, at times in collaboration with Quaker Life

Klaus Huber

on behalf of Quaker Life Central Committee, 18 February 2023

Church Government Advisory Group

The Church Government Advisory Group (CGAG) has responsibility for suggesting changes to the texts of Quaker faith & practice to keep it up-to-date.

This paper has three parts:

- A. Quaker Stewardship Committee: suggested changes to text
- B. Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales: suggested changes to text
- C. Overseer: consideration of what text changes are appropriate.

Parts A and B each contain suggested new text for Quaker faith & practice to take account of

- A. the laying down on Quaker Stewardship Committee and
- B. the introduction of the name Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales

In each section, the proposed changes are set out. The left hand column shows the current text, with both additions and deletions marked. New text is underlined, text to be deleted is ~~crossed through~~.

The right hand column gives a brief explanation of the changes suggested. If you have any questions or comments on the proposed changes, please contact the Church Government Adviser, Michael Booth michaelsb@quaker.org.uk .

Two further documents have been prepared which may be of interest.

Document 1: This contains the existing and proposed text side by side.

Document 2: This contains side-by-side the existing text, changes highlighted, and proposed text.

These are obtainable on request from Michael Booth michaelsb@quaker.org.uk .

Part C of the paper is about ceasing to use the term overseer.

Meeting for Sufferings in its minute MfS/22/12/06 has asked all area meetings to cease using the term overseer and to select another suitable term in its place.

Part C of this paper CGAG is asking for formal guidance from Meeting for Sufferings about what changes to Quaker faith & practice are appropriate following the decision to cease using the term overseer.

A) Quaker Stewardship Committee

Meeting for Sufferings in its minute MfS/21/10/13 asked Church Government Advisory Group to prepare changes to the text of Quaker faith & practice to take account the decision of Yearly Meeting to lay down Quaker Stewardship Committee.

We started work on this in October 2021, but felt it wise to wait until Quaker Stewardship Committee had been formally laid down at Yearly Meeting 2022.

We consulted with staff in Quaker Life and elsewhere to make sure that the changes we are suggesting reflect the changes of responsibilities as agreed and minuted by Yearly Meeting.

We have assumed that the broad recommendations contained in the “Report of the Group appointed to review Quaker Stewardship Committee” have been implemented.

As these changes reflect the decision of Yearly Meeting, CGAG considers that all of these are minor factual amendments that could be agreed by Meeting for Sufferings on behalf of the Yearly Meeting.

The proposed new paragraph 14.36 gives the outline of the changes, and the rest of the draft implements them in the remainder of QFP.

	Changes highlighted	Explanation
3.01	<p>This chapter refers especially to our main meetings for church affairs, and in particular to area and local meetings. Attendance at these meetings is the right, and indeed the responsibility, of all Friends. <u>However</u>, the principles governing our Quaker business method, <u>particularly the need for meetings to be spirit led</u>, however, are equally relevant to less regular meetings for church affairs held by recognised meetings <u>meetings of Quaker trustees</u> and to the committees appointed by any of our meetings. Committees should appoint clerks, if this has not been done by the parent meeting, and minutes should be made during the course of each committee meeting. The general advice in this chapter will be helpful in enabling these meetings too to be rightly held.</p>	<p>This proposed change reflects the report of the review group: <i>"However, appropriate text may be required in the interim Advice on the Quaker Business Method. This should include specific reference to its current usage in a wide variety of situations – in large meetings such as MfS, and in smaller groups dealing with more detailed matters, such as Trustees."</i></p>
4.10	<p>The area meeting shall keep the following matters under regular review: ... m) the provision of the relevant financial accounts and property records to the Quaker Stewardship Committee <u>Meeting for Sufferings</u> in order to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities (14.38–14.39) <u>(14.36)</u> including annual certification to the Yearly Meeting.</p>	<p>Change the text to reflect that area meetings now should provide financial and property information to Meeting for Sufferings. And change reference at end of section.</p>

	Changes highlighted	Explanation
5.07	<p>Quaker gatherings or regional meetings may be set up by two or more area meetings, by a mix of area and local meetings, or by two or more general or regional meetings. The constituent meetings are those that choose to take the responsibility for organising and funding such gatherings or conferences. The members are the members of the sponsoring meetings. They may choose to change their status or area, or local meetings may wish to come together in different combinations to support the work and witness of Quakers in the area. If such changes are contemplated, or if a newly formed gathering is intended to have an ongoing structure and regular meetings, the Recording Clerk should be informed and appropriate guidance obtained from Quaker Stewardship <u>Life Central</u> Committee.</p> <p>All gatherings (including those that continue from pre-existing general meetings) must inform Yearly Meeting through Meeting for Sufferings of any substantial changes they may make including their setting up and laying down, and, if the latter, of how they intend to discharge or transfer their responsibilities and deposit their records. They should forward to the Recording Clerk the minute by which they are finally laid down.</p> <p>Quaker groupings which are independent charities may need to register with the Charity Commission and should obtain advice from Quaker Stewardship Committee via the Recording Clerk.</p>	To change source of guidance.
6.06	<p>The agenda may comprise:</p> <p>...</p> <p>c. a report of the proceedings of Meeting for Sufferings during the year (<u>6.25</u>) <u>including a certification that every part of Britain Yearly Meeting is producing</u></p>	Section j is deleted. The information currently in section j is moved to section c. The final sentence is changed to reflect this.

	Changes highlighted	Explanation
	<p><u>proper financial accounts and property records (14.36).</u></p> <p>...</p> <p>j. the report of the Quaker Stewardship Committee, certifying that every part of Britain Yearly Meeting is producing proper financial accounts and property records (14.28).</p> <p>....</p> <p>Items b, c, d, <u>and</u> e and j are presented for consideration and acceptance, the Trustees' annual report and financial statements having been approved and forwarded by Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees (8.03).</p>	
6.17	<p>The following committees are appointed in whole or in part by Yearly Meeting, for continuing work after its conclusion: Agenda Committee (6.18); <u>and</u> Central Nominations Committee (6.21); Quaker Stewardship Committee (14.36).</p>	<p>The first sentence is changed. Friends looking at a printed edition will note that Committee on Clerks has already been deleted.</p>
14.36	<p><u>Quaker Stewardship Committee was created in 2002 to support our meetings in their stewardship of property and to co-ordinate the relationship between the yearly meeting and those administering charity law. It was laid down by Britain Yearly Meeting in 2022 and its responsibilities allocated to other Quaker bodies.</u></p> <p><u>Meeting for Sufferings, on behalf of Yearly Meeting, has responsibility for the oversight of Area Meetings' compliance with their legal responsibilities.</u></p> <p><u>Quaker Life Central Committee has responsibility for the advice and guidance function of Quaker Stewardship Committee, including the support of Area Meeting trustees.</u></p> <p><u>Britain Yearly Meeting trustees have responsibility for liaising with the Charity Commission on matters of general concern to Quakers, and, working with</u></p>	<p>New text replaces the current text of 14.36</p>

	Changes highlighted	Explanation
	<u>General Meeting for Scotland, for liaison with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).</u>	
14.37 to 14.42	<u>Omitted</u>	These paragraphs (14.37 to 14.42) described the work of Quaker Stewardship Committee, they are no longer required. Rather than renumbering the whole chapter and cross-references, the sections should be omitted. This is also what was agreed in section 6.19 when the Committee on Clerks was laid down.
14.44	<u>Omitted</u>	Attendance at the Annual Conference of Treasurers is now open to a wider range of Friends. Formal appointments are no longer required.
15.06	<u>In all their activities, trustees are advised to refer to the guidance offered to all trustees by the Charity Commission and Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) websites. Further queries or concerns not covered by these resources should be addressed to the Recording Clerk's office.</u>	This text replaces the current text.
15.16	Britain Yearly Meeting in session has agreed the governing document for the centrally managed work of the yearly meeting (see 8.01 , 8.03), as well as a governing document template drawn from sections of <i>Quaker faith & practice</i> for the use of area meetings and other Quaker bodies, available from Quaker Stewardship Committee (see 14.36 – 14.43 Stewardship) <u>Quaker Life Central Committee</u> .	Replacing reference to Quaker Stewardship Committee with Quaker Life Central Committee.

Recommendation to Meeting for Sufferings

CGAG recommend that Meeting for Sufferings approves these changes to the text of Quaker faith & practice, and reports them to Yearly Meeting.

B) Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales

Change of name of Meeting of Friends in Wales

Meeting for Sufferings minuted the change of name of Cyfarfod y Cyfeillion Yng Nghymru / Meeting of Friends in Wales to Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales (CCQW) and asked CGAG to offer changes to the text of Quaker faith & practice to reflect this.

CGAG has confirmed with CCQW that the name should appear bilingually in all texts.

There are references to Wales and Welsh elsewhere in Quaker faith & practice, but they refer to the country and language rather than what is now CCQW.

As these changes reflect the new name of Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales, CGAG considers that all of these are minor factual amendments that could be agreed by Meeting for Sufferings on behalf of the Yearly Meeting.

The following sections appear to require changing to take account of the new name.

	Changes highlighted	Explanation
<u>3.09</u>	<i>For regulations on attendance of non-members at meetings for church affairs see 4.08 for area meetings, 4.32 for local meetings, 5.03 for General Meeting for Scotland, 5.04 for <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales & 6.15 for Britain Yearly Meeting.</i>	New name required in final italic paragraph
<u>3.28</u>	Full guidelines and details of procedures, agreed by Meeting for Sufferings, are available from the Recording Clerk or online at www.quaker.org.uk/qfp . These cover the yearly meeting, area and local meetings, matters delegated to General Meeting for Scotland (5.03) or to <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales (5.04–5.05), as well as other Quaker groups. A summary policy document for meetings and groups is also available. Additional support or guidance can be obtained from the Recording Clerk (offsite link).	New name required in final paragraph
<u>4.18</u>	An area meeting may communicate formally by minute with its constituent local meetings, with any general meeting or Quaker gathering (5.02) to which it belongs (including the General Meeting for Scotland (5.03) <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales (5.04–5.05) where appropriate), with Yearly Meeting (6.06.a, 6.25“), with Meeting for Sufferings (7.02) and with meetings with which it does business through its representatives	New name required within paragraph

	Changes highlighted	Explanation
	appointed to joint committees. The area meeting has an obligation to receive minutes from those bodies. There may occasionally be circumstances in which it will be helpful to circulate other minutes for information only.	
<u>5.02</u>	Among general meetings that are continuing and are managing independent activities and financial accounts are General Meeting for Scotland (see <u>5.03</u>) and) <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales (see <u>5.04</u> & <u>5.05</u>). They represent Quakers in their respective nations and are part of Britain Yearly Meeting’s structure with certain delegated powers from Yearly Meeting. Other distinct types of general meeting are any Quaker school general meeting that functions solely as that school’s responsible body, and Young Friends General Meeting (see <u>5.08</u>).	New name required within paragraph
heading above <u>5.04</u>	<u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales	New name needed
<u>5.04</u>	<u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales has national responsibilities on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting, to represent and advance the life and witness of Quakers within Wales. The meeting consists of all Friends who live in Wales or who are members in local meetings within Wales. Provision is made for members of other meetings and attenders to be present at meetings as in 4.08. The responsibilities of <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales include: <p style="margin-left: 40px;">a to e..</p> <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales will provide information and nominations or appointed representatives to Quaker and other bodies when required. The meeting may communicate by minute with Yearly Meeting through its agenda committee (6.18) and Meeting for Sufferings (7.04), as well as with area meetings which include parts of Wales. It also has the obligation to receive minutes from these bodies.	New name needed in three places (twice in first paragraph and once in final paragraph).

	Changes highlighted	Explanation
	Cyfarfod y Cyfeillion yng Nghymru	Delete this heading, the one above 5.04 covers both sections.
<u>5.05</u>	<p>Mae gan Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales Cyfarfod y Cyfeillion yng Nghymru gyfrifoldebau ar ran Cyfarfod Blynyddol Prydain, i gynrychioli ac hyrwyddo bywyd a thystiolaeth y Crynwyr yng Nghymru. Mae'r cyfarfod yn cynnwys pawb o'r Crynwyr sydd yn byw yng Nghymru neu yn aelodau o gyfarfodydd lleol yng Nghymru. Gwneir darpariaeth i aelodau o gyfarfodydd eraill fynychu cyfarfodydd yn unol â 4.08. Mae cyfrifoldebau Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales Cyfarfod y Cyfeillion yng Nghymru yn cynnwys:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a...e</p> <p>Fe fydd Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales Cyfarfod y Cyfeillion yng Nghymru yn darparu gwybodaeth ac enwebiadau neu benodiadau i gyrff Crynwrol a chyrff eraill yn ôl y galw. Gall y Cyfarfod gysylltu trwy gofnod â Chyfarfod Blynyddol Prydain trwy ei bwyllgor agenda (6.18) a'r Cyfarfod Dioddefiannau (7.04), ac hefyd â'r cyfarfodydd rhanbarth sy'n cynnwys rhannau o Gymru. Mae hefyd yn ofynnol i'r cyfarfod dderbyn cofnodion gan y cyrff hyn.</p>	<p>New name needed in three places (twice in first paragraph and once in final paragraph)</p> <p>We have checked with CCQW, and have been informed that no initial mutation is required.</p>
<u>6.06a</u>	minutes from area meetings, General Meeting for Scotland, Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales Meeting of Friends in Wales or Young Friends General Meeting, and minutes or memoranda from standing committees appointed by Meeting for Sufferings sharing with the yearly meeting as a whole some concern which has their united support;	New name required within section a of 6.06
<u>6.18</u>	The planning of the agenda for, and the use of the premises during, Yearly Meeting shall be in the hands of the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, which shall consult as may be necessary with standing committees, area meetings and General Meeting for Scotland, Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales Meeting of Friends in Wales and Young Friends General Meeting. (first paragraph)	New name required within paragraph

	Changes highlighted	Explanation
<u>6.25</u>	Any communication to the Yearly Meeting from an area meeting, from General Meeting for Scotland, <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales , London Quakers Property Trust or Young Friends General Meeting shall be in the form of a minute signed by their clerk, as shall communications from Meeting for Sufferings and from committees of the Yearly Meeting. (first paragraph)	New name required within paragraph
<u>7.04</u>	Area meetings, General Meeting for Scotland, <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales , London Quakers Property Trust, Young Friends General Meeting, Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and the standing committees appointed by Yearly Meeting or Meeting for Sufferings may communicate with Meeting for Sufferings by minute signed by or on behalf of their clerk. These bodies may request that Friends other than members of Meeting for Sufferings be allowed to speak to such minutes.	New name required within paragraph
<u>7.05d</u>	one representative, and alternate, appointed by the Yearly Meeting on the nomination of <u>each of</u> (i) General Meeting for Scotland (5.03) and (ii) <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales (5.04–5.05), subject to review in due course;	New name required within section d of 7.05 Add “each of” to improve clarity.
<u>8.10b</u>	two representatives of <u>each of</u> General Meeting for Scotland, <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales and Young Friends General Meeting;	New name required within section b of paragraph. Add “each of” to improve clarity..
<u>8.18</u>	(final paragraph) Trustees are accountable to Yearly Meeting (chapter 6) and the charity regulators (chapters 14 & 15). Trustees and the standing committees may communicate by minute with Meeting for Sufferings and Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, and with each other. Standing committees may also communicate with General Meeting for Scotland, <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales and area meetings on specific delegated matters; they should ensure that this is done in co-ordination with Trustees and other standing committees, liaising as required.	New name required within paragraph

	Changes highlighted	Explanation
<u>9.12</u>	(penultimate paragraph) General Meeting for Scotland makes appointments to ACTS; <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales makes appointments to Cytûn.	New name required within paragraph
<u>9.13</u>	(First paragraph) The Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) is appointed by Meeting for Sufferings and is accountable to Britain Yearly Meeting through Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees. At least one member is appointed from General Meeting for Scotland and at least one from <u>Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales</u> Meeting of Friends in Wales . Ireland Yearly Meeting is invited to nominate a representative through Britain Yearly Meeting’s Central Nominations Committee. Additional members may be co-opted to assist with particular issues.	New name required within paragraph
<u>14.44</u>	<i>(omitted)</i>	Section A of this report recommends that this paragraph is deleted.

Recommendation to Meeting for Sufferings

CGAG recommend that Meeting for Sufferings approves these changes to the text of Quaker faith & practice, and reports them to Yearly Meeting.

C) Overseers

Meeting for Sufferings in its minute MfS/22/12/06 has asked all area meetings to cease using the term overseer and to select another suitable term in its place.

The words overseer and oversight occur numerous times in *Quaker faith & practice*, describing both current and historic Quaker practice.

We do not think it is appropriate under our current guidance about the extent of changes we may propose to suggest removing the word from the whole current text. We suggest that a possible way forward would be the addition of a short piece of text explaining our current practice added in Chapter 12 of *Quaker faith & practice* possibly prior to section 12.05. In addition a note about this change could be added under the heading “Changes to *Quaker faith & practice* since the 5th edition was published” on the front page of the online edition.

We have learned that the Book of Discipline Revision Committee (BDRC) will also take account of the decision of Meeting for Sufferings when preparing material on topics covering pastoral care.

Before CGAG goes ahead with suggesting text, we wish to formally consult Meeting for Sufferings to ask if this way forward is acceptable.

Recommendation to Meeting for Sufferings

CGAG recommend that Meeting for Sufferings approves this approach to take account of the change to nomenclature, or it offers clear alternative guidance for how to take account of the change in the text of Quaker faith & practice.

Finn Pollard, Convener

Michael S Booth, Secretary

Church Government Advisory Group

February 2023

Quaker chaplains

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group felt representatives would appreciate hearing more about chaplaincy work. In the early days of the Quaker movement many Friends were imprisoned for their beliefs and Friends continue to be imprisoned for acts of conscience – perhaps because of this there has been a continuing concern for prisoners. It should be noted that Friends may also be in prison for other criminal matters, just like any other citizen, and that Quaker prison chaplains minister to Quakers and non-Quakers alike.

There are many Quaker chaplains working in variety of settings as well as prisons. Chaplains are appointed and supported locally by area meetings and the network of chaplains is supported nationally by BYM.

At the meeting you will hear from the staff involved at BYM, and from several chaplains who will share experiences from their ministry.

Quaker faith and practice 13.45-46:

Quaker chaplains can be found in a variety of settings including prisons, secure units, universities, colleges, schools, hospitals and hospices, on the streets, in sports clubs and workplaces, often as part of an ecumenical or interfaith chaplaincy team. There is a difference between the role of Quaker chaplain and that of Quakers seeking to offer oversight or support Friends within an institution. Quaker chaplains may also do this but their role primarily is to offer a formal space for people of all faiths and none to explore the spiritual in a trustworthy relationship. Apart from prison chaplains, Quaker chaplains may be appointed either by the area meeting or by one of its local meetings according to local circumstances. The work may need support, both financial and spiritual, from the appointing meeting.

Chaplaincy can be an opportunity for outreach. Friends' non-credal approach and openness to new light, from whatever quarter, may be particularly appealing to the enquiring mind. Friends should be ready to make Quaker views known as well as providing pastoral care. There may be opportunities for holding a meeting for worship as part of chaplaincy work; local elders should share in responsibility for such a meeting.

Some places may have several Friends responsible for pastoral care associated with chaplaincy; local meetings should have an overall responsibility to support all these Friends both practically and spiritually.