

## Follow up Letter



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

### To members of Meeting for Sufferings

6 December 2017

#### Meeting for Sufferings 2 December 2017

Dear Friends,

I hope that your travel home from the meeting on Saturday was not disrupted too much and that you were able to keep hold of the positive experiences that we had during the day. The minutes of our meeting are attached and the important ones for your local and area meetings are:

Minute 12: our recommendation to Yearly Meeting that it is time to have a revision to our book of discipline – this recommendation comes with some specifics about how this may go forward. Do feedback how pleased the Review Preparation Group was with the responses to the reading project, which came from all over the yearly meeting. Also if you have not been involved in this, it is not too late and there is a condensed version of the reading programme on the Being Friends Together website (link [here](#)). (Perhaps it would be good to have a new local reading group through the winter months!)

Minute 15: the Sanctuary Everywhere manifesto was adopted with some editorial amendments so please use the version from the minutes or as available as a separate document [here](#)

Minute 8: we heard about the Ride 4 the Common Good and a link to Kendal and Sedbergh's website is [here](#)

Minute 16 and 17 are about Friends in Wales and Scotland and of course, minute 18 refers to the reports from European yearly meetings. (A link to the General Meeting for Scotland website is [here](#)) and the Quakers in Wales website is [here](#)

Please tell your area meeting about the young people's event – perhaps you may report together this time?

Homework for you if you have not already done so, please:

- a) Complete feedback about the experience of holding MFS outside London ([here](#))
- b) Please email in any amendments you wish to be considered for your annual report (the draft is in the MfS papers for this meeting).

As ever, any comments you wish to make to Margaret, Juliet or myself, send to [sufferings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:sufferings@quaker.org.uk) – it does help in our planning.

At this time of year, I am reminded of the angels' message in the Christmas story and hope for peace and goodwill to be with all on earth.

And more particularly with you, your area meetings and committees.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Anne Ullathorne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anne Ullathorne  
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

**The following papers are included in this mailing:**

- Minutes of the Meeting held 2 December 2017
- Meeting for Sufferings: are we addressing our functions?

## **Meeting for Sufferings: are we addressing our functions?**

*Quaker faith & practice* section 7.02 sets out 19 functions of Meeting for Sufferings (a-s). Arrangements Group hopes it will be helpful to monitor how the agenda items enable us to address these functions. At this meeting, the business related to 11 of the functions. (We also hope that before and after every meeting all representatives address function i) to foster communication throughout the YM.)

### **a) To set the priorities for the centrally managed work**

MfS 2017/12/12 Revision of the Book of Discipline

### **b) To issue public statements in the name of BYM**

MfS 2017/12/15 Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto

### **c) To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees**

MfS 2017/12/14 BYM Trustees Report

### **d) To receive the BYM trustees' annual report & accounts for information**

MfS 2017/12/14 BYM Trustees Report

### **e) To make a report on its own activities to YM**

MfS 2017/12/20 MfS draft annual report

### **g) To deliberate on how best to support the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and to further the development of its visionary and prophetic role**

MfS 2017/12/12 Revision of the Book of Discipline

MfS 2017/12/15 Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto

### **i) To foster communication throughout the yearly meeting**

MfS 2017/12/08 For the Common Good

MfS 2017/12/16 Meeting of Friends in Wales

MfS 2017/12/17 General Meeting for Scotland

### **j) To receive minutes from area meetings**

MfS 2017/12/07 Concern about the poverty of the public services in the UK

MfS 2017/12/08 For the Common Good

MfS 2017/12/09 Investments profiting from the occupation of the West Bank

MfS 2017/12/10 Payment of taxes for terrorism and war

### **k) To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register**

MfS 2017/12/06 Court and Prison Register

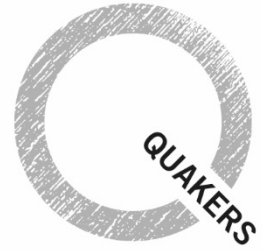
### **l) To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings**

MfS 2017/12/18 Reports from other European Yearly Meetings

### **r) To authorise action and minute as required under other sections of *Quaker faith & practice***

MfS 2017/12/11 Church Government Advisory Group

MfS 2017/12/13 Appointments



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

## **At a meeting of Meeting for Sufferings**

Held at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ  
Saturday 2 December 2017

### **MfS/17/12/01 Opening Worship**

During opening worship we have heard read section 2.12 of Quaker faith & practice.

We have also remembered a former member of Meeting for Sufferings who has recently died.

### **MfS/17/12/02 Welcome**

We are glad that members of the Young People's Participation Day have joined us for opening worship. 40 young people and staff and volunteers are with us today and we have been reminded in our worship that:

'Peace is not a distant goal that we seek, but the means by which we arrive at that goal'  
(Martin Luther King Jr., quoted in 'Living our Beliefs').

### **MfS/17/12/03 Apologies**

We receive apologies from Hardshaw & Mann, West Weald, and Swarthmoor Area Meetings, which have not been able to send a representative on this occasion.

### **MfS/17/12/04 Membership**

We have received the following nominations for and requests for release from Meeting for Sufferings until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2018:

#### **Nominated:**

Sarah Allen – York AM alternate  
Ruth Cook – West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM alternate  
James McCarthy – York AM representative  
Sam McNair – Pickering & Hull AM alternate  
Kate Mellor – Bournemouth Coastal AM alternate  
Helen Still – North Wales AM representative

#### **Release requests received:**

Sarah Allen – York AM representative  
David Malone - Pickering & Hull AM representative  
James McCarthy – York AM alternate  
Dori Miller – Wirral & Chester AM representative  
Jane Pearn – General Meeting for Scotland representative  
Frances Voelcker – North Wales AM representative

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

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

Fran Hicks – West Somerset AM  
Anna Sharman – North London AM

**Other visitors:**

Adwoa Bittle – Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group (Assistant Clerk); General Meeting for Scotland (Clerk)  
Tony Fitt – Committee on Clerks  
Jonathan King – Mid Essex AM  
Lesley Richards – Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group (Clerk)  
Lynne Richardson – Banbury & Evesham AM  
Michael Booth – BYM Staff: Church Government Advisor  
Anne van Staveren – BYM Staff: Media Relations Officer  
Chris Venables – BYM Staff: Engaging Young Adult Friends Project

**MfS/17/12/05 Agenda**

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

**MfS/17/12/06 Court and Prison Register**

We receive two communications relevant to the court and prison register.

Ian Bray of Brighouse West Yorkshire AM was arrested in London on 30<sup>th</sup> October, as part of an action undertaken by 'Rising Up' to highlight air pollution in London. Along with three others, he was remanded in custody at HMP Thameside for eight days and has also been fined.

The case involving Barbara Penny of York Area Meeting (our minute MfS/15/12/06 refers) came to Leeds Crown Court on 17 August 2017 and the driver of the vehicle was acquitted. Minute 4 of York Area Meeting held on 9 September 2017 informs us further of Barbara's witness during the trial.

We agree to add the names of these Friends to our court and prison register, and we hold them in the Light.

**MfS/17/12/07 Concern about the poverty of the public services in the UK**

We receive minute 07/2017/08 of Staffordshire AM held on 8 July 2017 regarding a concern about the poverty of public services in the UK.

We forward this minute to QPSW Central Committee, asking for their advice.

**MfS/17/12/08 For The Common Good**

We receive minute 17.09.07 of Kendal & Sedbergh AM held on 17 September 2017 regarding the group 'For the Common Good' and Chris Bullard, from that area meeting, has told us more about the plans for the Ride of Witness 4 Equality and the Common Good in the summer of 2018, which will be passing through twelve Area Meetings. We hope that Friends will support this initiative where they are able.

We forward this minute to QPSW Central Committee.

## **MfS/17/12/09 Investments profiting from the occupation of the West Bank**

We receive minute 80/2017 of Devon AM asking BYM to consider adding to their current list of exclusions for investment purposes any company that is profiting from the occupation of the West Bank. We also receive minute 70.17 of Sussex East AM held on 14 October 2017 in support of Devon AM's minute.

We have heard from Trustees that our current investments do not include investment in any company with direct interests in the occupied Palestinian territories and that the BYM investment policy is currently under review.

We forward these minutes to BYM Trustees, QPSW Central Committee and Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations.

## **MfS/17/12/10 Payment of taxes for terrorism and war**

We receive minute 68.17 of Sussex East AM held on 14 October 2017 regarding concern over the use of taxes in the UK to fund involvement in war.

We forward this minute to QPSW Central Committee, asking for advice.

## **MfS/17/12/11 Church Government Advisory Group**

We receive minutes CGAG 17/24 and CCAG 17/28 proposing amendments to the current Book of Christian Discipline of Britain Yearly Meeting (currently *Quaker faith & practice*).

Minute CGAG 17/24 proposes new text which takes account of the laying down of Six Weeks Meeting and the foundation of the London Quakers Property Trust (Qfp 5.09, 6.25, 7.01 and 7.04). Minute CGAG 17/28 proposes three changes to references to Data Protection (Qfp 8.21, 11.06 and 11.25):

- 8.21 Change the second to last paragraph to: The Recording Clerk is responsible for ensuring that the recording and processing of data held by the yearly meeting conforms with the law. (4.45)
- 11.06 and 11.25: change 'the Data Protection Act' to 'data protection legislation' in both cases.

We agree the proposed changes and forward them to Yearly Meeting.

## **MfS/17/12/12 Revision of the Book of Discipline**

Lesley Richards, Clerk to the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group, has spoken to a report from the Group recommending that the Yearly Meeting revises our Book of Discipline. The report lays out the reasons why the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group (BODRPG) is making this recommendation, and explores some of the recommendation's main implications. Several members of the Group are with us today and we have heard a summary of the work and the 'journey' that has been taken by the Group both individually and together. They have focussed on listening to Friends throughout the yearly meeting and have gathered feedback from many who followed the Reading *Qf&p* programme. They have been interested in 'how it has felt' and especially in the context of religious difference. General conclusions are that Friends find that the church government sections need revision, that we are listening more to each other in our expression of faith and that we feel more involved in the process of revision.

We feel that the time is right to start a revision of our book of discipline.

We also agree:

- 1) The revision should begin with, but not be limited to church government, namely the sections which focus on our procedures and corporate discipline.
- 2) The revision should divide material between that in the main body of the book, which lays out principles, and supplementary material, which gives details.
- 3) The revision should draw on the richness of theological thought in our yearly meeting, now and historically, seeing diversity as fundamental to our community, not as a flaw.
- 4) The Revision Committee be given the freedom to be creative, while remaining in close contact with the yearly meeting.

If the Yearly Meeting agrees the recommendation, Meeting for Sufferings will be ready to support the process. We have today considered the draft terms of reference prepared by the BODRPG that could support the Revision Committee, and we have shared some initial thoughts.

We rejoice that the work of the BODRPG has enriched Britain Yearly Meeting and enabled Friends to grow in their spiritual and theological understanding.

We thank the group for their work and for their report.

We forward this minute to Yearly Meeting and ask the BODRPG to work with YMAC in preparing materials.

### **MfS/17/12/13 Appointments**

Central Nominations Committee brings forwards the following names for service or release:

#### **Friends Trusts Ltd**

Request for release:

Richard Anderson                      Oxford & Swindon AM

#### **Central Nominations Committee**

Request for release:

Tina Leonard                              Oxford & Swindon AM

Request for release with effect from Yearly Meeting 2018:

Ann Titman                                 Hampshire & Islands AM

#### **Quaker Council for Christian and Interfaith Relations**

Note of correction to MfS/17/06/09 minute of MfS held 3 June 2017:

To serve from appointment to 30 April 2019 (first term):

Sue Beardon                                Sheffield & Balby AM

To serve from appointment to 30 April 2020 (first term):

Lynda Williams                             Southern Marches AM

#### **Yearly Meeting Nominating Group**

Request for release:

Marta Berbel Gallego                      Young Friends General Meeting

#### **Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations**

Renominated to serve for a second term from May 2018 to April 2021:

Mark Lilley                                 Lincolnshire AM

Stephanie Grant                          Luton & Leighton AM

Eoin Stephenson                          Ireland YM (nominated by Ireland Yearly Meeting)

Nominated to serve from May 2018 to April 2021 (first term):  
Catherine Brewer Northumbria AM

### **Quaker Housing Trust**

Renominated to serve for a second term from 21 April 2018 to Annual Retirement Meeting 2021:  
Malcolm Bowker York AM  
Barbara Potter West Scotland AM

### **Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee**

Nominated to serve from 3 December 2017 to YMG 2020 (first term):  
Anne Bennett Lincolnshire AM

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

### **MfS/17/12/14 BYM Trustees report**

We receive BYM Trustees' minutes of their meetings on 22-23 September and 17 November 2017 and note particularly BYMT 2017-11-11 (Transparency of Lobbying Act) and BYMT 2017-11-12 (Sustainability Strategy).

Ingrid Greenhow, clerk of BYM Trustees, has told us more about the business at the Trustees' meetings in September and November, and has updated MfS on the 2018 operational plan.

The plan is presented to us within the framework of Our Faith in the Future, and we are pleased to see the Trustees are drawing on the discernment of Meeting for Sufferings.

Peter Ullathorne (BYM Treasurer) has told us about the Operational Group Budget for 2018. In summary, we have done better in 2017 than forecast. In 2018 activities will continue as before, and we expect a deficit lower than in 2017.

We thank the Trustees for their reports.

### **MfS/17/12/15 Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto**

Further to minute MfS 2017/10/17, we receive minute QPSWCC 2017/19, with a redrafted Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto.

The introduction to the revised manifesto places it firmly within the Quaker tradition of seeking that of God in everyone, speaking up for the oppressed and speaking out against 'all acts of Government which set people against one another and turn away those in need'. The manifesto is framed in the context of Quakers' longstanding work of welcoming newcomers to our shores.

With some amendments, we approve the manifesto as follows:

As Quakers, we have long worked for peace and equality, because of our belief that there is that of God in everyone, everywhere, whoever they are.

Through Quakers' longstanding work welcoming newcomers to our shores, we have seen up close that the government's creation of a 'hostile environment' is increasingly embedding policies of discrimination into the practices of the British state. Quakers in Britain are committed to working with others to change this, creating a culture of compassion and welcoming hospitality that answers that of God in every person.

Our Meeting for Sufferings was born of a response to the government's systematic discrimination against Quakers in the past. Today we turn that experience into solidarity,



and stand against all oppression and suffering. We declare our determination to work for sanctuary everywhere, including here in Britain, by agreeing this Manifesto for change.

- Human rights standards for all should be the foundation on which any national policy or international agreement on migration is founded, and these include the right to work, to learn, to housing, to medical care and to security in the event of adverse circumstances beyond personal control.
- We will campaign for change to the asylum process so that it is built on a culture of compassion and practical response, rather than starting from an assumption of disbelief.
- Within the UK system of immigration detention is institutional violence and discrimination. We oppose indefinite detention, which we believe neither right nor necessary, and will work towards the closure of all detention centres. Other more humane policies are more effective and should be introduced.
- Our belief in every human being's equality leads us to oppose unjust deportations and removals, whether to the EU or to the wider world.
- The humanitarian risks of trafficking and unsafe passage lead us to work for new, peaceful, safer routes of migration including the introduction of humanitarian visas and improved rules for family reunion.
- To ourselves and wider society, we reaffirm our determination to acknowledge and dismantle discrimination in all of its forms, wherever it is to be found.

We thank QPSW staff and its Forced Migration Advisory Group for their work.

## **MfS/17/12/16 Meeting of Friends in Wales**

Gethin Evans introduced the report from Meeting of Friends in Wales.

The report began:

Wrth i mi gyflwyno'r adroddiad yma sylweddolwn mai dyma'r gyntaf o'i math ac felly yn ddatblygiad pwysig ym mywyd Cyfarfod Blynyddol Prydain ac efallai fod hyn hefyd yn arwydd o wendid sef na fu i'r Cyfarfod Blynyddol roi digon o sylw i Gymru yn y gorffennol.

(Introducing here the first report from MFW to Meeting for Sufferings seems an important development in the life of BYM, a pointer, perhaps, to Yearly Meeting having given insufficient attention to Wales in the past.)

2017 marks the first 25 years of Meeting of Friends in Wales (MFW), and there has been considerable change over this period, particularly as a result of devolution. MFW fosters links with relevant groups including CYTŪN (Churches Together in Wales) – Friends are represented on its Board of Trustees and Board of Finance - and an MFW representative is appointed to the group of denominational church and society policy officers that monitors the Assembly's work. The membership of MFW includes all Quakers who live or worship in Wales, thus crossing Wales' borders. MFW is seeking provision for a tabular statement for Wales itself, to make the situation clearer.

With increased funding the Meeting has been able to extend the administrator's working hours and also to cover the additional costs of simultaneous translation in meetings. Creating parity for English and Welsh speakers within meetings and for the purposes of inreach and outreach is an important element in MFW's work.

The report draws our attention to the Spiritual Hospitality report published in 2003.

In Wales Friends' witness includes gatherings for spiritual nurture, publications in Welsh and English for wide use, and outreach via events such as the National Eisteddfod, the Royal Welsh Show and, more recently, the Hay Literature Festival.

We welcome this report and all the work it represents, and thank Gethin for introducing it.

### **MfS/17/12/17 General Meeting for Scotland**

Adwoa Bittle, clerk of General Meeting for Scotland, spoke to us about General Meeting for Scotland.

There are approximately 1500 Quaker worshippers in Scotland, about half of whom are in membership. With such a wide geographic spread, from Shetland to the Borders, community building across all ages is very important.

General Meeting for Scotland meets four times a year, and there are activities for young people such as Shindig. It is a challenge to participate in some Yearly Meeting events when summer school holidays only overlap by a maximum of 10-14 days.

We have heard about two different strands of parliamentary engagement and also about ecumenical links.

We thank Adwoa for her lively report.

### **MfS/17/12/18 Reports from other European Yearly Meetings**

We receive reports from Friends who represented us at the following Yearly Meetings during 2017: Belgium and Luxembourg; France; German; Ireland; Netherlands; Nordic; Sweden; and Switzerland.

We thank the Friends who represented us. It is clear that this practice is valued both by the yearly meetings and by our representatives.

### **MfS/17/12/19 Quaker Recognised Bodies**

Further to minute MfS/15/12/01, we receive paper MfS 2017/12/12 recommending seven groups for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies.

We agree to register the following groups for five years, with registration to be reviewed by December 2022:

#### **External**

The Association of Talking Friends  
Give Peace A Chance Trust  
Glebe House (Friends Therapeutic Community Trust)  
Quaker Peace Studies Trust  
Quaker Service Memorial Trust

#### **Free-standing**

Experiment with Light Network  
QARN (Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network)

## **MfS/17/12/20 Meeting for Sufferings draft Annual Report**

We have considered the draft Annual Report of our work in 2017 and made suggestions. We ask the clerks to update the report following this meeting, before forwarding it to Yearly Meeting.

## **MfS/17/12/21 Young People's Participation**

Members of the Young People's Participation day held alongside Meeting for Sufferings have joined us for closing worship. We have shared news about each other's agenda. We are pleased to have this opportunity for inter-generational dialogue and worship together. We thank them for their participation. We receive the report on their day's activities as follows:

At the Young Quaker Participation Day 2017 alongside Meeting for Sufferings, we had the opportunity to learn about the Quaker decision making process. In the morning some chose to do a variety of activities relating to the book 'Living our Beliefs' while others chose to attend the Meeting for Sufferings session on the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group report. Participants felt this opportunity allowed us to have an involvement in Quaker decisions. Many felt this was empowering, although some thought it was difficult to find the confidence necessary to participate in a large meeting. However, one participant said it was great that 'in a room with a hundred people, everyone had a voice'; and even those who would not fully identify themselves as a Quaker found it 'informative, welcoming, and surprisingly fun'. It was also a reminder that young Quakers are not a separate group but part of a wider body.

At lunch, we appreciated the opportunity to meet our Area Meeting representatives for Meeting for Sufferings and discuss Quakerism with them. It was interesting to speak to these slightly older Quakers who we may never have met before. We enjoyed being able to hear about their experiences and get a different perspective on Quakerism. Participants also enjoyed the opportunity throughout the event to meet both new people and old friends.

The afternoon brought more choices with the chance to re-join Meeting for Sufferings during their session on the 'Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto' while the rest of us continued enjoying activities on 'Living our Beliefs'. The overall opinion about the event was certainly positive. We would like to continue being involved in the discernment regarding the revision of the Book of Discipline, and hope that this can be arranged.

## **MfS/17/12/22 Close**

We close, intending to meet again on 3 February 2018.

Anne Ullathorne  
Clerk