



To Clerks of all Area Meetings, Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales, General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain and Quakers in Scotland

Dear Clerks,

Yearly Meeting is changing

In 2026 there will be three sessions of Yearly Meeting: 1-4 May, 18 July and 21 November. All Friends are welcome and you can find the details for how to register at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/bookings.

In parallel with this change to how Yearly Meeting is held, we will lay down Meeting for Sufferings.

There are many opportunities for Friends and meetings to engage with Yearly Meeting and I have outlined some of them below. Please also note the specific request for your meeting to appoint a Yearly Meeting representative.

The final section of this letter explains how you can ask questions and find out more about Yearly Meeting.

Encouraging Friends to attend Yearly Meeting

We want the changes to the holding of Yearly Meeting sessions to support greater participation in and engagement with national level Quaker decision making. We hope that the full spectrum of Quaker experience can be present and heard.

To make that a reality we need Friends to come to Yearly Meeting sessions and to feel connected to the community and business of the yearly meeting. The first thing that we need from meetings is for them to encourage Friends to attend Yearly Meeting – either online or by coming to the venue. Friends can attend as many sessions each year as they wish – they are welcome at all of them, but if they cannot attend one then they can still attend the others.

Yearly Meeting Representatives

As well as encouraging all Friend to engage with Yearly Meeting, we are asking your meeting to appoint a Yearly Meeting representative.

Full information is available in a downloadable document on the website: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/ym-call-for-reps>. Please share that document with your nominations committee. The key points are summarised in this letter.

Yearly Meeting representatives will have an important role in:

- Creating continuity of attendance – making sure there is a group of Friends committed to attending most or all sessions.
- Strengthening connections between local Friends and the yearly meeting as a whole – making sure that there is someone in the local Quaker community who knows what is happening at Yearly Meeting sessions, and who can encourage Friends to attend sessions and to use the preparation materials.
- Together reflecting the diversity of Quaker experience – ensuring Friends are present from across the yearly meeting and hopefully with a range of experience to share.

Your meeting should appoint a representative as soon as you can and in time for them to attend the Yearly Meeting sessions from July onwards. You should make the appointment in accordance with your usual nominations practice and inform us of the name(s) and contact details on rco@quaker.org.uk.

Appointed representatives whose details are notified to us will have their expenses paid from BYM funds. Your meeting can of course use its own funds to pay expenses for any additional Friends to attend.

The role of Yearly Meeting representative is new and we haven't tried to produce a definitive role description – different meetings will need to think about different considerations. You can appoint someone of any age, with any amount of Quaker experience – what is important is that they are willing to engage, learn and participate. Think widely about the diverse experiences you have within your meeting and consider appointing someone whose perspective might not otherwise be heard at Yearly Meeting. Your current Meeting for Sufferings representative might be the right Friend to take on this service, but please ask your nominations committee to exercise its discernment rather than assuming that the same Friend should continue in a new role.

In terms of practicalities, please appoint a representative with the expectation that they will come to the majority of the Yearly Meeting sessions scheduled during their term (find the dates through to the end of 2028 here: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/our-structures/continuing-yearly-meeting>). You can appoint an attender as a Yearly Meeting representative if you wish although Yearly Meeting maintains an ability to close any part of the meeting to non-members if it feels the need to do so.

Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales should appoint one representative in addition to those appointed by area meetings located wholly or partly in Wales.

Young Friends General Meeting should appoint at least one and up to three.

Area meetings and Quakers in Scotland should appoint according to the following formula:

- If there are 1-6 local meetings in your meeting area, 1 representative
- If there are 7-12 local meetings in your meeting area, 2 representatives

- If there are 13-18 local meetings in your meeting area, 3 representatives
- And so on ...

There is no need to appoint an alternate. If, unusually, you need to send someone in place of the representative then please notify us in good time so that the expense claim can be processed.

Sending minutes to Yearly Meeting

Agenda Planning Committee (APC) is the new committee which will work with Yearly Meeting clerks to set the Yearly Meeting agendas.

Part of the role of APC will be to receive and consider minutes sent in by meetings like yours.

At present, minutes that are sent to Meeting for Sufferings are considered by its Arrangements Group and not all of them are included in a Sufferings agenda. This will also be true for minutes received by APC. For example: some minutes will need further testing (perhaps by the meeting that sent them or by a committee); some minutes will be most suitable for sharing with other meetings to see if there is parallel discernment happening that could help to take the matter forward; some minutes will not need any further discernment at all but could be shared for information.

Meetings are invited to consider the following before submitting a minute to APC:

1. Do you have as full a picture of the situation as possible?
2. What background information will be needed to help Friends understand the issue?
3. Do you know who else is working on this, whether they are Quakers or not? What can you learn from their experience? Have you discussed the matter with Quakers in Britain staff?
4. What makes this a Quaker concern? You may feel it is inherently Quaker, but can you explain how?
5. Is there any urgency or time constraint? - you may know (for example) that a scheduled meeting will soon be discussing the same issue, or about forthcoming legislation. This may be a current issue in the public domain that demands immediate attention: if so, it's worth considering what Friends' particular engagement with the issue should be.
6. What are the implications of your minute? Do you understand what will be involved in taking this forward?

If your meeting has agreed a minute and has agreed that it should be sent to APC, please ensure that you:

1. Send in the full text of the relevant minute, and any relevant previous minutes or helpful background documents

2. Include a clear ask of APC – is this minute being shared for further discernment by the Yearly Meeting; simply to share news of, or invite support for existing work; to encourage Quakers to take action locally, or for another reason?
3. Include any details of work relating to the minute which has already been done by the sending group
4. Explain who to contact from the sending meeting or group and include their contact details to enable follow up communication

From now on minutes should be sent to: YMagenda@quaker.org.uk. Minutes can no longer be sent to Meeting for Sufferings.

Quakers in Britain staff will log receipt of your minute and will contact you to let you know when you can expect a substantive response. At that stage they might send follow-up questions by email or arrange a call to make sure they are clear about what your meeting thinks should happen with the minute, and to request any necessary additional information.

The minute will then be shared with APC for its discernment. If APC needs more information or discerns that the matter is not ready for discernment by the Yearly Meeting at this point then someone will contact you to discuss the next steps. If APC discerns that the minute should be added to a future Yearly Meeting agenda then someone will contact you to discuss whether and how your meeting might help with introducing it.

This guidance will be available on the Quakers in Britain website soon.

Find out more

There is a lot of information packed into this letter and if anything is unclear you can send any questions to rco@quaker.org.uk.

Our website will be changing with more information being shared about how to engage with Yearly Meeting – keep an eye out for new pages being added to <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation>.

The best way to keep up to date with Yearly Meeting developments is to subscribe to our newsletter Hope So! You can read about the newsletter and find a subscription link at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/newsletters/hope-so>.

I very much look forward to seeing you at a future session of Yearly Meeting and hope you will be in touch with any queries you may have.

In Friendship,

Paul Parker

Recording Clerk