

Agenda & notes 1

Compiled for Yearly Meeting,
Friends House, London and online
1-4 May 2026

Yearly Meeting of Quakers in Britain



Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Introduction and information | 3 |
| 1.1 Introduction | 3 |
| 1.2 Young adults at Yearly Meeting | 5 |
| 1.3 Youth, Children & Families programmes | 5 |
| 1.4 Contact details | 6 |
| 2. How does Yearly Meeting work? | 7 |
| 2.1 Safeguarding the health and well-being of our community | 7 |
| 2.2 Online participation in Yearly Meeting sessions | 7 |
| 2.3 Participation in Yearly Meeting sessions at Friends House | 8 |
| 2.4 Discipline of Yearly Meeting sessions | 8 |
| 2.5 How Yearly Meeting will agree minutes | 10 |
| 2.6 Elders and Pastoral Support at Yearly Meeting | 10 |
| 2.7 Photography and video | 12 |
| 2.8 Orientation | 12 |
| 2.9 Spiritual preparation and theme-related sessions | 13 |
| 3. Explanation of business to be taken at Yearly Meeting | 15 |
| 3.1 Nominations and appointments | 15 |
| 3.2 Receipt of annual reports | 17 |
| 4. Agenda and notes | 19 |
| 4.1 Preparation ahead of Yearly Meeting | 19 |
| 4.2 Activities | 19 |
| 4.3 Events | 21 |
| 4.4 Agenda | 23 |
| Friday 1 May | 23 |
| Saturday 2 May | 25 |
| Sunday 3 May | 29 |
| Monday 4 May | 30 |
| 5 Appendices | 32 |
| A: Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC) Annual Report | 32 |
| B: Quaker Housing Trust annual report | 34 |
| C: Meeting for Sufferings report | 37 |
| D: Agenda Planning Committee report | 44 |
| E: Central Nominations Committee annual report | 47 |

1. Introduction and information

1.1 Introduction

Yearly Meeting is when Quakers in Britain come together to worship, make decisions, and spend time as a community.

Yearly Meeting is also when we can learn, practise, improve, and take back to our local meetings ways of conducting business that are rooted in Quaker discipline and our own experience, yet also meet contemporary challenges.

Yearly Meeting is a blended event: this allows people to attend the same meeting either online or at Friends House.

We all need to approach this style of event with care, patience, and compassion.

The purposes and functions of Yearly Meeting are described in *Quaker faith & practice* 6.02–6.11, which also gives the background to the business agenda.

May Yearly Meeting

The primary business sessions of Yearly Meeting May 2026 will be held from Friday 1 to Monday 4.

A range of online preparation events will be held before Yearly Meeting, from Monday 13 to Friday 17 April. From 20 to 26 March Quaker Recognised Bodies and Yearly Meeting central committees and programmes will offer a wide range of online meetings.

Details of Yearly Meeting in session and preparation sessions on the main topics of Yearly Meeting are included in this document.

To access the full schedule of events (including preparation events), you first need to register to attend Yearly Meeting. You can do this online at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Yearly Meeting planner (Sched)

Once your registration has been confirmed, you will be sent a link to the online Yearly Meeting planner.

The screenshot displays the 'Yearly Meeting 2026' planner interface. At the top, there's a purple banner with the title 'Yearly Meeting 2026'. Below it, a navigation bar includes 'Schedule', 'Groups', 'Help, Pastoral Care, Contacts', and 'Attendees'. The main content area shows a calendar view for Thursday and Friday, 11-13 January 2026. Sessions are listed with titles and 'Book now' buttons. A sidebar on the right offers filters for 'Filter By Date', 'Filter By Venue', 'Filter By Type', and 'Filter By Age'. The footer contains the website 'www.quaker.org.uk', a Quaker logo, and contact information.

Please refer to the Yearly Meeting planner for details of all sessions, including the Swarthmore and Salter Lectures, orientation, worship, special interest meetings, and Yearly Meeting preparation sessions, at <https://ym2026.sched.com>.

You will not be able to use this until your registration has been confirmed.

1.2 Young adults at Yearly Meeting

This is a way for 18- to 35-year-olds to attend Yearly Meeting and be in a smaller community too. It gives young adults a chance to prepare for, and reflect on, their own experience of Yearly Meeting together. There will be a hub in Friends House for young adults who wish to gather informally and for scheduled activities.

1.3 Youth, Children & Families programmes

The Children's and Young People's programmes are central to Yearly Meeting. Children and young people attending these programmes will also be using Quaker practice and discipline, in ways appropriate for their ages.

They may share their discernment with the whole Yearly Meeting through minutes during different sessions. They will build an exciting, challenging and creative community. All under-18s attending Yearly Meeting need to be registered by their parent or guardian.

Junior Yearly Meeting (ages 15 to 18) is a residential event, this year held shortly before Yearly Meeting, on 3-7 April. It will be based at the Pioneer Centre near Kidderminster. It is arranged by a group of young people, with the support of adult volunteers and staff. Junior Yearly Meeting will be exploring the theme "In a divided world, are we living our values to foster acceptance and belonging?" Bookings for JYM closed on 26 January 2026.

Young People @ Yearly Meeting (ages 11 to 15) is a residential event held at the same time as Yearly Meeting. It will be based in Northamptonshire. It is arranged by a group of young people, with the support of adult volunteers and staff. This group is exploring the theme "Connecting across divisions: how can we overcome our prejudices and understand people who we disagree with in our communities?" Bookings for YP@YM close on 1 March.

The Children's Programme (ages 0 to 11) will be exploring the topic of "Building bridges". The programme runs at Friends House in the mornings and

afternoons from Saturday to Monday. There is also a programme for 5- to 11-year-olds running alongside the Swarthmore Lecture. Bookings close on Tuesday 7 April.

Accompaniment for 15- to 17-year-olds will offer a supportive environment to enable older teens to take part in Yearly Meeting at the pace and depth that suits them. This is not residential, and participants will be the responsibility of parents/carers outside of attended sessions. Bookings close on Tuesday 7 April.

A **family space** will be available between sessions of the Children's Programme in the All-age Community Hub. Children are the responsibility of their own adults at this time.

1.4 Contact details

Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee

Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ

Please send comments on business or the agenda to Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee at arrangements@quaker.org.uk.

General enquiries

Quaker Church Affairs Telephone: 020 7663 1040

Email: ym@quaker.org.uk

Website: www.quaker.org.uk/ym

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/quakerspace

Bluesky: <https://bsky.app/profile/quaker.org.uk> #BYM2026

2. How does Yearly Meeting work?

2.1 Safeguarding the health and well-being of our community

The following section sets out the action we will take to safeguard the well-being of the most vulnerable members of our community. There are various respiratory and flu-like illnesses in circulation. Please do not attend Yearly Meeting if you feel unwell, have tested positive for Covid-19 or have had close contact with someone who has a contagious illness. You may consider wearing a face-covering when indoors if you feel more comfortable doing so. Please always check with individuals to see whether they are comfortable hugging or shaking hands before making physical contact. Please follow good hygiene procedures such as regular handwashing for 20 seconds and coughing/sneezing into your elbow rather than your hand.

2.2 Online participation in Yearly Meeting sessions

Friends joining a blended session online will use Zoom. Yearly Meeting sessions will open ten minutes before the start time so that the meeting can gather in silence beforehand.

If you need to move away from your computer, please turn off your camera.

- Use 'rename' so that your screen name includes both your first/ personal name and surname/ family name. – If you are concerned about displaying your full name on screen, please email ym@quaker.org.uk in advance of Yearly Meeting.
- Add the name of your area meeting, if known, or your local meeting or other worshipping community.
- Visitors from other yearly meetings should add the name of their yearly meeting.

2.3 Participation in Yearly Meeting sessions at Friends House

Entering late or leaving early can disturb other Friends. If you need to do so, please wait for a break or, if necessary, leave at the end of an item of business. Please avoid leaving or entering when the clerk is standing, or a Friend is giving spoken ministry.

The clerk will aim to conclude sessions by published closing times. If it is necessary to extend sessions, the clerk will say when those who need to meet participants from the Children's Programme, or who have other pressing matters, can leave.

One door only will be used for latecomers, so please follow the directions of doorkeepers and wait quietly until they say that you can go in.

Please turn mobile phones to silent. Even a phone set to vibrate can be distracting to Friends sitting near you. The exception to this rule will be parents or guardians with children in the Children & Young People's programmes, who need to be contactable in case of emergency.

2.4 Discipline of Yearly Meeting sessions

Please read the guidance on the Quaker business method found in chapter 3 of *Quaker faith & practice*.

“In our meetings for worship we seek through the stillness to know God's will for ourselves and for the gathered group. Our meetings for church affairs, in which we conduct our business, are also meetings for worship based on silence, and they carry the same expectation that God's guidance can be discerned if we are truly listening together and to each other and are not blinkered by preconceived opinions.”

Quaker faith & practice 3.02

Spoken ministry and discipline

If you feel a prompting to speak, please test this first as you would in any meeting for worship. The following questions may be helpful. Is my message led by the spirit of peace, truth and love? Is it a message for me alone or for others? Does it need to be said now? Will it help the meeting towards faithful and well-discerned unity?

When speaking in Yearly Meeting, “try to sum up what you have to say in as few words as possible. Speak simply and audibly, but do not speak for effect.” (*Quaker faith & practice* 3.10)

Section “[1.1 Introduction](#)” sets out the role of elders in relation to ministry and discipline at Yearly Meeting.

In Friends House, if you feel led to give spoken ministry, stand or raise your hand. Online, if you feel led to give spoken ministry, raise your electronic hand. Once called upon by the clerk, wait for a microphone to be brought to you when in person, or, online, wait to be invited to unmute.

If more than one Friend feels moved to speak, the clerks will discern who to call. If another Friend is called, please sit down or lower your hand. Do not rise/raise your hand when someone else is giving spoken ministry.

If you are called, please share your name and your meeting before you begin your ministry (e.g. “X Area Meeting” or “attending X Meeting”).

Each contribution should be heard in silence. Audible indications of approval or disapproval of spoken ministry are not part of the discipline of our Yearly Meeting.

After each contribution, there will be a pause to allow reflection. Please do not stand or raise your hand at this time. When the clerk feels the time is right for a further contribution, they will say so. If you have tested your ministry and feel that the meeting needs to hear it to reach unity, you should stand or raise your hand at this point.

2.5 How Yearly Meeting will agree minutes

The clerk listens for the sense of the meeting. When they discern that the time is right, they will say they are ready to draft a minute. Please do not stand or raise your hand at this time. While the minute is being drafted, please support the clerks with prayerful silence.

When the clerk reads a minute and asks if it is acceptable, please think about whether the minute is good enough. You may choose to answer “I hope so” or to remain silent. There is no need to indicate active agreement. If, after reflection, you are clear that an amendment is necessary, stand or raise your hand and wait to be called. Do not add fresh information at this point.

Minutes agreed in a Yearly Meeting session will not be altered later other than minor amendments for spelling, grammar or slight inaccuracies. If, when the minutes are checked, substantive changes seem to be required, they will be proposed at the next session before further business.

2.6 Elders and Pastoral Support at Yearly Meeting

Elders at Yearly Meeting

The role of the Elders team at Yearly Meeting is to lovingly support all present to deepen awareness of the Spirit at work amongst us. They may sometimes speak with words of guidance to help the meeting in its task. They are present online and in Friends House at each session and at morning and evening worship. They work alongside the Pastoral Support team, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee and Arrangements Committee.

Elders are nominated for three years by Central Nominations Committee who seek a group to represent the diversity of Britain Yearly Meeting.

Elders meet regularly in worship in the months beforehand to hold in the Light all preparation for Yearly Meeting. They provide spiritual support for the clerks during this time and throughout Yearly Meeting. They wear purple sashes so they are easily identified. Those online will have “YM Elders” on their screen. If you wish to consult Elders about the conduct of the Yearly

Meeting please engage with them straight after a session. They will do their best to support you.

You can also contact Elders before and during the event through the Yearly Meeting planner or in writing at Friends House via a box at the main entrance.

Welcome and pastoral support

Our Pastoral Support Friends are on hand to welcome and support Friends, old and new. Please feel free to reach out to the team who will be happy to help with any questions you might have.

You can contact Pastoral Support Friends by email or via the Yearly Meeting planner. Please leave your email and phone number. They will then arrange to contact you. Email pastoralcare@quaker.org.uk.

During Yearly Meeting, you can also phone a Pastoral Support Friend by calling 07845 696 228. Pastoral Support Friends will be available in Friends House at the following times:

- Friday, 15:00–21:00
- Saturday, 09:30–17:30
- Sunday, 09:30–17:30
- Monday, 09:30–16:00

The Welcome & Pastoral Support desk will be in the café. Pastoral Support Friends will also be in the Large Meeting House (during and immediately after Yearly Meeting sessions) and around Friends House. They will be wearing green sashes.

Supporting each other is an important part of our community's witness. We hope that Quaker meetings and communities will support their own participants as far as possible.

Yearly Meeting Pastoral Support Friends provide a listening ear and seek to signpost to support where relevant. They cannot provide long-term befriending or support.

Help desk

For general help about Yearly Meeting, or if you have been unsuccessful making contact with Elders or Pastoral Support using the details above, please contact the help desk via email at ym@quaker.org.uk or by calling 020 7663 1040.

2.7 Photography and video

Quakers in Britain staff will be taking photos and videos of activities and interactions for use in Quaker communications. These are used to illustrate what happens at Yearly Meeting online or in printed materials to attract new enquirers and encourage people to take part in our activities or contribute to our funds.

Filming takes place in Yearly Meeting sessions. Footage is streamed to registered participants via Zoom and may also be used for Quaker communications purposes to illustrate Yearly Meeting in session. Seating charts will be provided to show which areas of the Large Meeting House will not be filmed.

If you do not want to appear in Quaker communications after Yearly Meeting you can request a coloured lanyard, so you can be identified and kept out of published imagery.

2.8 Orientation

Woodbrooke will host online orientation sessions leading up to Yearly Meeting as follows:

All about Yearly Meeting – doing discernment and creating community

This session is for everyone, whether you have been to Yearly Meeting before or are completely new to it – and whether you will be attending online or at Friends House.

The session will explore how joining in community and discernment with hundreds of Quakers can be exciting, but also different from local and area

meeting. We will look at the basis of spirit-led discernment; how this works at our blended Yearly Meeting in particular, and how to come with hearts and minds prepared but not made up. We will also explore what else is happening at Yearly Meeting and how to get the most from the gathering. There will be a chance to ask any questions that you might have – there is no such thing as a silly question!

- Monday 13 April, 19:30–20:45 (online)
- Friday 1 May, 17:00–18:15 (online and in Friends House)

Orientation material from these sessions will also be recorded and available on the Yearly Meeting website at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/programme.

2.9 Spiritual preparation and theme-related sessions

In the document *Preparing for Yearly Meeting*, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee introduced the main topics being considered this year. *Preparing for Yearly Meeting* also suggested some spiritual preparation and resources (see www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents).

To help Friends prepare for discernment at Yearly Meeting, there will be some online preparation sessions from Tuesday 14 April to Thursday 16 April. For details and to book, please refer to the online Yearly Meeting planner.

What unites us as a Spirit-led community? How do we foster acceptance and belonging?

- Tuesday 14 April, 19:30–20:45 (online)

A seasoned and a newer Friend will talk about being part of a spirit-led community and what it means to them. They will explore the impact this has on their lives. There will be an opportunity for questions, and for participants to share their own experiences in breakout groups.

Updates on our Quaker constitution

- Wednesday 15 April, 19:30–20:30 (online)

As we prepare to lay down Meeting for Sufferings and hold Yearly Meeting

sessions more often we need to update some of our most important constitutional documents: *Quaker faith & practice* and the Britain Yearly Meeting Governing Document. If you want to learn more about the proposed changes and about how our Quaker constitution works then come along to this session. Draft text will be sent out with Agenda & Notes so come with questions and comments to share.

How do we let the spirit guide us to peaceful resolution of the conflicts within our Quaker meetings and our communities?

Thursday 16 April, 19:30–20:45 (online)

We will hear stories from Friends who have been part of resolving conflicts within their Quaker meetings and communities. We will explore where the Spirit can lead in these all-too-familiar situations and how we can learn from others' experiences. We hope that this will help Friends to come to Yearly Meeting viewing conflict as something that can lead to new and positive growth, if we listen with love and follow where the Spirit leads.

3. Explanation of business to be taken at Yearly Meeting

3.1 Nominations and appointments

Yearly Meeting nominations and appointments

Yearly Meeting itself will nominate and appoint Friends to serve on Yearly Meeting Nominating Group and the Committee to Examine Minutes.

Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (YMNG)

(see *Quaker faith & practice* 6.22)

To find out more or to nominate somebody to the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group, please complete the short form, which can be found on the Get Involved section of www.quaker.org.uk/ym, or visit the Nominations section of the Yearly Meeting planner.

You will need permission from the Friend(s) you are nominating and up-to-date contact information for them.

An online meeting of all interested Friends will be held on Saturday 2 May, 18:00–19:00 to explain the role, answer questions, and see if it is possible to nominate the final group. The nominations will then be brought to Yearly Meeting in session.

You can only nominate Friends who will be attending Yearly Meeting. A list of nominated Friends will be shared with the Yearly Meeting on the Yearly Meeting planner, and any objections should be made to Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee (at nominations@quaker.org.uk) by noon on Sunday 3 May.

Committee to Examine Minutes

Yearly Meeting will nominate and appoint Friends to serve on the Committee to Examine Minutes (*Quaker faith & practice* 6.24). This operates during Yearly Meeting and is responsible for checking the minutes at the close of each session and correcting any slight inaccuracies.

Friends can be nominated to this committee in advance of Yearly Meeting. Friends must be attending Yearly Meeting to serve, have access to a computer, and be comfortable with working with an online document. Further information can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/get-involved.

The deadline for nominations is noon on Thursday 30 April.

If we receive nominations for more than ten Friends, Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee will determine the names to be brought before Yearly Meeting on Friday 1 May.

Nominations from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

BYM Trustees nominate the Clerk of BYM Trustees and the Yearly Meeting Treasurer.

Nominations from nominating committees

For the remaining vacancies, two different nominating committees bring the names of Friends to Yearly Meeting: Central Nominations Committee and the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group.

The Friends named by these committees have been identified after a careful and prayerful process of discernment. Their names will be published in the Schedule of nominations, which will be available on the Yearly Meeting website, www.quaker.org.uk/ym, before Yearly Meeting.

If you see a problem with the service of any of the Friends nominated, you should contact:

Erin Letbe Holder, Volunteers and Committees Coordinator, either by email at nominations@quaker.org.uk or telephone on 020 7663 1165.

This must happen as soon as possible and in good time before May Yearly Meeting.

3.2 Receipt of annual reports

Yearly Meeting is the final constitutional authority of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain. Consequently, Yearly Meeting receives the annual reports of the committees appointed to carry out its business between Yearly Meetings. These reports are from the following groups:

- **Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee** is responsible for planning the agenda and use of premises for each Yearly Meeting. At the beginning of each Yearly Meeting, Agenda Committee reports on the planning of that Yearly Meeting and sets the agenda in context. See *Quaker faith & practice* 6.18.
- **Meeting for Sufferings** has been the body entrusted with the general care of matters affecting BYM in the intervals between Yearly Meetings and the making of decisions and issuing of statements in the name of BYM. See *Quaker faith & practice* 7:02–7:06.
- **BYM Trustees** are responsible to Yearly Meeting for the right stewardship of the centrally managed work and the assets and property of the yearly meeting. See *Quaker faith & practice* 8.17–8.20. Trustees are accountable to both Yearly Meeting and the charity regulators.
- **Central Nominations Committee** is responsible for bringing the names of Friends for service to both Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings. Consequently, they have an overview of the number of Friends who have offered their service and are involved in encouraging Friends to consider service. See *Quaker faith & practice* 6.21. See agenda items 16-18 below.
- **Friends Trusts Ltd** is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. It is the denominational trust corporation for Quakers in Britain and, in this capacity, holds property and investments as custodian trustee or nominee for meetings and other bodies within BYM. It receives legacies that are to benefit some aspect of the Society or its work and manages a number of Quaker trusts. See *Quaker faith & practice* 14.45.

Friends Trusts Ltd's audit will not take place until after Yearly Meeting, so no report is included in these documents. The Annual Report will be available on the website, together with the company's annual report and financial statements when they have been approved by the relevant governance bodies.

We expect BYM's annual report and accounts to be brought to Yearly Meeting in November 2026. See www.quaker.org.uk/annualreport.

- **Quaker Housing Trust** is the yearly meeting's own national housing charity. It makes grants and loans to social housing projects. Independent of BYM funds, its income comes directly from Friends and meetings. See *Quaker faith & practice* 8.15.

Yearly Meeting Epistle

The Yearly Meeting Epistle is the letter sent from this Yearly Meeting to Friends everywhere: to other yearly meetings worldwide and to local meetings in Britain. It is sent to all local meetings in Britain, immediately after Yearly Meeting so that it can be read out at meeting for worship at the first available opportunity. *Quaker faith & practice* 6.23 outlines the process for creating the epistle. The details for our blended Yearly Meeting are set out below.

Any Friend may give written advice on the content of the Epistle by contacting the Epistle Drafting Committee before 17:30 on Sunday 3 May (either by placing it in the box on the information desk in Friends House or via the Epistle Drafting Committee box in the Yearly Meeting planner online).

The Epistle Drafting Committee will then produce a draft Epistle, which will be made available to Friends on the morning of Monday 4 May (on the information desk in Friends House and on the Yearly Meeting planner online).

Comments on the content, text, style, grammar, language, etc., of the draft Epistle should be sent to the Epistle Drafting Committee preferably by 11.45 and no later than 12:35 on Monday 4 May.

A revised draft Epistle will be presented at the final session on Monday 4 May, 14:00–15:30, when no further revision (except perhaps excision) will be invited.

4. Agenda and notes

4.1 Preparation ahead of Yearly Meeting

A number of Preparation Sessions for Yearly Meeting will take place between Monday 13 April and Thursday 16 April. See sections “[2.8 Orientation](#)” and “[2.9 Spiritual preparation and theme-related sessions](#)” of this document.

Ahead of Yearly Meeting there will also be a range of special interest meetings about Quaker work and witness offered by Quaker Recognised Bodies and some committees and work programmes of Quakers in Britain. These will take place between 20 and 26 March. For more details on these, see the online Yearly Meeting planner, once you have registered for Yearly Meeting.

4.2 Activities

Details about spaces, activities, events and opening times in Friends House can be found in [Attending Friends House](#), which will be published in April.

Worship

In Friends House and online

There will be opportunities to worship (online and in Friends House) at the start and end of each day as follows:

- Friday, 1 May 21:00–21:30, following directly after the opening session, in the Large Meeting House, Epilogue, led by Yearly Meeting Elders
- Saturday 2 May 08:30–09:00, semi-programmed worship led by Quaker World Relations Committee
- Saturday 2 May 21:00–21:30, Epilogue, led by Yearly Meeting Elders
- Sunday 3 May, 08:30–09:15 unprogrammed worship upheld by Yearly Meeting Elders
- Sunday 3 May, 21:00–21:30 semi programmed Epilogue led by Young Friends General Meeting

- Monday 4 May, 08:30–09:00 semi-programmed worship led by Quaker World Relations Committee

Each worship time will be upheld by Yearly Meeting Elders. All are welcome.

In addition, there is an unprogrammed meeting for worship from 13:30–14:00 on Saturday 2 May, where families are particularly welcomed. This will be at Friends House only.

A note on different ways of worshipping

Friends in different parts of the Quaker world have different ways of worshipping. For Quakers in Britain and most of Europe and Asia West Pacific, worship is unprogrammed and based in silent waiting. Quakers will speak if they feel moved by God/the Spirit to offer ministry. This could be in the form of vocal ministry, a short passage from the Bible or other text, or sometimes singing out of the silence.

In other parts of the Quaker world - Africa and parts of the Americas - worship is programmed. Worship follows a structure with music, readings, and a sermon, often with a pastor to lead the service.

Semi-programmed worship is partly unprogrammed (with silence and space for those to speak who feel moved to) and partly structured worship through song, prepared ministry, and readings.

Epilogue is a time of quiet reflection and worship at the end of the day.

Online reflection sessions

- Saturday 2 May, 12:45–13:20 and Sunday 3 May, 12:45–13:20

An opportunity for Friends online to meet with each other and reflect on Yearly Meeting. Each session will be supported by an elder and a pastoral care Friend. After a short introduction with suggested queries, participants will move into breakout groups of three or four. See the Yearly Meeting planner for details.

4.3 Events

Please refer to the online Yearly Meeting planner for full details and to book for these events.

Swarthmore Lecture

Stuart Masters, “Tangled roots: navigating the complex legacy of early Friends”

Organised by Woodbrooke

- Saturday 2 May, 19:00–20:15

In Friends House and live-streamed via YouTube

Stuart’s lecture will trace the diverse mix of characteristics visible in the faith and practice of the first Friends and show how these continue to shape and challenge the spiritual lives and communities of Quakers today.

For more information and to watch the livestream, please see www.woodbrooke.org.uk/swarthmore.

There will be another opportunity to watch the Swarthmore Lecture as a YouTube premiere on Wednesday 6 May at 19:00. Friends are invited to watch together at that time and discuss with others via YouTube’s live comments. After it has premiered, the lecture will be available to watch in your own time via www.woodbrooke.org.uk/swarthmore.

The Swarthmore Lecture is part of the work of Woodbrooke.

Meet the Swarthmore Lecturer

- Sunday 3 May, 13:15–14:15

Online and in Friends House

An opportunity to join Stuart Masters for a session reflecting on his lecture.

Salter Lecture

Rachel Shabi, “The Middle East: a moral catastrophe?”

Organised by Quaker Socialist Society

- Sunday 3 May, 19:00–20:15

In Friends House and online

Rachel’s lecture looks at the West’s selective empathy and deeper ignorance of racism in all its forms and argues for a genuine universalism rooted in consistent, principled antiracism.

Rachel Shabi is an award-winning journalist and author who has reported extensively on Israel-Palestine and the wider Middle East, including the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia. Her recent book, *Off-White: The Truth about Antisemitism*, received widespread acclaim. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown praises her ‘unique sensibility, embodying multiple identities and universal, non-negotiable human rights’.

4.4 Agenda

Friday 1 May, 19.00–21.00

Yearly Meeting Session 1 – Opening session

- 1. Appointment of clerks** Central Nominations Committee nominates the following Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerks for Yearly Meeting May 2026, and subsequent Yearly Meeting sessions until 31 December 2028:
 - **Clerk:** Fred Langridge, Sheffield & Balby AM
 - **First Assistant Clerk:** Mary Aiston, Kingston & Wandsworth AMFor Yearly Meeting May 2026, serving until 31 December 2026:
 - **Second Assistant Clerk:** Jane Harries, South Wales AM
- 2. Welcome to all-age Yearly Meeting** The clerk will outline what it means to be an all-age Yearly Meeting including the age-related programmes happening in parallel with Yearly Meeting sessions, and the times when we will all come together.
- 3. Appointment of Committee to Examine Minutes** The names of those nominated to serve on the committee will be read out and Yearly Meeting may approve them. Friends should refer to page 15 for an explanation of the nomination process.

4. Agenda introduction The clerk of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee will introduce the report of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee. The report can be found in [Appendix A](#) and Friends should refer to *Quaker faith & practice* 6.18 for an explanation of the role of the committee.

5. Eldership and pastoral support at Yearly Meeting

6. Nominations received

a. Central Nominations Committee brings forward nominations as specified in Table 3 of the Schedule of Nominations.

b. Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees bring forward nominations as specified in Table 2 of the Schedule of Nominations.

Friends should refer to the guidance on page 15.

7. Report of Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (2025–26) The Nominating Group appointed at Yearly Meeting 2025 brings forward nominations as specified in Table 5 of the Schedule of Nominations.

8. Nominations required

a. We ask Central Nominations Committee to bring nominations to Yearly Meeting February 2027 as specified in Table 4 of the Schedule of Nominations.

b. We ask Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees to bring nominations to Yearly Meeting February 2027 as specified in Table 4b of the Schedule of Nominations.

Friends should refer to guidance on page 15.

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| 9. Quaker Housing Trust | We will formally receive the report of the Quaker Housing Trust (Appendix B). |
| 10. Receipt of Tabular statement | We will formally receive the <i>Tabular statement</i> printed in <i>Patterns of membership</i> , available from: www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents . |
| 11. Letters of Greeting | |
| 12. Reflections on Quaker Earthcare Gathering | We will hear reflections from a Friend who attended the Quaker Earthcare Gathering held 24–27 October 2025. |

Saturday 2 May, 09.30–12.30

Yearly Meeting Session 2 – Spirit led community

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| 13. How can we develop our Spirit-led connection at the heart and at the edges of our communities? | This session invites Friends to explore how the Spirit can help us connect more deeply with one another, bringing us together across our differences and grounding us as a community. We will be encouraged to look forward, to consider how we can strengthen and build upon what we are already doing, so that our Meetings may be more open, loving, and alive to the movement of the Spirit. We might also reflect on how we can speak more naturally about the God/Spirit/Divine, so that newcomers and long-standing Friends alike can share in this connection. |
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Saturday 2 May, 14.30–17.30

Yearly Meeting Session 3 – Required business

14. The work of our national representative body: receipt of annual report from Meeting for Sufferings

We will receive and consider the final report of the work of our national representative body, Meeting for Sufferings, which has acted on our behalf between Yearly Meetings. The written report can be found in [Appendix C](#).

In December 2025 Meeting for Sufferings approved minor amendments to *Quaker faith & practice*, to take effect after this Yearly Meeting. Their minute and the agreed amendments can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents.

15. Report of Agenda Planning Committee

We will receive a report of the Agenda Planning Committee, which is planning the agenda for Yearly Meeting sessions after May 2026. The written report can be found in [Appendix D](#).

16. Revision of Yearly Meeting Governing Documents

Changes to our structure agreed in 2024, including the laying down of Meeting for Sufferings and the holding of more frequent Yearly Meeting sessions, mean that we need to agree revisions both to the **Governing Document for BYM** (the legal document that governs how we operate as a charity) and to the **terms of reference of the BYM Trustees** (that sets out key aspects of how our trustee body operates). Only Yearly Meeting in session can amend these documents. The proposed revised documents can be found in **Agenda & notes 2: supplementary material**. Yearly Meeting is asked to accept these new versions.

The current versions of these documents can be found on the BYM website at www.quaker.org.uk/bymtrustees.

Any Friend wishing to comment on or discuss the proposed revisions can write to the Recording Clerk's Office on rco@quaker.org.uk. There will be time for detailed questions at the preparation session on 15 April.

17. Meeting for Sufferings proposes amendments to *Quaker faith & practice*

Meeting for Sufferings propose amendments to *Quaker faith & practice*. These changes were considered by Meeting for Sufferings at a meeting held 6 December 2025. Their minute and proposed amendments can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents.

Decisions taken at Yearly Meeting sessions in 2024 and 2025 have changed how some aspects of our church government work. When we agree changes to our practice we need to make changes to the text *Quaker faith & practice* to ensure it accurately reflects what we do. Some changes have already been agreed by Meeting for Sufferings on behalf of the Yearly Meeting. Proposed amendments to chapter 6 of *Quaker faith & practice* are significant and need to be agreed by Yearly Meeting in session. Meeting for Sufferings considered draft text in December 2025. It endorsed the draft and has sent it to Yearly Meeting for decision. Their minute and the proposed text can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents.

Any Friend wishing to comment on or discuss the wording of the proposed revisions can write to the Recording Clerk's Office on rco@quaker.org.uk. There will be time for detailed questions at the preparation session on 15 April.

18. Laying down Meeting for Sufferings

19. Central Nominations Committee We will receive a report of the work of Central Nominations Committee ([Appendix E](#)), who are responsible for seeking names to bring to Yearly Meeting and previously Meeting for Sufferings for a number of committees, groups, and roles.

Sunday 3 May, 09.30–10.15
Yearly Meeting – All-age worship

We will have an opportunity to worship together as an all-age community.

Sunday 3 May, 11.00–12.30
Yearly Meeting Session 4

20. The work of BYM Trustees in 2025 In this session, our trustees will report on the work done by BYM’s staff and committees.

The annual report, including financial statements, will be published as a separate document and received at a Yearly Meeting session later in the year.

21. Book of Discipline Revision update Our Book of Discipline Revision Committee, which is working on our behalf to revise *Quaker faith & practice*, plans to bring a first draft of the new book to Yearly Meeting in 2027. We will hear a brief update from the committee about their work and when Friends may receive the new draft.

22. Yearly Meeting Gathering 2027 update We will receive a brief update on preparations for Yearly Meeting Gathering being held 24–28 July 2027.

23. Europe & Middle East Young Friends / Europe & Middle East Section (EMEYF/EMES) All-age gathering August 2026

We will receive a brief update on preparations for the Europe & Middle East Young Friends / Europe & Middle East Section (EMEYF/EMES) All-age gathering being held 8–15 August in Germany.

Sunday 3 May, 14.30–17.30:

Yearly Meeting Session 5 – Handling conflict well

24. As a Spirit-led community, how can we handle conflict well?

Conflict is unavoidable when we are part of a community; and none of us are impartial peacemakers when we are a part of that conflict. In this session we will ask: “How do we let the Spirit guide us to peaceful resolution of the conflicts within our Quaker meetings and our communities?” Looking inwards honestly shows a disconnect in our Meetings between how we think and behave and how we want to be seen.

Acknowledging this, we will explore how the spirit shows us our darkness and leads us to new life.

Every Yearly Meeting is a new start for us all. This session is to inspire Friends to go back to their Local and Area Meetings equipped with ways that the spirit has helped others resolve conflicts peacefully and positively.

Monday 4 May, 09.30–12.30

Yearly Meeting Session 6 – Required business; as led

25. Yearly Meeting Nominating Group: appointment

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| 26. Yearly Meeting Nominating Group 2026–2027 | We ask Yearly Meeting Nominating Group to bring nominations to to a future Yearly Meeting session as described in <i>Quaker faith & practice</i> 6.22 |
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27. As led

Monday 4 May, 14.00–15.30

Yearly Meeting Session 7 – Our all-age community; closing session

28. Receipt of the Yearly Meeting Draft Epistle

29. Minute of record: Epistles

30. Minute of record: Testimonies

31. Minute of record: Friends from other yearly meetings

32. Minute of record: Inter-church and inter-faith visitors

34. Receipt of Junior Yearly Meeting Epistle

35. Thanks

36. Reading and signing of the Yearly Meeting Epistle

5 Appendices

A: Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC) annual report

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee felt led to centre our Yearly Meeting in May 2026 on questions about equality, diversity and inclusion, and how we build community, handle conflict and respond to change. These themes arose at our first meeting on the agenda for Yearly Meeting May 2026, back in July 2025, when we gathered with Friends from Quaker committees and other bodies to hear how the spirit was moving in their work and what might be brought to Yearly Meeting.

In further discernment YMAC reflected on these themes in the context of the increase of division in the world and our life as a church, a Spirit-led community, rather than a secular organisation. This has led us to the areas described in more detail in Agenda & Notes: In a divided world, what unites us as a Spirit-led community? How do we foster acceptance and belonging? As a Spirit-led community, how can we handle conflict well in a way that builds connections, nurtures community and finds common ground, overcoming divisiveness and polarisation?

Yearly Meeting May 2026 also has further work to do to implement our decision to move to a new format for Yearly Meeting, made in 2024, including changes to *Quaker Faith & Practice*.

YMAC'S work is not limited to discerning the agenda for Yearly Meeting: we also have responsibility, with staff support, for preparatory materials, social opportunities, other events in Friends House during Yearly Meeting, pastoral support, communications about Yearly Meeting, and other tasks, including some that emerge during the year. In all this we take account of feedback from Friends from previous events. It is hard work but rewarding. We grow as our own Spirit-led community along the way and that sense of community supports our discernment.

YMAC members and clerks are Friends of different ages and experiences and from different parts of Britain. During our planning we also received minutes from the arrangements committee of Junior Yearly Meeting. We thank them for their discernment which helped mould our own.

We are grateful for the upholding provided by Yearly Meeting Elders throughout our planning work, and for the upholding we feel from Friends throughout and beyond our Yearly Meeting. As always, the planning only takes us part of the way, and we look forward to finding out where the spirit leads Friends when we gather in May 2026.

YMAC will be laid down at Yearly Meeting in May 2026 as part of the changes to move to a new format for Yearly Meeting. Agendas for Yearly Meeting from July 2026 onwards will be discerned by Agenda Planning Committee (APC). They began their work immediately after Yearly Meeting 2025. They are a separate committee from YMAC discerning on the opportunities and risks that the new format of YM presents. One of the many questions APC are considering, is how best to hear the leadings from Friends across Britain Yearly Meeting about what should be on future Yearly Meeting agendas. In the twelve months between Yearly Meeting 2025 and Yearly Meeting May 2026 a small number of Friends are serving on both YMAC and APC, and the Yearly Meeting clerk or assistant attend all APC meetings. This has ensured the two committees are sighted on each other's work and has meant a particularly busy year for some.

I wish to express my thanks to all Friends who have served on YMAC in the last year, and in all earlier years, for their prayerful discernment and hard work.

Mary Aiston, Clerk, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

B: Quaker Housing Trust annual report

Background

The Quaker Housing Trust (QHT) was set up by Yearly Meeting in 1967 to take forward Friends' concerns on housing and homelessness. With donations from Friends, QHT provides grants and loans for social housing projects for those in genuine housing need. This is typically support to small and medium-sized charities to provide housing for vulnerable people, particularly those at time of transitions in their lives. QHT supports projects which provide comfortable, secure and long-term homes, built to high energy efficiency standards, both so running costs for tenants are lower, but also fulfilling our sustainability testimony.

Work of the Quaker Housing Trust in 2025

In the first ten months of 2025 the Quaker Housing Trust paid out the following awards totaling £144,000 to:

Capital Funding:

- **Street Connect**; capital funding towards the purchase of a 2-bedroom flat to be used as Move-On accommodation for individuals affected by drug and alcohol, who are in a transition to living fully independent lives in the community.
- **Assist Sheffield**; capital funding towards the purchase and renovation of a home for refugees & asylum seekers.
- **East Cleveland Youth Housing Trust**; capital funding to purchase and renovate a home for 16–25-year-olds living locally.
- **Chooselife Cymru Ltd**; capital funding to purchase and renovate a home for people suffering hardship and needing housing support within Carmarthenshire.
- **Raasay Development Trust**; capital funding to purchase and retrofit a property on the Isle of Raasay to provide affordable housing to local people.
- **Bonny Downs Baptist Church**; capital funding to build 8 studio flats for

people experiencing homelessness in Newham.

- **Doorway**; capital funding to purchase and renovate a home for young people experiencing homelessness in Warwickshire and the surrounding area.
- **Ottery Feoffee**; capital funding towards the build of four 1-bedroom affordable homes for local people who are experiencing housing insecurity.

Best Practice Funding:

- **Cirencester Housing for Young People (CHYP)**; funding to conduct a study into the feasibility of building a new property for young people CHYP supports.
- **The Zinithiya Trust**; funding to conduct a study into the feasibility of Zinithiya Trust purchasing their own property to rent out as affordable accommodation to the people they support.
- **North Somerset Area Meeting** (remainder paid in 2025); Quaker Asset grant funding to draw up plans for the conversion of Weston-Super-Mare meeting house, so that the space can also offer affordable housing.
- **Emmaus Coventry and Warwickshire**; feasibility funding to draw up plans to create a new property on their grounds, to expand their housing for those seeking refuge from homelessness.

We are working with three other projects whose applications for capital projects we have approved, and seven organisations for best practice grants.

The Quaker Housing Trust has three separate funding programmes. The main programme supports projects for building or refurbishing accommodation to provide long-term homes to people at transition points in their lives. The Audrey Deacon-Vera Johnston Legacy fund has been used to support similar projects for older people. Additionally, QHT supports projects at an early stage, working with organisations to strengthen them and prepare them to undertake a project delivering new or refurbished homes. These feasibility grants are limited to £6000 and can focus on environment assessment or financial feasibility.

Our funding programmes are oversubscribed. There are brilliant charities out there creating housing and we would like to support more of them. This year we are very grateful that fifteen meetings held collections for Quaker Housing Trust. Most of our funding continues to come from repaid loans from earlier awards; in this way, a single donation can fund multiple projects. Donations made by Meetings and Friends to QHT have increased since 2024, however, demand for our funding continues to exceed the resources we have available.

We ask Friends to consider their own housing position and their ability to help those in housing need through donating to QHT. Regular donations would increase the number of projects we can fund. Leaving a legacy to QHT would allow Friends to ensure their fortunate housing position can be used to house people who are less fortunate.

Approach to project funding

In April, trustees agreed a new strategy of only making capital grants for projects supporting people with No Recourse to Public Funds, as other capital projects are in a position to repay loans from rental income/housing benefit, in order to make the QHT's fund more sustainable for the future.

Fundraising and awareness raising

Two key focuses for 2025 and into 2026 are fundraising and awareness raising, to ensure we can continue to support as many projects as possible. We have been putting much of our time and energy into raising awareness of QHT amongst Quakers. Trustees and Grace Burgess (secretary) have been visiting Quaker meetings to share about our work, and we will continue to do this in 2026.

Following a legacy left to Quaker Housing Trust to fund the creation of homes for older people, we have renamed our designated fund for housing to older people to the Audrey Deacon- Vera Johnston Legacy Fund.

C: Meeting for Sufferings report

This is the last written report of Meeting for Sufferings before it is laid down at Yearly Meeting in May 2026. It covers the work of Meeting for Sufferings during 2025. Meeting for Sufferings responsibilities are specified in *Quaker faith & practice* 7.02.

Meeting for Sufferings is a representative body. Each area meeting in Britain appoints a representative and an alternate. It is likely that your area meeting representative will be a Friend you already know, a living link with your local Quaker life. Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees attend and there are representatives from General Meetings, Central Committees and other Quaker bodies. So, with a crowd such as this, there is lots of buzz, lots of conversation and lots of work to be done. But above all, we are a worshipping community of committed Friends, trusting that we will be Spirit-led in our discernment. We meet four times a year. In 2025, one of these was a residential meeting, held over a weekend at High Leigh in Hertfordshire.

Living out our Quaker faith in the world

We are very far from realising gospel order in our world and this is reflected in the Quaker business that is brought before Meeting for Sufferings.

Meeting for Sufferings was set up in 1675 and as the name implies it had responsibility for supporting early Friends and their families at a time when they were persecuted for their faith and challenging the legal system. Today there is still a price to pay for faithful witness.

At each Meeting for Sufferings, we receive minutes from area meetings detailing the actions of Friends who have appeared before the courts as a result of taking non-violent direct action in response to issues and practices that are of deep concern to them. These names and actions are recorded in the Prison and Court Register. In 2025, they included protests at the Defence and Security Equipment International arms fair in London, and Just Stop Oil and Drax - reclaim the power action, and an increasing number of arrests for supporting Palestine Action, a proscribed organisation. At

Meeting for Sufferings in December, we were deeply saddened to hear that, as a punishment for his witness to protect the planet, a Friend had been sentenced to 26 months, 40% of which was to be served in prison, plus a fine of £2480.

With the implementation in England and Wales of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023, Meeting for Sufferings received several area meeting minutes about the effect of the new police powers on Quaker witness and protest. This was discussed in March, and in July staff from Britain Yearly Meeting's Faith in Action Team helped us consider the challenges we and others might face when engaging in direct action, and the need for that action to be a clearly discerned, spiritually grounded decision. In a facilitated workshop session on social change, we reflected on the roles of rebel, reformer, citizen and change agent, and which role best fits us. Representatives were given details of this exercise so that they could offer it to their area meetings.

At Meeting for Sufferings in July, we also united with the concern expressed about the police raid on Westminster Quaker Meeting House in March and we agreed a minute of record of the incident, quoting the full minutes of Westminster Local Meeting, which gave the details. We were heartened to hear about the eighty messages of support that came from Friends around the world, other faiths, the community and individuals.

BYM Trustees have told Meeting for Sufferings that they will continue to publicise the adverse effects of current legislation on Quaker witness and peaceful protest.

Area Meeting concerns

During 2025, Meeting for Sufferings received twenty four minutes on various topics from area meetings and other Quaker bodies, giving information or asking Meeting for Sufferings to take forward a concern. Each of these is considered and a response is given. Some go directly to Meeting for Sufferings in session, others need further work and discernment.

At our July meeting we received and considered a minute from

Worcestershire and Shropshire Area Meeting on the Supreme Court judgement on the Scottish case regarding trans inclusion. We affirmed the importance of our Yearly Meeting commitment to welcome trans and non-binary people in our meetings, the need to work to make this welcome real, and our belief that it is essential that protections in the Equality Act are implemented fairly and equitably. Our differences are a blessing, and yet working through them can be challenging. In December, we received a draft discussion paper from the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations which will help Friends explore our commitment to the inclusion of all, from a faith perspective. We seek to be in a loving community accepting one another and we encourage meetings to find ways of holding spiritually grounded conversations for learning from our lived experiences on all aspects of this matter. The Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations' paper is available and we commend it to Friends, as a basis for conversations on affirming and respecting gender diversity.

Meeting for Sufferings might revisit matters raised in minutes, and in October we returned to a question posed in 2023, following an initial consideration of two minutes on the relationship of church and state: "Can our participation in civic ceremonies of this sort be a faithful witness to the alternate Gospel Order to which we are committed, or is it rather an expression of complicity with the domination system of worldly powers?" This arose from Quaker participation in the loyal address, an occasion for privileged bodies to reassert their loyalty to the crown as well as drawing the monarch's attention to particular issues. We heard prepared ministry on the history of the Quaker privilege to give the loyal address. Whilst recognising that this is an imperfect means of speaking truth to power, we are not ready to relinquish it yet, but we should use it boldly. We expect Friends will continue with their discernment on this matter.

Sometimes, Yearly Meeting asks MfS to carry our specific tasks on its behalf.

Sustainability

It is 14 years since Yearly Meeting in Canterbury committed Quakers in Britain to working towards a low-carbon economy. Meeting for Sufferings

set up the Sustainability Monitoring Group to follow progress on this commitment. The Group is no longer functioning but Quaker work on sustainability and climate justice continues, albeit in a fragmented way. In March, Meeting for Sufferings heard about some of this work, recognising that this overview was incomplete. The task of monitoring this work was passed to Agenda Planning Committee in the first instance. They were given a list of questions and suggestions for consideration to help move the work forward into a new phase, including the observation that at least some of the groups working on sustainability matters need to be linked into our decision-making structures.

Blended meetings

Yearly Meeting 2024 asked Meeting for Sufferings to explore the theology and community aspects of blended meetings, with some Friends physically present in the room and others present online. We spent time considering this at our October residential meeting, beginning with prepared ministry on large blended meetings for church affairs, specifically Yearly Meeting, and online Meetings for Worship. In small groups we explored this further reflecting on: how being in different places might affect our discernment of the Spirit amongst us; whether in blended meetings we are one worshipping community or two; and best practices for becoming a gathered blended meeting. After listening to each other at these sessions, many Friends changed their views on blended meetings. There was no conclusion, but we need to continue speaking about this and listening to one another. Meeting for Sufferings has passed this work to Agenda Planning Committee.

Quaker Recognised Bodies

Meeting for Sufferings is tasked with approving the registration and re-registration of Quaker Recognised Bodies, and has completed a review of the process involved. We received the report of the review in December, and agreed to implement its recommendations, which should improve the efficiency and transparency of the application and renewal processes, and clarify how applicants seek to express and realise Quaker values. Suggestions for how the process might work when Meeting for Sufferings is laid down were passed to Agenda Planning Committee.

Area Meeting Compliance

Britain Yearly Meeting requests that area meetings submit an annual report on their compliance with charity requirements. Meeting for Sufferings is responsible for keeping track of this, with the assistance of Quaker Life Central Committee. In 2025, progress was reported in meeting the key governance criteria. The return also asks for information on sustainability. This year the EcoChurch criteria were used and have improved the quality of reporting.

Hearing about Quaker Work

On a regular basis, Meeting for Sufferings representatives hear about our centrally managed and other Quaker work, and they are encouraged to share this information with Friends in their area meetings.

Meeting for Sufferings has a close working link with BYM Trustees. At each meeting, Trustees share a detailed report of their work and from time to time they take the opportunity to consult Meeting for Sufferings about current matters. Meeting for Sufferings representatives are engaged with the review of strategic priorities for centrally managed work, initiated by BYM Trustees.

In March we heard about the innovative work of the Quaker Housing Trust, including setting up the Quaker Asset Fund to help Quaker meetings considering the future use of their buildings investigate if they could be converted to provide social housing. We were reminded that a safe and secure home is essential for our health and well-being and that those who are denied access to housing are becoming increasingly marginalised in our communities. The Quaker Housing Trust provides practical Quaker help through grants and loans to meet real housing needs.

Quakers play an active part in the faith community in Britain. The Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations nourishes and enriches relationships with other churches and faith groups. It reports to Meeting for Sufferings annually on its work and in March we were reminded that creating and maintaining opportunities for ongoing dialogue with others is an

element of Quaker peace building across faith differences.

Our Quaker community stretches beyond Britain Yearly Meeting and we are encouraged to engage more with our neighbours. In October the Quaker World Relations Committee shared details of the annual meeting of the Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation. This section includes Friends from Palestine, Israel and Ukraine, who are suffering daily from the ongoing violent conflicts. We pass on the request to hold these Friends in the light, in particular the conscientious objectors.

Currently Quaker Life Central Committee is consulting Friends on the revision of the Quakers in Britain and Woodbrooke strategy for supporting Quaker communities. In October Meeting for Sufferings representatives participated in a creative workshop on 'How our Quaker communities could look in 2030 and beyond', giving some thought to Quaker community priorities for the next five to ten years, and how centrally managed work could support the flourishing of these priorities.

Moving towards a simpler church

Meeting for Sufferings agreed to the proposed changes to amalgamate Quaker bodies in Scotland into Quakers in Scotland, the new Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. On 20 September 2025, General Meeting for Scotland was laid down and its responsibilities as set out in *Quaker faith & practice* 5.03, were transferred to Quakers in Scotland; on 8th November 2025, East Scotland Area Meeting, North Scotland Area Meeting and West Scotland Area Meeting were laid down and their responsibilities were transferred to Quakers in Scotland. We have also been informed of plans to simplify Quaker governance in Yorkshire by creating a new single Quaker charity, Yorkshire Quakers.

Church Government Advisory Group was asked to draft suitable text for *Quaker faith & practice* to reflect these and other changes to our structures and governance, and in December, Meeting for Sufferings agreed a raft of minor changes to *Quaker faith & practice*.

To see the minor changes to *Quaker faith & practice* already agreed by Meeting for Sufferings go to www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents. This page will be kept up to date in the event that Meeting for Sufferings agrees any further changes at its March 2026 meeting. Please note that all of the agreed changes will come into effect after the May session of Yearly Meeting, when the online version of *Quaker faith & practice*, <https://qfp.quaker.org.uk>, will be updated.

Detailed work continues to facilitate laying down Meeting for Sufferings and handing over ongoing business to the Agenda Planning Committee.

Elizabeth Allen

Meeting for Sufferings Assistant Clerk

D: Agenda Planning Committee report

“We want Quakers to experience Yearly Meeting sessions as an inclusive and connected worshipping community, with spirit-led discernment at its core, which provides Friends with an opportunity to respond together to the concerns of Quaker communities across Britain, and the needs of the world, and is a driver for spiritual and community renewal throughout the yearly meeting.

Additionally, we seek to ensure that Friends across the Yearly Meeting know how the agenda for Yearly Meeting sessions is set and how they can feed into that process.”

Agenda Planning Committee 2025 Minute 53

The Agenda Planning Committee is responsible for discerning and planning the agendas for the Yearly Meetings under the new system whereby Yearly Meeting will be held four times a year.

The first such meeting will be on 18 July 2026 in Manchester, and each year one Yearly Meeting will be held outside London; in 2027 this will be a Yearly Meeting Gathering in Hull, from 24–28 July. Put it in your diaries!

One of the committee’s tasks was to consider what the new Yearly Meetings should be called. We suggest a simple nomenclature whereby the first of the new Yearly Meetings will be Yearly Meeting July 2026. The second will be Yearly Meeting November 2026 and so on.

The committee began its work in June 2025 and is grateful to have had the opportunity to meet twice in person to get to know each other and to get to grips with the task ahead.

We are a small committee of 10 Friends with a wide variety of experience of the holding of Yearly Meeting including Friends who have served as Yearly Meeting elders and pastoral care Friends and members of Meeting for Sufferings.

We are grateful to BYM staff who have provided the necessary information and details to enable us to carry out our work. We would like to thank Jude Acton, Sarah Donaldson and Siobhán Haire for their support.

The committee wants to make our Yearly Meetings ever more accessible, affordable, interesting and grounded in the Spirit. We are excited by the opportunity for Friends to meet four times a year. This provides opportunities to introduce matters for discernment at one meeting and then return to them later in the year for further discernment. Our hope is that the Yearly Meeting representatives will report back and involve Friends in their Area Meetings so that Friends across Britain Yearly Meeting are better informed about the work being undertaken on their behalf.

We are also excited by these increased opportunities to meet together, worship together and to get to know each other in the things both eternal and temporal. The advent of Zoom has enabled many more Friends to attend Yearly Meeting than has been in the case in the past. In 2025 some 400 people attended Yearly Meeting for the first time. This is both exciting and challenging. The committee is working with Young Friends General Meeting to find ways of reminding us all of our Quaker discipline and helping those who are new to Yearly Meeting to understand the way we work.

As a small committee, we know we are not able to support all the community building activities we would like to see at Yearly Meeting, and therefore we will be looking to Friends across the Yearly Meeting to help. We want Yearly Meeting to be all our Yearly Meeting, where everyone feels welcome, valued and included.

Of course there is a difference between being at Yearly Meeting in person and attending via Zoom and YM Elders are working hard to ensure that those who are on the screen and those who are physically present all feel as much a part of the Yearly Meeting as is possible.

We are looking at the required business, matters that need to come to Yearly Meeting, such as nominations, and annual reports to see how these can be attended to effectively whilst also leaving time for discernment on

other matters. At Yearly Meeting July 2026 we hope to hear about Quaker Life's work on new forms of membership. Looking ahead, we know that two big matters will be making their way onto the agendas in the not too distant future. The revision of the Book of Discipline will form a major part of the agenda at the Yearly Meeting Gathering in Hull in 2027. There will be further opportunities for discernment and questions in succeeding Yearly Meeting sessions. We also know that the work of the Reparations Group will be coming to Yearly Meeting, possibly this year. Again there will be more than one opportunity to spend time on this important area.

In the past, minutes from Area Meetings and certain Quaker committees have gone to Meeting for Sufferings for discernment before - sometimes - making their way onto the Yearly Meeting agenda. The Agenda Planning Committee is now responsible for this process and we wish to open it up so that Quaker Recognised Bodies and other Quaker groups may also submit minutes for discernment.

In its terms of reference, the Committee was asked to recommend whether the name Meeting for Sufferings should be retained. The Committee spent much time on this and feels that it would not be helpful to retain this name but rather that from time to time there should be a meeting for worship to uphold those suffering for our Quaker faith.

The committee's work is still in its early days and Yearly Meeting July 2026 will be the first opportunity to see how we are all working.

Ingrid Greenhow

Clerk

E: Central Nominations Committee annual report

“Are there not different states, different degrees, different growths, different places?...Therefore, watch everyone to feel and know his own place and service in the body, and to be sensible of the gifts, places and services of others, that the Lord may be honoured in all, and every one owned and honoured in the Lord, and no otherwise.”

Isaac Pennington 1667
Quaker faith & practice 10.27

Looking back over another year of nominations work we will share the challenges and difficulties but also, I hope, the positives of this service itself; it can be busy, but is always interesting and often joyful. I hope this might also make the case for wider service in all the roles we nominate for. While we continue to have some vacancies on CNC, we are pleased that our numbers have increased this year.

As we began the new year of the nominations cycle there was an added complication as we lost both our supportive members of staff, Penny Finch and Savannah Barrett Edwards, just before YM 25. We wish them both well in pastures new! During the gap, while recruitment for these roles was taking place, CNC was brilliantly supported by Jane-Eve Straughton and her team and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their considerable hard work on top of their usual roles. In October, we welcomed both our new Volunteer and Committees Co-ordinator Erin Letbe-Holder and our new Administration and Support Officer (volunteers and committees) Orlane Martinez Le Du and look forward to working together.

During this year of transition to the continuing YM, we look forward to the positive change this opportunity brings. We continued our work on reaching out to a wider circle of Friends and reducing barriers to service; we continue to seek additional ways to be in communication. Our link with YFGM continues and we have also had contact with Quaker Rainbow. We

are pleased to be more visible and available to discuss possible roles - please come and find us between YM sessions at the CNC table. We have a new, improved database to manage all the offers of service (Quaker Service Information Forms - please complete one if you are able to offer or consider any service) the Committee Hub and we hope this will be making the work of our search groups more manageable. The new governance newsletter, 'Hope so' is another chance for us to let you know about possible roles to be filled. We have also been mindful of how we might need to adapt our processes to ensure the nominations journey is a smooth one for all involved. Our work must essentially be forward thinking – looking at current needs with a future perspective.

The results of this work are before you in the Schedule of Nominations as we prepare to meet at YM. Names are all discerned with great care before they come to Friends for appointment but we ask that you also give them prayerful consideration as members of the appointing body and prayerful support as they take on the adventure that is Quaker service. We thank everyone who has agreed to serve and wish them joy in their roles. If you feel there is any reservation about a name on the schedule please contact nominations@quaker.org.uk.

So far this year we have found Friends for over 50 roles for service throughout the Yearly Meeting and we are still searching for more, some for Committees, others to support the holding of YM. The possibilities are many and various and Friends' gifts contribute to building and continuing our vibrant community.

If you feel the time is approaching to offer your skills for central service, please [complete a Quaker Service Information Form online](#) or at the CNC desk. Let us know your experience and passion. Our Committees are made up of normal Quakers like you, often doing extra-ordinary work to ensure the success of our Society.

Eleanor Brooks, Gill Greenfield

December 2025

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Quaker unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship – a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly – internally, in relationships with others, and with the world. Local meetings for worship are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power. The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal.

This leads Quakers to put faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause injustice and violent conflict.

Accessible versions of this document are available. Please contact the publications manager at publications@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1162

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