YM 2026 11 07

Report from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

This written report focuses on the business recently considered by Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) Trustees (the full minutes are attached). At the Yearly Meeting session, the Treasurer will also present the annual report and accounts for 2025.

Trustees met briefly on 29 June 2026, a meeting clerked by Kit King and Lis Burch, to approve a response to the publication of the Equality and Human Rights' Commission's Code of Practice for the provision of services. As you can see from the minutes, we discerned that we should continue with the arrangements put in place in May 2025. Guidance to Area Meetings on this topic has since been published, but it remains a matter for AM trustees to agree appropriate arrangements for their circumstances.

A full meeting of trustees took place on 5 & 6 September at Walthamstow Meeting House. We were pleased to be joined for part of the meeting by Lucy Cox Dodgson, who will begin service as a trustee on 1 January 2027, along with Alexandra Boliver-Brown.

Alongside much regular business, as can be seen from the minutes, we found it very helpful to be guided into two workshops, one on Equity and Justice, led by Edwina Peart, Equity and Justice Lead, which we found very inspiring, and one on board effectiveness, during which we considered our role in providing support, stretch, scrutiny, stewardship, strategy and spiritual grounding to the Senior Leadership Team and staff that deliver the work we have governance responsibility for, and the tensions that can arise between these different aspects of our working relationships.

We also gained valuable insights in the use of risk documentation by examining two specific areas of higher risk: the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) and Engagement and Participation.

To quote our closing minute in full:

> *As an organisation, we aim for excellence by secular standards and then transcend those standards by imbuing them with faith, worship, and the will of God. We hope that Yearly Meeting in session can offer opportunities for support as well as scrutiny, understanding as well as advice, and a clear sense of what Love requires of us.*
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> *During our session on equity and justice we heard read the following excerpt from Love as the Practice of Freedom by bell hooks: "I conclude that many of us are motivated to move against domination solely when we feel our self-interest directly threatened. Often, then, the longing is not for a collective transformation of society, an end to politics of domination, but rather simply an end to what we feel is hurting us. This is why we desperately need an ethic of love to intervene in our self-centred longing for change."*

As a Religious Society, at our core we love and care for one another and we recognise that it is possible to have fruitful conversations about sensitive issues in ways that do not require us to lay ourselves bare. We are grounded by seeking what Love can do, and we have witnessed this by living in community and working with one another this weekend.

Marisa Johnson, Clerk

Kit King, Assistant Clerk

Paul Whitehouse, Treasurer

British Yearly Meeting Trustees

Held on 29 June 2026

Online on Zoom

Minutes

Present: Kit King (Clerk for this meeting), Lis Burch (Assistant Clerk for this meeting), Marisa Johnson, Teresa Murray, Ruth McTighe, Paul Whitehouse (Treasurer), Ursula Fuller, Liz Law, Chris Jardine, Catherine Brown, Silas Price, Liz Redfern, Kit Fotheringham (minute BYMT/26/06/03 onwards)

In Attendance: Siobhán Haire (Deputy Recording Clerk), Sarah Donaldson (Senior Change Leader: Quaker Governance), Lisa San Martín (CEO of Quiet Company)

Prevented: Jo Hills

BYMT/26/06/01 Clerking arrangement for this meeting

Our Clerk, Marisa Johnson, has requested to not clerk this meeting due to personal reasons. We appoint Kit King as Clerk for this meeting and Lis Burch as Assistant Clerk for this meeting. This is a temporary arrangement and will only last for the duration of this meeting, after which our usual arrangement will resume.

BYMT/26/06/02 Welcome & Introductions, Agenda Check, Conflict of Interest Check, Opening Worship

Our Clerk welcomed us to the meeting.

We opened our meeting with a period of worship.

We agreed the agenda.

There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest.

BYMT/26/06/03 QiB responses to the draft EHRC Code of Practice on Services

This minute follows the discernment recorded in minute BYMT/25/05/02 and the same principles apply to our discernment today. The context has now changed, in light of the draft Code of Practice for Services, Public Functions, and Associations, a draft statutory guidance which has been laid before parliament.

We have considered paper BYMT 2026/06/01, which shared recommendations on the correct approach to toilet facilities across our estate. The Deputy Recording Clerk spoke to the paper.

In practice, accepting these recommendations means that our provision will remain as it has been for the last 14 months. We note that during this time we have received four informal concerns, and only one formal complaint about this approach. During this time, we have not been informed of any concerns arising from incidents of inappropriate or harmful behaviour in or in connection with our toilet facilities.

We accept and welcome these recommendations, noting that there is no risk-free approach to providing toilet facilities in the

current environment, and that we will keep this approach under review as case law in this area develops. We feel that the greatest risk to the other options is not standing for what we believe in, not speaking truth to power, and not upholding our testimony to equality. We note that fundamental contradictions exist in the legal landscape and that the legal guidance on this is far from clear.

We agree that in the longer term, any changes to toilet facilities across our estate will need to happen in alignment with our agreed maintenance schedule and on the basis of affordability.

We ask staff to provide advice to Trustees of Area Meetings on the toilet provisions in their meeting houses, relevant to the context of each Area Meeting.

We ask staff to refresh the *Statement of policy on provision of trans-inclusive facilities on BYM's estate* to match our discernment and communicate the changes publicly. We ask staff to continue our public affairs work on this issue, which we hope can include engaging with Quaker and other Members of Parliament.

Britain Yearly Meeting's position on welcoming trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people is clear. We minuted in BYMT/25/05/02 that "We hold in the Light all trans, non-binary, intersex, and gender non-conforming people whose lives are being made more difficult." The phrase "more difficult" has proven to be an understatement and we are deeply saddened and angered that parts of British society, including political leaders, policy makers, and members of civil society, are creating barriers to the social inclusion of trans people and opening the door to hatred towards them.

We reiterate our commitment to continuing to work to make our corner of the Commonwealth of Heaven on Earth a more

welcoming and accessible place. We pray that love and light prevail and we pray for an inclusive, loving, and hopeful British society and Religious Society of Friends.

BYMT/26/06/04 Closing worship

We closed our meeting with a period of worship.

Kit King **Lis Burch**

Clerk **Assistant Clerk**

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Held on 5 & 6 September 2026

On site at Walthamstow Meeting House and online on Zoom

Minutes

Present: Catherine Brown, Lis Burch, Kit Fotheringham, Ursula Fuller, Jo Hills, Chris Jardine, Marisa Johnson (Clerk), Kit King (Assistant Clerk), Liz Law (from BYMT 26/09/06), Ruth McTighe, Teresa Murray, Silas Price (until BYMT 26/09/14), Elizabeth Redfern (until BYMT 26/09/07), Paul Whitehouse (Treasurer)

With: Lucy Cox Dodgson (North London Area Meeting, to begin service as a Trustee on 1 January 2027, BYMT 26/09/15 onwards), Sarah Donaldson (Deputy Recording Clerk - Church Affairs), Siobhán Haire (Deputy Recording Clerk - Strategy & Effectiveness), Suzy Lidbury (Head of Governance & Events) (BYMT 26/09/13), Judith Miller (Partner, Sayer Vincent) (BYMT 26/09/05), Vipan Narang (Finance Director) (until BYMT 26/09/17), Paul Parker (Recording Clerk), Edwina Peart (Equity & Justice Lead) (BYMT 26/09/12), Rhodri Roberts (Impact & Projects Coordinator) (BYMT 26/09/16), Oliver Robertson (Director of Programmes) (until BYMT 26/09/16)

Prevented:

BYMT/26/09/01 Welcome and introductions, agenda, conflicts of interest, continued minutes

Our opening worship was introduced with the following reading:

> Plain speaking is a longstanding Quaker testimony. It is not only that we hold a witness to the value of truth but also that straightforwardness saves us from many mistakes and much time wasted. On first acquaintance some Quakers can seem rather brusque; without the conventions of flattery and half-truths, we particularly need to make clear the steadfast love we have for one another.
>
> *Quaker faith & practice* 12.01

The Clerks welcomed Friends to the meeting. There are no unrecorded conflicts of interest. We considered our agenda and have accepted it. We have received a list of continuing minutes.

BYMT/26/09/02 Minutes received

We receive the following minutes:

- Agenda Planning Committee Minutes May 2026
- BYM Internal Audit & Risk Committee Minutes, June 2026
- Reparation Working Group Minutes, June 2026
- Reparation Working Group Minutes, July 2026

- Finance, IT & Property and Internal Audit & Risk Committee (Joint Meeting) Minutes, July 2026
- Finance, IT & Property Committee Minutes, July 2026
- Programmes & Prioritisation Committee Minutes, July 2026

BYMT/26/09/03 Items taken on draft minute

a. Appointment of investment managers

We approve the between-meeting appointment of Royal London Asset Management to manage our Fixed Interest Investments made on 15 December 2025, as recommended by the Investment Committee in Minute 25/04 from their December 2025 meeting.

b. Gold minutes

We have received and approve a set of Gold Minutes from the period November 2025 to August 2026.

We agree not to include BYMT/25/11/12 Changes to Investment Governance in the Gold Minutes as the Investment Policy itself suffices for the record.

c. Revised Scheme of Delegation and revised Senior Leadership Team terms of reference

We have received and approve a revised Scheme of Delegation and revised Senior Leadership Team Terms of Reference, subject to an amendment. These documents reflect the organisational changes which have taken place in recent months.

d. Risk Management Policy

We have received and approve the risk management policy, which documents our current practice.

e. Microsoft365 Guest User Policy

We receive and will follow the new Microsoft365 Guest User Policy.

BYMT/26/09/04 Finance

a. Management Accounts to July 2026

We receive paper BYMT 2026 09 04a, the most recent management accounts, introduced by Vipan Narang. We note that we are ahead of the Q1 reforecast. Unfortunately, due to the hot weather and subsequent events cancellations, the income from commercial activity is behind budget. Legacy income is higher than anticipated, resulting in a stronger position moving into Q3. Despite this, there are still risks to our finances, some of which we can mitigate, such as the level of capital expenditure required to upgrade Drayton House, and some we cannot predict, such as irregular legacy income. Therefore, we must remain prepared for these situations, should they arise.

b.Minutes of Finance, IT & Property Committee

Catherine Brown, Co-Clerk of Finance IT and Property Committee, introduced the most recent minutes from the Finance, IT, and Property Committee held on 1 September 2026 with particular reference to IT and property.

BYMT/26/09/05 Operational plan mid-year report

We receive the report (paper BYMT 2026 09 06) and Siobhán Haire, Deputy Recording Clerk (Strategy & Effectiveness), has spoken to it.

We note in particular that the new format of the report is very clearly structured and therefore easier to follow and informative.

We appreciate the revised format for this report. We thank the staff involved in preparing it, and all our staff for their work.

BYMT/26/09/06 Trustees' annual report & accounts

We have been joined by Judith Miller, Audit Partner from Sayer Vincent, for this item, and thank her for attending our meeting this weekend.

We receive the draft Trustees' annual report and financial statements for 2025 (paper BYMT 2026 09 05a), and the external auditor's post audit report (paper BYMT 2026 09 05b). We also receive the minutes of the Finance, IT, & Property Committee/Internal Audit & Risk Committee (FIPC/IARC) Joint Meeting on 14 July 2026 (paper BYMT 2026 09 02e) and note the recommendations to us in minute FIPC IARC 2026 07 03a that we approve the annual report & accounts and that there are no material uncertainties as to our ability to continue as a going concern.

Our Treasurer has introduced this item. We have also heard from the Finance Director and the Clerks of FIPC.

Total income for the year ended 31 December 2025 was £14.7 million (2024: £12.3 million), representing an increase of £2.5

million. Total expenditure increased in a more modest way to £16.3 million (2024: £16.2 million), an increase of £0.1 million.

This resulted in an operating deficit before investment gains of £1.6 million (2024: £4.0 million deficit). After recognising net investment gains of £1.5 million (2024: loss of £0.4 million) and losses on revaluation of functional and investment property £6.5 million (2024: nil), the Group recorded a deficit of £6.6m for the year (2024: £4.4 million deficit).

The year-on-year increase in the deficit of £2.2 million was driven primarily by losses on the revaluation of functional and investment properties. Total income increased, supported by donations, legacies and improved investment performance, while expenditure growth was contained relative to income growth.

We have had time with Judith Miller without staff present.

We have considered the recommendations in minute FIPC IARC 2026 07 03a set out above and now approve our clerk and treasurer to sign the annual accounts and authorise our treasurer to sign the letter of representation to the auditors.

BYMT/26/09/07 Senior Leadership Team report & dashboard

We have received the Senior Leadership Team's report, covering June to September 2026. The members of SLT highlighted particular areas from the parts of QiB's work that they oversee and Trustees had the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

We have also received the dashboard dated September 2026 with indicators of key information on compliance, communications, and organisational health.

BYMT/26/09/08 Clerks' report

The Clerks responded to a number of sign offs since the previous meeting of BYM Trustees. These will be listed separately and shared. There was little additional activity, apart from:

- preparing for and attending Yearly Meeting in Manchester in July,
- attending a meeting of clerks of all BYM committees,
- routine one-to-one meetings with the Recording Clerk, and
- being consulted on the amended policy on use of facilities in BYM estate, which was published in August.

BYMT/26/09/09 Safeguarding policy

We have received a revised Safeguarding Policy and Siobhán Haire, Deputy Recording Clerk (Strategy & Effectiveness), has spoken to it.

We approve the new document and ask that in a future review we include reference to our context as a church community.

BYMT/26/09/10 Programmes & Prioritisation Committee

Lis Burch, Clerk of Programmes & Prioritisation Committee, has given a verbal update on the work of the committee so far. There have been two meetings so far. Recruitment to the committee is now complete and the group already feels cohesive. The committee aims to gain an overview of the work that is happening across the charitable purposes and has designed a template to present the committee with the information it needs. For the current year the committee is tracking the budgeting process, and from next year it will work to inform the decisions that will need to be made.

BYMT/26/09/11 Appointments

We receive a report from the Trustee Nominating Group.

a. Appointments

We make the following appointments and reappointments:

Internal Audit & Risk Committee

- John Ashcroft, Sussex East Area Meeting as Clerk for the period 1 January to 30 June 2027
- Chaundra Crouch, North West London Area Meeting, as Clerk from 1 July 2027 until 31 December 2029.

Programmes & Prioritisation Committee

- Alison Breadon, Wirral & Chester AM, to serve from 9 July 2026 to 31 December 2028
- Deborah Rowlands, South Wales AM / CCR De Cymru, to serve from 9 July 2026 to 31 December 2028.

- (From Quaker Life Central Committee) Susie Tombs, Banbury and Evesham AM, to serve from 26 February 2026 to 31 December 2027
- (From BYM Trustees) Ruth McTighe, Central Yorkshire AM reappointed to serve from 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2028.

Quaker Commercial Board

- Alex Clayden, North West London AM, to serve from 1 January 2027 until 31 December 2029
- Suzanne Watts, Luton & Leighton AM, to serve from 1 January 2027 until 31 December 2029

Young Adult Quaker Grants Group

- Isaac Peat, Central England AM, renominated to serve as clerk from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2027
- (Quaker Peace & Social Witness Grants Group Link) Lynda Prescott, Worcestershire and Shropshire AM, to serve from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2028

b. Finance, IT & Property Committee Terms of Reference

We note Trustee Nominating Group's reflections on the difficulties arising from the current Terms of Reference for FIPC. We agree to increase the number of non-trustee members of FIPC from two to three and continue to invite specialists and/or consultants to support them on specific projects. We ask staff to amend the terms of reference accordingly.

BYMT/26/09/12 Equity & justice

Edwina Peart, Equity & Justice Lead, has led us through an equity and justice session. We explored our different experiences of 'Quaker culture' in our different contexts, reflected on our attitudes to leadership and 'followership' and considered how we can create safe spaces that enable us to be brave, acknowledging that we can only be brave when we are afraid.

Following reflections on how we may 'run towards the roar' - to go into something that may seem scary but may in fact be harmless – we shared elements of what we feel make up 'Quaker culture' and reflected on the impact that our cultural identity has within and without the Religious Society.

We thank Edwina for spending time with us and leading us through this exercise, and for the leadership she continues to provide to our organisation in tackling prejudice in ourselves and each other, and reaching towards greater inclusion, equity, and justice. We hope we may have another session with Edwina in 2027.

BYMT/26/09/13 Governance strategy

We receive a proposed Governance Strategy for 2026-2028. Suzy Lidbury, Head of Governance & Events, has joined us to speak to the paper (BYMT 2026 09 13).

The strategy focuses on a number of issues to be addressed over the period:

- Audit readiness – demonstrating compliance
- Committee effectiveness - may need to work with a consultant

- Administration and infrastructure – looking at improving efficiency and streamlining
- Nomination system's improvement
- Building governance fit for the 21st century to be included in the new book of discipline.

We agree the revised strategy. We ask staff to explore risks and possible mitigations related to over-reliance on single providers of IT infrastructure and bring back findings to a future meeting of BYMT.

BYMT/26/09/14 Board effectiveness

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, has facilitated a workshop on Board Effectiveness. We considered our role in providing support, stretch, scrutiny, stewardship, strategy and spiritual grounding to the Senior Leadership team and staff that deliver the work we have governance responsibility for. We acknowledge the tensions that can arise in delivering a healthy combination of these elements and how the dynamics of our own board change every time new trustees join us. We need to be careful to respect boundaries while seeking to create meaningful working relationships.

Communication is always key – we need to listen carefully, test our own ideas and insights before offering them, and always express concerns in a way that is respectful and grounded in a good understanding of the facts and context of a situation.

Effectiveness can and should be measured – this may entail involving an external resource to help us evaluate our own impact on the organisation. We look forward to continuing to explore board effectiveness at a future BYMT meeting.

BYMT/26/09/15 Dates for 2027 and 2028

We have received agreed dates for 2027:

- Saturday 6 February (9:30am to 4:30pm) online
- Saturday 5 to Sunday 6 June (11am Saturday to 4pm Sunday) residential at Swarthmoor Hall
- Friday 10 to Saturday 11 September (12:30pm Friday to 1pm Saturday), online
- Friday 26 November (9:30am- 4:30pm) at Friends House

We have received proposed dates for 2028:

- Saturday 29 January (9:30am to 4:30pm) online
- Saturday 8 to Sunday 9 April (11am Saturday to 4pm Sunday) venue to be confirmed
- Friday 30 June to Saturday 1 July (12:30pm Friday to 1pm Saturday), online
- Friday 13 October (9:30-4:30pm) at Friends House

We ask staff to confirm these dates and send electronic meeting invitations accordingly.

BYMT/26/09/16 Deep Dive on Risk

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, introduced this item and we are joined by Rhodri Roberts, Impact and Projects Coordinator. We have explored two significant risk areas in depth:

a) the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine & Israel - an operational risk and

b) Engagement and Participation - a strategic risk.

Oliver Robertson, Director of Programmes, and Sarah Donaldson, Deputy Recording Clerk (Church Affairs), have outlined the context for these risks and the way they are currently managed and mitigated.

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to review the risk documentation for EAPPI and are satisfied with the approach being taken at this time, understanding that it is continuously reviewed.

BYMT/26/09/17 Reflecting on July/Preparing for November YM

We have reflected on the Yearly Meeting session in Manchester and online in July and prepared for the next Yearly Meeting session in London and online in November.

BYMT/26/09/18 Reviewing the Meeting

We have reviewed the meeting.

BYMT/26/09/19 Time with Recording Clerk

We have spent time with the Recording Clerk.

BYMT/26/09/20 Time without Staff

We have spent time without staff.

BYMT/26/09/21 Clerks' offering

As an organisation, we aim for excellence by secular standards and then transcend those standards by imbuing them with faith, worship, and the will of God. We hope that Yearly Meeting in session can offer opportunities for support as well as scrutiny, understanding as well as advice, and a clear sense of what Love requires of us.

During our session on equity and justice we heard read the following excerpt from *Love as the Practice of Freedom* by bell hooks:

> "I conclude that many of us are motivated to move against domination solely when we feel our self-interest directly threatened. Often, then, the longing is not for a collective transformation of society, an end to politics of domination, but rather simply an end to what we feel is hurting us. This is why we desperately need an ethic of love to intervene in our self-centred longing for change."

As a Religious Society, at our core we love and care for one another and we recognise that it is possible to have fruitful conversations about sensitive issues in ways that do not require us to lay ourselves bare. We are grounded by seeking what Love can do, and we have witnessed this by living in community and working with one another this weekend.

BYMT/26/09/22 Closing Worship

We were nourished by joining Friends at Walthamstow Local Meeting for Meeting for Worship this morning and send them our gratitude for opening their meeting house to us this weekend.

We closed our meeting with a period of worship. We depart hoping to meet again on 27 November 2026, should nothing occur to prevent it.

Marisa Johnson
Clerk

Kit King
Assistant Clerk