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

At a Yearly Meeting session held at Friends House, London, and online,

Saturday 21 November 2026

Saturday 21 November, 09.30-13.00: Yearly Meeting Session 10

Minute 70: Worship, welcome, agenda & introductions

We began our meeting together in worship, during which we heard read *Quaker faith & practice* 26.72

We accept the agenda prepared for our meeting today.

This time 701 adults have registered in advance to attend, of whom 255 have registered to attend online and 446 at Friends House. Of this total number, there are 97 attenders not in membership. We welcome 119 Friends attending Yearly Meeting for the first time.

As part of this Yearly Meeting, 11 Friends aged 1-12 are participating in the Children's Programme, exploring the theme of 'story weavers'. 6 Friends aged 13-17 are participating in the Accompaniment Programme, which will include an introduction to the new draft book of discipline and work on reparation as well as the option of joining in the all-age discernment. We look forward to gathering as an all-age community.

We welcome everybody who is attending any part of our Yearly Meeting session today.

Minute 71: The work of our yearly meeting trustees: receipt of the annual report of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

We receive with thanks the trustees' annual report including financial statements for 2025. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees have spoken about the work done on our behalf. The Yearly Meeting Treasurer has introduced the accounts, emphasising that Britain Yearly Meeting needs income in order to continue to do Quaker work. All of us, individual Friends and Quaker meetings, are urged to give the amount we believe is possible and right for us.

We have heard responses in spoken ministry.

We accept the annual report and financial statements.

Minute 72: Visitors from other Yearly Meetings

We have welcomed 8 representatives and visitors from other yearly meetings and Friends' groups around the world.

Minute 73: Report of Central Nominations Committee

Central Nominations Committee brings forward nominations, amendments and requests for release from service as specified in their paper *Nominations to Yearly Meeting, November 2026* and as appended to these minutes.

The nominations and renominations being acceptable, the Friends named are duly appointed.

The proposed extensions to terms of service being acceptable, these changes are agreed.

The releases requested being acceptable, our Friends are duly released and we give thanks for their service.

Minute 74: Proposed changes to the Quaker marriage declaration

In December 2023 the Book of Discipline Revision Committee asked Meeting for Sufferings to consider whether there should be changes to the Quaker marriage declaration. Friends and meetings engaged in discernment on this issue and in October 2024 Meeting for Sufferings asked Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) to take the matter forward. In December 2025 Meeting for Sufferings agreed the proposed changes in principle; the final authority to change the wording of the Quaker marriage declaration lies with Yearly Meeting.

We are not in unity about the proposed change to the wording that may be used towards the start of the declaration, to 'In the presence of God and this assembly', or 'Ym mhresenoldeb Duw a'r gynulleidfa hon'. The existing options will therefore remain at the beginning of the declarations, including the option to omit the initial phrase and begin with 'Friends, I take this my friend'.

We agree to the proposal that the marriage promises may be given in English as 'upheld by the Light of Love', as an optional alternative to 'through divine assistance' or 'with God's help'. In Welsh the phrase agreed for the additional option is 'wedi fy nghynnal gan y Goleuni'.

These changes now having been agreed, they form part of our discipline and should be used for marriages from now on. Anyone with queries about forthcoming marriages should contact the Recording Clerk's office for advice.

We ask Church Government Advisory Group and Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales to bring forward new text for *Quaker faith & practice* 16.52 and 16.53. We ask that the proposed new text be published as soon as possible so that Friends have time to consider it, with a view to it being agreed on draft minute at a future Yearly Meeting session.

Minute 75: Report of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee

We receive a written report from the Book of Discipline Revision Committee and its clerking team has spoken to the report.

We give thanks for the prayerful work of this committee over the last eight years, and for the new draft book that they have prepared. We will uphold them as their work continues. The draft book will become available to everyone today, and we look forward to reading it.

Our Quaker Way: The spiritual discipline of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain is a draft book, not the finished article, and the title is provisional. All of us will have the chance to shape the final text. Friends and meetings are encouraged to explore the text, and the non-text materials which are available online. We are encouraged to make use of the resources available to help us read, reflect and respond. We are encouraged to engage prayerfully, joyfully, creatively and boldly with the process.

We expect to consider the book together during our Yearly Meeting sessions in 2027 and beyond.

Minute 76: Epistle

Part of the epistle of Switzerland Yearly Meeting 2026 has been read.

Minute 77: Update from Agenda Planning Committee

The clerk of Agenda Planning Committee has updated us on the work of the committee, including plans for our next Yearly Meeting session on 20 February 2027.

Saturday 21 November, 14.00–16.30: Yearly Meeting Session 11

Minute 78: Reparation Working Group

We have heard from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees' Reparation Working[1]Group, who have shared the work of researchers, historians and theologians showing that Quakers and Quaker-owned businesses were directly involved with, and profited from, the enslavement and trafficking of Africans, and that Quakers have continued to benefit from this.

We acknowledge this history that has been brought into the light, and we commit to the next phase of work on our response.

We are grateful to the Reparation Working Group for their work so far and their commitment to future work on our behalf. We recognise that we all have our part to play in understanding this aspect of Quaker history and discerning our response.

We ask local and area meetings to continue these conversations about our history and about the action needed now. Resources to help with this are available at https://www.quaker.org.uk/action/reparations and in the attached document 'Reparation Working Group: Tree of hope and tapestry'. Friends throughout Britain Yearly Meeting need to be engaged in order to make an apology meaningful.

We expect to return to this matter at our Yearly Meeting sessions in 2027.

Reparation is not about changing the past but about repairing broken systems and harmful behaviour that continue to do damage today.

We are urged to look more deeply into the ideology of Quaker colonialism and white supremacy that affected enslaved people and enslavers, and continues to affect descendants of both of these groups. The history of Quaker involvement in abolitionism is not a true or complete history; it erases the history of black people and enslaved people who struggled for their own freedom. This history is bound up with a mindset of extractivism, treating people as objects and accumulating wealth in the hands of the few.

Until we face up to our own culpability we cannot hold others to account.

We have an opportunity to open ourselves to the truth that can make us free. We each have a light and we can make a commitment to take this journey together, to show the world we have been wrong, but that our testimonies can make a difference to the world.

Our discernment today follows on from the conference *Truth and Repair: Our Quaker Journey Towards Justice* held on 23 October 2026. The conference was organised by the Reparation Working Group and about 200 Friends registered to attend, online and at Friends House. We receive the document "Our hopes for the reparation journey", prepared by the group and giving possible ways forward for our collective work on

[1] The working group's name has been changed from Reparations (plural) to Reparation (singular) as a result of their discernment.

reparation. We also receive the report, prepared by Woodbrooke, on the history and theology of Quaker involvement in enslavement, abolition and reparation.

We are grateful for the work of the historians, researchers and theologians who have explored this subject on our behalf.

We know that there is a great deal more for us all to learn and work to do.

Minute 79: Minutes received from area meetings

(a) Banbury & Evesham Area Meeting

We receive minute 2026:56 from Banbury & Evesham Area Meeting and minute 2026:097 from Central England Area Meeting. Banbury & Evesham AM intends to lay itself down, with its remaining local meetings being transferred to Central England. Central England AM agrees to this suggestion.

We agree to the course of action outlined in these minutes.

(b) Joint London Area Meeting

We receive minute 2026/57 from the Joint London Area Meeting, a meeting that brings together Friends from the seven existing area meetings in London. Kingston and Wandsworth, London West, North East Thames, North London, North West London, South East London and South London intend to lay themselves down and to create a single area meeting known as Quakers in London.

We agree to this plan.

Minute 80: Minor amendments to *Quaker faith & practice*

Church Government Advisory Group proposes minor amendments to *Quaker faith & practice* sections 4.10, 4.17, 5.04. 5.05, 8.08, 8.09, 8.10, 13.44 and 14.43. These amendments relate to changes concerning Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales, Quaker Life Representative Council and the Annual Conference of Treasurers.

We accept the proposed amendments, with the following additional changes:

-The word “*Llywodraeth*” should be removed from 5.05 (iii)

-The correct cross reference in section 5.04 (v) and 5.05 (v) is to 6.08.

The online version of Quaker faith & practice will be updated as soon as possible. We thank Church Government Advisory Group for its work.

Minute 81: Court and prison register

Matt Clement, an attender of Leicester local meeting, was arrested at a peaceful protest outside the factory in Meridian Business Park which manufactures military drones for the Israeli weapons company, Elbit.

Jim Newmark of Leicester Area Meeting, was arrested at a protest organised by Defend our Juries about the banning of Palestine Action.

Both Friends have been charged but neither Friend has yet had their trial.

Ginnie Shaw of York Area Meeting was arrested whilst protesting as part of a 'Defend our Juries' march and sit-in. Her plea hearing was expected in autumn 2026 but has been delayed.

We agree to include this information in our court and prison register and we hold these Friends in the Light.

Minute 82: Testimonies

The following testimonies to the grace of God as shown in the lives of deceased Friends have been received (pages 2-17 of the published edition of *Testimonies)*:

Peter Armstrong
Jean Asher
Ronald (Ron) Barden
John Lynes
Susan (Sue) Monaghan
John Guthrie Smithson

Minute 83: Receipt of minutes from the Children's Programme

We have received and heard read a minute from the Children's Programme of this Yearly Meeting (Friends aged 1-11) as follows:

Story Weavers

We came together this morning as a new group to play, worship, hear stories and share stories.

Our favourite things about today were:

- Playdough – we made a restaurant.
- The people
- Reading to the babies
- Watching everyone make friends
- Seeing different age groups playing with each other.

We have made a big book of us and look forward to hearing how our stories carry on, next time we meet.

We have also received a minute from the Accompaniment Programme (13-17 year-olds) as follows:

Accompaniment Programme

Five young people, two adult volunteers and one staff member met today in Friends House to discuss Quaker values and beliefs. Some of us chose to join

clerked sessions during the day, whilst others preferred to discuss in a smaller group. These decisions were supported throughout. We were also visited by a reporter from *Le Monde*.

We explored the draft of *Our Quaker Way*, which was kindly gifted to us and recognised the effort that was put into it. We considered how children and young people were described - sometimes feeling like an add on or second thought. This led us to recognise the value of our time together and the role of adults who supported us - locally, regionally and nationally and the resources this requires. Reflecting on the revised advices and queries, we started the process of creating a version that spoke to us more. We edited the language of the newer copy to try and make the advices seem less like demands and more like collective suggestions.

Earlier in the day, we took a visit to Friends House Library and explored the books and extensive cataloguing system. We were also lucky enough to see the Sichuan tapestry and look forward to seeing it reinstated. We thank the library staff for opening it for us and for their welcoming presence.

We appreciated a space today to be with others our age and have fun.

Minute 84: All-age worship and conclusion

We have ended our time together in worship as an all-age community.

We are learning together how our new ways of gathering as a Yearly Meeting can work, and we will continue this experiment in 2027.

Change is needed. We need to be silent together and to talk together. We need to be opened by the spirit to see what we need to do as individuals and a whole community.

Having concluded the business laid before us in the agenda for this session of Yearly Meeting, we separate, hoping to meet again in Friends House and online, for the first session of Yearly Meeting 2027 on Saturday 20 February 2027, should nothing occur to prevent.

Fred Langridge

Clerk

Appointments, changes to terms of service & releases from service

Yearly Meeting Elders

Service extended from 01 January 2027 to 31 December 2027:

Eleanor Beswick, Oxford & Swindon AM

Lee Taylor, Luton & Leighton AM

Catherine Khurana, Central England AM

Reappointed to serve from 01 January 2027 to 31 December 2029:

Gill Grimshaw, Banbury & Evesham AM

Appointed to serve from 01 January 2027 until 31 December 2029:

Martin Barker, Quakers in Scotland

Thomas Penny, South East London AM

Church Government Advisory Group

Appointed to serve from 01 January 2027 until 31 December 2029:

Gerald Hewitson, North Wales AM/CCR Gogledd Cymru

Friends Trusts Ltd

Reappointed to serve until 31 December 2027:

Mark Tod, Mid-Thames AM

Reappointed to serve until 31 December 2029:

John Capper, Thaxted AM

Malcolm Sterratt, Pendle Hill AM

Appointed to serve from 01 January 2027 until 31 December 2029:

Liz Megson, Cambridgeshire AM

Hilary Tucker, Manchester & Warrington AM

Quaker Life Central Committee

Reappointed to serve until 31 December 2029:

Graham Dragon, Hampshire & Islands AM

Appointed to serve from 01 January 2027 until 31 December 2029:

Emma Robinson, Southern Marches AM

Michael Goodwin, Norfolk & Waveney AM

Margaret Lee, South Wales AM/CCR De Cymru

Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee

Reappointed to serve until 31 December 2029:

Matthew Guest, Northumbria AM

Hannah Larn, Hardshaw & Mann AM

Margot Lunnon, Teesdale & Cleveland AM

Lesley Grahame, Norfolk & Waveney AM

Friends in residence at Pendle Hill (Pennsylvania)

Appointed to serve in 2027:

Rosemary Field, Cornwall AM

Gillian Metheringham, Gloucestershire AM

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

Appointed to serve from 01 January 2027 until 31 December 2029:

John Shinebourne, North West London AM

Released from service with immediate effect:

Joyce Robertson, North Wales AM/CCR Gogledd Cymru

Review group for Yearly Meeting eldership and pastoral care

Appointed to serve until the work is complete:

Clare Scott Booth, London West AM

Jane Harries, South Wales AM/CCR De Cymru (as convenor)

David Somervell, South East Scotland AM

Ruth McCarthy, York AM

Epistle Drafting Committee

Reappointed to serve until 31 December 2027:

Chris Lord, Dorset & South Wiltshire AM

Lucy Parker, Norfolk & Waveney AM (as co-convenor)

Gillian Charters, York AM (as co-convenor)

Appointed to serve in 2027:

Mark Russ, Central England AM

Suzie Green, Bournemouth Coastal AM

Mary Elliott, Lincolnshire AM

Kirstie Macqueen, North-East Thames AM

Felicity Breet, Northumbria AM

Deborah Hansen, Leicester AM

Marie Giraud, Oxford & Swindon AM

Quaker World Relations Committee

Appointed to serve from 01 January 2027 until 31 December 2029:

Till Geiger, East Cheshire AM