

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

At the Yearly Meeting in London at Friends House and online, 28 April to 1 May 2023, and additionally on 1 July 2023.

Friday 28 April: 19:00–21:00, Yearly Meeting Session 1

Minute 1: Clerks

Central Nominations Committee nominates the following Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerks for Yearly Meeting 2023, serving until the first session of Yearly Meeting 2024:

Clerk:	Adwoa Burnley	East Scotland Area Meeting
First Assistant Clerk:	Fred Langridge	Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting
Second Assistant Clerk:	Mary Aiston	Kingston & Wandsworth Area Meeting

These nominations being acceptable, we appoint the Friends named accordingly.

Minute 2: Worship

We have met in worship and we have heard read *Quaker faith & practice* paragraph 6.03.

Minute 3: Welcome to all

We welcome everyone who is attending any part of Yearly Meeting this year. This year 1,510 adults have registered in advance to attend, of whom 811 have booked to attend

online and 699 in person. Of this total number, there are 123 attenders. We welcome 240 Friends attending Yearly Meeting for the first time.

Minute 4: Youth, children & families programmes

As well as the Friends gathered in this room and online, we expect 87 children and young people to attend this Yearly Meeting. These comprise:

Fifty-one 0–11 year-olds in four groups participating in the Children's Programmes based in Friends House exploring the theme 'Truth & Joy'.

Thirty-six 11–15 year-olds taking part in the residential Young People's Programme being held at Felden Lodge, on the theme 'Truth & Integrity'.

There are 17 adult volunteers working across these programmes, supported by three members of BYM staff. All the youth, children and families programmes' themes reflect the theme of the Yearly Meeting and all expect to attend the final session of Yearly Meeting.

We look forward to joining with these Friends during this weekend and to sharing their ministry and contributions during our Yearly Meeting.

Minute 5: Committee to Examine Minutes

We appoint the following Friends to examine the minutes of this Yearly Meeting at the close of each session, and to correct any slight inaccuracies:

- Jonathan Lingham, London West Area Meeting (AM)
- Jane-Eve Straughton, Norway Yearly Meeting

If substantive alterations appear to be required, they are to be proposed at the next session prior to further business.

Minute 6: Agenda

We receive and accept the report of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee in appendix A of *Agenda & notes* and accept the agenda as listed in section 4.

The clerk of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee has introduced the agenda and outlined the topic for this Yearly Meeting:

- How can we release our energy to follow the leadings of the spirit? How can our organisation's structures best support what God calls us to do?

We give thanks for all the work undertaken by staff and Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee on our behalf.

Minute 7: Eldership and pastoral care at Yearly Meeting

We have heard from Ruth McCarthy (York AM), one of the co-conveners of Yearly Meeting Elders, and from Yvonne Estop (Thaxted AM), one of the co-conveners of the Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group, about arrangements for eldership and pastoral care over the period of Yearly Meeting.

Minute 8: Report of Central Nominations Committee

We receive the report from Central Nominations Committee on their work in 2022. The report is at appendix C in *Agenda & notes* and in the *Schedule of nominations* and has been introduced by the co-clerk of Central Nominations Committee.

Further to minute 8 of Yearly Meeting 2022, Central Nominations Committee brings forward nominations as specified in table 3 of the *Schedule of nominations*, as amended in this meeting and appended to these minutes.

These nominations being acceptable, the Friends named are appointed accordingly. We release the Friend named, with thanks for their service.

We give thanks for the work of Central Nominations Committee on our behalf.

Minute 9: Report of Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

The Nominating Group appointed at Yearly Meeting 2022 brings forward nominations as specified in table 5 of the *Schedule of nominations* as amended in this meeting and appended to these minutes.

These nominations being acceptable, all the Friends named save one (who will serve for one year only, to the end of Yearly Meeting 2024) are appointed for service from 1 May 2023 to the end of Yearly Meeting 2026 (Central Nominations Committee members) and from 1 May 2023 to the end of Yearly Meeting 2024 (Convener of the Nominating Group). We release the Friend named, with thanks for their service.

Minute 10: Central Nominations Committee: nominations required

We ask Central Nominations Committee to bring nominations to Yearly Meeting 2024 as specified in table 4 of the *Schedule of nominations* appended to these minutes.

Minute 11: Nominations to the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group (2023–2024)

Friends are asked to consider nominations for the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group 2023–2024.

The nominations process has been explained. We will return to this later in this Yearly Meeting.

Minute 12: Appointment of clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees bring forward the name of Marisa Johnson, a member of Cambridgeshire AM, to serve as clerk of trustees from 1 January 2024 until 31 December 2026.

This nomination being acceptable, the Friend named is appointed accordingly.

Minute 13: Report of Book of Discipline Revision Committee

We have heard from one of the co-clerks of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, about the progress of their work. We are reminded that the committee is keen to hear from a wide range of Friends, both in reflections on the draft texts that have been shared, and in suggestions of material to be included.

We are glad to hear of the care the committee is taking to consider our different choices of language, so that the text can reflect the truth behind the words.

We give thanks for this committee's work on our behalf.

Minute 14: Receipt of letters of greeting

We have received letters of greeting, from the World Office of Friends World Committee for Consultation; from Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe & Middle East Section; from Ireland Yearly Meeting; and from Australia Yearly Meeting. These letters have been published on our Yearly Meeting website.

We uphold those working on preparations for the Friends World Committee for Consultation World Plenary Meeting which will take place in South Africa and online from 5–12 August 2024.

The annual meeting of Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe & Middle East Section begins next week, and we will hold this gathering in the light.

Saturday 29 April: 9:30–12:30, Yearly Meeting Session 2

Minute 15: Worship

We have gathered together in worship.

Minute 16: Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting

We have heard read the epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting held 1–4 April 2023.

Minute 17: Releasing Energy and Revitalising Quaker Communities

We have heard ministry about changes in our ways of working that have been planned over years, including Symud Ymlaen, the changes in organisation in Wales and the Southern Marches to release Friends' energy to follow our leadings. We have heard too about changes made quickly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We recognise a need, now, to discern what change was just for that time, and what we will carry forward with us.

Change is inevitable. How we respond to change will determine whether our meetings are as full of vitality and welcome as we want them to be, and how we move forward gyda'n gilydd – together, as a community. We need now to be intentional about change, supported by our Quaker disciplines. We are led to work in new ways that are more inclusive and sustainable into the future. We recognise that inclusion means looking at a web of different needs and different gifts, continually listening and improving.

When we serve our meetings in a committee, or by serving coffee in a meeting house, we are doing the work before us; but we are also building community by working together. Working together is a form of Quaker worship and a way in which we can come to know each other in the things that are eternal.

We do need to discern which jobs and committees are still needed. Simpler structures could release energy for following the leadings of the spirit. It can help to think about the actions that are needed, to see what structures best support them. Let us bring creativity to our consideration of governance. Let us turn to a power greater than ourselves that will enable us to ground our work in deep spirituality, work joyfully, and reduce the risk of dutiful Friends becoming burnt out. Working more collaboratively and sharing our learning can enable us to reduce the overall burden of work. Simplifying our structures will enable us to share the gift of our worship and witness more expansively.

We are grateful for all the work that is done on our behalf. Each of us will have times and places where we are actively working, and others where our role is to uphold the Friends doing the work, trusting that they are listening to the leadings of the spirit. All of us must remember to breathe, to give space for the spirit to move.

Saturday 29 April: 14:30–17:30, Yearly Meeting Session 3**Minute 18: Worship**

We have gathered together in worship.

Minute 19: Epistle

Part of the epistle from Australia Yearly Meeting held 2–10 July 2022 has been read.

Minute 20: The work of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

The clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees has spoken to the work of trustees in 2022. We have heard of the collaborative work being overseen by trustees. There are many examples of this, Local Development Workers being but one.

Further to Minute MfS/23/03/14 of Meeting for Sufferings, we note that trustees' annual report and financial statements will be received and considered at an additional Yearly Meeting 2023 session to be held at 10am on 1 July. All Friends are welcome to attend.

We give thanks for the work of our trustees on our behalf.

Minute 21: Looking at Central Committees

We are a people of faith forever in transition. To be faithful is to be open to change; to be open to the leadings of the spirit.

When Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees agreed our Strategic Priorities in 2018, they considered the priority of 'simple structures and practices'. It followed that trustees started to look at our central structures to consider whether there were opportunities for simplification.

We recognise that the time has come to look anew at our structures, including our Central Committees. We ask our trustees to consider what form a new committee structure should take. We ask them to form a group who will consult widely with affected committees, with Meeting for Sufferings, informal groupings of Friends and Friends more widely. We ask them to bring proposals to a future Yearly Meeting for our discernment.

We need this work to be bold, imaginative, careful, and joyful. We need it to look deeply into how to connect with those Friends who have not yet been involved with service at a national level, some of whom feel excluded or disconnected from that work.

At the heart of our structures is Yearly Meeting, which includes all Quakers in Britain. We are led to create new structures for central work that are more sustainable and more inclusive, and which provide wider opportunities for service, including by Friends who do not have a single, long term, geographical base.

We ask that this work bears it **all** in mind; the state of where we are, our falling numbers and our ageing membership.

This may lead us to address some of the problems that we face as we think of the stewardship of our resources between us all. This is one step, with more slow, careful steps to follow.

Sunday 30 April: 10:30–13:00, Yearly Meeting Session 4

Minute 22: All-together worship

We have worshipped with those participating in the Children’s Programme and Young People’s Programme, and, by video connection, with 82 local meetings registered to join from their meeting houses and Friends in many other locations around Britain and the world.

Minute 23: Truth and Integrity

We began our discernment by hearing powerful prepared ministry about how Friends in the United States and Canada have taken forward the long-standing Quaker commitment to Truth and Integrity in the face of a decline in standards in public life which is reflected around the world.

In our preparation session we heard about the ongoing work of the Quaker Truth and Integrity Group.

Seeking truth is a practice of staying open to what we don’t know and haven’t experienced, and to mistakes we have made or are making. When we open ourselves to this listening we find ourselves on “kinder ground”.

We need to listen widely, including to young Friends for their concerns and advice, and to amplify the voices of people from oppressed groups and seek to “increase the proximity between us”.

How are we hearing prophetic witness today? How might we practise our public presence as Quakers? How can we name and claim our Quaker identity and act as public truth tellers?

We look forward to exploring these questions at a future Yearly Meeting and ask Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to consider how we can continue our exploration of Truth and Integrity at Yearly Meeting 2024.

Sunday 30 April, 15:00–18:00: Yearly Meeting Session 5

Minute 24: Worship

We have gathered together in worship.

Minute 25: Testimony

Part of the testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Bridget Robson (page 33 of *Testimonies*) has been read.

Minute 26: The work of our national representative body: receipt of annual report from Meeting for Sufferings

We receive the annual report from Meeting for Sufferings on their work in 2022. The report is at appendix D in *Agenda & notes*, and has been introduced by the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings.

We have heard that Meeting for Sufferings has agreed minor changes to *Quaker faith and practice* on our behalf as a consequence of the laying down of Committee on Clerks and Quaker Stewardship Committee, the redundancy of marriage registers, and the new name for Meeting of Friends in Wales: Crynwyr Cymru–Quakers in Wales.

We give thanks for the work of Meeting for Sufferings on our behalf.

Minute 27: Looking at Meeting for Sufferings

Further to minute 28 of our Yearly Meeting 2021, we have prayerfully considered questions brought to us by Meeting for Sufferings, arising from the work of the group reviewing Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering and Meeting for Sufferings.

We have not reached unity on the way forward. We will return to this matter tomorrow morning.

Monday 1 May, 9:30–12:00: Yearly Meeting Session 6**Minute 28: Worship**

We have gathered together in worship.

Minute 29: Testimony

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Peter Frank Fox (pages 15–16 of *Testimonies*) has been read.

Minute 30: Looking at Meeting for Sufferings – continued

We recognise that a change in the relationship between Yearly Meeting, Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, and Meeting for Sufferings is needed to address the overlap in current roles and responsibilities. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to bring to a future Yearly Meeting session proposals for what that change could look like. We are seeking changes that could release energy within our corporate structures, emphasise the importance of spirit-led discernment, allow wider and more diverse participation in decision making and improve communication between individual Friends, local meetings, area meetings and Meeting for Sufferings.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to work with the Recording Clerk; its Group to Review Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering and Meeting for Sufferings; and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees.

We must trust our spirit-led nominations and appointment process and the Friends we have asked to serve on our behalf. Trust within our community and between our different bodies is a vital part of making our structures work.

Monday 1 May, 14:00–16:00: Yearly Meeting Session 7**Minute 31: Worship**

We have gathered together in worship.

Minute 32: Agenda

We agree to defer to our July session of Yearly Meeting the receipt of the Tabular Statement, receipt of the report of Quaker Housing Trust, and offering guidance to our trustees further to minute 21 of this Yearly Meeting, along with receipt of the Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees' annual report and financial statements.

Minute 33: Receipt of the Yearly Meeting Epistle

The Epistle Drafting Committee appointed by minute 9 has submitted a draft epistle which has been read and accepted after amendment.

Minute 34: Yearly Meeting Nominating Group: appointment and nominations required

Further to minute 11, the following nominations are received for service on the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group from 1 May 2023 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2024:

Linda Craig, London West AM

Will Reed, Young Friends General Meeting

Rachel Berger, West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM

Sarah Siddle, Teesdale & Cleveland AM

Robert Straughton, Swarthmoor SW Cumbria AM

Imogen Sewell Risley, North West London AM

Margaret Mortimer, South East Scotland AM

Being acceptable to the meeting, the Friends nominated are appointed to work with their convener, Anne Bennett, who was appointed by our minute 9.

We ask the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group to bring nominations to Yearly Meeting 2024 as follows: six Friends to serve on Central Nominations Committee from the end of Yearly Meeting 2024 to the end of Yearly Meeting 2027; and one Friend to serve as Convenor of the Nominating Group from the end of Yearly Meeting 2024 to the end of Yearly Meeting 2025.

Minute 35: Testimonies

The following testimonies to the Grace of God as shown in the life of deceased Friends have been received (pages 8–47 of the printed edition of *Testimonies*) in addition to those from which extracts have been read in our sessions.

John Blamires

Geoffrey Brogden

Isobel McCallum Clark

Len Clark

John Michael Gibbs

Alma and John Harding

Brian Kendall

Derek Lawrence

Arthur Ronald Lewis

Pat Lucas

Neil Macdonald

Roger Mattingly

Patricia (Pat) Norman

Eva Pinthus
Ethel Roberts
Kathleen Rodham (née Eddie)
Mary Doreen Rowntree
Ruth Scott
Rosalee Ross Sinclair (née Norton)
Brenda McLeod Stokes
Oscar Wallis
Geoffrey Weeden
Michael Woolley

Minute 36: Visitors from other yearly meetings

We have welcomed 30 representatives and other visitors from yearly meetings and Friends' groups around the world.

Minute 37: Inter-church and interfaith and belief visitors

We have welcomed as visitors to this Yearly Meeting:

Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela, Interfaith Network for the United Kingdom
Susan Durber, World Council of Churches
Matthew Smith, Unitarian Church

Minute 38: Meeting for Sufferings: interim membership changes since Yearly Meeting 2022

We note that a number of appointments to and releases from the membership of Meeting for Sufferings have occurred since Yearly Meeting 2022. Table 6 of the *Schedule of nominations* appended to these minutes records the membership of Meeting for Sufferings, excluding those who serve *ex officio*, as advised to the Recording Clerk's Office and appointed by Meeting for Sufferings, as of its meeting on 4 March 2023.

Minute 39: Thanks

We record our thanks to all our staff and all those who have served us so well both during this Yearly Meeting and over the past year. We uphold those working on the planning for our Yearly Meeting in 2024.

Minute 40: Epistles from other Yearly Meetings

We have received greetings from Friends around the world via epistles from Yearly Meetings and other bodies, available on the website of Friends World Committee for Consultation and listed in *Testimonies*.

Minute 41: Receipt of minutes from the Youth, Children and Families Programmes

We have received and heard read minutes from the groups of the Youth, Children & Families Programmes of this Yearly Meeting as follows:

New Shoots (0–2 year-olds)

We enjoyed the theme of truth and joy through sensory exploration and new experiences.

We found it difficult for our parents to leave us with strangers, but our helpers did lots of things to make us feel safe.

We took the toy food in and out of the box, played with playdough and read stories; the story *Handa's Surprise* let us taste some different fruits.

We enjoyed the magic balloons over the air conditioning unit.

We played on the balcony with the Fox Cubs and found the Light Explorers in the park. We enjoyed bursting bubbles and chasing birds.

We ended our sessions with worship flowers opening in water and light changing bunnies.

Fox Cubs (3–5 year-olds)

Our theme this weekend has been Truth and Joy.

Our favourite story has been *What We'll Build* by Oliver Jeffers.

After listening to the story we built our own special shed. We put in the shed all the things we love the most.

Over the weekend we have had a wonderful time building love and taking care of each other.

We visited the library and saw books high up on shelves and there was a ladder to reach them. We saw a book made by Quaker children a very long time ago. It was so old we couldn't touch it.

We went to the park, lay on the grass and gazed up at the blue sky through beautiful pink blossom and green leaves.

We read our favourite story again and acted the bit where our enemies were kept outside the wall, but then we let them in for the tea and biscuits. We love them all.

We heard a story about a girl who wore her hijab for the first time. She went to school and some boys said some unkind words. Sometimes hurtful words need to stay with the person who said them.

We worshipped together and then thought about God, using floating paper flowers; lights; singing and candles.

We rested in our shed where we felt safe and were quiet.

Today we go home tired, but with good memories of time with our Quaker Friends. Things we have made and collected in our journal bags will help us remember.

Light Explorers (6–8 year-olds)

We are the Light Explorers. Over the weekend we were thinking about Truth and Joy.

We wanted to have a safe, quiet place so we built quite a big den made from bamboo, rope and fabric. In the den we had boxes, pillows, books and fairy lights. On Saturday afternoon, on a hunt for Truth in nature, we went to the library to look at old drawings of plants and animals and we learnt a lot about books from the past. We coloured in animal pictures and folded animal origami and did some creative writing. Back in our room we made the animals and characters move with stop motion animation. Playing fantastic parachute games with the spiritual adventurers was fun and some of us popped through the middle of the parachute.

On Sunday we went to All-together Worship where we coloured a picture of a house and drew the things that make us feel safe and joyful. In our room we started our session together with reading, drawing, colouring and playing games. We built the things we would like to see from Lego and playdough and worked together. For snack we had biscuits, oranges and loads of apples and juice. After lunch we went to the park and played in the sun. Some played football and some built a den for one Friend's soft bear.

On Monday morning after listening to Giraffes Can't Dance we made our own kind of music with instruments and had a joyful time dancing and drumming.

In our epilogues we danced like circles in the night and blew amazing bubble mountains. We will go home having had lots of fun together and made lots of new friends.

The Spiritual Adventurers (9–11 year-olds)

Over the weekend, 15 Spiritual Adventures came together to explore Truth and Joy and that Quakers do more than just sitting down.

On Saturday morning, we came together for the first time to make new friends and catch up with old friends. We played games to get to know each other and also went and used

the parachute with the Light Explorers in the George Fox room. We spent some time exploring the theme of Truth and Joy and heard the story 'The Weight of Nothing' which made us think about how lots of tiny things can have a big impact. In all of our sessions over the weekend, we had lots of snacks, we journalled or crafted what we had been up to and we also worshipped together and did the Quaker Stretch.

In the afternoon, we were joined by a member of the Epistle writing committee while we watched 'The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse' and talked about being able to find joy and love even when you might be feeling lost, lonely or sad. We also thought about how being your true self is much easier than being fake to fit in. As it was going to be May Day on Monday, we learnt a Morris dance that we did to music. We then went to the Library and learnt about all the Quakers that wrote about nature and animals and practised making our own nature sketches or origami flowers and were given wild flower seeds that we could take home to plant.

On Sunday, many of us went to the All-together Worship where we listened to the story 'What We Build' and decorated a sketch of a house with things we like. When we went back to our room we learnt about Elizabeth Fry and watched a dramatisation of her life and work. We then talked about exercising truth to power and how it is never too late to do the right thing. After this, we talked about nominations, selected our nominations committee and we were also visited by the Recording Clerk.

After lunch, we had a meeting for worship for business, where we nominated and appointed writers and readers of this minute. We had fun doing this in the Quaker way. We looked at joy and the different ways there can be joy. We took turns reading the book 'The Jar of Happiness' and talked about how joy can be what you bring for yourself, what you can bring for someone else and what someone can bring for you. We enjoyed a story about Zacchaeus and how kindness can come from unexpected places and can change you as a person.

On Monday morning, we were visited by Ellis Brooks to talk about Peace Education. We then thought about what brings us inner peace, outer peace and global peace and how we can bring about peace when we go home and back to school. One of us is already a peer mediator in school. Later on, we went to Tavistock Square and looked at the Peace Garden.

We have had a really fun weekend full of happiness and truthfulness with some tiredness. We have thought about how to have joyful experiences and not to go round telling lies so that we can be truth filled and life proofed. When we go home, we will take lots of fun memories of new friends in our cosy glows, and with a Quakerly spring in our step.

Thank you 😊

Young People's Programme (12–15 year-olds)

To all Friends everywhere,

This year, 29 young people aged 12–15, with five adult helpers met at Felden Lodge in Hemel Hempstead to consider the theme: 'Truth and Integrity'. Over the weekend, several thought-provoking workshops made us think about how we sustain our truth and integrity in an immoral world.

In our first workshop of the weekend, Tanya Hubbard helped us explore how we speak our truths in different situations through the use of drama and movement, along with some silly chicken impressions. After a tasty lunch, Ellis Brooks used animals to help represent different styles of negotiation and conflict, from the forceful shark to the accommodating teddy bear, and many in between. This helped us think about which strategies are most useful in different situations.

On Sunday morning, the TikTok legend @rhiannonbookgeek helped us think about which communities we can feel confident in, and comfortable to share our truths with, along with some smaller group discussions. She then joined us in worship. Our chat rooms helped us explore themes further, hearing experiences of our adult volunteers. Some of the young people attended the Swarthmore lecture via zoom and heard Esther Loukin talk about her experiences with using the law to create change. She came to our final speaker session and we explored different types of activism. She was encouraging about us taking action for ourselves and the importance of taking action together.

Our three base groups gave us the opportunity to reflect on speaker sessions and discuss these issues further. We also used this time to play games and get to know each other better.

We also had lots of opportunities for fun over the weekend, competing in challenges, and group activities outdoors, such as rugby and capture the flag, along with lots running around in the forest. Additionally, we had a quiz involving the creation of some awful Quaker jokes. We were also able to entertain each other on Sunday evening with our very own Quaker talent show which included: dance routines, singing and origami.

We have had a full-on weekend of laughing, talking, playing, eating and reflecting. We worshipped by ourselves and joined the All-together Worship – an all-age national blended meeting for worship on Sunday, ending with an epilogue of affirmations on Sunday evening.

We've had a weekend of reflection on our own integrity and left with a better idea of how to maintain our own truth in trying times.

Signed in and on behalf of YPP

Quinn Breadon, Emily Fuller, Ilana Jones

Minute 42: Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting

We have received the epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting held 1–4 April 2023, which reads as follows:

To all Friends everywhere,

Between the 1st and the 4th of April 2023, 46 participants and 10 adult volunteers gathered at the Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire to consider the theme:

“Speaking Truth to Power: How can we release this energy to bring light to our worlds?”

Our weekend was filled with fascinating explorations of truth, power, and integrity. As young Quakers, we experienced the importance of building community and forming meaningful connections. Throughout the weekend, we participated in Base Groups, which provided a familial atmosphere that enabled us to quickly become comfortable with one another. This allowed us to let loose, laugh, and truly be ourselves.

We met daily in worship and felt enriched by the ministry shared, which was a vital part of our community. Through song, movement, and quiet reflection, we strengthened our spiritual connection. Together, we explored the subjectivity of definitions, the importance of discernment, and the balance between faith and practical action. The final epilogue ended with a bonfire, where we shared our gratitude for one another in an incredibly sentimental way.

Our community was further enhanced by a range of activities and events, including a Ceilidh, outdoor activities run by the Frontier Centre, and a quiz. The weather improved as our community strengthened, encouraging us to utilise the outdoors as well as the indoors.

Our theme was introduced by our Arrangements Committee, and their interpretations of it so far were shared. We ended with reflective questions including “How can we create positive change from intense feelings?” We contrasted these thoughts with actions by listening to the adult volunteer team sharing their experiences of speaking truth to power through different lenses. This included restoring historical voices, smashing a Banksy and speaking Truth to Power as part of the trade union movement.

Our guest speakers included Paul Parker, who shared reflections on the work of Margery Post Abbott. This discussed Everyday Prophets, and how young Quakers who are often called ‘the future’ of Quakerism can hold this prophetic role as Quakers now. The session enabled us to appreciate the importance of speaking with love. Jude Acton encouraged the group to explore what speaking truth to power meant to us as individuals as well as members of communities. We shared in groups how we might do this in our everyday lives. This thought-provoking session raised a multitude of questions that the community was very eager to engage with. This contributed to making our Quaker meeting for worship for business so powerful.

As we reflect on our time together, we are filled with gratitude for the connections we formed and the insights we gained. We depart with a renewed sense of purpose and a commitment to speak truth to power in our everyday lives.

We wish to share the final paragraph of our minute, as we leave this community ready to seek the balance between speaking truth and hearing it in our lives.

“To speak truth to power is as much about knowing when to use our voice as it is to use our silence. This balance is quintessential, if we only speak we have no chance to listen inclusively but if we only listen we cannot bring about change. This balance is the answer.”

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Yearly Meeting 2023

Eve Park Olwyn Lewis-Bowen

Minute 43: Naming of clerks

Central Nominations Committee currently expects to bring the following names to serve as clerks for Yearly Meeting in 2024, to be appointed in the first session of that Yearly Meeting:

Adwoa Burnley, East Scotland AM

Fred Langridge, Sheffield & Balby AM

Mary Aiston, Kingston & Wandsworth AM

We ask these Friends to undertake the necessary work to prepare for that Yearly Meeting.

Minute 44: General Epistle

We send loving greetings to Friends everywhere.

Cyfleuwn gyfarchion cariadus i Gyfeillion ym mhob man.

Quakers of all ages gathered for Yearly Meeting at Friends House in London, Hemel Hempstead and online. Preparatory sessions took place online in the week before, and Junior Yearly Meeting met earlier in April. An All-together meeting for worship was held with many local meetings and individual Friends joining virtually across Britain and beyond.

We meet at a time when existential issues face us both within our aging and numerically diminishing Society and in the wider world. These require urgent responses. Quakers can show leadership and offer counsel that will help our nations in matters of the degradation of public truth, the climate and ecological crisis, and divisive public commentaries around people's identities and associated rights.

How best can we achieve this? We are a people of faith, always in transition on an exciting path of collective and personal exploration. We seek and follow the eternal Truth of the Spirit, which has many names, remaining open to new leadings and also to the possibility that we are mistaken. Our faith requires us to practise our testimony of truth and integrity in all that we say and do.

Kindness has a powerful impact and we hope to offer caring support to all, including those with whom we may disagree. Speaking from a faith perspective can carry weight. We try to let our lives speak and have a ministry of presence, but can we speak out more as Quakers?

We can be a listening presence, creating a “kinder ground”, alongside speaking truth in public places and contexts. We are called to witness truth-telling, accountability, community-building, and to give messages of hope. Speaking truth to power with love is a ministry, and is vital in a time when truth is often corrupted.

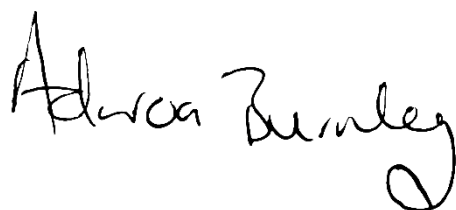
Our Quaker community has many voices, and we are upheld as one by the power of the Spirit. We all have a part to play, need to collaborate and trust those doing work on our behalf. Are we open to all voices, and how can we develop structures to engage all Friends through active listening? Ensuring true access for all in our community is a work of love. This may require us to move outside our own comfort and experience others’ frustrations and discomforts.

Yearly Meeting is the all-encompassing body of which we are all a part and where we are most diverse. It takes on the big questions – Who are we as Quakers? Why are we here? What are we led to do? At times we have been mystified, even baffled. However, we discern a need to simplify our structures to make them more transparent, to release energy for practical ministry. We seek intentional change, led by the Spirit, to help our community to thrive as we move into the uncertain futures that dance before us.

Building on our tradition of radical spirituality, we need to be courageous, imaginative, careful, and joyful. We seek corporate structures that are agile, simpler, more inclusive and support equality. Big questions are being asked about how we take the Society forward, with ways of working that meet our practical needs and have spirit-led discernment flowing throughout.

This work will continue into 2024, and ways to involve Friends across Britain Yearly Meeting will be developed, arising from our discernment thus far. As a Society, we must go in whichever direction we are led, so that the Truth may prosper.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting,



Adwoa Burnley
Clerk

At the Yearly Meeting in London at Friends House and online, additional session on 1 July 2023.

Saturday 1 July: 10:00–12:45, Yearly Meeting Session 8

Minute 45: Worship

We have met in worship. We rejoice in the presence of 10 children and seven young people who are part of our Meeting today.

Minute 46: Epistle

Part of the epistle from the Europe & Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation annual meeting held in Paris and online 20–23 May 2022 has been read.

Minute 47: Report of Quaker Housing Trust

We receive and accept the report from Quaker Housing Trust which is presented as paper A in our *Agenda Supplement*. We give thanks for the service of those Friends involved during the year.

Minute 48: The report of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Further to minute 20 of this Yearly Meeting, the clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees and the Yearly Meeting Treasurer have reported to us. We receive and note minute BYMT/23/06/05 of trustees' meeting held 9–11 June 2023, which informs us that the annual report and accounts are not yet ready to be received by Yearly Meeting. Our trustees have told us that this unfortunate situation is a 'perfect storm' of unusual factors and is extremely unlikely to happen again. We are nonetheless concerned about how this came about. We have heard that our trustees have brought in additional people with appropriate expertise, and have learnt from this experience, to ensure that our accounts and audits run smoothly in future and that they will be able to present accounts to Yearly Meeting. We ask them to work with Management Meeting to ensure appropriate support and challenge is in place for staff. We have been reassured by trustees that there are no concerns about the financial viability of Britain Yearly Meeting. We have heard that our trustees are confident that the accounts will be ready for submission to the Charity Commission by the deadline at the end of October.

We ask Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees to arrange an online meeting so that the accounts can be presented to us, once the audit is completed.

We hold our trustees and staff in the light as they complete this work.

Minute 49: Receipt of Tabular Statement

We receive and accept the Tabular Statement for 2022, published in *Patterns of Membership*. We have heard that despite an overall fall in members, 92 meetings are growing and this delights us. Many meetings are welcoming newcomers – we must nurture them. We are encouraged to consider how each of us and each local meeting can take action, to welcome those who could find a home with Quakers, including welcoming children, young people and their parents. We are reminded of Quaker Quest and how good it has been at bringing in new people. This mode of outreach really does intrigue people. This may influence our tabular statement over the coming years.

Minute 50: Looking at Meeting for Sufferings – continued

Further to minutes 27 and 30 of this Yearly Meeting, in which we asked Meeting for Sufferings to bring proposals for change to us, we have heard how the Friends working on this are approaching this work.

We agree that proposals which meet the following criteria would adequately reflect our wishes for the way forward:

Changes need to:

- continue to place spirit-led and informed discernment at the heart of all decision-making across Britain Yearly Meeting
- ensure our structures and our processes are agile and capable of translating our discernment into action
- release energy within our Quaker community
- clarify the lines of accountability; explain clearly the roles and responsibilities of different bodies; meet the requirements of charity law, good governance practice and Quaker Gospel order
- promote greater diversity and wider participation in our decision-making
- improve communication between all Friends involved in our local meetings, area meetings and all the different parts of our structures.

We look forward to hearing more about this work at Yearly Meeting in 2024.

Minute 51: Reading

In our worship we have heard read section 3:06 from *Quaker Faith & Practice*.

Minute 52: Looking at Central Committees – continued

Further to minute 21 of this Yearly Meeting, we have had an opportunity to offer further guidance to our trustees who are arranging for a group to review our structures.

We have reflected on what we value about our structures and processes. We value the massive commitment of committee members to understanding the work, and to making decisions in a spirit of worship as well as with full information. We value the strong relationships that can be built between committees, including trustees, and the staff working on our behalf, and the opportunities for spiritual accompaniment in these relationships. We value community and continuity, so that those discerning in committees are deeply grounded worshipping communities. We value those relationships within and between committees and extending out from them, that are built on time spent together, and we value the wonderful decisions that can be reached with spacious opportunities for prayerful discernment.

With multiple reviews and changes taking place at the same time, it is essential that the final recommendations do not contradict each other. Communication between the reviewing groups must continue, to mitigate that risk. We are also conscious that the two Central Committees conducted extensive reviews recently, and some of the resulting changes may still be settling.

We are glad to hear of the intention to reduce complexity and ensure that our structures and processes are easy to understand. We hope that pathways for Friends to become involved in central work can be clarified, to remove the perception, or the experience, that there is a distinction between “central Friends” and “grassroots Friends”. It is essential to ensure that there is wide representation on committees of the centrally managed work, from local and area meetings as well as diversity of identity and experience. Nominations committees can only work with what they’ve got: we are reminded to bring Friends’ gifts to their attention.

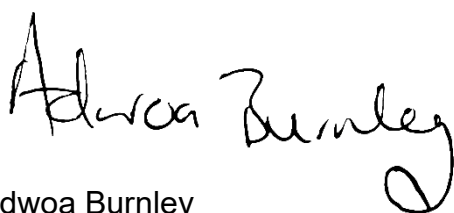
We recognise that the spirit will continue to move among us, and that our structures need to be flexible enough to allow us to follow our leadings.

We have not reached clarity about the necessity for change. We will need to continue this discernment in the future. We uphold our Friends as they consult widely. We look forward to hearing more about this work at our next Yearly Meeting.

Minute 53: Concluding minute

There being no further business for the Yearly Meeting, we separate, hoping to meet again at Friends House, London, from 26 to 30 July 2024, should nothing occur to prevent.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting,



Adwoa Burnley
Clerk

Schedule of nominations

Table 2. Report from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Appointed(*re-appointed):

Position	Name	Meeting	For service
Clerk of Trustees	Marisa Johnson	Cambridgeshire AM	1 January 2024 to 31 December 2026

Table 3. Report from Central Nominations Committee

a) Appointments for this Yearly Meeting:

Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee

Appointed:

Name	Meeting	For service
Till Geiger	East Cheshire AM	at this Yearly Meeting
Laurie Michaelis	Oxford & Swindon AM	

Yearly Meeting Elders

Appointed (*re-appointed):

Name	Meeting	For service
Catherine James *	North Wales AM	during Yearly Meeting 2023
Jo Keogh *	South East London AM	
Leasa Lambert *	North London AM	
Carolyn Sansom *	South Wales AM	
Patsy Wilson *	Northumbria AM	

Appointed as co-convenor for 2023 (*re-appointed):

Name	Meeting	For service
Michael Hutchinson *	West Scotland AM	during Yearly Meeting 2023
Ruth McCarthy	York AM	

Yearly Meeting Elders (cont.)

Appointed:

Name	Meeting	For service
Ruth McCarthy	York AM	during Yearly Meeting 2023
Matt Rosen	Oxford & Swindon AM	
Terry Winterton	Swarthmoor South-West Cumbria AM	
Barbara Sharrock	Devon AM	
David Somervell	South East Scotland AM	

Yearly Meeting Epistle Drafting Committee

Appointed:

Name	Meeting	For service
Ian Cook	Hardshaw & Mann AM	during Yearly Meeting 2023
Tony D'Souza	North West London AM	
Elinor Kershaw	Bristol AM	
Finola O'Sullivan,	Cambridgeshire AM	
Gerald Hewitson	North Wales AM	
Victoria Timberlake	London West AM	

Appointed as convener:

Name	Meeting	For service
Mark Kibblewhite	Dorset & South Wiltshire AM	during Yearly Meeting 2023

b) Appointments and other changes to committees and groups for work outside Yearly Meeting in session:

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

Appointed (*re-appointed):

Name	Meeting	For service
Andrew Rendle *	London West AM	from Yearly Meeting 2023 to Yearly Meeting 2026
Martin Ward *	South East Scotland AM	
Andrew Backhouse	East Cheshire AM	
Eleanor Coss	Northamptonshire AM	
Sarah Fox	South East London AM	
Patsy Wilson	Northumbria AM	

Released from service:

Name	Meeting
David Amos	Kingston & Wandsworth AM

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Appointed (*re-appointed):

Name	Meeting	For service
Ursula Fuller	East Kent AM	from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2026
Silas Price *	Norfolk & Waveney AM	
Kit Fotheringham *	Bristol AM	

Name	Meeting	For service
Marisa Johnson	Cambridgeshire AM	from 1 May 2023 to 31 December 2026

Clerks of Central Nominations Committee

Appointed:

Position	Name	Meeting	For service
Co-clerk	Lucy Parker	Norfolk & Waveney AM	from Yearly Meeting 2023 to Yearly Meeting 2024
Co-clerk	David Lewis	Leicester AM	

Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group

Appointed:

Position	Name	Meeting	For service
Clerk	Ade Couper	Worcestershire & Shropshire AM	from the end of Yearly Meeting 2023 to Yearly Meeting 2026

Table 4. Central Nominations Committee: nominations required

Nominations to be brought to Yearly Meeting 2024:

Committee	Nominations required	For service
Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee	6	From the end of Yearly Meeting 2024 to Yearly Meeting 2027
Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee	2	To serve at Yearly Meeting 2024
Yearly Meeting Elders	6 (or to a total of 12 elders)	To serve at Yearly Meeting 2024 and Yearly Meeting 2025
Yearly Meeting Epistle Drafting Committee	5–7 (1 as convener)	To serve at Yearly Meeting 2024
Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group	2	To serve from the end of Yearly Meeting 2024 to Yearly Meeting 2025
Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees	4	1 January 2025 to 31 December 2027

Table 5. Report of the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group**Central Nominations Committee**

Appointed:

Name	Meeting	For service
Sylvia Thomson	North Scotland AM	from the end of Yearly Meeting 2023 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2026
Ann Gimpel	Leicester AM	
Matt Rosen	Oxford & Swindon AM	
Eleanor Brooks	East Kent AM	
Peyton Lee	North East Thames AM	
Elsie Whittington	Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM	
Yvonne Dickson	Wirral & Chester AM	
Gordon Benson	Pendle Hill AM (for one year to Yearly Meeting 2024)	

Released from service:

Name	Meeting
Heather Mellars	Northumbria AM

Convener of the Yearly Meeting Nominating Group

Appointed:

Name	Meeting	For service
Anne Bennett	Lincolnshire AM	from Yearly Meeting 2023 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2024

Table 6. Meeting for Sufferings interim membership changes

For information, we record here the membership of Meeting for Sufferings, excluding those who serve ex officio, as advised to the Recording Clerk's Office and appointed by Meeting for Sufferings as at its meeting on 4–6 March 2023.

Area Meeting	Representative	Alternate
Banbury & Evesham AM	Lynne Richardson	Susie Tombs
Bournemouth Coastal AM		Kate Mellor
Brighouse West Yorkshire AM	Rosemary Daley	Cathy Urqhart
Bristol AM	Dawn Snape	Kerren Davey
Cambridgeshire AM	Dorothy Ball	Hilary Mansfield
Central England AM	Claire Bowman	Margot Williams
Central Yorkshire AM	David Bunney	David Cook
Chilterns AM	Anthony Philpott	Sheila Stevenson
Cornwall AM	Les Hereward	Andrew Bird
Craven & Keighley AM	Chris Hart	Lois Lodge
Crynwyr Cymru –	Robert Pritchard	Glenn Tomkinson
Quakers in Wales	Deborah Rowlands	Angela Arnold
Cumberland AM	Robert Pritchard	Glenn Tomkinson
Devon AM	Judy Thurgood	Juliet Morton
Dorset & South Wiltshire AM	Rachel Celia	Tess James
East Cheshire AM	Sally Mendham	Keith Braithwaite
East Kent AM	Danny Chesterman	Caroline Howden
East Scotland AM	Robert Thompson	
General Meeting for Scotland	Ann Kerr	Mike Shilson
Gloucestershire AM		Dorothy Jerrome
Hampshire & Islands AM	Jane Wilde	Catherine Brown
Hardshaw and Mann AM	Richard Melling	Diana Jeater
Hertford & Hitchin AM	Kathy Hindle	Ian Chandler
Ipswich & Diss AM	Sally Sparrow	
Kendal & Sedbergh AM	Ann le Mare	Ester Sloggett
Kingston & Wandsworth AM	Keith Walton	Mark Frankel
Lancashire Central & North AM	Jon Martin	Helen Rhodes
Leeds AM	Veronica O'Mara	Richard Hawkins

Leicester AM	Chris Myers	Anthony Gimpel
Lincolnshire AM	David Howard	Christopher Rose
London West AM	Charles Phillips	Clare Scott Booth
Luton & Leighton AM	Neil Morgan	Simon Colbeck
Manchester & Warrington AM	Hilary Tucker	Stephen Johnson
Mid Essex AM	Brian Wardrop	Susan Garratt
Mid Wales AM	David Jones	Carol Satterthwaite
Mid-Somerset AM	Andy Hall	Christopher Greenfield
Mid-Thames AM	Jenny Gordon	Jean Scott-Barr
Norfolk & Waveney AM		Sarah Bean
North East Thames AM	Jane Natai	Jenny Brand
North London AM	Arthur Charlton	Anna Sharman
North Scotland AM	Sue Horne	Mary Dower
North Somerset AM	Shella Parry	Shena Deuchars
North Wales AM	Helen Still	Ros Morley
North West London AM	Emily Milner	Tony D'Souza
Northamptonshire AM	Sue Jenkins	Magnus Ramage
Northumbria AM	Barbara Adshead	Faith Lydiard
Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM	Maggie Lightowler-Cook	Nicky Hoskin-Stone
Oxford & Swindon AM	Jennifer Barraclough	Tina Leonard
Pendle Hill AM	Pip Swancott	Ben Pink Dandelion
Pickering & Hull AM	Paul Wicks	Chris Fellowes
Sheffield & Balby AM	Emma Norminton	Mark Lallemand
South East London AM	Cherry Simpkin	Ruth Owens
South East Scotland AM	Jane Kelly	Katrina McCrea
South London AM	Janet Veitch	Eva Kalmus
South Wales AM	David Harries	Carole Rakodi
Southern East Anglia AM	Robert Parkes	Ann Kurra

Southern Marches AM	Ann Davison	Jan Arriens
Staffordshire AM	Linda Skellam	Richard Ashwell
Surrey & Hampshire Border AM	Ivan Hutnik	Gregory Valatin
Sussex East AM	Peter Aviss	Susan Walton
Sussex West AM	Christine Habgood-Coote	
Swarthmoor (South West Cumbria) AM	Robert Straughton	Bill Shaw
Teesdale & Cleveland AM	Mary Wilkinson	David Simpson
Thaxted AM	Sue Moloney	Margaret Somerville
Wensleydale & Swaledale AM	Edna Rossiter	Ian Hunter Smart
West Kent AM	John Spencer	
West Scotland AM	Michael Hutchinson	Elaine Millar
West Somerset AM	Ali Dominy	Margaret Stocks
West Weald AM	Kim Hope	Mariu Hurriaga
West Wiltshire & East Somerset AM	Ruth Cook	Angela Le Grice
Wirral & Chester AM		
Worcestershire & Shropshire AM	Penny Osborne-Gajewski	Paul Mountain
York AM	John Bourton	Teresa Rose
Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM)	Alexandra Boliver-Brown	Rachael Booth