

Minutes of Central England Area Quaker Meeting held at Edgbaston Meeting House on 19th January 2019

Clerk: Alison Ironside

Assistant Clerk: Cathy Khurana

Elders on duty: Hilary Johnson, Vic Grainger.

2019.001 Opening Minute

Our Meeting began with a period of silent worship during which part of the introduction to Chapter 24 of Quaker Faith and Practice was read to us:

The Peace Testimony is probably the best known and best loved of the Quaker testimonies. Its roots lie in the personal experience of the love and power of Christ which marked the founders of the Quaker movement...

The Peace Testimony has been a source of inspiration to Friends through the centuries, for it points to a way of life which embraces all human relationships...

In the closing years of the twentieth century, we as Friends faced a bewildering array of social and international challenges, which have widened the relevance of the Peace Testimony from the issue of peace and war between states to the problems of tensions and conflicts in all their forms.

2019.002 Representatives

The following meetings were represented here today:

B&R; BOU; BUL; COT; COV; EDG; HAL; KIN; SEL; SOL; STO; SUT; WAL; WAR;

The clerks have given permission for the following attenders to join us today:

David Foxall (SUT), Lisa Small (B&R), Dean Reynolds (WAL).

Ian Taylor (SUT), Pete Doubtfire (BUL),

Rajan Naidu (STO), Suzan Atasu (WAL),

We welcome Sara Hagel, director of West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project (WMQPEP).

2019.003 Membership Matters

a) Deaths

- We record the death of Antonia (Toni) Rumsby (WAR), who died on 21st December 2018 aged 88.
- We record the death of Kathleen (Kate) Mitton (SUT), who died on 18th December 2018 aged 93.
- We record the death of Anne Fletcher (SUT), who died on 10th January 2019 aged 91

b) Birth:

We record the birth of Brendan Peter Wilde to Ellie and Ruth Wilde (SEL) on Saturday 12th January 2019. We ask nominations committee to appoint visitors to welcome Brendan.

c) Journey into Membership:

We have heard the report of the journey into membership of Sarah Thompson, an attender at Warwick LM. We welcome her into membership of the Religious Society of Friends and Central England Quakers. We ask her visitors to welcome her and the clerk to write to her.

d) Resignation:

We have received letters of resignation from Charlotte Deasy (EDG) and Janet Austin (SEL) and Candia Cox (EDG) has asked for her membership to be ended.

We accept these resignations and wish the Friends well. We ask the clerk to write to them.

e) Terminations

Contact has been lost with the following Friends and their addresses either are not known or they have shown no interest for a prolonged period:

- Joan Blaney (EDG), Jean Harper (EDG), Michael Cox (EDG) and Chris Pendlebury (EDG)
- John Rhodes (STO), Diana Baker (STO)
- Patricia Marlow (SOL), Ann Peasgood (SOL) and Peter Marlow (SOL)
- Brian Stanger (COV)
- John Wyatt (BOU)

We therefore terminate their membership under QF&P 11.30a and 11.30b

f) Transfer Out

- Brian Ashley (COV) to North Scotland Area Meeting.

2019.004 Testimony for Hugh Maw

The memorial minute for Hugh Maw (our minute 2018.107 refers) that we sent to Elders/Overseers Support Group has been returned with slight amendments and is suggested as a Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Hugh Maw.

We accept this as a testimony and forward it to Britain Yearly Meeting.

2019.005 West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project (WMQPEP) Report

Sara Hagel has spoken to her written report. She told us that:

- The Peacemaker course of 10 weekly sessions has been a core activity in schools but this has now been declining due to the constrained budgets of schools
- Learning for Peace is going well and has attracted funding
- Restorative Approach work has stayed steady
- Junior Peacemakers has been successful running in conjunction with Peace Hub
- Peer Mediation is still going strong, and the training has been approved by the College of Mediators.

We heard that an intern has been appointed for six months as part of their communications strategy – she is proving a very useful staff member with social media skills.

Innovation has led to partnerships. One of these has led to Minus Violence Plus Peace project with funding from the Home Office Anti-Knife Crime Community Fund enabling work in 4 extra schools. We are asked to consider the shape of Peacemakers in the future. Originally, they worked with young people mainly through schoolwork. It could move more into wider community work as well as the current work and perhaps become a rather bigger project. We are encouraged by the work of WMQPEP and invite Staffordshire Friends and members of the management committee to come to our next Area Meeting on 9th March to explore the future vision of Peacemakers.

We thank Sara Hagel, Anna Gregory and Jackie Zammit and all the staff, the management committee and the freelance workers for their work on our behalf.

2019.006 Peace Hub Report

Pete Doubtfire has spoken to this report. He reminded us of the existence of Peace Hub on Bull Street and how this last year the space has been made more accessible with more of a café feel. Numbers have risen from 250 in 2017 to 350 in 2018 of unique individuals dropping in. Opening hours have changed from this month.

Peace Hub has funded the work with WMQPEP on Junior Peacemakers; it is hoped to expand this in the current year. Peace Hub are involved in partnerships not only with WMQPEP but NCS The Challenge and interfaith work with Footsteps.

We thank Peace Hub, Pete Doubtfire and the management committee for their work.

2019.007 CEQ Environmental Policy

At Area Meeting in July 2018 we asked the Low Carbon Commitment Forum to make minor amendments to the draft Environmental Policy presented at that Meeting. (CEQ Minute 2018.077). The Low Carbon Commitment Forum has considered this minute. It has made a number of adjustments to the wording of the area meeting environmental policy to emphasise that the policy does not just apply to buildings and to remove references to individual buildings.

We accept these changes and adopt the policy which is filed and will be available to read and download from the CEQ website.

The Forum also discussed ways in which it could provide 'guidance and ideas' on putting the environmental policy into practice. It concluded that the area meeting should continue to use the Eco Church framework and work with others.

We heard that the Forum will continue to support local meetings in becoming Eco Churches. It hopes that as many friends as are able will attend its meetings. The forum is co-hosting a 'Show the Love and afternoon tea' at the Birmingham Central Mosque on 17th February and joining with other churches to run another ecumenical environmental conference in the Priory Rooms.

There is a growing upwelling of grass roots concern about the likely impacts of climate change. Quakers need to be involved to demonstrate that our faith is relevant to the climate challenges. The Forum clerk responded to the Climate Coalition's request to write the Quaker resources for its 'Show the Love' campaign.

We commend the Show the Love initiative to local meetings and the outreach opportunities it provides for holding conversations about Quakerism and our sustainability and climate justice work.

2019.008 Sustainability Conference 19th – 21st October 2018

Rajan Naidu attended this conference and reported on it. He reminded us that our corporate sustainability work grew out of our Canterbury Commitment at BYM in 2011. His written report will be circulated with these minutes and there are several links embedded for further reading.

He referred to the feedback from the weekend, which included: having fun, envisaging what we want, strengthening connections with others.

Points to take away included look at real and tangible happiness in the world, be aware of the key to changes happening in nature, do not shy away from fear of being different.

He also told us about his interest in a vegan lifestyle according with Quaker values. He mentioned a paper he has written on this and this will also be circulated with these minutes.

We thank Rajan Naidu for his report, which will be filed.

2019.009 Nominations

Nominations committee have the following suggestions for service:

- Darryll Candy (BOU) to serve on Old Peoples Fund Trust from January 2019 to January 2025
- Wendy Burnett (BUL) to serve on Records Advisory Committee for a 2nd Triennium from March 2019 to March 2022
- Jo Hallett (COV) to serve a 3rd Triennium on the WMQPEP Management Committee to December 2021
- Tina Helfrich (COT) and Carole Pannell (STO) to attend the Inclusion and Diversity Conference Woodbrooke 18th - 20th January 2019
- Judith Jenner (COT) and Claire Bowman (BOU) to attend the Trustees and Treasurers Conference 29th - 31st March 2019

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We approve these names and appoint them accordingly

We agree that Area Meeting can send 2 or 3 Friends to the Outreach Conference.

We note that Stephen Shirley has decided that he doesn't want to go to JYM.

Release from Service

- Rhiannon Grant (BOU) as an Area Meeting Trustee
- Anne Ullathorne (COT) from the West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project.
- Keith Hitchcock (SUT) from Area Meeting Nominations Committee^[1]_[5]

We thank them for their service and ask Nominations Committee to find replacement names for these vacancies if required.

Elders and Overseers Support Group:

Vic Grainger (SEL) is appointed to serve on the Elders and Overseers Support Group for the rest of the Triennium.

Nominations Committee 2018-2020

The following additional names are suggested by local meetings to serve on the Area Meeting Nominations committee for the remainder of the triennium

COT	Helen	Rowlands	N
COV	Andrew	Rigby	N
SUT	Barbara	Cockcroft	N

These names being acceptable they are duly appointed.

2019.010 Interim Triennial Elders and Overseers' Nominations

The clerk of Triennial Elders & Overseers Nominations Committee brings forward the names of Barbara Cockcroft (SUT) and John Cockcroft (SUT) as Elders/Overseers for the remainder of the triennium to the end of December 2020.

We appoint Barbara Cockcroft and John Cockcroft as Elder / Overseers from now until the end of the triennium December 2020.

2019.011 Terms of Reference for Peace Committee

We have received terms of reference for our Peace Committee. We accept these terms of reference with the deletion mentioned, which will be dated with today's date.

2019.012 Meeting for Sufferings Report

Cathy Khurana reported on the residential MfS held 23rd – 25th November 2018

Quite a lot of time was spent increasing our understanding of the work of central and standing committees and the key issues that concern them at present:

- Quaker Committee for Interfaith Relations, QCCIR who talked about their study on the [changing face of faith](#);
- Quaker Life Central Committee, QLCC: the life of local meetings including outreach, eldership and oversight and current work on [gender diversity](#)
- Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee, QPSW: more information [here](#)
- Quaker World Relations Committee, QWRC shared reports from other European yearly meetings. Friends were also encouraged to watch a short inspiring video made by FWCC [about the effects of climate change on Quakers in other parts of the world](#)

Meeting for Sufferings enthusiastically endorsed strategic priorities for BYM that have been developed by Trustees under the heading 'A simple church, supported by a simple charity, to reinvigorate Quakerism'.

- Speaking Out – a reminder that anyone who wants to receive copies of media releases can let Anne van Staveren know – annev@quaker.org.uk
- Inclusion and diversity: Our work on inclusion and diversity is being overseen by Meeting for Sufferings, so this is a good opportunity to remind you:
- All Friends are encouraged to complete the survey – to help us examine where we are now, and inform what we do next.
- Dealing with difficult issues such as deciding to lay down the BYM Sustainability Group since this work is now embedded into Quaker Life and Quaker Peace and Social Witness.

We thank Cathy for her report, which is filed.

2019.013 Nominations Committee Report

We have received the report from Nominations Committee on the work they have done in 2018.

We thank Judith Jenner, the outgoing clerk, and nominations committee for their discernment on our behalf and thank the people who serve.

The report is filed.

2019.014 Briefing Paper from Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN)

This was brought to our attention as the Stansted 15 are due to be sentenced in the week beginning 4th February before our next meeting. We are encouraged to write to our MPs. Copies will be sent out with the minutes.

2019.015 Thanks and Next Meeting

We thank Edgbaston LM for hosting AM. We meet again, at Bull Street QMH on March 9th from 2.00 – 5.00pm.

Alison Ironside

Clerk this time