

Central England Quakers Meeting for Church Affairs
held at Bull St Quaker Meeting House
on 23rd November 2019

Clerk – Cathy Khurana

Assistant clerk – Alison Ironside

Elders on duty: Wendy Burnett & John Kimberley

2019.102 Opening Minute

Our meeting began with a period of silent worship during which we remembered those who have died since our last meeting.

We also heard read to us Quaker faith and Practice 26.64:

By emphasising the Inner Light, we do not humanise religion too much. It is not our light – we receive it. As we are in the midst of experiences with our fellow beings, a light will come that causes those experiences to look changed. We say, in a clumsy way, that it is the Inner Light that has caused the transformation, and we believe that it has come from God. How do we know that we are not deceiving ourselves? In the end, we have nothing but our own experience to rely upon. In the end, even the one who accepts the most traditional religion has nothing but his own experience to rely on.

2019.103 Representatives

The following Local Meetings were represented here today:

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

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

Ian Taylor (SUT); Fiona Waterhouse (SUT); Terry Stanley (BUL); Lisa Small (BGR)

2019.104 Membership Matters

a) Deaths

We record the death of Howard Boyd (COT) on 17th October 2019, aged 75.

We record the death of Alistair Eastland (BOU) on 17th October 2019, aged 59.

We record the death of Marjorie Parry (PEN/STO) on 16th October 2019, aged 98.

b) Application for membership

We have received an application for membership from Fiona Waterhouse, an attender at Sutton Coldfield LM. We ask nominations committee to find the names of visitors for Fiona.

c) Transfer out

Ian Prior (BG&R) to Worcester & Shropshire Area Quaker Meeting.

2019.105 Memorial Minute

We have received a memorial minute from Sutton Coldfield Quakers for Anne Fletcher, and have heard it read to us.

We send it to Elders and Overseers Support Group for further consideration.

2019.106 Minutes Received

We have received minutes from two of our Area Meeting committees asking for a renewed consideration of our Local Meetings, as several are small and struggle to continue, particularly finding it difficult to appoint Friends to roles and responsibilities:

1. Minute received from Elders and Overseers Support Group, 8.10.2019

2019.30 - E&OSG are aware that many of our small Meetings across the area are struggling. We feel that a review is due; we ask AM to look at imaginative ways of using our Meeting Houses differently and working together more collaboratively.

2. Minute received from Clerks Advisory Committee

CAC2019/16 Minute from AM elders & overseers support group

We have heard minute 2019/30 from the E&O support group about smaller meetings in our AM. We also note the invitation from Britain YM to all area meetings to put in an expression of interest for a local development (formerly vibrancy) worker in our area who could provide meeting centred support

We have heard that several meetings in our AM are struggling with low numbers, and in particular Edgbaston

As an area meeting we may have enough funds to contribute towards our own local development worker.

We recommend that this goes on to the November agenda. We ask the clerk to send this minute to the clerk of trustees [Judith Jenner] and clerk of AM trustees finance committee [Robert Morris].

Hilary Johnson from Elders and Overseers Support Group has spoken to this matter and raised some inter-related issues of nurturing and growing Quakerism through our meetings and associated buildings. We are conscious that the matter of smaller or struggling meetings is a recurring concern in our Area Meeting.

We ask all our Local Meetings to consider some of the ideas raised today: getting together in a different way, for example holding semi-programmed Meetings for Worship; holding Meeting for Worship at different times or on different days; local Meetings might identify and advertise their prime concern.

We want to hear from every Local Meeting and will return to this matter; we ask our Local Meetings to send a minute to the AM clerks by the end of March.

We ask the clerks to submit an expression of interest to BYM for a Local Development Worker for the Area Meeting.

2019.107 Bursary Fund Report

Jane Holt has introduced the Bursary Fund report, explaining the work of the Bursaries Committee over the last three years. Friends are asked to raise awareness of this committee in our Local Meetings to enable those who need financial support to attend a variety of Quaker events, gatherings, courses and conferences. There is a document in the website and all Local Meeting treasurers have a copy, explaining how the Bursary Fund works: "Funding for Friends and Attenders".

We thank Jane for the report and the committee for their work on our behalf. The report is filed.

2019.108 Priory Rooms Report.

John Kimberley, one of our trustee directors of Priory Rooms, has spoken to the report prepared by Peter Ullathorne, Clerk to Directors.

The Priory Rooms trading company runs our conference and meeting facilities at Bull St, providing accommodation for a wide range of Quaker and other groups and continuing to serve as a base for Quaker activities.

We thank the directors and all the excellent staff team led by Andrew Callan for their work which supports our Area Meeting through gifting the taxable profit to us.

2019.109 Nominations and Appointments

Nominations Committee suggest:

- Val Jenner (SEL) serves a further triennium on Outreach Committee until Dec 2022.
- David Foxall (SUT): Visitors Keith Hitchcock (SUT) Barbara Groombridge (WAL)
- Fiona Waterhouse (SUT): Visitors John Cockcroft (SUT) Wendy Burnet (BUL)
- Miriam Branson (STO) Alison Ironside (SEL) and Barbara Groombridge (WAL) serve on Clerks Advisory Committee from Jan 2020 to Dec 2022.
- Keith Hitchcock (SUT) to serve a third triennium on Trustees Property Committee from Dec 2019 to Nov 2022
- Eddie Rugg (WAR) takes part in Young Friends Participation Day
- Philip O'Shea (EDG) serves on Quaker Christmas Parcels Appeals Committee from Dec 2019 to Nov 2022
- Philip O'Shea (EDG) serves on Outreach Committee from Dec 2019 to Nov 2022
- Cyril Bezant (SEL) serves on Northfield Development Committee from Dec 2019 to Nov 2020
- John Cockcroft (SUT) serves as a QCAT Trustee from Dec 2019 to Nov 2022
- David Pulford (SEL) serves on WMQPEP Steering Group Management Committee from Dec 2019 to Nov 2020
- AM to support the application of 2 Representatives to attend QPSW Conference in March 2020

We approve these names and appoint our Friends accordingly.

Triennial Nominations Committee:

We bring forward the name of Hilary Topp (COT) to serve as an Overseer for the remainder of the triennium until Dec 2020.

We approve this name and appoint our friend accordingly.

RELEASE FROM SERVICE:

Kath Jeffrey (EDG) has asked to be released from Christmas Parcels Committee.

We agree to this and thank Kath for her service.

2019.110 CEQ Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for 2018

The CEQ Annual Report and Accounts for 2018 were approved by Trustees at their September 2019 meeting and subsequently submitted to the Charity Commission. A copy was sent to each Local Meeting in October. An illustrated summary "Central England Quakers in 2018" has been published and several copies sent to Local Meetings. We hope these will be used to keep Friends, Attenders and others informed of our work and witness.

We thank James Bradbury, and the trustees, treasurers and examiners for all their work in producing the report and summary.

2019.111 CEQ General Fund Budget for 2020

Included in our papers for today's meeting is a Forecast for 2019 and Draft Budgets for 2020, prepared by James Bradbury, treasurer to trustees, and approved by Trustees Finance Committee.

James has also given a presentation on this matter. The budget proposals concern the two main funds – General Fund and Trustees Fund – which finance our work and witness.

We have heard that contributions to the General Fund from individual Friends and Local Meetings has fallen in recent years and contributes only 6% of the General Fund income.

We note that we have changed our stockbrokers, moving our investments to Rathbone Greenbank, an ethical investment company.

We confirm that we will send £25,000 to BYM for this year (2019), and agree to increase the budgeted £24,000 for 2020 to £25,000.

We accept the budget for 2020.

2019.112 Gender Diversity

This item is held over but Friends are encouraged to take this to our Local Meetings.

2019.113 Thanks and Next Meeting

a) We thank Cathy Khurana for her service as co-clerk over the last four years and her previous service as assistant clerk.

b) We thank Bull St Quaker Meeting for hosting our meeting today.

We meet again on Saturday 18th January 2010, also at Bull St QMH from 2.0 – 5.0pm.

Cathy Khurana
Clerk This Time