

Minutes of Central England Area Quaker Meeting held at Warwick Quaker Meeting House as a Blended Meeting on 15th July 2021

Clerk: Alison Ironside
Assistant clerk: Stella Roberts
Assistant Clerk: Vic Grainger (zoom)

Elders on duty: Gill Smith (zoom), John Sheldon.

2021.054 Opening Minute

We record that this is a blended Meeting facilitated by Warwick Local Meeting.

Our Meeting began with a period of silent worship during which § 10.04 Quaker Faith and Practice was read:

The life of a religious society consists in something more than the body of principles it professes and the outer garments of organisation which it wears. These things have their own importance: they embody the society to the world. and protect it from the chance and change of circumstance; but the springs of life lie deeper, and often escape recognition. They are to be found in the vital union of the members of the society with God and with one another, a union which allows the free flowing through the society of the spiritual life which is its strength.

William Charles Braithwaite, 1905

2021.055 Representatives

The following meetings were represented here today:

BOU; BUL; COT; COV; HAL; SEL; SOL; STO; SUT; WAL; WAR;

We welcome again Frances Rutter, a member of South Wales Area Meeting

2021.056 Membership Matters

a) CONFIDENTIAL

b) Transfer Out

Jonathan Idle (COV) to Hampshire and Islands Area Meeting

Hilary Cremin (WAR) to Leicester Area Meeting

Sally Sadler (COT) to Cambridgeshire Area Meeting.

c) Transfer In:

Geoffrey Braithwaite (HAL) from Luton and Leighton Area Meeting.

2021.057 Memorial Minute

We have received a memorial minute from Cotteridge Meeting for Val Hill and have heard it read to us.

We forward this minute to Elders / Overseers Support Group for their consideration.

2021.058 Minutes and Notes Received

a) We have received the following note from the Meeting House Management Group, a sub-group of Trustees Property Committee:

CEQ Meeting House Management Group

The Meeting House Management Group met on Monday 14 June 2021 and the final item on the agenda was concern for the Friends continuing to meet at Barnt Green & Redditch and Kings Heath local meetings. Although this is outside the remit of MHMG, the current situation is relevant to some of our decisions about the care and management of properties. Now that the responsibility for the finances and buildings is with trustees the Friends are able to focus on building their worshipping communities and their own spiritual lives.

We are pleased that the Elders & Oversees Support Group and others are seeking ways to support these Friends. However, we are aware that the area meeting discerned that it does need to look more carefully at our infrastructure and find ways of simplifying some of our local meetings.

Twelve area meeting friends attended the Woodbrooke/BYM Simpler Meetings course in the spring, and we hope that any insights gained from this programme can be shared with the area meeting soon. Then we can find creative and new ways for Friends to meet as a local meeting without having too many roles and responsibilities.

We ask that an action plan is brought to area meeting to explore how ideas from the Simpler Meetings project can support some of our local meetings.

We ask that this section of the notes of the meeting is sent to the area meeting clerk.

Following on from our minute 2021.022 the clerking team did approach Woodbrooke Learning to explore them facilitating the possibility of them helping us understand how the Simpler Meetings project could be applied to our Area Meeting (AM) as we discern the way forward.

We understand that they are working on this, but we have not heard from them officially.

We acknowledge that those Friends in smaller Meetings do need our spiritual and pastoral support in addition to the financial and management support already given. Elders and Overseers Support Group are doing what they can.

However we do need to look in a broader sense across our AM as to how we may work in simpler ways. Link to BYM/Simpler Meetings webpages:

<https://quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/support-for-meetings/simpler-meetings>

We encourage all Friends to look at these pages.

We ask Clerks Advisory Committee to explore with those Friends who participated in the Simpler Meetings courses a way to bring this matter back to AM.

b) We have received the following minute from Bull Street LM:

Minute 2021/38

A concern has been shared that some Area Meeting papers are circulated late.

Important and complex matters, such as safe guarding, need more time for fuller consideration and discernment.

The Meeting asks that the Clerk forwards this Minute to the Area Meeting Clerk in advance of the next Area Meeting of Central England Quakers on July 15th

The advice has always been that papers should be sent to the office a minimum of a week before Area Meeting. Unfortunately, either some papers have come in late or the AM office has not been open to circulate the papers well in advance.

The 8 AMs this year are not all around the same time each month so that the time of the calling letter (before

the first Sunday in the month) when documents in advance could be sent out can be well in advance of AM and the documents haven't come in.

Large Policy Documents should be tabled the month before they come to Area Meeting for discernment.

2021.059 CEQ Safeguarding Report and Policy

Carole Pannell, one of our Safeguarding officers, has spoken to this report

The report serves to give some of the background and introduce the new Policy to us.

We agree to accept the Policy for implementation in our Local Meetings.

It has been explained that the appendices referred to, which are not printed with the policy, are the Toolkit and this gives the detailed procedures and all the forms needed; it will be available as part of the training to be offered to Local Meetings' Clerks, representatives of Elders and Overseers, and those who are involved in running children's meetings in late Autumn or early Spring by our Safeguarding co-ordinators.

We thank Carole Pannell and the other safeguarding officers for the report, which is filed, and for their work on this complex matter.

2021.060 Meeting for Sufferings Report

Cathy Khurana has spoken to her report on Meeting for Sufferings on 10th July 2021.

She lists the main items on the agenda and gives the link to the papers for the meeting:

<https://quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2021-07-agenda-papers-package>

Young Adult representation on MfS is interesting in that MfS asks AMs to find representatives or alternates under 50!

She commented that she felt we should trust the discernment of other Quakers.

We thank Cathy Khurana for her report, which is filed.

2021.061 Edgbaston Vision Group Report

Our minute 2020.063 on the Edgbaston Working Group Report said we look forward to hearing further in due course.

We have before us now both a report from the Edgbaston Vision Group and the notes of their latest meeting.

Clare Bowman, convenor of the group, explained that the report gives some of the history of the group and that the Vision Group is composed of ½ interested Friends and ½ of local residents.

It has been rather a think-tank and they acknowledge the role of the Meeting House Management Group in coping with the property and finances of Edgbaston in this instance.

The Vision Group see themselves in more of an advisory role now.

We encourage the Vision Group to continue to work to explore increasing the use of the Meeting House by various community user groups, and when appropriate to define their purpose or draw up some Terms of Reference.

We thank Clare Bowman and the Vision Group for their work

2021.062 Nominations

Nominations committee have the following suggestions for service:

- To serve as a Priory Rooms director - Roger Chapman (WAR) July 21 - June 25
- To serve on the Northfield Development Committee - Mikayla Pencross (COT) June 21 - May 24

- To serve a 2nd Triennium on AM Employment Committee - Roger Chapman (WAR) June 21 - May 24
- To serve a 3rd Triennium on AM Employment Committee - Huw Davies (HAL) Oct 21 - Sept 24
- To serve on AM CYPC - Helen Waters (SEL) July 21 - June 24
- To continue to serve on the Susanna Cole Trust - Stella Roberts (COV) Oct 21 - Sept 24
- To serve as Quaker Life Representative (alternate) Anna Edelsten (WAR) July 21 – June 24
- To serve as a Talking Friend trustee - Susan Steadman COT for 1 year initially Sept 21 - Aug 22.

We approve these names and appoint them accordingly and ask the Area Meeting Secretary to inform them and any clerks of the relevant committees.

Release from Service

- Val Jenner (SEL) from AM Outreach Committee.

We agree to this request and thank her for her service and ask the Area Meeting Secretary to inform her.

2021.063 Requests for Hosting Area Meeting in 2022

We ask LMs to consider whether they can host AM next year, and offers to host AM will be welcome for the following months:

January, March, April, June, July, September, October and November.

2021.064 Thanks and Next Meeting

We thank Warwick LM for providing Elders and helping with the blended Meeting. We hope to meet again, nominally at Barnt Green QMH on September 18th from 2.00 – 5.00pm.

Alison Ironside
Clerk