

Minutes of Central England Area Meeting for Worship for Business, held at Selly Oak Quaker Meeting House on Saturday September 17th and also online.

Elders: Ed Ullathorne, Cathy Khurana.

Clerks: Vic Grainger, Stella Roberts.

Hosts on zoom: Ed Ullathorne, Barnaby Waters.

Children's Meeting: Betty Hagglund, Maud Grainger, Barnaby Waters.

Prevented: Judith Jenner.

2022.066 Opening Worship

During our opening worship we heard of the death of Jeanne Little of Cotteridge meeting, who died on the 18th July, aged 93. Advices & Queries 19 was read: *Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring. Remember that the meeting as a whole share a responsibility for every child in its care. Seek for them as for yourself a full development of God's gifts and the abundant life Jesus tells us can be ours. How do you share your deepest beliefs with them, while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them? Do you invite them to share their insights with you? Are you ready both to learn from them and to accept your responsibilities towards them?*

2022.067 Representatives

All our Local Meetings except Barnt Green & Redditch and Hartshill were represented. The following attender has been given permission to attend - Willemina Morton. Grace Waters from Children's meeting was also present.

2022.068 How has the truth prospered in Selly Oak Meeting?

We heard from Maud Grainger, co-clerk of Selly Oak meeting, as follows:

'For a number of personal circumstances, I have not had a chance for this to be shared with Selly Oak friends. So please accept these words as my perspective as Co clerk over the past 18 months. Selly Oak friends have worked hard to create a 'have a go' mentality. Trying to relax formal structures and see what emerges. This requires trust, willingness, acceptance of risk and humour. I recently heard of a concept - 'failure week' - a week where it's not about succeeding or getting things right but a week that is about trying and experimenting and seeing what happens. We are endeavouring to find a balance between acknowledging our tested structures and being open to new light. Any talk of truth must talk about hurts and it wouldn't feel right to talk about truth without saying no meeting is without hurt, no community is without hurts and it's never plain sailing. We are a meeting with a strong children's meeting but with many parents involved in the delivery of that programme. We are a meeting that aims to socialise together but often that responsibility lies with a few. We are a meeting that aims to raise our environmental awareness and action. We are a meeting where we hope we can share our passions and concerns. We are a meeting wanting to learn and doing this together. We are a meeting willing to move our start time once a month. We are a meeting willing to work alongside others. We are a meeting committed to intervisitation. Over the next year we hope to strengthen our Nominations, we hope to laugh together more often and fill our meeting with joy. We hope to find ways to express our resistance to injustice.' We thank Maud and Selly Oak Friends for sharing their truths with us.

2022.069 Membership Matters

a) Deaths

We record the death of Jeanne Myrtle Little, a lifelong Quaker and member of Cotteridge Meeting, who died on 18th July 2022, aged 93.

b) Journey into Membership - Edward Rugg (WAR)

We have heard the report of the visit with Eddie Rugg by Helen Pemberton (WAR) and Pete Duckworth (COV). We welcome Eddie into membership and ask the AM clerk to write and his visitors to welcome him.

c) Application for Membership - Clive Gordon (SUT)

Clive Gordon has been attending Sutton Coldfield LM for over a dozen years and has now applied for membership. We ask Nominations committee to find names of visitors for him.

d) Resignation from Membership - Andrew Spittle (BUL)

Andrew responded to enquiries from Bull St friends by email: - *'I have not been able to attend Meetings at Bull Street for very many years and I now live in London so I think it would be appropriate to come off the list of Members and thanks for your prompt in this regard.*

I have very many happy childhood memories of attending Monthly Meetings at Bull Street with my family who have a long association over many generations. I send to you all at Bull Street my very best wishes for the future.'

We accept and record his resignation.

e) Memorial Minute - Jeanne Myrtle Little (COT)

We have heard the memorial minute for Jeanne Little, which is filed. We send this to AM Elders and Pastoral Friends Committee for further discernment.

f) Accomplishment of Marriage Emily Lloyd Quinton and Paul Corrigan.

We record the accomplishment of marriage between Emily Mary Lloyd Quinton, a member of Leicester AM, and Paul Anthony Corrigan, not in membership, at Bournville Meeting House on August 22nd 2022. The Quaker Marriage Form H, Certificate of Accomplishment, is filed with these minutes.

2022.070 Fuel Poverty and Energy champion concern. (Chris Martin)

We have heard from Chris Martin (COT) about his concern, that Central England AM should support his Fuel Poverty and Energy Champion project. He is supported in his concern by Cotteridge meeting, and his proposal has been circulated with the papers, together with the supporting minute from Cotteridge LM, which is filed. (We note however that Bull St meeting does not support this concern as costing a lot of money with an uncertain commitment - this minute is also filed). The energy champion project has also been taken to, and has the support of, CEQ Climate Emergency Action. A CEQ CEA meeting heard Phil Beardmore from Ecobirmingham say that the energy champion project was an 'opportunity for CEQ to get things moving not just in terms of money but also in showing leadership and setting an example. Alliances of people wanting to do something about fuel poverty need to be formed between faith organisations and community-based organisations. This needs to be done very soon because of the price rises looming in October and the need to make an impact this winter.' The energy champion project also has the support of the Centre for Sustainable Energy, The Active Wellbeing Society, Ecobirmingham and other groups.

We have had a long discussion about this matter and have heard opposing views. In light of this we feel we are not in unity at this time, although there is general agreement that it is of great importance. We ask Chris and others involved to take note of the questions raised in this Meeting, namely the questions of managing volunteers, who actually will do what, and can we afford it. We also ask other LMs to comment on the proposal as so far we have only heard from two. We hope that Chris and others will firm up their proposal and that AM Finance Committee will have fuller information before their budget meeting in October. We hope that this proposal will come back to Area Meeting soon. We thank Chris for his great labour and efforts to engage with this important issue.

2022.071 AM Children and Young Peoples report

We thank Barnaby and Grace Waters for presenting this report, which is filed with the minutes, and the CYPC committee for all their work during the year.

Four of our local meetings have active CYPC groups, and Hartshill, while having laid down the formal group, have done things differently by having All Age Worship throughout the year.

JYF young adults' group (18-20s) had a Christmas residential at Bournville Meeting House last year, and another is being planned for December this year.

By mutual agreement JYF was laid down as a concern of AM CYPC, and remaining JYF funds were transferred to AM CYPC.

In addition, there was planned provision for children at the May 2022 special AM, and voices of children were able to be heard. We are fortunate as an AM, to have up-to-date Safeguarding procedures, and facilities and funds for Children and Young People, although we realise that we could do more.

2022.072 Proposal for 2023 AM Meetings from Clerks Advisory Committee

John Sheldon has spoken to this and the proposal and proposed timetable is filed with the minutes. We thank the CAC for their thoughts. There were a number of comments. Wendy Burnett (BUL) said 4 AMs at Bull St would be too onerous. It was thought that 12 meetings may be too ambitious. Devotional area meetings latterly were not well attended - could we experiment with a picnic or outing in August, or an AM intervisitation day one Sunday in August to a LM? We ask AM clerks and the Clerks Advisory Committee to return to the proposal to make some changes. In the meantime, we ask Local meetings to consider if they could host a meeting in 2023, and if they have any comments on these proposals.

2022.073 Poppy kits from Peace Committee

Cathy Khurana has brought poppy making kits for LMs to take back and make in their own meetings and display as a wider symbol of remembrance. We thank the Peace Committee for this initiative, and hope that it will spur friends on to consider becoming a link person for their LM. Please send extra poppies to Peace Hub for their window display. The poppy mosaics by Caroline Jariwala are now on display in the Bull St MH garden.

2022.074 Thanks and Next Meeting

We thank Selly Oak meeting for their hospitality today; and Betty Hagglund for taking the Children's meeting. The next AM will be at Coventry LM, on October 22nd.

signed,

Vic Grainger (clerk this time)