

# Minutes of Central England Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) held at Bournville Meeting House and online on 17 June 2023

Clerk: John Sheldon (WAR) Assistant clerk: Clare Bowman (BOU)  
Elder: Kate White (BOU) Pastoral Friend: Howard Saunders (BOU)

## 2023.045 Appointment of Assistant Clerk

Bournville LM suggest Claire Bowman as assistant clerk for this meeting, and we appoint our Friend accordingly.

## 2023.046 Worship

We have observed a period of stillness during which we heard part of *Quaker Faith & Practice* 10.03 as follows:

*Our sense of community does not depend on all professing identical beliefs, for it grows from worshipping together, knowing one another, loving one another, accepting responsibilities, sharing and working together. We will be helped by tried and tested Quaker methods and procedures, but the meeting will only live if we develop a sense of community, which includes children and adults alike. If all those who belong to our meeting are lovingly cared for, the guidance of the spirit will be a reality. The celebration and commemoration of life's great events draw us together as we share the occasion and rejoice or mourn with one another.*

## 2023.047 Representatives

The following Local Meetings are represented: B&R, BOU, BUL, COT, COV, HAL, KIN, SEL, STO, SUT, WAL, WAR.

We are aware that the following Local Meetings are not represented: HAR & SOL. We have heard that William Waddilove visits Hartshill regularly. They are a small but thriving meeting.

The clerk has given permission for the following Attenders to join us today:  
Lee Gunn (COV), Ian Neal (BOU) and Edwyn Jones (SEL)

## 2023.048 How the Truth has prospered at Bournville

Donald Stubbings has told us of some of the activities of Bournville over recent months. We have heard that worship on Sunday is blended and attended by 20-25 Friends. There are shared lunches once a month, online discussions about *Quaker faith & practice* and an away-day was held in March. Bournville are currently reviewing their structure and are working towards a "Life Committee" (including elders and pastoral Friends) and a "Resources Committee" (including finance and property).

## 2023.049 Process for appointing Elders and Pastoral Friends

We have received a paper from Nicholas Paton Philip and Julia Furminger, clerk and assistant clerk of our Elders and Pastoral Friends Nominations Committee and Nicholas has spoken to this. We have also been reminded of part of our minute 2021.084 (Triennial Elders and Overseers Nominations Committee: Report). Nicholas Paton Philip has spoken to the report and we have heard a number of contributions on the topic.

We feel led to lay down the Elders and Pastoral Friends Triennial Nominations Committee and ask Local Meetings to nominate elders and pastoral Friends as these appointments come to an end, for consideration by Area Meeting. We would keep this arrangement under review. We see the need for supporting elders and pastoral Friends across the Area Meeting and we will return to this aspect next time.

## 2023.050 Minute from Community Justice Group: Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP)

We have received Minute 2023/08 from our Community Justice Group which reads as follows:

**IPP Sentences** – "*insidetime*" the national newspaper for Prisoners & detainees carried on its front page an article on IPP. Last September 2022, the Justice Committee published its report into the Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentence. The Government provided its response to this report on 9 February 2023. The then Justice Secretary, Dominic Rabb, rejected the recommendations of this landmark report. IPP sentences were abolished in 2012, yet there are still 3,000 people in jail. CJG has previously raised this matter with CEQ AM and our concern was taken to Sufferings. We ask that renewed energy is put into lobbying the government on this matter, particularly in light of a new Justice Minister being

*appointed. The Clerk is asked to send this minute to AM.*

We have also received a covering paper from Tricia Bradbury, clerk of the group, and Roderick Keefe has spoken to this matter. We support the concern of our Community Justice Group that the continued illegal use of Imprisonment for Public Protection should be brought to an end as soon as possible. We encourage our Community Justice Group to work with whatever organisations might help to bring this about. We hope very much that Quakers in Criminal Justice and Meeting for Sufferings, to whom we send this minute, will take whatever steps they can to bring our shared concern to the attention of Alex Chalk, who was appointed Justice Secretary in April this year, with the request that there should be a “re-sentencing exercise” brought in at the earliest opportunity for all Imprisonment for Public Protection prisoners.

## **2023.051 Minute from Bournville Local Meeting: Support for ecobirmingham**

Our trustees have forwarded Minute 2023.12 from Bournville LM as follows, and Donald Stubbings has spoken to this.

### **Support for ecobirmingham (formerly called Northfield Eco Centre)**

*Our friend Donald Stubbings asked the meeting to consider supporting a request by ecobirmingham to Central England Quakers for continued core funding.*

*He reported that, this year, CEQ are giving a grant of £20,000 to ecobirmingham. Trustees are currently having discussions with the organisation about future funding. A summary of the ecobirmingham's 2021/2022 impacts report is attached to these minutes.*

*The point was made in our meeting that core funding improves ecobirmingham's ability to attract funding from a variety of sources for specific projects. This is true for all charities. Currently, the Area Meeting contributes 20% to the overall budget of ecobirmingham.*

*We discussed the proposal that our meeting supports the request made by ecobirmingham to Central England Quakers for continued core funding and that this should be at least at the current level for the next three years.*

*We agree with this and ask our Co-clerks to send a minute to the Clerk of Area Meeting Trustees to request that they continue with core funding for the next three years.*

*Anne Giles & Ian Neal, Co-clerks*

We have also been reminded by Gill Smith, clerk to trustees, about our ongoing concern to determine “What love requires of us”.

Many Friends have spoken in favour of the Bournville minute. As an Area Meeting, we are committed to doing what we can to ameliorate the growing climate crisis and many Friends, including our children, are working on this. We feel that it is best for the minute to be sent to trustees for them to consider in this year's budget planning. We expect that in the autumn we and the trustees will have heard further from our special working group and that we will have a clearer vision of what love requires of us.

## **2023.052 Membership matters**

### **(a) Applications**

We have received applications for membership from Anne Christie (BOU), Tina Vendrells Feliu (SEL), and from prisoner JG. The letter of application from JG has been read to us. We ask our Nominations Committee to find Friends to visit them and to report back to us with the names.

### **(b) Journey in to membership**

We have received a report on the journey into membership of Rajan Naidu (SEL) from Stuart Masters (SEL) and Maris Vigar (STO) and this has been read to us. We welcome Rajan into membership of Central England Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). We ask his visitors to welcome him and the clerk to write to him.

### **(c) Transfers out confirmation**

We record the completion of the transfers out of the following Friends:

Peter Fishpool (COT) to Gloucestershire AM. May 2023

Sarah Fishpool (COT) to Gloucestershire AM. May 2023

Andrew & Rose Parry (STO) to Worcestershire and Shropshire AM. March 2023

### **(d) Resignation**

We have heard that Judith Jenner (COT) wishes to resign her membership. Cotteridge Friends are clear that this is appropriate so we accept Judith's resignation and ask our Clerk to write to her.

## 2023.053 Report from Junior Yearly Meeting

We have received a report from Rose Mackman (SEL) on JYM which was held 1-4 April 2023 at the Rock Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire. We thank Rose for the report which is filed with the minutes.

## 2023.054 Report from Quaker Life Representative Council Conference

We have received a report from Anna Lyon and Ruth Livermore who attended this conference which was held 24-26 March 2023 on Zoom.

## 2023.055 Nominations

### (a) Nominations Committee suggest

Robert Morris (HAL) to serve as Priory Rooms Director from June 2023 until the end of May 2026  
Anne Ullathorne (COT) to serve as Area Meeting Treasurer from June 2023 until the end of May

2025

Jane Holt (WAR) to serve a further triennium on Bursary Committee from July 2023 until the end of June 2026

Claire Bowman (BOU) to serve a further triennium as Area Meeting Ecumenical and Interfaith Co-ordinator from June 2023 until the end of May 2026

Janet Blann (COT) to serve a further triennium as our representative to Ackworth School General Meeting from June 2023 until the end of May 2026

Janet Blann (COT) to serve on the Lettings Advisory Group from June 2023 to the end of May 2026

Clare Peat (SEL) to serve on the Lettings Advisory Group from June 2023 to the end of May 2026

Claire Bowman (BOU) to serve on the Lettings Advisory Group from June 2023 to the end of May

2026

Robert Sprake (B&R) to serve on the Lettings Advisory Group from June 2023 to the end of May

2026

Val Jenner (SEL) and Diana Lampen (STO) to visit Claire Cavendish on her journey into membership

Eleanor Nesbitt (COV) to visit Lee Gunn along with Rob Hooper (appointed in April) on her journey

into membership

These names being acceptable we appoint our Friends accordingly.

### (b) Warwick LM suggest

Frances Rutter to serve on AM Nominations Committee. This name being acceptable we appoint our Friend accordingly.

### (c) Clerks of Elders and Pastoral Friends Nominations Committee suggest

Geoffrey Braithwaite (HAL) to serve as an additional elder until 2024.

### (d) Release from service

Anne Ullathorne (COT) from Elders and Pastoral Friends Support Group. We thank our Friend for her service on this group.

## 2023.056 Change to Governing Document – Schedule

Trustees propose the following changes to the Governing Document of our Area Meeting.

### SCHEDULE to the Governing Document for Central England Area Meeting

#### Constituent Meetings

MEETING	ADDRESS
Barnt Green & Red-ditch	Meeting House, 6 Sandhills Road, BARNT GREEN, B45 8NR
Bournville	Meeting House, 65 Linden Road, BOURNVILLE, Birmingham B30 1JT
Bull Street	Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, Birmingham, B4 6AF
Cotteridge	Meeting House, 23A Watford Road, COTTERIDGE, Birmingham, B30 1JB
Coventry	Meeting House, Hill Street, COVENTRY, CV1 4AN
Hall Green	Meeting House, Hamlet Road, HALL GREEN, Birmingham, B26 9BG
Hartshill	Meeting House, 112 Castle Road, HARTSHILL, CV10 0SG

Kings Heath	Meeting House, 17 Colmore Road, KINGS HEATH, Birmingham, B14 7PE
Selly Oak	Meeting House, 930 Bristol Road, SELLY OAK, Birmingham, B29 6NB
Solihull *	Solihull Methodist Community Centre, Station Approach, SOLIHULL, B91 1LG
Stourbridge	Meeting House, Scotts Road, STOURBRIDGE, DY8 1UR
Sutton Coldfield	Meeting House, Kenelm Road, SUTTON COLDFIELD, B73 6HD
Walsall*	Pelsall Community Centre, Station Road, Pelsall, WALSALL, WS3 4BQ
Warwick	Meeting House, 39 High Street, WARWICK CV34 4AX

\* *Meetings held in rented premises*

**Branches:-**

Quaker Christmas Parcels

Community Justice Group

Peace Committee

Peace Hub

West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project (Peacemakers)

**Trading Company:-**

Priory Rooms (Bull Street) Ltd

We accept these changes.

**2023.057 Thanks and next meeting**

We thank Bournville Friends for their hospitality and technical support today. We hope to meet again, should nothing occur to prevent, on Thursday 6 July at Warwick with agenda items to be with the clerk by Friday 23 June.

John Sheldon  
Clerk this time