

## **Minutes of a meeting of Quakers in Yorkshire**

Held at Oxford Place Methodist Centre on 21 January 2017

### **Representatives**

#### **Brighouse West Yorkshire:**

Doreen Glover, Mike Glover, Sylvia Sheard, Hilary Browne, David Hyatt

#### **Central Yorkshire Area Meeting:**

David Bunney, Bronwen Alty

#### **Craven & Keighley Area Meeting:**

David Olver, Evelyn Shire, Richard Vesey, Sue Cariss, Chris Petrie, Alison Tyas

#### **Leeds Area Meeting:**

Jude Acton, Pat Gerwat, Joanna Guise (prev), Janet Naudin, Una Parker, Barbara Parry, Pete Redwood, Judith Sayer; Susan Robson, Martin Schweiger, Edward Starkie

#### **Pickering & Hull Area Meeting:**

Diana Sandy, Helen Clark, Chris and Brian Fellowes, Gina and Steve Allen

#### **Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting**

Sallie Ashe, Margaret Lawson, Faith Rodger, Keith Burdett, Sue Goodson, Romaine Gayton

#### **York Area Meeting**

Nicholas Evens, Mary Griffiths, Barbara Penny and Lizzie Rosewood.

### **QiY 17/01/01 Reading**

In our opening worship we have heard a reading of part of paragraph 28.01 of *Quaker Faith & Practice*.

### **QiY 17/01/02 Welcome**

We have been given a very warm welcome to Oxford Place by Veronica O'Mara, Co-Clerk to Leeds Area Meeting.

### **QiY 17/01/03 Appointment of Elders**

We thank Robert Keeble and Barbara Parry for their willingness to serve as Elders for today's meeting.

## **Reaching Out**

### **QiY 17/01/04 Under 19s Co-ordinating Group**

Kate Marks has reported to us about the work of the Under 19s Co-ordinating group.

The report will be circulated with today's minutes and will also be available on the QiY website. We thank Kate for her report.

### **QiY 17/01/05 Junior Holidays**

We have heard from Rosemary Daley (who has spoken on behalf of Rachel Muers who is prevented today), about Junior Holidays in 2016, and about the committee's plans for 2017. The report will be circulated with today's minutes and will also be available on the QiY website. We thank Rosemary for her report.

### **QiY 17/01/06 Yorkshire Friends Holiday School**

We have heard an interesting and lively account from Guy Milner about YFHS in 2016, and of their plans for 2017. The report will be circulated with today's minutes and will also be available on the QiY website. We thank Guy for his report.

### **QiY 17/01/07 Easter Settlement 2016**

Chris Petrie and Pauline Leonard have reported to us about Easter Settlement in 2016. Their full report will be circulated with the minutes of our meeting and posted on the QiY website. We have also heard of the plans for the 2017 Easter Settlement. Our thanks go to Chris and Pauline for their report.

### **QiY 17/01/08 Questions to Our Speakers**

Following the presentation of their reports, our speakers involved in organising children's activities have been asked questions about the burden of child protection legislation and the impact of this on the range and enjoyment of the children's events. Does the legislation cause problems in providing an authentic Quaker experience for the young people? We acknowledge that we do need to look to providing support, and we understand that QiY Trustees have been asked by the Under 19s Coordinating Group to explore the possibility of employing a paid administrator who would support our Junior Holiday Committee and the activities they manage.

We have heard further about the organisation of Holiday School (where many more people are involved to deal with the larger numbers), and issues relating to the roles of student helpers, and of their training.

By comparison the Junior Holidays Committee is very small and there is a problem of continuity with the turnover of its members every few years. We thank Friends for their questions and reflections on this matter.

We extend our thanks to our Friends for their responses to our questions.

### **QiY 17/01/09 Outreach Projects Committee**

Annabel May has presented a detailed account about the work of the OPC in 2016 and a table entitled 'Spreading the Word' has been distributed to Friends present today. We

have heard how helpful the committee's funding has been to local meeting projects, and in helping Friends to organise Quaker Week events and to contribute to wider community projects. Several Friends have expressed their appreciation for the ways in which the OPC has developed its endeavours after a difficult period of transition. Further details and supporting documents will be circulated with today's minutes and will also be available on the QiY website. We thank Annabel for her report.

### **QiY 17/01/10 Testimony**

We have heard a testimony to the Grace of God in the Life of our Friend Anna Needham, formerly of Leeds Area and Pontefract Monthly Meetings. This was accepted by Leeds Area Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2016. We thank our Friends for preparing the testimony and Leeds Area Meeting for forwarding it to us.

### **QiY 17/01/11 Peace Vigil**

Following the inauguration of Donald Trump as President of the USA, many Friends from our meeting have taken part in a lunchtime vigil for peace on the steps of Leeds Town Hall. Others have taken part in a peaceful march, in support of the Solidarity with Million Women initiative, in Briggate.

### **QiY 17/01/12 Thanks**

We thank all those Friends who have offered service to Quakers in Yorkshire in various ways and have come to the end of their terms of appointment.

### **QiY 17/01/13 Releases and Appointments**

#### **RELEASES**

##### Junior Holidays Committee

Rachel Muers has asked to be released as a committee member later this year. We agree to this and thank Rachel for her work.

##### The Mount School Committee

Paul Stansfield has ceased to be a parent of a student so is released from being a parent governor. We thank Paul for his work.

##### The Retreat

The Retreat has abolished the role of Member of the governing body. Therefore we release Sharon Hodgson from service and thank her for her work.

##### QiY Website

John Batchelor maintained the website on a voluntary basis from 2004 but has now ceased doing this. The co clerks will write and thank him for his many years of service.

We are grateful that David Olver is prepared to be responsible for the website for the time being.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

Nominations for appointment are brought to us as follows.

### From Area Meetings

#### QiY Trustees

From Sheffield and Balby AM: June Lewis (Sheffield Central) to serve a second term from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

#### QiY Outreach Projects Committee

From Craven and Keighley AM: Floe Shakespeare (Skipton) to serve a further term of two years from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018.

#### QiY Nominations Committee

From Central Yorkshire AM: Denise Stimson (Hight Flatts) and Ruth McTighe (Barnsley) to serve first terms from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

From Sheffield and Balby AM: Romaine Gayton, (Sheffield Central) to serve a second term and Sallie Ashe, Balby (Doncaster) a first term from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

#### From Yorkshire Friends Holiday School

For the year 2017, we note the names of Mark Rymer as Applications Secretary and Ruth Clark as Treasurer. A number of other volunteers, whose names have been notified to the co clerks, serve on the committee.

#### From QiY Nominations Committee

##### Breckenbrough School

Stefan Lewicki (Harrogate) and John Littlefair (Beverley) to serve first terms as Governors of Breckenbrough School from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2020.

##### Glenthorne

Mike Watson (Skipton) to serve a first term on Glenthorne Management Committee from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2020.

##### Under 19s Coordinating Group

Guy Milner (Attender, Leeds) to serve on the Under 19s Coordinating Group from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

##### The Mount School Committee

Margaret Bryan (York Friargate) to serve on The Mount School Committee from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2020.

Joan Concannon to serve as a Parent Governor on The Mount School Committee from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2020.

These names being acceptable our Friends are duly appointed. We thank these Friends for their willingness to serve.

### **QiY 17/1/14 List of Members and Attenders**

This list is published every three years; the next issue is due early in 2018. We agree that we wish this work to be undertaken again. We ask the Trustees to approve the financial commitment for this.

The details provided will be in accordance with QiY's Data Protection Policy. The book's compilation requires collaboration with Area Meetings which are responsible for ensuring the lists of members and attenders they submit comply with data protection regulations.

We thank David Olver for his offer to the co-clerks to coordinate this.

### **QiY 16/10/15 Considering Our Future**

Diana Sandy shared with us a concern she has had for about 30 years, which focuses essentially on how the decision making and discernment processes have changed with increasing centralisation.

The Society established by George Fox and Margaret Fell enabled all Friends to engage with deliberations, discernments and decisions with, and for each other. Local groups met monthly with an important function of seeing each others' faces, and regional groupings met on a quarterly basis. She likened this system of interlinking groups to a cobweb.

Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting was one of 18 quarterly meetings set up in 1666/7. The meetings made all decisions and maintained contact with the constituent monthly meetings. Travelling in the ministry was a feature in the early days. The annual meetings in London came into existence to record decisions made and to enable Friends to meet. But the cobweb structure enabled problems to be aired and dealt with, was adaptable, and in Diana's view was highly influential.

A consequence of the laying down of quarterly meetings in 1966 was that their responsibilities now rest with Friends House. The option for general meetings (GMs) to continue led to the establishment in 1966 of Yorkshire General Meeting (YGM) which carried on meeting for various activities including outreach, and support work with enquirers and attenders. From a meeting of all GM clerks and assistant clerks in 1986 it was clear that individual GMs wanted a more proactive role. YGM was laid down following recommendations of the group appointed by Yearly Meeting to review structures. The question is whether secular efficiency is dominating.

Diana asks us 'What business are we in?' 'Are we still necessary?' 'Is there a need for some radical spirituality?' Quakers in Yorkshire is now one of only eight regional

gatherings and some are very weak. The vast majority of Friends have no equivalent to turn to and some meetings struggle.

Is there a need to re-establish the cobweb?

In discussion afterwards, there was a variety of views. Some Friends were not too despondent. The Society is evolving and the cobweb is still in place, exemplified by examples of spiritual opportunities such as The Kindlers, Experiment with Light and other initiatives, under the care of local and area meetings.

It was recognised that some elements are imposed from outside – such as legislation about safeguarding or regulations imposed by the Charity Commission. However, there is a similarity with us all – very white and few young people. Some meetings do have young people – and would love travelling ministers. The difficulty in getting to meetings for worship for business was mentioned.

The question was posed as to whether we really want new people and are willing to change our culture? Communication is important. The internet has changed the way Friends communicate with each other. Could we take up the opportunity to get involved with more networks, using social media? A Friend gave an instance of changed practice with the children's meeting when a review revealed that the young people recognised how much adults valued meetings for worship, but had not hitherto communicated with the young people what the essence of this was.

David Rubinstein highlighted our structures and our theology. Regarding theology, there have been significant changes in the 300 years since the Society was established. We exist in a secular age, in contrast to the religious age in which the Society started. And we have a great deal to offer the world, and should bear that in mind.

We thank Diana Sandy for her stimulating talk and for prompting us to consider these fundamental issues. We thank David Rubinstein for his thoughtful closing contribution.

### **QiY 16/10/16 Closing Minute**

We thank Leeds Area Meeting Friends for their warm welcome and hospitality today. It has been a pleasure for us to be joined by six young people in our opening worship. We are grateful to those Friends who have provided them with activities for the rest of the day.

We hope to meet again at Harrogate Friends Meeting House, on Saturday 22 April 2017, God willing.

Chris Love, Arthur Pritchard

Co-Clerks, Quakers in Yorkshire