

Minutes of a meeting of Quakers in Yorkshire

Held at Ackworth School, 21 July 2018

Representatives

Brighthouse West Yorkshire Area Meeting

Central Yorkshire Area Meeting

Pauline Frykman, Denise Stimson

Craven & Keighley Area Meeting

Lois Lodge, David Olver, Alison Tyas, Mike Watson

Leeds Area Meeting

Robert Keeble, Ann Castle, Veronica O'Mara (prevented), Brian Sayer, Judith Sayer, Audrey Acton, Barbara Parry, Chris Bagley (prevented)

Pickering & Hull Area Meeting

Marjorie Bliss, Michael Bliss, Dianne Hallett, Steve Hallett

Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting

Margaret Lawson, Faith Rodger

York Area Meeting

Pat Easton, Keith Knight (prevented), Liz Scurfield, Kurt Strauss, Eleanor Tew, Mike Turton

QiY 18/07/01 Reading

In our opening worship we have heard part of section 24.49 of Quaker Faith & Practice.

QiY 18/07/02 Testimony – Winifred Smith

We have heard read a testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of our Friend Winifred Smith. This was accepted by Pickering and Hull Area Meeting on 12th May 2018. We endorse the testimony and thank the Friends who prepared it.

QiY 18/07/03 Elder

We thank David Bunney for offering to serve as an Elder for today's gathering.

QiY 18/07/04 Welcome

We have been given a warm welcome to Ackworth by David Bunney, speaking on behalf of the Head, Anton Maree, who is not able to be with us today. David has given us a brief account of the activities in the school. A lengthier account, prepared by Anton, will be included in the QiY October newsletter.

QiY 18/07/05 Annual Reports and Accounts from QiY Trustees

Barbara Windle, clerk to QiY Trustees, has presented the annual report for Quakers in Yorkshire for 2017. Her report will be attached to the minutes of this gathering and a summary of the accounts will also be available.

QiY 18/07/06 Annual Report from Glenthorne Trustees

Mike Watson of Skipton Meeting has presented a summary of the annual Trustees' report from Glenthorne Quaker Centre for 2017. The Glenthorne Trustees report has been circulated at our meeting and will also be placed on the QiY website.

QiY 18/07/07 Israel and Palestine: presentation by Karen Abi-Ezzi

We welcomed Dr Karen Abi-Ezzi of the Division of Peace Studies and International Development, University of Bradford who focused on the effects of American foreign policy in the Middle East. There are a number of inter-connected conflicts and a general shift from the striving to establish a Palestinian State to the focus on resolving the tensions between Sunni and Shiite Muslims which have been emerging for some time.

Since President Trump came to power, there has been a very significant break with the international consensus which had been a feature of American Foreign policy until then. For a long time, there was an assumed consensus around the idea of a dual state, but with the opening of the Embassy of the United States in Jerusalem, that has receded. Mr Trump allows President Netanyahu to do what he wishes in his aim to establish a new Jewish nation state.

Mr Trump covered his proposed policy in his campaign. The significance of the mid-term elections coming shortly cannot be overlooked and President Trump's ambition to achieve some of his promises. The result has been a huge shift in the Middle East because of crude policies, realignments, alliances and allegiances that we would not have imagined a few years ago. This includes the new law which has gone through the Knesset about the establishment of a nation state for Israel. Nikki Haley United States Ambassador to the United Nations has used strong language to support US policy and is disliked; Jared Kushner¹ has been given huge responsibility.

The crisis in the Gaza Strip is linked to the withholding of funds, with much unemployment and poverty there compared to the West Bank. Hamas has been in power in the Gaza Strip for around ten years. Their power has depleted because of the reduction of Arab backers and there are great tensions with Fatah in the West Bank. There is also a closer alliance between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Very complex relationships exist throughout the region. Karen summarised these with examples from Yemen, Syria, Qatar as well as Lebanon. There has been a general rise in Shiite rule as in Iran, but Saudi Arabia, with a new younger leader, represents Sunni interests.

Karen felt there was no real leadership from the United States, despite many arms deals such as the major one with Saudi Arabia, and yet leadership is needed if a solution is to be found.

The Trump administration sees President Obama's position on the Iran Nuclear Deal, which led to a lot of trade between Iran and the European Union, as a mistake and the EU has struggled to maintain it.

¹ Son-in-law and Senior Adviser to President Trump

Following the talk, there were a number of questions from the floor about different aspects of what is happening. On the question of what we might be able to do, Karen said there is a lot of unrest among liberal Jewish young people in the USA who are concerned about the right-wing government in Israel. Perhaps we can seek out Jewish groups we can work with; she was disappointed about the apparent absence of any such initiatives in the UK.

This was a comprehensive yet sobering account for which we thank Karen warmly.

QiY/07/08 Releases and Appointments

RELEASES

Releases

Diane Exley (Rawdon) has asked to be released as one of the Custodians of the Yorkshire Quaker Archives.

Marian McNichol (Settle) has asked to be released from Junior Holidays Committee.

Due to ill-health Margaret Nunnerley (Ilkley) was not able to take up a post as Governor of Breckenbrough School.

Due to ill health, John Baily (Thirsk) was unable to assume his role as a QiY Trustee and has asked to be released.

We agree to these requests for release.

Appointments

Nominations for appointment are brought to us as follows:

From York Area Meeting

Meg Forrest (New Earswick) to serve as a Trustee of QiY from now until 31 December 2020.

From QiY Nominations Committee

Co-Clerk

Arthur Pritchard (High Flatts) to serve a second term as Co-Clerk of Quakers in Yorkshire from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021.

Bootham

Sharon Hodgson (Skipton) to serve a further term as a Governor of Bootham School from 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2021 (to complete the maximum allowed period of eight years).

Donald Purves (Friargate) to serve a second term as a Governor of Bootham School from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022.

Graham Ralph (Friargate) to serve a first term as a Governor of Bootham School from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022.

The Retreat Nominations Committee

Peter Allan-Williams (Lincolnshire AM) to serve a second term of 3 years on The Retreat Nominations Committee from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021.

These names being acceptable, the Friends are duly appointed. We thank them for their willingness to serve. We also thank the different Nominations Committees for their work.

We request Quakers in Yorkshire Nominations Committee to seek a Friend to be Newsletter Editor, to assist the present Co-clerks.

QiY 18/07/09 Closing Minute

We thank staff at Ackworth School and Friends from Ackworth and Pontefract meetings for their warm welcome and hospitality and for their contributions towards the afternoon's activities. We hope to meet again at The Mount on Saturday 20th October, God willing.

Chris Love

Co-clerks

Arthur Pritchard