

Minutes of a meeting of Quakers in Yorkshire

Held at St Andrew's Church, Skipton, on 20 July 2019

Representatives

Brighouse West Yorkshire Area Meeting

Central Yorkshire Area Meeting

Maureen Pritchard, Lynn Hill (prevented), David Cook

Craven & Keighley Area Meeting

Alison Tyas, Mike Watson

Leeds Area Meeting

Ann Castle, Paul Ellis, Jane Garrett, Pat Gerwat, Janet Jerram, Margaret Meara, Una Parker, Barbara Parry, Bridget Robson, David Robson

Pickering & Hull Area Meeting

Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting

Sue Goodson, Margaret Lawson, Faith Rodger

York Area Meeting

Christine Abbot, Jo Reilly

QiY 19/07/01 Reading

In our opening worship we have heard two excerpts from *Living Adventurously*, Quaker Faith and Practice, Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting, 2009. These were *Multilingualism and Multiculturalism*, p 64, Justine White, Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, and *Quakers and Social Justice in South Africa*, p 70, Kholekile Tshanga, Cape Eastern Monthly Meeting.

QiY 19/07/02 Welcome

We have been given a warm welcome to Skipton by Liz Watson, of Skipton Local Meeting.

QiY 19/07/03 Elders

We thank Gil Skidmore and Laurel Phillipson for offering to serve as elders for today's gathering.

QiY 19/07/04 Annual Reports and Accounts from QiY Trustees

Barbara Windle, Clerk to QiY Trustees, has presented the annual report for Quakers in Yorkshire for 2018. A number of questions have been raised regarding the report and Chris Petrie, the Treasurer of QiY and other QiY Trustees, have agreed to respond to these as required during our lunch interval. The Trustees' report will be attached to the minutes of this gathering and a summary of the accounts will also be available on the QiY website.

QiY 19/07/05 Annual Report from Glenthorne Trustees

Meg Hill of Kendal and Sedbergh Area Meeting has presented a summary of the annual report from Glenthorne for 2018. We have heard in particular about the Welcome Project, run since 2008, which is funded by a special bursary to offer respite to asylum seekers. Beneficiaries have come from many countries around the world. The Glenthorne report has been circulated at our meeting and will be attached to the minutes and placed on the QiY website.

**QiY 19/07/06 Sanctuary Meetings: Tatiana Garavito and Rosemary
Crawley**

We have welcomed Rosemary Crawley from Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) and Tatiana Garavito, Programme Manager for Sanctuary Everywhere at Friends House.

Rosemary talked about the 'hostile environment' for refugees and of the activities of British Friends in challenging it.

Racism is at the root of the hostile environment. The term was coined by Theresa May in 2016 but predates that by many years. The recruitment of labour from the West Indies was opposed from the start, the Colonial Secretary being criticised for allowing Empire Windrush to set sail. Hostility was evident in early decades but most evident when a housing shortage appeared. The so-called 'race' riots of 1958 prompted the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act which disadvantaged minorities from the New (Black) Commonwealth. This has been followed by 14 other policies restricting movements as well as plentiful negative rhetoric such as Margaret Thatcher's talk of being 'swamped'; it was her government which introduced one of the acts.

British Friends have only recently looked at challenging prejudices; Rosemary feels there is a genuine need for this. Black Friends need to know they can rely on solidarity in the Religious Society of Friends.

Tatiana Garavito spoke about the setting up of QARN which supports Friends acting under concern and urges them to oppose inappropriate government policies. She gave the background to the decisions to set up Sanctuary Meetings, the aim of which is to promote welcoming environments and to challenge racism as they affect refugees and asylum seekers.

Sanctuary meetings and QARN are trying to change the law so that discrimination can be eliminated. Evaluation has established that the major aim of those involved in this work is to be able to contact each other. Consequently, a directory is now being compiled to enable people to do this. A conference in Woodbrooke from 27th to 29th September 2019 will enable Friends to come together and share experiences.

We then heard from various Friends about the activities in their meetings.

Hilary Evens (Harrogate LM) advised that the main aim of the meeting is to support Harrogate District of Sanctuary. She outlined their endeavours to raise funds for 12 families (mainly Syrian and Muslim) to spend time at The Jonas Centre in Wensleydale. Following initial frustrations they have been offered funds from a

number of sources. Lee Lester, the Youth Development Worker for Yorkshire Quakers, who is also a football coach, will be running a day of activities for 25 young people.

Robert Keeble confirmed that **Leeds Area Meeting** is a Sanctuary Meeting. Specific initiatives in which Friends are involved include Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (PAFRAS), which provides counselling, the West Yorkshire Destitute Asylum Network (WYDAN), which runs a night shelter and has organised a trip to Bamford Community, and a Harmony Community Choir. This was the means used to invite asylum seekers and refugees to a shared lunch in Leeds – about 20 people are now coming to Carlton Hill Meeting House one Sunday a month.

Ruth Dance of Friargate stated that during its first year, Friends who are working for York Area Sanctuary Meeting tried to ascertain what was already going on in York so as to avoid duplication. They have made meaningful contacts such as with Refugee Action York and with the University of York who may be able to undertake research studies.

Illustrating her work with photographs, **Marian McNichol** spoke about campaigning with the local MP and awareness-raising work that **Settle Local Meeting** is undertaking, as well as practical initiatives. She spoke especially of the Settle Community Sponsorship scheme, which will bring a refugee family from Syria to Settle and support them for two years.

Hilary Browne (Bradford LM) stated that Quakers were founder members of Bradford City of Sanctuary. Three Friends in Bradford are employed by Refugee Action; refugee families came to Skipton for a day, and they have also been to Ilkley. One Friend is a McKenzie Friend, supporting people in the courts, and others attend court to give support to those asylum seekers who are awaiting their appearances.

Kathleen Wallace, Sheffield Local Meeting, reminded Friends that Sheffield was the first City of Sanctuary; it now has its own premises from which a number of activities are run. In 2018, when considering Sanctuary Meetings, Sheffield Central Friends realised that there was already a network of projects, including ASSIST (set up in 2003) for failed asylum seekers, which offers practical help including houses, which have been donated, and there are various conversation clubs. Asylum seekers and refugees will be welcome at the event celebrating the 30th anniversary of the opening of Sheffield Meeting House.

Jette Howard, Skipton said that 2015 saw an inaugural meeting of a refugee support group held in Skipton meeting house. For the last two years the meeting house has given room for volunteers to enable English lessons to take place. They have also written to the MP, especially about unaccompanied children.

We have also heard from Catherine Putz about activities involving Friends from Hebden Bridge and Halifax meetings, such as at St Augustine's Centre, Halifax which offers a range of support to asylum seekers and refugees. The AM has made a commitment to Sanctuary Everywhere.

We thank those Friends who have shared these details with us and all those others who are involved in many ways throughout our region. Any reports available will be put on the QiY website. This session has been energising, has enriched our understanding of the issues and underscored our commitment to provide sanctuary to asylum seekers and refugees.

QiY 19/07/07 Releases and Appointments

RELEASES

Custodian of Yorkshire Quaker Archives

Philomena O'Hare has asked to be released from the committee. We agree to this and thank her for her work.

APPOINTMENTS

Nominations for appointment are brought to us as follows.

From QiY Nominations Committee

Co-Clerk

Gavin Burnell (Carlton Hill) to serve as Co-Clerk of Quakers in Yorkshire from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022.

Treasurer

Chris Petrie to serve a second term as Treasurer of Quakers in Yorkshire from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022.

Retreat Nominations Committee

Roger Pierce (Friargate) to serve on The Retreat Nominations Committee from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022.

Junior Holidays

Bronwen Alty (Wakefield) to serve a second term on Junior Holidays Committee from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022.

Bootham School

David Stanton (London West AM) to serve a second term as governor of Bootham School from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023.

Breckenbrough Governors

Alison Clarke (Thirsk) to serve a second term as governor of Breckenbrough School from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023.

Ruth McTighe (Barnsley) to serve a second term as governor of Breckenbrough School from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2023.

Independent Examiner

Crozier Jones, Chartered Certified accountants, to complete an Independent Examination of the QiY 2018 accounts. This was a between-meetings appointment, initially until December 2019. The meeting today agreed that trustees could appoint for a further term if appropriate.

From Area Meetings

QiY Trustees

From Sheffield and Balby AM: Digby Swift (Balby (Doncaster)) to serve as a QiY Trustee from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022.

Nominations Committee

From Central Yorkshire AM: Sarah Myers (Pontefract) to serve on the QiY Nominations Committee from now until 31 December 2020 (completing a term)

From Sheffield and Balby AM: Norman Anderson (Sheffield Central) to serve on QiY Nominations Committee and Sallie Ashe (Balby (Doncaster)) to serve a second term on QiY Nominations Committee, both from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022.

These names being acceptable our Friends are duly appointed. We thank these Friends for their willingness to serve. We also thank all the nominations committees for their work on our behalf.

QiY 19/07/08 Closing Minute

We thank Friends in Skipton for their very warm welcome (including the welcoming banner) and hospitality and for organising this afternoon's activities. We hope to meet again at Bootham School on Saturday 19th October, if the Lord permits.

Chris Love
Arthur Pritchard
Co-Clerks to QiY

The Clerks ask Friends to note that the dates of next year's January and April meetings were inaccurately recorded in the July Newsletter.

The correct dates are:

Saturday 18 January at St Aidan's Church, Leeds
Saturday 18 April at Sheffield Central Meeting House

The other dates are correct:

Saturday 18 July at Pickering Meeting House
Saturday 17 October at The Mount School York