

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

Held at St Aidan's Church, Leeds 18 January 2020

### **Representatives:**

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

Hilary Browne  
Jill Mollitt  
Sylvia Sheard

Robert Keeble  
Ray Middleton  
Barbara Parry  
Liz Schweiger  
Edward Starkie

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

Bronwen Alty  
David Bunney  
Pauline Frykman

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

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

Romayne Gayton  
Sue Goodson  
Rosie Roberts

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

David Olver  
Chris Petrie  
Evelyn Shire

#### ***York Area Meeting***

Ruth Corry  
David Corry  
Jacqui Coule-Bleakley  
Nicholas Evens  
Ruth Rymer.

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

Audrey Acton  
Ann Castle  
Helen Ford  
Martin Ford  
Pat Gerwat

A total of 74 Friends registered their attendance at our meeting.

### **QiY 20/01/01 Reading**

In our opening worship we have heard Quaker Faith & Practice, paragraph 10.05.

### **QiY 20/01/02 Testimony**

We have heard read a testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of our Friend Lorna Woodroffe of Kirbymoorside Meeting as accepted by Pickering and Hull Area Meeting on 9 November 2019. We endorse the testimony and thank the Friends involved in preparing it.

### **QiY 20/01/03 Welcome**

We have been warmly welcomed to St Aidan's by Martin Ford on behalf of Leeds AM.

### **QiY 20/01/04 Appointment of Elders**

We thank Robert Keeble and David Robson for their service as Elders for today's meeting.

### **QiY 19/01/05 Reaching Out**

#### ***(a) Under 19s Co-ordinating Group***

Ruth Rymer has reported to us from the Under 19s Co-ordinating Group and introduced the speakers.

#### ***(b) Junior Holidays***

Bronwen Alty has reported to us on the 2019 Junior Holidays, illustrating her presentation with video clips of games and interviews with children. Two weekends were held: the first at Nell Bank with 26 children, a teenage helper and six adults. The second was held in October at Lockerbrook Farm Activity Centre on Snake Pass, where 19 children gathered with a teenage volunteer and seven adults. For the children these gatherings often represent their only opportunities to meet other Quaker children. Activities included all weather football, problem-solving and teamwork activities, wall climbing, creating creatures by recycling materials, and a lively social time. The theme of the first holiday was 'Our Planet', and the second was 'Looking after ourselves and others'. Lee Lester joined one of the holidays and also helped with training some of the volunteers to enable them to help plan and run the events. The holidays are subsidised by Quakers in Yorkshire, but costs have been raised in order to provide specialist activities. The decision was taken to increase the cost for a weekend from £50 to £70, and local and area meetings are usually able to subsidise. Bronwen outlined the plans for Junior Holidays in 2020, with the second event planned for a refurbished Barmoor. We thank Bronwen and all the Altys for a lively and entertaining presentation.

#### ***(c) Easter Settlement 2019 & 2020***

Martin Schweiger, in the absence of Pauline Leonard, co-ordinator of the planning committee, has reported on Easter Settlement in 2019. The full report will be circulated with these minutes and posted on the QiY website. The gathering in 2019 enjoyed warm sunshine, with 48 adults, 16 of whom were first-timers. We have also heard of the plans for the 2020 Easter Settlement. We thank Martin for reporting to us.

#### ***(d) Youth Development Worker: Lee Lester***

Jude Acton has reported to us on the work of Lee Lester, our Youth Development worker who is based in Sheffield. Lee's work has been important in developing a range of activities with young people, facilitating these through networking, developing a website and producing a newsletter. Lee works regionally and nationally and has written *Journeys in the Spirit* – a document to be used for work with young people. One new project is a plan for a plastics-free day, inspired by a Bootham School project which

created bricks by re-using waste plastic. Lee supported Harrogate meeting in evolving a football project in Ripon with refugees and asylum seekers. This work enables young people to make connections, and what goes on in BYM often benefits from young people who have been involved in Junior Holidays. It was hoped that this project might be continued when the present phase ends in 18 months' time. Jude's PowerPoint will be made available on the QiY website. We thank her for her stimulating and wide-ranging report.

### **QiY 20/01/06 Quaker Outreach Projects Committee**

Iona Lyons, in place of Annabel May, the retiring Clerk of the QiY Outreach Projects Committee (OPC), has presented a report on the committee's work in 2019. A copy of this will be circulated with these minutes and placed on the Quakers in Yorkshire website.

Nine projects were funded, and we have heard about three of these:

Margaret Lawson has told us about a gathering in Sheffield meeting house, for refugees and asylum seekers, in which the asylum seekers provided some of the food. Sheffield Friends also used OPC funds to provide white poppies for sale at a stall.

Sue Mosley of Wooldale meeting has told us about setting up a lunchtime Quaker meeting at Huddersfield University, in an effort to engage young people there. It has been a successful exercise in outreach which has made gradual progress as a regular worshipping group but has enabled contacts with chaplains in the University. Friends recognise that they are in for the long haul.

Robert Keeble of Carlton Hill LM reported that Leeds Quakers received grants to give away about 1000 Fairtrade Bananas outside the Meeting House and to also distribute White Peace Poppies in Leeds City Centre and outside Carlton Hill Meeting House. We were told that distributing the poppies in the city centre had to be abandoned on account of the cold and the rain. In 2019, Leeds Quaker Outreach events were generally challenging to arrange, with fewer people willing or able to volunteer. A full account of Leeds AM's outreach work will be posted on the QiY website.

We thank all our speakers for their contributions

### **QiY 20/01/07 Appointments and Releases**

#### ***(a) Thanks***

We give thanks for the service of all those Friends whose appointments for Quakers in Yorkshire have been completed since our last meeting.

#### ***(b) Appointments***

- (i) Our nominations committee has brought us the following nomination for service:

John Sweetman of York Area Meeting (Friargate Local Meeting) to serve on the Mount Board of Governors from now until 31/12/ 2023.

This nomination being acceptable, we appoint the Friend named accordingly and give thanks for the service of all those Friends involved in bringing these nominations.

***(c) Convenor of Nominations Committee***

We note that Gil Skidmore has agreed to serve as the convenor of Quakers in Yorkshire Nominations committee from now until 31/12/2020.

**QiY 20/01/08 Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (PAFRAS)**

In the absence of our Friend Edwina Beier, Karen Pearce has introduced us to the work of PAFRAS (Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers), a Leeds based charity that assists people arriving in the UK to remain in the country. Karen has described the difficult circumstances faced by those who are supported by PAFRAS. The organisation welcomes large numbers of people who drop in at St Aidan's Church. About half of the people who come are effectively destitute and the provision of support, such as breakfast at the meetings is very important.

We thank Karen for sharing the experience of supporting people in real difficulties with us. She has in turn expressed her thanks to those Friends who have been working in support of the project.

**QiY 20/01/09 Simpler Meetings**

David Olver, the convenor of the Yorkshire Group to Reinvigorate and Simplify Processes (GRASP) has also reported on its progress. A full report from GRASP will be available on the QiY website.

We have been pleased to welcome Jonathan Carmichael, the member of staff at Friends House supporting the Yearly Meeting's "Simpler Meetings" project. Jonathan has invited us to reflect on ways we can simplify the management of our affairs to reduce the number of roles, by sharing personnel and roles across local and area meetings. We have been encouraged think radically, to think what we need to have Simplicity is about considering ways of shedding traditional practices.

We thank Jonathan for giving us his presentation today. His presentation notes with identified possibilities for simplifying our business and organisation can be found on the QiY website.

**QiY 20/01/10 Yorkshire Friends Holiday School (YFHS)**

We have heard an exciting and stimulating report of YFHS 2019 from Edd Buckley, a member of the staff, and three of the week's participants, Lydia Klosa, Mishka Heny and Charlotte McPherson have shared with us their experiences of the week in a lively and entertaining presentation. Mark Rymer played the video and a compilation of still photos for us.

We have watched a vivid and entertaining video, a trailer which revealed some of the activities that go on at Holiday School. Water featured prominently, as did travelling considerable distances, prone, on long sheets of industrial polythene. Edd Buckley has told us of the 2019 theme, Creative Impact, and how creativity can be used for the benefit of everyone. This year the week had a number of interesting contributors, a film maker, a playwright and a member of staff who does drama workshops with prisoners. The week included a peace vigil, in a busy, tiring week based on daily worship, activities in groups and social time together. Edd interviewed the participants about what they had enjoyed. Charlotte found the epilogue especially valuable, as time to reflect on the lively, fun times during the day.

Lydia spoke about the importance of the week for her as a member of a community, where, because her brother had attended previously, she felt she already knew everyone when she arrived. Lydia spoke about the writing down of the memories she took from the week and how important this exercise was for her.

Edd told us about the numbers attending the 2019 School and explained how the group was made up of folk from all over the country, not just Yorkshire, and also from Ireland.

From today's engaging and stimulating presentation we have gained a real sense of the richness of the experience for the young participants, as well as the staff and the student helpers.

We have been impressed and delighted by the energy and vitality of the presentations and thank everyone for a most enjoyable session.

### **QiY 20/01/11 Concluding Minute**

There being no further business to be taken today, we conclude. We record our thanks to Leeds Area Meeting Friends for their warm welcome and hospitality today and to St Aidan's Church for the opportunity to make use of their premises.

We intend to meet again at Sheffield Central Meeting House on the 18th April 2020 should nothing occur to prevent.



Gavin Burnell, Arthur Pritchard  
Co-Clerks, Quakers in Yorkshire