

Minutes of a meeting of Quakers in Yorkshire

Held at The Mount School, York, on 15 October 2016

Representatives

Brighouse West Yorkshire:

Helen Brockley John Gaukroger

Central Yorkshire Area Meeting:

David Bunney

Craven & Keighley Area Meeting:

Chris Petrie Alison Tyas David Olver

Leeds Area Meeting:

Una Parker Janet Naudin David M Robson
Pete Redwood Edward Starkie Barbara Parry

Pickering & Hull Area Meeting:

Janice Every Chris Newsam Rosi Robinson (prev.) Diana Sandy

Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting

York Area Meeting

Edith Jayne Roy Love Joyce Pickard Eleanor Tew Barbara Windle
Nicholas Evens Barbara Penny

QiY 16/10/01 Reading

In our opening worship we heard a reading of paragraph 23.74 of *Quaker Faith & Practice*.

QiY 16/10/02 Testimony (Dennis Mitchell)

We have heard part of a testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of our Friend Dennis Mitchell. This testimony was accepted by Central Yorkshire Area Meeting on 13th July 2016. We endorse the testimony and thank the Friends who prepared it.

QiY 16/10/03 Welcome

We have been given a very warm welcome to The Mount by the Principal, Adrienne Richmond.

QiY 16/10/04 Elders

We thank Edith Jayne and Barbara Windle for their willingness to serve as Elders for today's meeting.

QiY 16/10/05 Student Presentation

Seven students from The Mount and Bootham have collaborated in sharing with us the experiences they have had in learning about Quakers and Quakerism. The presentation covered their retreat to Woodbrooke, PeaceJam, Bootham

Environmental and Sustainability Team (BEAST), and the Quaker Pilgrimage. They gave us examples of how their learning has been incorporated into their day-to-day activities and witness. These include using meetings for clearness, activities through PeaceJam to bring about change, notably the LifeBag Project and BEAST's focus on local environmental improvements such as renegotiating a landfill project. The Pilgrimage, during which they visited Swarthmore Hall, Pendle Hill, the Quaker Tapestry and Firbank Fell, taught them many things including the value of Quaker silence as an opportunity for people of all backgrounds to find the spiritual truth which speaks to them individually, and respect for individuals.

We are most grateful to the students for their very well prepared address to us. The PowerPoint presentation will be distributed and put on the QiY website.

QiY 16/10/06 Reports from Clerks

The clerks of the school committees of Bootham and The Mount, Stephen Sayers and Tim Phillips have reported to us. Shortened versions of their reports have been published in the QiY Newsletter, and their full reports are available on the QiY website.

We thank our Friends for their reports.

QiY 16/10/07 Report from Head of Bootham

We have heard from Chris Jeffery, the new Head of Bootham who has just begun his first term in post. He has given his first impressions of Bootham and of his encounters with Friends and Quakerism. He has spoken of disjunction between the aspirations of Quaker schools and the testing regimes imposed by recent governments. We thank Chris for his report which can be read in full on the QiY website.

QiY 16/10/08 Report from Principal of The Mount

We have heard from Adrienne Richmond about her first year as Principal of the Mount. She has told us of her Anglican background and her experience of contacts with Friends. She has found Quaker values 'easy to sell' to parents of prospective students, and shown us the way in which these values and ideas have engaged the students who have spoken to us this morning. Bullying simply doesn't happen. Charity work and social justice projects abound. She has also told us of proposed development plans which include a drama studio. We thank Adrienne for her report which can be read in full on the QiY website.

QiY 16/10/09 Report from Bursar of Bootham

We have heard from Andy Woodland, Bursar of Bootham School who has reported on the completed and on-going building projects at the school. Andy has told us of his intention to retire and reflected on his time in post, hoping that he leaves it in better shape than when he arrived. Further details will be available on the QiY website. We thank Andy for his report.

QiY 16/10/10 Financial Report from The Mount

Adrienne Richmond has offered a report on behalf of The Mount's Business Manager. It has been a challenge to get to grips with the school's finances but

the budget that was in deficit a year ago should be in balance quite soon. We thank Adrienne for reporting to us.

QiY 16/10/11 Releases and Appointments

RELEASES

We report with sadness that Katharine Rowntree, former member of The Mount School Committee, died on the 9th September 2016.

Fiona Waddington (Beverley) has asked to be released as a member of The Mount School Committee. We agree to this request and thank Fiona for her service.

APPOINTMENTS

Nominations for appointment are brought to us as follows:

From Pickering and Hull AM

Chris Fellowes, to serve as a QiY Trustee from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019. This would be Chris's third triennium.

From York AM

Kevin Sell (Acomb) to serve on the Outreach Projects Committee from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

From Craven & Keighley AM

David Olver to serve a second term on Nominations Committee from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

From QiY Nominations Committee

Arrangements Committee

Diana Sandy (Beverley) to serve a second term from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

Ann Banks (Hebden Bridge) to serve a first term from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

Bootham School

Malcolm Sterratt (Skipton) to serve a second term as governor from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2020.

Heather Woolley (Scarborough) to serve a second term as governor from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2020.

Nicholas Burton (attender at Malton) to serve as governor on Bootham School Committee from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2020.

Outreach Projects Committee

Annabel May (Beverley) to serve as clerk to the Outreach Projects Committee from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

Junior Holidays

Bronwen Alty (Wakefield) to serve on the Junior Holidays Committee from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019.

From Nominating Group appointed in July 2016 (Minute16/07/08)

Rosie Yeoman (Sheffield Central) to serve as Safeguarding Coordinator (joint) from 1 January 2017 – 31 December 2019. (Confirmation of between meetings appointment.)

We are glad to appoint these Friends and thank them for their offers of service. We also thank the various nominating groups for their work in bringing names to us.

Until now the initial responsibility for bringing names as Safeguarding Coordinators has been assigned to the Under 19s Coordinating Group. QiY asks that this now be the responsibility of our Nominations Committee.

We request Pickering and Hull Area Meeting to bring the name of a representative to replace Annabel May on the Outreach Projects Committee.

QiY 16/10/12 The Retreat

Our clerks have received notice from John Miles, Clerk to the Members of The Retreat of the proposal to make changes to arrangements for appointing governors of The Retreat. The details of the proposals have been circulated with the October QiY Newsletter, and we have Malcolm Bowker from the Retreat governing body with us today who has answered questions. The principal change is that QiY will no longer appoint Friends to serve as governors but will appoint Friends to serve on a nominating group who will be responsible for finding and nominating the governors. Our Nominations Committee has agreed to the change, and after reflection we are happy to agree to the changes as they stand.

We also agree to receive a report from The Retreat at an interval agreed by QiY Arrangements Committee.

We understand that this minute will be reported to The Retreat Trustees for presentation to a general meeting of the members of the Retreat on 24 November. If endorsed and if these changes are implemented, then we ask QiY Trustees to make the necessary amendments to the QiY governing document.

We thank Malcolm for answering our questions.

QiY 16/10/13 Stephen Pittam

We have welcomed Stephen Pittam, formerly with the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, who has been involved in a number of activities which fall

broadly under the umbrella of human rights. His focus today has been on how the principles apply at a local level and the role Quakers have played.

Human rights flow naturally from our testimonies, especially peace and equality. They are particularly important for those who are disadvantaged or disempowered. The impending repeal of the Human Rights Act anticipated under the present government and its replacement by a British Bill of Rights, which will inevitably be weaker, is a cause for dismay.

There is an overwhelming feeling in the community at large that human rights apply to others, not to us. But they **do** apply to us and have been secured after great efforts. York is very important. The Centre for Applied Human Rights at York University, which welcomes activists and thinkers from many locations in the world, is a precious and indispensable institution in our community. International Service in York is the only overseas volunteering agency based outside London and operates in a human rights context.

The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, also in York, has supported human rights work in the UK. The hoped-for Human Rights Commission planned by the Labour Government did not materialise unfortunately. So the position was that human rights were seen to be not relevant to most people's lives.

The initiative to establish York as a Human Rights City grew out of the realisation that there are Human Rights Cities in Africa, South America, North America and in Europe and the coming together of the University Centre of Applied Human Rights, York City Council, North Yorkshire Police, York CAB, International service and York CVS.

Stephen outlined the vision and objectives as well as the work that has been done. A research project probed respondents to identify the five rights they identified as important. These were education, non-discrimination and equality, health, an adequate standard of living and affordable housing. Five hundred people responded. December will see the launch of their report. The group have embarked on education and training, for example with City of York Council and voluntary sector leaders. This showed a growing awareness of how a human rights framework could be applied to their work.

The public launch will be in 2017. Stephen emphasised the long term nature of this work and the antipathy towards human rights from certain political figures and elements of the media. Our Human Rights Act is under serious threat. However, it has been used to instigate investigations into various injustices, some more publicised than others – for example the enquiry into the Hillsborough disaster, deaths at hospitals and army barracks. The planned repeal is a source of great concern.

A number of questions illustrated how the European Convention on Human Rights protects us all and Stephen listed a number of these rights. The Act came about after the end of World War II and there is great concern over the present Government's focus on eliminating these rights especially as the proposed British Bill of Rights would apply to British people only. Keeping the

legal avenues open is essential. Perhaps Quakers can partner the many other organisations who are feeling concern? Despite the existence of charity law to which we are bound, there is still room for dissent.

We thank Stephen for his stimulating presentation and for his encouragement for us as Quakers to consider our role in maintaining human rights. A copy of Stephen's report will be on the QiY website.

QiY 16/10/14 Closing Minute

We thank our Friends at The Mount for their very warm welcome and hospitality today. We hope to meet again at The Methodist Church, Oxford Place Leeds, on Saturday 21st January 2017, God willing.

Chris Love
Arthur Pritchard
Co-Clerks, Quakers in Yorkshire