

Minutes of a meeting of Quakers in Yorkshire

Held online via Zoom 16 January 2021

Representatives:

Brighouse West Yorkshire: Catherine Putz , Hilary Browne and Susan Clarkson

Central Yorkshire Area Meeting: David Bunney, Charlie Davies

Craven & Keighley Area Meeting:

Leeds Area Meeting: Judith Sayer, Susan Robson, Una Parker, Barbara Parry and Pat Gerwat.

Pickering & Hull Area Meeting:

Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting:

York Area Meeting: Meg Forrest, Liz Bryan, Graham Torr, Rosie Roberts, Martin Birley, Barbara Penny, Ruth Rymer

A total of 79 Friends have registered their attendance at our meeting.

QiY 21/01/01 Reading

In our opening worship we have heard read part of paragraph 23.36 of Quaker Faith & Practice.

QiY 21/01/02 Welcome

We have been welcomed to our Zoom meeting by our clerks. In parallel with our meeting an online event for young people has been arranged by Lee Lester, the Youth Development Worker. In total eight young people have registered on this.

QiY 21/01/03 Reaching Out

(a) Under 19s Co-ordinating Group

Ruth Rymer has reported to us from the Under 19s Co-ordinating Group which managed to meet online in November, and introduced the speakers.

(b) Junior Holidays

Bronwen Alty has reported to us on the 2020 Junior Holidays, and shown us a PowerPoint which outlines the pattern of the Zoom Junior Holidays and some of the

work produced. Twelve children met in an online gathering in June and ten in October. At these events the themes were Connections, and Safe Harbours. The PowerPoint will be available to us on the QiY website. Both Ruth and Bronwen recorded their gratitude to Lee Lester who made an enormous contribution to the success of these events.

(c) Easter Settlement 2020 and 2021

Pauline Leonard, co-ordinator of the planning committee, has reported on Easter Settlement in 2020 and the plans for 2021 which are outlined in this month's Newsletter, and which will be held online. The report will be circulated with these minutes and posted on the QiY website.

(d) Youth Development Worker: Lee Lester

Lee Lester has reported to us on the work undertaken with children and young people in the past year. Lee, whose current term of service comes to an end in May, has outlined the pattern of activity undertaken, which began in January with live gatherings but since then has included regular weekly online gatherings, interactive workshops, including two meetings planned to run concurrently with QiY quarterly meetings.

More young people joined the online gatherings than had participated at the live events, with young people joining from across the country. Lee has offered a PowerPoint which will be placed on the QiY website.

Lee has set up several young people's groups including SYFAN (Sheffield Young Friends Network) and a monthly online youth group TYFON (Teenage Young Friends Online Network) which has engaged young people from all parts of Britain. We have been deeply impressed by the marvellous professionalism of Lee's contribution and the way new life has been breathed into Quaker work with children and young people.

We are concerned that the current pilot project is coming to an end but we are informed that QiY trustees will be addressing the question.

We thank Lee for reporting to us today and for all the work achieved in the Youth Development Worker's pilot project.

QiY 21/01/04 Quaker Outreach Projects Committee

Chris Petrie and Kathleen Wallace have reported to us on the current state of OPC and the understandably quiet year for outreach activity since the start of the pandemic.

There has been some spending on the provision of white poppies by Friends in Sheffield, but otherwise no funds have been allocated to projects since the start of the pandemic. We note that Annabel May has now retired from the committee and that a clerk is required. Thanks to our Friends for updating us.

QiY 21/01/05 Yorkshire Friends Holiday School (YFHS)

We have heard an exciting and stimulating report of YFHS 2020. Introduced by Elspeth Moore, Kate and Susie Harty have joined us from Ireland to offer a lively report on Holiday School which was held online in August. Illustrated with a lively video created by participants moving online together, the group celebrated their ability to adapt the usual Holiday School activities and come together as a loving and accepting online community. A former holiday scholars reunion is planned in early 2021. Kate's report will be available on the QiY website.

QiY 21/01/06 GRASP

David Olver has reported to us on the current thinking of the GRASP, the group set up with the task of simplifying and reinvigorating our structures.

The group has been able to pass on best practice in making arrangements for holding Quaker Meetings for Worship and meetings for business during the present pandemic. Some of the changes forced on us by the pandemic may carry forward even when meetings in person are possible again, even though aspects of networking and community building are not so easily done remotely.

GRASP hopes to release its final report next month which will contain recommendations and suggestions for local meetings and area meetings to take up and consider. Although GRASP and QiY can be an enabling group it is up to the Area and Local meetings to decide how to implement the recommendations.

GRASP has been working as a reference group for the appointment of the Yorkshire Quaker development worker to be employed by BYM and based at Carlton Hill meeting. The group has also been supporting work on Nominations and a video entitled 'Willing and Able' will shortly be available on the QiY website.

We thank the group for their update.

QiY 21/01/07 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) Release

We agree to the release of Jane Morris (Brighouse WY AM) as a trustee of Quakers in Yorkshire effective from the 31/12/2020 and ask Brighouse WY AM nominations committee to bring a nomination for a new trustee as soon as they are able to.

(c) Appointments

From QiY Nominations Committee

Quakers in Yorkshire Nominations committee brings forward nominations for service from now until the 31/12/2023 as follows:

Arrangements Committee:

Digby Swift (Sheffield & Balby AM) 1st term

Junior Holidays Committee:

Rebecca Gilmour (Brighouse WY AM) 2nd term

Anne Peart (Craven & Keighley AM) 1st term

Quakers in Yorkshire Nominations committee further brings forward nominations for service from now until the 31/12/2024 as follows:

Bootham School Committee/Governors:

Rosemary Roberts (York AM) 1st term

Peter Coltman (Leeds AM) 1st term

Sarah Coltman (Leeds AM) 1st term

Breckenbrough School Committee/Governors:

Fleur Parker (York AM) 1st term

Kirit Gordhandas (Central Yorkshire AM) 1st term

All these nominations being acceptable, the Friends are appointed accordingly.

From AMs

We receive nominations from the Nominations Committees of Area Meetings for service from now until 31/12/2023 as follows:

QiY Nominations Committee:

Pauline Leonard (Leeds AM) 1st term

Catherine Putz (Brighouse WY) 1st term

Outreach Projects Committee

Pauline Frykman (Central Yorkshire AM) 1st term

These nominations being acceptable, the Friends names are appointed accordingly.

(d) Correction

We note that the name of Helen Brooks was recorded as representing Brighouse West Yorkshire AM on QiY Nominations Committee in the minutes of our last Meeting. This should be Helen Brockley. We approve the retrospective correction to the relevant minute.

QiY 21/01/08 Black Lives Matter

Jonathan Doering of Barnsley Local Meeting has initiated our reflection on this hugely challenging topic. The BLM movement has served to awaken the conscience of responsible people across the world following the murder of George Floyd while under police restraint in Minneapolis in May 2020.

In his PowerPoint Jonathan has considered the historical responses of Quakers to slavery. The pattern of our response has been complex, sometimes inconsistent and there have been some surprising ways in which Friends have simply got things wrong.

Charlie Davies, also of Barnsley LM, has shared with us some of the Quaker history regarding slavery and the work to end the Atlantic slave trade. We are reminded that members of the society were not always without fault and that many early Quakers were in fact slave owners. Charlie has told us some of William Penn's story, including his ownership of slaves and how in early 18th century Pennsylvania a very uneasy pattern prevailed regarding race relations.

Craig Barnett of Sheffield Central meeting has asked us to consider what systemic racism really means. We need to work to understand the impact on people of colour from our non-conscious racist assumptions. Craig has asked us to consider what kind of changes we need to make within our society and within national public debate.

Susan Robson of Leeds Carlton Hill has offered us an account of how difficult she has found it to raise issues such as, for example, the use of the term 'overseer' in the Society of Friends. It is often tricky to ask people to consider how to make changes. We need to understand each other's experiences and how we come to feel the way we do. Empathy is about listening to the stories of others and making space for these before telling our own.

Susan Clarkson of Bradford LM has suggested racism is also related to class. We cannot achieve change solely through the society of Friends. We need to find our allies in the wider community in order to achieve the change we want.

Following the introductions Friends have come together in small groups in online breakout rooms to reflect on the topic. We have concluded our session listening to brief comments from some of the groups. We are reminded that racism is learnt, and that we must ask ourselves where racist attitudes come from. We urge Friends to take the question forward in whatever ways they can. Meetings might hold a discussion or workshop or watch a film.

Friends have forwarded some reading materials through which we can take the matter further. We have also been asked to consider keeping this topic as a regular agenda item for QiY. The draft reading list is attached.

QiY 21/01/09 Minute from QiY Young People's Programme

QiY youth programme 16 January 2021

Eight young people joined QiY from Leeds, Sheffield, Wakefield and Ireland for a day's programme of games and discussion on zoom.

In the morning the discussion was around the question 'Am I the only one?', thinking about the isolation we can feel as the only young Quaker in our schools or in our friendship groups and the difficulties we can have in challenging assumptions.


In the afternoon the discussion was around racial in/justice and the Black Lives Matter campaigns.

We started by defining and unpicking terms used in these issues.

Our friend Sophie Bevan says ‘200 years ago Quakers took a stand against slavery deeming it unlawful in the eyes of God. But what have we done since?’ We are not aware of the action that our meetings are taking but we as individuals have taken action, speaking at BLM demonstrations, organising school strikes and been allies to those black people organising BLM demonstrations. We have been hindered recently by the Covid situation and not being aware of actions in our meetings or communities that we can be involved in. We would like to be involved and supported in action.

QiY 21/01/10 Concluding Minute

We record our thanks to all those Friends who have contributed to our meeting. There being no further time to take business today, we conclude intending to meet again online on the 17th April 2021 should nothing occur to prevent.



Gavin Burnell, Arthur Pritchard

Co-Clerks, Quakers in Yorkshire.