

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

**16 October 2021**

**Held at Friargate Friends Meeting House York and on Zoom internet conferencing platform**

### **Representatives**

Brighouse West Yorkshire AM:

CYAM: Ruth McTighe, David Bunney, David Cook (prev)

Craven and Keighley AM: David Olver

Leeds AM: Janet Naudin and Pat Gerwat

Pickering and Hull AM:

Sheffield and Balby AM:

York AM: Rosie Roberts, Peter Jarman and Martin Birley

### **1. Meeting for Worship**

During our opening worship we have heard read Quaker Faith and Practice 23.02.

### **2. Welcome by the Clerks**

Our clerks have welcomed us to this, our first blended meeting of Quakers in Yorkshire. We are heartened to be able to meet in person for the first time in over 18 months whilst welcoming approximately 15 Friends who have registered to attend online.

### **3. Welcome from Friargate and Appointment of Elders**

We have been welcomed to Friargate by its Co-clerk, David Laverick. We ask Graham Ralph and David Olver to serve as Elders for this meeting and thank them for this service.

#### **4. Presentations from pupils of Bootham and The Mount Schools**

We have been pleased to receive a presentation in person from the Bootham School Head Reeves, Libby Tomlinson and Eric Rogers. They have told us about their recent experiences at School and the ways in which the COVID pandemic has impacted on their routine. The students have been keen to emphasise the ways in which their experiences and activities have been influenced by the schools' commitment to a Quaker ethos. Live streaming has enabled Bootham gradually to get back to normal. The loss of Peter Woodmansey, a valued member of the school, has affected everyone, but his memory has drawn everyone together in a special way and this has benefitted everyone. A key element has been the support of the community and the growing of sunflowers symbolised this.

Online learning has been very effective for many. Staff and students have made the best of the circumstances thanks to the determination of everyone to continue in the difficult COVID. Getting to know one another in a different environment has been challenging but also enriching.

Adrienne Richmond, The Mount School Principal, has brought us a video made by senior students, introduced by Jo Howden the new Head of College. There were technical problems presenting this video at the meeting and it is attached to the minutes.

We thank the students from Bootham and The Mount for reporting to us.

#### **5. Reports from Bootham**

The Head, Chris Jeffery, has reported on the tough times experienced by schools, Quaker schools included, in the hugely complex restraints imposed by changing rules. The examination process was a monumental task but staff rose to the challenges of teaching, examining and grading. Unable to meet the school face to face, the school faced problems of fragmentation, with groups scattered around in different places, but concerts and other activities were achieved in spite of this, to the delight of all involved. The meeting for worship held to commemorate Peter Woodmansey was profoundly moving. It functioned as a means whereby many members of the school could start to process their loss.

A non-teaching Head of Social Action has been appointed to the school. We have come to realise that Bootham has not just survived the pandemic but is flourishing, serving an important function as outreach on behalf of the wider Quaker community.

A copy of Chris's report is attached to the minutes.

Clerk to Governors, Cathy Woodbine, has thanked the staff and commended the work of the Head and Bursar, who have ensured the continuation of the life and work of the school in extremely testing times.

A copy of Cathy's report is attached to these minutes.

The Head has answered questions on the background of students at the school, saying that it is not quite so diverse since COVID struck; but much more diverse than 10 years ago. We thank all who have joined our meeting today and reported to us.

## **6. Report from The Mount**

The Clerk of the Committee, Margaret Bryan, has reported on recent developments on the School Committee, and on the way in which the school has been run during the last year. She has told us of Adrienne Richmond's decision to move on to a new post at the end of 2021 and the appointment of her successor.

A copy of Margaret's report is attached to these minutes.

The Principal, Adrienne Richmond has referred to many of the problems that schools have faced during the pandemic already mentioned by Chris Jeffery. She has emphasised how Quaker meeting is such an important element of school life. Silent worship for the whole school was re-introduced in June; in Quaker week a Quaker Heritage walk allowed girls to discover the diverse Quaker traditions of the city.

Adrienne and Chris have both told us that the network of heads of Quakers schools has been of great value and support, in particular over the last 18 months of the COVID pandemic.

We offer Adrienne our thanks for her report and her valuable service as Principal of the Mount. We have much appreciated her approachability and enthusiasm, and the full and varied reports she has shared with us since she joined the School in 2016, and we wish her well for her future career.

## **7. Releases, Appointments and Nominations Required**

### **a. Releases from Service**

We have received requests for the following to be released from service to Quakers In Yorkshire

<b>Position</b>	<b>Released</b>	<b>Area Meeting</b>
QiY Arrangements Committee	Sam McNair	Pickering and Hull
Bootham School Committee/ Governor	Nigel Lindley	
Mount School Committee/Governor	Era Gjurgjeala	
Breckenbrough School Committee/Governor Committee	Kirit Gordhandas	

We agree to these releases and give thanks for the service of these Friends and school Governors.

### **b. From Quakers in Yorkshire Nominations Committee**

Our Nominations Committee brings forward nominations for appointments as follows for the period from 1st January 2022 until 31st December 2024 (except where stated otherwise):

<b>Position</b>	<b>Nominated</b>	<b>Area Meeting</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Co-Clerk to QiY	David Bunney	Central Yorkshire AM	1st term
QiY Trustee	Peter Jarman	York AM	To complete Meg Forrest's term. Ends 31 Dec 2023

Custodian of Quaker Archives	Oliver Pickering	Leeds AM	4th Term
Mount/school Committee/Governor	Greg Willmott		From now to 31 Dec 2024
And for service from 1st January 2022 until 31st December 2025			
Bootham School Committee Governor	Ed Potten		1st Term
	Melissa Askew		1st Term
The Mount School Committee	Julian Pattison	York AM	2nd Term
	Nicola Spence		2nd Term
Breckenbrough School Committee / Governors	Digby Swift	Sheffield and Balby	1st Term

These nominations being acceptable, these Friends, and nominated governors, are appointed accordingly.

### c. From Area Meetings

We have received nominations for appointments from Area meetings for the period from 1st January 2022 until 31st December 2024 as follows:

Position	Nominee	Area Meeting	Notes
Quakers in Yorkshire Trustee	Richard Vesey	Craven & Keighley AM	1st Term
Quakers in Yorkshire Nominations Committee	Floe Shakespeare	Craven & Keighley AM	1st Term
Outreach Projects Committee	Louise Brown	York AM	2nd term
	Leah Dalby	Craven & Keighley AM	1st Term
Under 19s Coordinating	Lizzie Hussey	Central	1st Term

Committee

Yorkshire AM

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

#### **d. Nominations Required**

The convenor of our nominations committee reports that they are still searching for nominations for :

<b>Position</b>	<b>Nominations Sought</b>
Arrangements Committee	1 member to be nominated by Pickering and Hull AM
U19s co-ordinating group	1 member
Junior Holidays Committee	1 or 2 members
Breckenbrough School Committee / Governors	1 member

We give thanks for the prayerful discernment and work of the members of QiY and AM nominations committees for finding nominations for service to Quakers in Yorkshire and uphold them in their continuing efforts.

### **8. Racial Justice**

Ruth McTighe has introduced our regular Racial Justice item, sharing some of the activity taking place in our area. Rosie has shown us a short video in which John Amaechi discusses what it means to be anti-racist. Finally she has cited part of this year JYM 's minute which reads:

‘As Quakers we need to understand that we are not exempt from racism because we wish to be anti-racist - it is our actions that will make a difference, not our intentions, since racism is so systemic that it's often subconscious’.

Then at BYMG this summer, during ‘Session 3: For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis’ we considered: ‘Are we ready to commit to being an anti-racist faith community?’

After stirring and sensitive ministry, the final part of the BYMG Session 3 minute reads: 'We declare our commitment to becoming an actively anti-racist faith community. We are still wrestling with what this means for us'.

Our questions for the coming months are:

**What does becoming actively anti-racist mean for us, both individually and in our meetings? What might we do, or are we doing, individually and in our meetings, to respond to these minutes?**

We include a link to the video with these minutes. We thank Ruth and Rosie for their update.

## **9. Book of Discipline Revision Committee**

We have been led in a brief introduction to the work of the Yearly Meeting Book of Discipline Revision Committee by Rosie Carnall, Matt Moore and Rachel Muers.

They have told us of the progress the committee has made over the last two and a half years. The revision committee has an evolving and diverse membership as it seeks to revise the whole of Quaker Faith and Practice. The revision aims to include seven key themes, spirituality, worship and discernment; Quaker community; Testimony and Faith in Action; Stages of Personal Life; Church Government; Our story and Advices and Queries. This has led to a total of 26 topics - of which the committee has started on 7.

Whilst the revision committee has identified material that needs to be updated, they have also found issues of principle that need to be discerned by the Yearly Meeting. Following the guidance of Yearly Meeting, the revision committee has started with a focus on Church Government matters and to consider the distinction between core principles of being Quakers and the matters of operational practice.

The committee have articulated their insights as five points:

- We can all have direct access to a transforming experience of the divine
- We live under the guidance of the promptings of love and truth in our hearts

- We recognise and seek to address that of God in every person
- There is a dynamic spirit bringing continuing revelation
- We hold the whole of life to be sacramental

In small groups we have considered the question “*What do you think is the most important purpose of having a book of discipline?*” and have shared our responses.

We thank Rosie, Matt, and Rachel for their introduction and we look forward to time for a more substantive discussion of the revision at our April 2022 meeting. Further details of the work of the committee and ways to contribute to their consideration will be attached to the minutes.

## **10. Spiritual Preparation for COP-26**

Tracey Martin of Leeds AM and Woodbrooke has shown us a PowerPoint on the ways Friends are engaging in the issues that will come to COP-26 in Glasgow in November. The aim is to make people aware of what Quakers are doing at and for COP26, including within Yorkshire; to invite people to think beyond COP26 and ask how they might respond to the climate crisis in the immediate future. Tracey has acknowledged things we are already doing. She has shared QPSW policy priorities: making polluters pay, stopping funding climate breakdown and building back better. We have been told about online worship sessions from Woodbrooke in October and November, and an International Day of Worship on 31 October planned by FWCC.

Our work should not end there: agreements do not mean action; pressure needs to be sustained; our lives will change radically; we will need to be resilient spiritual communities and need to act in solidarity with those who are most affected by the climate crisis.

Woodbrooke is offering support. What is our meeting’s ministry in time of crisis? How do we respond to ecological crisis? How can our Quaker Spiritual Insights help us? Is there potential for regional meetings to engage through learning, networking and discernment.



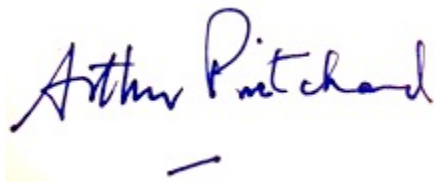
We have been asked to consider in groups: What are we doing now? What might we do during COP26? What role can our meeting play in a time of climate crisis – offer spiritual support, sanctuary, resources, actions?

A link to Tracey's presentation will be attached to our minutes and made available on the Quakers in Yorkshire website. We thank Tracey for joining us online and sharing her PowerPoint presentation with us.

### **11. Concluding Minute**

We note that this is the final meeting at which Arthur Pritchard will serve as our co-clerk as he completes his present term at the end of this year. We give thanks for his service over the last six years in enabling Quakers in Yorkshire to meet.

There being no further business to be taken at this time, we conclude, hoping to meet again, should nothing occur to prevent, on January 15th 2022 on Zoom.



Arthur Pritchard  
Co-Clerks



Gavin Burnell