

Minutes of a meeting of Quakers in Yorkshire

Held online on Zoom platform 15th Jan 2022

Representatives

Brighouse West Yorkshire

Central Yorkshire Area Meeting

Chris Pilkington (prevented)
Bronwen Alty
Arthur Pritchard

Craven & Keighley Area Meeting

David Heslop

Leeds Area Meeting

Liz Schweiger
Barbara Parry
Pat Gerwat

Pickering & Hull Area Meeting

Chris Fellowes
Brian Fellowes

Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting

York Area Meeting

Jo Reilly
Gwenilian Shippides
Barbara Penny
Graham Torr
Jacquie Coule Bleakley

A total of 45 Friends registered in advance to attend our meeting.

1. Reading

In our opening worship we have heard read Quaker Faith & Practice, paragraph 2.74

2. Testimony

We have heard a testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of our Friend, Jean Elliot of Brighouse West Yorkshire Area Meeting. We thank the Friends concerned for preparing it and add our endorsement.

3. Welcome

Our clerks have welcomed us to this, our first meeting of 2022, introduced our agenda to us and reminded us of our processes for the conduct of our online meetings for Church Affairs.

4. Reports of U19s events 2021 and planned events 2022

a. Under 19s Co-ordinating Group,

Andy Beck has prepared a report on behalf of the U19's co-ordinating group. The main focus in 2021 has been on activities at Holiday School, Junior Holidays, and Easter Settlement – all of which have been seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic but have managed to offer some engagement for children and young people.

The group has been exercised by concerns around Gender Diversity, which has led to the development of a gender diversity policy for the whole of QiY. This is a difficult and emotive subject which requires much care, thought and sensitivity. The group has also considered how confidential documents are stored, and have considered how to update policies for the digital world and “cloud storage”.

b. Junior Holidays

Bronwen Alty has shared a presentation about Junior Holidays with us. During the pandemic some children had turned 7 or even 8 and had not had the chance to try out a Quaker junior holiday. Others had missed out on their final one. All of them had missed out on time meeting friends and making new ones from the Yorkshire Quaker community. In 2021 Junior Holidays was able to run a one-day event in June at Nell Bank and a weekend at Barmoor in September with the theme “Stepping Out”, attended by 27 and 20 young people respectively. These events were positively received with lots of new friendships made.

Two weekend events are planned for 2022 at Nell Bank again in June and Barmoor in September.

We thank Bronwen for her report and congratulate the Junior Holidays team on making such a success of their events in 2021.

c. Yorkshire Friends Holiday School

Guy Milner has spoken to a report from Yorkshire Friends Holiday School and shared photographs from the event with us.

Whilst in 2020 Holiday School was entirely online, but in 2021 a blended approach was used. An online “Virtual holiday school” was held on one day, followed by an in

person day event “Actual Holiday School”. Virtual holiday school had about 20 participants, including those from Ireland and New Zealand, along with volunteers and included shared activities and worship online as well as independent activities away from the screen.

Actual Holiday School featured similar activities to the traditional residential holiday school, but compressed into a single day. Around 40 participants took part and the day included games and “potted sports” as well as discussion in small groups and social time and dancing in the evening.

It was positive to have a face to face day event given that the residential event was not possible.

Holiday school plans to hold a regular week long residential event this summer, the dates of which are to be confirmed and will be publicised on the Quakers in Yorkshire website and the usual channels.

We thank Guy for his report.

d. Yorkshire Quaker Youth Development Work

Jo Baynham has introduced himself as the new Quaker Youth Development Worker in Yorkshire. Jo started work this month, and is based at the Yorkshire Quaker Hub at the Quaker Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane Leeds.

Jo and his family live in Rawdon and previously he has run Westbrooke, a youth centre on the Isle of Wight and an eccumencial centre on Lindsefarme. Jo plans to visit the 7 Area Meetings in Yorkshire and to both work with young people and also to train volunteers for carrying out Quaker Youth Work.

We are very pleased to welcome Jo to Quakers in Yorkshire and look forward to seeing his ideas put into action.

5. Easter Settlement Report and Plans 2022

Pauline Leonard has spoken to the report from the Easter Settlement Planning group, a copy of which will be placed on the Quakers in Yorkshire website.

Easter Settlement provides an opportunity for Friends to strengthen their spiritual base as part of a wider Quaker family. The weekend programme is a mixture of reflection, discussion, worship and fun. Single people and families, those new to the Society of Friends and established Settlers are all made equally welcome.

For a second consecutive year, the Easter settlement was not able to happen in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, Friends met via Zoom for a series of

sessions on the theme “Building a Better World”. Sessions for young people were facilitated by Lee Lester, the former Quaker Youth development worker in Yorkshire.

The planning group very much hope to be able to run a residential event at Cober Hill this Easter (15th-18th April) but are also preparing contingency plans if this proves impossible yet again. The theme will be “Let Your Lives Speak” and there will be a programme for children and young people.

We thank Pauline for her report.

6. Quaker Outreach Projects Committee

Susan Robson, acting clerk of the Quaker Outreach projects Committee has spoken to their report for 2021. Sadly the ongoing restrictions in Quaker and wider public life due to the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in no new applications for funding to the committee in the last year, though some grants from the past have continued to be spent on COPVID-19 compliant distribution of white poppies.

One application has been received so far in 2022 and the committee remains standing by to consider further applications in a generous fashion and urges Friends to look out for the tiny shoots of new outreach projects as the pandemic hopefully eases. We note that the committee has consistently underspent its £10000 annual budget.

We thank Susan for her report.

7. Racial Justice Group Update

Susan Robson with Stephan Ball have introduced this to the update of the regular summary table of work carried out across Quakers in Yorkshire on Racial Justice. A copy of the table will be placed on the Quakers in Yorkshire website.

Stephan has raised whether the regular reports from the group are the best way of carrying forward our ongoing concern in this area. We are content to continue with the regulate ports and ask our clerks and agenda committee to find time to come to a longer consideration at a future meeting. We encourage the group to continue to ask questions of us that reflect the full range of Racial Justice as a topic.

We thank Susan, Stephan, Rosie Roberts and Ruth McTighe for their continued work to keep us updated on activity in this area.

8. Report on Quaker Activities around COP26

We have watched a short video report of Quaker activities at the COP26 conference in Glasgow in November 2021 and our clerk has shared a slide with further links to reports. A copy of the slide will be placed on the Quakers in Yorkshire website.

As well as events in Glasgow, Quakers participated in actions in both Leeds and York and Woodbrooke has developed further resources.

Effective change requires engagement at many levels and in a multitude of ways - to understand government and intergovernmental processes, trying to change the political agenda as well as action as individuals and communities.

We hope to be able to explore some of these issues ahead of the planned COP27 conference.

9. 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. Releases

Shortly after our last meeting, Fleur Parker asked to be released from service as a Breckenbrough school governor. We agree to this release.

c. Appointments

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

From 1st January 2022 until 31st December 2025:

Kathy Clarke Mount School Committee and Governor for a 1st term

This nomination being acceptable, Kathy Clarke is appointed accordingly.

(ii) Area Meeting nominations committees brings us the following nomination for service

From 1st January 2022 until 31st December 2024:

Robert Keeble Leeds Area Meeting 2nd term

To Quakers in Yorkshire Nominations Committee

Ruth McTighe Central Yorkshire Area Meeting 1st term

As a Quakers in Yorkshire trustee

These nominations being acceptable, we appoint the friends named accordingly.

Ruth's appointment supersedes the appointment made in July 2021 for the same office and the same period of time but in a different capacity. We note that when a new Safeguarding coordinator appointment is made in the future, then such appointment would also be as a Trustee of Quakers in Yorkshire if the Friend thus appointed was not already a trustee.

d. Nominations Required

We note that the Mount School Committee is seeking nominations for at least 2 Friends or others, one of whom needs to be an old scholar, to fill other vacancies, with particular interest or expertise in HR, buildings and estates experience.

e. Convenor of Nominations Committee

We note that Gil Skidmore has agreed to serve as the convenor of Quakers in Yorkshire Nominations committee for a third year from now until the end of 2022.

10. Concluding Minute

There being no further business to be taken today, we conclude. We intend to meet again in person at Huddersfield Meeting House on the 23rd April 2022 should nothing occur to prevent.



David Bunney

&

Gavin Burnell

Co-Clerks, Quakers in Yorkshire