

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

**14 October 2023**

**Held at the Bootham School, York**

## **Representatives**

In total there were 21 Friends representing meetings present for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Unfortunately the online connection did not work as we would wish, with apologies to those who were unable to join us.

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

During our opening worship we heard Quaker faith and practice 10.04.

### **2. Welcome by the Clerks and Appointment of Elders**

Our clerks have welcomed us to our meeting today and introduced the agenda.

The agenda has been accepted for our meeting today.

We ask Jenny Sergeant and Eleanor Tew to serve as Elders for our meeting today.

### **3. Welcome from Bootham School**

We have been welcomed to Bootham School by the Head, Deneal Smith, at his first QiY meeting. There was a brief summary of housekeeping for the day.

### **4. Presentations from pupils**

## **Bootham School**

We thank the students from Bootham for their report to us. Their presentations will be available on the QiY website.

The spirit in the school continues to develop with enthusiasm since the pandemic. Many projects have taken place with the external community, the details of which will be posted on the QiY website.

There are two points of education; the cultivation of creativeness and the cultivation of faith.

Truth, kindness and integrity go through the school, marked by an annual kindness award in memory of Peter Woodmansey. There is a warm welcome. Sophie spoke of sustainability and the eco-festival with a focus on individual reflection within their houses to review and implement sustainable initiatives. Over two days the festival took place in the school grounds which featured a revival of the greenhouses and appreciating the wildlife on the campus

Share your light means sharing Quaker values through the internal and external community. A mural of recycled materials has been produced to bring together themes. Each house has a particular project to pursue during the year to support those in need, whether local or internationally

The leadership sessions took place in Keswick this year to uphold high standards of personal behaviour in work as well as the Mount to include students from the Mount and Ackworth.

The students paid tribute to Chris Jeffery and welcomed Deneal Smith in how he has transitioned to Bootham with its difficult ethos for newcomers. The year has been a time of reflection and with thoughts of a positive future for exemplary

We thank Maya and Jamie for their excellent report, which will be posted on the QiY website.

## **The Mount School**

The Mount is close to its Quaker roots. All are encouraged to be an active participant in the school life within a diverse school community that allows the girls to develop.

There are programmes for sustainability and better health through exercise and avoiding the use of cars.

The Mount is one of only three all girls Friends schools in the world, the others being in Japan and USA, and the immediately warm relations are very valuable.

There is a heavy emphasis on Quaker meetings where all are encouraged to minister. Each year group has the opportunity to lead a morning meeting, so far this year being a consideration of equality and hierarchy in the present. Girls are encouraged to join Friargate local meeting and are looking to host their own meeting for worship. There is a very active programme of charitable works and support.

We heard of the range of physical activities that are enjoyed across the school community and which take place on school trips as well as in school.

We thank Lucky, Josephine and Rebecca for their very full and varied reports

## **5. Reports from the Schools**

### **Bootham School**

We have received reports from Catherine Woodbine, Clerk and Deneal Smith, the new Head who succeeded Chris Jeffery in September.

By January 2024 there will be 675 students, a record overall, with increases in the junior school being especially pleasing. Further growth in numbers will be the aim to counter the imposition of Labour party policy but the surplus for the current year will be modest.

Facilities continue to be refurbished with careful consideration of the benefits

Deneal Smith spoke of his new experience at Bootham and was pleased to receive the approval of Maya in her report for his transition into the new environment. Deneal spoke of the efforts to support young people as they prepare for the challenges after leaving school.

Despite the challenge from Labour party policies there is much that is positive across both schools and goes a long way to meeting such challenges.

The Quaker ethos in the school is a strong attraction to current and prospective parents and Deneal Smith is very happy to have arrived at Bootham at this time.

## **The Mount School**

We have received reports from Margaret Bryan, Clerk, and David Griffiths, Principal, at the start of their bicentenary year.

Margaret Bryan told us of the work of the School Committee, who are appointed by Quakers in Yorkshire. She spoke of the joys of being in school with a renewed enthusiasm for music. The efforts of David Griffiths have brought excellent results to the school's performance in terms of academic and financial aspects.

Margaret's term of office ends on 31st December 2024 and the appointment of a suitable replacement is a priority which is very important to the well-being of the school and in providing support for the staff.

David Griffiths has told us of the progress in community activities he reported to us last year. He has focused on music, with the school acting as host for a number of initiatives that have a strong place for local schools. A swimming company has been established to allow girls to train for roles as well as providing swimming facilities for local schools.

The Mount now runs an all girls summer school, in effect a 4th term of revenue, and are looking at sharing at other venues still with an undercurrent of Quakerism and reflection.

Numbers have moved to 240 including 3 boys joining in the junior school, overall a marked improvement from recent years.

The reports from all the participants are very detailed and demonstrate a varied life in the schools at all levels, with a strong foundation of Quakerism experienced in daily life, as well as giving us a valuable insight into the challenges faced by both of the schools. There are financial and political challenges but the schools have a very positive outlook that suggests a strong future for both schools.

## **6. Racial Justice**

John Margham has spoken to us about the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QUARN), 'Safe Passage' and other associated organisations and networks with which his wife Catherine has worked, but who was unwell and therefore unable to be with us today.

Their report set out the aims of QUARN and how it operates as well as their involvement in a variety of campaigns.

Most importantly the report spoke about the need to recognise systemic racism in state institutions as well as in our culture, and how we need to ensure that those working with people seeking sanctuary do so in solidarity with the seekers, not as ‘white saviourism’.

As a result this question is asked of us: How do we ensure that work with people seeking asylum is done in solidarity and not white saviourism?

There is a lot more information available on the QUARN website, [www.quarn.org.uk](http://www.quarn.org.uk)

The report will be posted on the QiY website.

## 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

Position	Releases	Area Meeting
Governors, Bootham School	Rosemary Roberts	York
	Sarah Coltman	Leeds
	Simon Hetherington	At end of 1st term
	David Stanton	At end of 2nd term

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

### b. From Quakers in Yorkshire Nominations Committee

Our Nominations Committee brings forward nominations for appointments as follows for the period from 1st January 2024 until 31st December 2027 (except where stated otherwise):

Position	Nominated	Area Meeting	Notes
Custodian of Yorkshire Quaker Archives	Ros Batchelor	York	2nd term (2024-2026)
Quakers in Yorkshire			
Trustee	Christine Abbott (Nominated by York AM)	York	1st term (2024-2026)
Clerk to Trustees	David Olver	Craven & Keighley	2nd term (2024-2026)
Bootham School Committee/Governors	Michael Sessions	Pickering and Hull	1st term
	Dominic Fairbrass	Old Scholar	1st term

Andrew Fisher	Old Scholar	1st term
Henrietta Stock	Current Parent	1st term

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

### **Nominations Required**

The convenor of our nominations committee reports that they are still searching for nominations for several posts.

Liz Bryan has urged that Area Meetings make the necessary appointments to the Nominations Committee , i.e. 2 per meeting to ensure that our functions can be carried out effectively.

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. A view of the future of Woodbrooke and the opportunities for Yorkshire Quakers.**

We have devoted our afternoon session to Woodbrooke, its future and opportunities and we were pleased to welcome to our meeting Ingrid Greenhow, Clerk of Woodbrooke Trustees, Jon Martin, Head of Communications and Impact and Rachael Swancott, Programme Coordinator for Community.

Ingrid Greenhow gave an introduction and explained the journey Woodbrooke had made over the past few years. It has been a difficult time for Woodbrooke even before the pandemic and associated lockdowns, when there was a hesitant move towards online learning. Lockdowns gave a strong impetus to change and Friends responded so enthusiastically. Staff are doing a fantastic job and are supported by grants from BYM and Joseph Rowntree Trust but more is needed to run the new organisation.

Jon Martin told us what Woodbrooke now looks like and what it has to offer to Friends and the wider world, followed by questions. Day events have been run around the UK in response to a request for face to face courses or workshops. There is a strong move towards residential courses, e.g. at Glenthorne and other UK locations. There may be consideration to use Friends schools with more residential capacities. The aim is to be relevant to the location but also to follow a curriculum programme that has a theme for the wider community.

The research programme continues and offers academic qualifications which gives further credibility to the status of Woodbrooke as a centre for learning and teaching. Woodbrooke also supports the Swarthmore Lecture, with 6000 people watching online in 2022, and offering 13 online meeting for worship sessions weekly. The changes at Woodbrooke, in part reflect the demographic changes in the Society of Friends, also offers new opportunities for Woodbrooke by looking at the needs of younger generations of new members and those interested in Quakerism. There is more flexibility to respond to new demands for courses, workshops and worship, by

collaborating with other bodies. Woodbrooke Places will help bring courses nearer to those who want day or residential courses.

Rachael Swancott then facilitated a conversation about the needs and interests of Quakers in Yorkshire and finished with a guide to how Woodbrooke could support Quakers and Quakerism in Yorkshire and beyond. We were asked to think about the issues that we are facing within our Local and Area Meetings in Yorkshire together with the joys that we want to celebrate. Rachael told us of the opportunities available for courses and workshops that would be relevant to our needs based on our assessment of joys and challenges.

We thank Ingrid, Jon and Rachael for their contribution to a fascinating and informative session which shows us how Woodbrooke will continue to play a positive role in supporting Quakerism in the years to come.

We have been reminded of the need to complete the British Quaker survey, which is available online, by the end of November. It is so important for giving a deeper understanding of Quakerism, how we do it and what it means to us, as opposed to the annual tabular statement, as well as informing researchers of Quakerism today.

Slides from the presentations will be placed on the Quakers in Yorkshire website with more details of the available courses.

## **10. Mary Rowlands**

We welcome the news that Mary Rowlands of Kirkbymoorside LM will be 100 hundred years old on 23rd October. We send our greetings and congratulations to Mary in the form of a birthday card from this meeting.

## **9. Concluding Minute**

We acknowledge that we do not live in a bubble. As we close our meeting our thoughts are with those who are seeking peace in Israel and Gaza, with a wish that their efforts are listened to and supported by the international community.

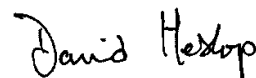
We thank Bootham School for their hospitality and arrangements for this meeting and to all those who have contributed to the content of the day.

There being no further business to be taken at this time, we conclude, hoping to meet again, should nothing occur to prevent, on Saturday, January 20th, 2024 at the Carlton Hill Meeting House, Leeds.



David Bunney

Co-Clerk



David Heslop

Co-Clerk (this time)