

Quakers in Yorkshire
Quarterly Meeting held on Saturday 19th October 2024
At the Mount School, York

MINUTES

1. Representatives

We have been joined by 21 in the room and 6 online for the morning session.
There were 16 in the room and 5 online for the afternoon session.

2. Meeting for Worship

In our meeting for worship we heard read Quaker faith and practice 25.04.

3. Welcome by the Clerks and the appointment of Elders

The Clerks have welcomed all those present to this meeting.
We have appointed our clerks to act as Elders for the meeting today.

4. Welcome from the Mount School

We have been welcomed to the Mount School by Jo Goudriaan, co-Principal. Aspects of housekeeping for this meeting have been given to us.

5. Presentations from the Schools – by pupils and the Schools

The focus for pupils at both schools has been on the living of Quaker values in everyday life in their communities. These were introduced by Katerina, Libby and Berlin from the Mount and Freddie and Millie from Bootham. Their words are available on the QiY website.

The Mount School

Margaret Bryan spoke of the role of governors and paid tribute to the support of her committee colleagues during a year when it was announced that David Griffiths would leave at the end of 2024 after 3 years as Principal. He has been a very active leader of the school community and has left his mark on the well-being of the school. He will be replaced by Anna Wilby who takes up the role of Head from January 2025.

This is also the last time that Margaret reports to QiY on behalf of the Mount School. We thank her for her dedication during some challenging times for the school over the last 8 years. Her successor will be Greg Wilmot, a parent governor with experience of committee service at the school.

Jo Goudriaan has reported on the year in her role as co-Principal for this term and her detailed report is available on the QiY website.

Bootham

Cathy Woodbine, chair of governors at Bootham, has spoken briefly to the meeting but the main report from Deneal Smith, the Head who was travelling in the Far East, has been read by Gavin Blackstone, Bursar at Bootham.

He opened with the three changes introduced by the incoming government that will impact on the school budgets as well as affect the offer of education. There has been an impact on all independent schools with uncertainty for parents as well as issues around affordability.

But opportunities still remain to offer excellent education and new curriculum courses to pupils. Time is made available for pupils to take on voluntary work in primary schools and charities. The detailed report will be available on the QiY website.

We thank all those who have presented to us this morning. It is clear that, in their different roles within the school community, all are faced with challenges. The pupils are facing a future in the outside world which we hope will be rewarding and fulfilling. The schools are facing issues that are also opportunities. We wish them all success in their endeavours.

6. Racial Justice

We have received, and heard, a report from John Margham, which has been read in our meeting. The report was on the theme of Eurocentric history, looking at the current curriculum in schools, and concluded by addressing, and challenging us, by asking questions about what 'decolonising history' means. John recommends that we read 'An African History of Africa: From the dawn of humanity to Independence' by Zainab Badawi. We thank John for his report, a copy of which will be posted on the QiY website.

7. Appointments

(i) From Quakers in Yorkshire Nominations Committee:

We have received the following nominations:

West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council: Robin Fishwick; 01/01/2025 to 31/12/2027

Glenthorne Management Committee: Ruth Woodhead; 01/01/2025 to 31/12/2027

QiY Clerk: David Bunney; 01/01/2025 to 31/12/2027

QiY Assistant Clerk: David Heslop; 01/01/2025 to 31/12/2027

Custodian of Yorkshire Quaker Archives: Oliver Pickering; 01/01/2025 to 31/12/2027

North Yorks SACRE: Sarah Beveridge; 01/01/2025 to 31/12/2027

Breckenbrough School Committee: Janet Connolly; 19/10/2024 to 31/12/2028.

These nominations being acceptable, those named are appointed accordingly.

(ii) From Area Meetings:

We have received the following nominations:

QiY nominations committee Ken R. Smith 01/01/2025 to 31/12/2027

QiY nominations committee Alison Clarke 01/01/2025 to 31/12/2027.

These nominations being acceptable, those named are appointed accordingly.

(iii) From the Schools

To serve on the Mount School Committee, Derek Chivers to serve from 01/01/2025 to 31/12/2028.

These nominations being acceptable, those named are appointed accordingly.

Quakers in Yorkshire Nominations Committee have brought to our attention the following vacancies:

QiY Treasurer;

Glenthorne Management Committee member (ideally with the ability to take on the role of treasurer);

Safeguarding Coordinator;

and committee vacancies at Breckenbrough.

We hope that Friends might give these their attention.

We thank our nominations committees for their diligent work in attending to all our appointments.

8. Simplification in Practice – Consideration of the proposal for a single charity in Yorkshire

Quakers in Yorkshire trustees have been engaged in a process of simplification of the charity with a proposal having been circulated to the Yorkshire AMs for consultation. Today, David Olver, Clerk of QiY Trustees, introduced the topic and encouraged us to start a conversation that is likely to take some time to complete.

The process of simplification started in April 2019 when Paul Parker, BYM Recording Clerk, spoke about the benefits of simplification arising from previous minutes by BYM, and was taken on by a Yorkshire group, known as GRASP (Group to Reinvigorate And Simplify Processes.) This group reported to QiY in February 2022 with some general proposals to go forward, the report being on the QiY website.

This latest move of simplification is taking the initial proposals and establishing specific actions for the future. Simplification is the process to enable us to reinvigorate Quakerism in Yorkshire. David Olver explained the background behind the proposals based on the experience of other meetings as well as meeting regulatory requirements.

The proposal for the future is based on the model laid out by the Charity Commission, meaning that trustees will report to the membership at an annual meeting, being one of the quarterly meetings for Yorkshire Quakers.

We held a general conversation in the room with David Olver answering questions on how the proposal might be organised and financed if professionals were employed to cover administrative activities, and how we looked after those who were to be employed.

The online group hoped that all members were aware of the proposal before their November AMs were held. They asked how professionals might be managed and trustees appointed.

A note has been made of the comments/questions arising today that might inform further re-iterations of the proposal for a single charity. It is planned that a final open session will be held at our April 2025 meeting when Paul Parker will return to be the keynote speaker. He will share with us the positives and the challenges that other groups, including in Wales, Scotland and London, have faced in pursuing a similar solution to that proposed for Yorkshire.

Following the conversation the view was expressed from this meeting: We hope that we also might live adventurously and both find and bring joy.

We thank David Olver for his contribution to this session of the meeting.

9. Dates and Locations for Meetings in 2025

Saturday 18th January - Leeds Carlton Hill LM

Saturday 26th April - Doncaster Balby LM

Saturday 19th July - Harrogate LM

Saturday 11th October - Bootham School, date to be agreed by the schools.

10. Concluding Minute

We thank all those who have contributed to the holding of this meeting and especially thank the staff at the Mount School for preparatory work and for their hospitality. Michael Aldridge has provided invaluable technical support.

We hope to next meet on Saturday 18th January 2025, if nothing occur to prevent.