

Minutes of a meeting of Quakers in Yorkshire

Held as a blended meeting at Leeds Carlton Hill FMH

on 17th January 2026

Present

A total of 48 Friends were present in person or online today.

1. Reading

In our opening worship we have heard read a passage from 365 Tao, a Reading for Every Day:

When we become involved with a fellowship, we must gradually become an integral, organic part of that organisation. The relationship will be one of mutual influence: We must carefully influence the collective, and in turn, we will be shaped by the company we keep.

Influencing others requires perception. We need to know when to act, when to be passive, when others are receptive to us, and when they will not listen. This takes experience.

2. Remembering Eleanor Tew

We remember our late and beloved Friend Eleanor Tew, of New Earswick Meeting, who was a regular attender at our Quarterly Meetings and who always brought a thoughtful and astute mind to bear on all our discussions.

3. Welcome

Our clerking team has welcomed us to this, our first meeting of 2026 and introduced our agenda to us.

Robert Keeble of Leeds Carlton Hill LM welcomed us and described the housekeeping for today.

Robin Fishwick has introduced the theme for today of Eldership and Pastoral Care and explained how good eldership can benefit the running of Quaker meetings for worship. We will hear more during the course of the day, from Robin and from Ben Wood.

We appoint Robin Fishwick and Adam Woods to act as Elders for this meeting.

4. Reports of U19s events of 2025 and planned events for 2026

a. Under 19s Co-ordinating Committee,

Andy Beck, convenor of the U19s committee, has reported on behalf of the U19's co-ordinating committee. His report follows:

In 2025 Jo Baynham, our regional Youth Development Worker, has continued to be an invaluable source of information and expertise to the committee, as well as being involved in running some of the events. We are very grateful to all Area Meetings for the continued funding of Jo's position.

Holiday School happened as usual in the school summer holiday, and there were 3 Junior Holidays weekend events (expanded from 2 in previous years), which you will hear about in their respective reports.

Responsibility for Link Group has now transferred from Britain Yearly Meeting to Quakers in Yorkshire. There have been several weekend gatherings, which you will also hear about in their report a little later on.

The committee met twice in 2025 – in May and November.

Our main focus has been on activities at Holiday School, Junior Holidays, and Link Group, and for the first time, Quaker Camp.

Our model for Safeguarding training is running smoothly, although some leaders and helpers do leave it rather late to complete their training... Training is delivered either on-line, or in-person at planning meetings and at the start of the events themselves, to minimise the need for leaders to make special trips to training courses.

The new QiY Safeguarding policy is still a work-in-progress, and groups continue to work to the previous policy in the meantime. This is a cause for concern, although the changes are not significant. Everyone is still waiting for the government's guidance to be published, following the Supreme Court ruling on gender identity.

QiY have now purchased a marquee, which was used for Quaker Camp. This is available for any C&YP event that wants to use it, and we rent a "lock-up" storage unit where other bulky resources can be stored if the other groups need it.

Trustees have been looking at how we allocate bursaries for the various events and have produced a draft proposal which we broadly endorsed.

We thank Andy for his report to us today and for the work of this co-ordinating committee.

b. Junior Holidays 2025

Mishka Heny has shared a presentation on Junior Holidays 2025 with us. Mishka is a new volunteer with Junior Holidays and is welcome to this meeting.

We thank Mishka, and the team, for this full report. The level of activity and participation is most encouraging for the future. There is a mismatch of numbers between girls and boys, about 2:1 in favour of girls, who attend these events and there are ideas of how to develop a more balanced attendance.

Jo Baynham spoke about the economics for Junior Holidays, and the Link Group, and how meetings might be able to provide bursary support, to avoid excluding any prospective participants. His report is included.

c. Yorkshire Friends Holiday School

Elsbeth Moore, a staff member of YFHS, and longstanding YFHS attender, has reported on behalf of Yorkshire Friends Holiday School 2025.

Her report on the 2025 event follows with a theme of: 'Are we there yet?'

The 2026 event will take place at Bootham School from 16th-23rd August, and perhaps considering the theme of 'AI and Creativity'. Ideas are welcome on possible speakers.

We thank Elsbeth for her excellent report.

d. Yorkshire Link Group

We were joined by Gwenllian Shippides, secretary to the Link Group who reported on behalf of the Yorkshire Link group and talked to the presentation. Apart from the activities the main points are: 3 annual gatherings are volunteer led; numbers of participants are continuing to increase; new venues are needed to meet demand.

Further details from the presentation are given below:

We thank Gwenllian, and the Link Group, for this very full report.

The financial summary given by Jo Baynham under Junior Holidays above also includes the Link Group.

e. Summer Camp

The first Yorkshire Summer Camp took place

in August 2025. It was blessed by fine weather and was a great start to what is hopefully a future holding of the camp. Despite a small drop off rate there were 80 plus participants and came in under budget.

Demand has been such that a larger venue has been found for 2026, that will take more people as well as offering a wider selection of accommodation. There is room for 120. Tickets for the event taking place 6th-8th August are now on sale. There has been 50% take-up so far!

5. Quaker Spring Gathering

Pauline Leonard has told us of the Easter Settlement 2025, and read reflections written by David Heslop, which follow:

An Easter recipe: take a couple of dozen Quakers, put them together in a familiar and much-loved venue on the coast, apply sunshine and let them loose for a long weekend and see what happens:

Although not a completely programmed event in the manner of Easter Settlement, the 'Spring Gathering' proved equally rewarding, if less taxing, with more time for Friends to sit around and chat, to complete jigsaws or take part in other activities as led by personal inclination (walks, water-colour painting, various games, etc., etc.). There was the feel of a small community completely at ease with itself, with numbers allowing everyone to have conversations with everyone else, at some point over the long weekend. A short meeting for worship after breakfast, and an epilogue at the end of each day, topped and tailed a time of unrushed relaxation and gentle pursuits.

The hospitality provided by Cober Hill was consistently first-rate; the staff constantly going out of their way to accommodate individual preferences and wishes: we were all made very comfortable, and very welcome. There were a few other guests in the hotel at the same time (and a large contingent from one of the Quaker families present).

Although Friends departed on the Monday morning after breakfast, the weekend Gathering more or less drew to a conclusion on the Sunday evening, with everyone being together for a 'home-made concert': an evening of music and song and games, of poetry and laughter and the uncomplicated joy of just having fun. The simple recipe seems to have worked well!

Is this to be the pattern of a Quaker presence at Cober Hill over Easter? This remains to be seen, but it seems likely that many Friends who were present at Cober Hill for this first 'Easter Gathering' may want to repeat such a lovely weekend. We'll have to wait and see.

In 2026 Friends are welcome to join the gathering. We thank Pauline for this insight into this Spring Gathering.

6. Quaker Outreach Projects Committee

Carol Hayward has read the report on behalf of the Quaker Outreach Projects Committee, which follows:

This year saw a shortage of applications to the Outreach Projects Committee OPC and we have met via Zoom on only 3 dates throughout the year: January August and October. We normally meet in April as well.

OPC is set up to receive applications for funding outreach events from meetings across the QIY area. This has proven to be a valuable asset for local meetings to occasionally embark on outreach projects that otherwise would not be possible due to insufficient funding. We are equally aware from our own meetings that many outreach events continue on a regular basis though these are covered under general expenses or volunteer contributions.

In January 2025 an application was received from Yorkshire families outreach campaign for funding an Outreach Campaign on social media in collaboration with Discovering Quakers, the Local Development Worker and Youth Development Worker. They aimed to produce targeted social media adverts focussing on the distinctive Quaker offer to young families.

'Discovering Quakers' had already demonstrated the effectiveness of social media advertising for putting new enquirers in contact with local Quaker meetings. This campaign would build on this approach to specifically target families in the Yorkshire area who are seeking a Quaker community to discover what it can offer. We agreed a grant £1400.

An application was also received from New Earswick meeting to fund the New Earswick Woodcraft Folk. This funding would enable the group to continue to use Friends Meeting House in New Earswick. New Earswick ranks high in the Multiple Index of Deprivation. Parents have been unable to give much in the way of financial contributions and volunteers have themselves helped-out financially.

This group provides a major link to the local community, especially to the parents of the children and young people who attend the group. At present about 12 children aged 2 – 11 and, at least, 6 adults attend regularly. Children and their parents love the atmosphere of the Meeting House and read the posters and leaflets about Quakers. Spiritual matters can also be discussed in an informal way.

The application was for £442 but New Earswick meeting found some money left over from warm Hub so we only needed to give them £89.88.

In August Wakefield Meeting submitted an application to run a weekly social group for people in the asylum process as well as other people in their community. The 'Welcome Café' offers free refreshments (food and drinks). The application also included funding for 'Peace Banner Making and Conversation' sessions on separate occasions. These would be open to the public and open to all ages.

Wakefield has a large asylum community in initial and dispersed accommodation. Engaging with the Thursday Social and the Peace Banner-Making sessions, is often the first contact that people from different parts of the world have with Quakers.

Both projects offer equality and a place of peace and safety to all people.

The sessions are run by volunteers and Friends and many of the volunteers are interested in Quakers.

All the volunteers uphold the ethos of welcome, inclusion, equality and friendship. People in the community see the Quaker Meeting House as a safe space and the safety of Quakers stays with them when they move to other areas. The local community respects the Quaker Meeting House as a neutral space where all are welcome.

Continuing to run the Thursday Social and Developing the Peace Banner-Making project will consolidate and enhance the Quaker presence in the community.

We agreed to make a grant of £1500.

The Outreach Projects Committee had full representation from each area meeting this year and most of these members were present at all our Zoom meetings. These were clerked by Ken Smith, and convened by Elizabeth Hodgson of Wooldale meeting using Wooldale meeting Zoom account.

We have enjoyed meeting up and working together on something we all feel is a valuable offering from Quakers in Yorkshire. It provides an opportunity to be able to sometimes put on something more than our usual outreach events which otherwise could not be afforded. Although we do not receive large numbers of applications, this is due to meetings simply covering the costs of their outreach events using meeting funds or contributions from local friends.

Elizabeth Hodgson writes of her experience regarding our Wooldale application for our Fox 400 event in 2024. It is still having an outreach impact. This year our video has been widely circulated and a recent showing of it as part of a local Holmfirth Film Festival event drew to our Meeting large numbers from our local community.

Applicants recently make it clear that some outreach activities would not be possible without support from Quakers in Yorkshire and our committee consider it a much-valued resource. Recipients often report that their OPC funding enhanced the nature and scope of their outreach activities.

We thank Ken R Smith and Elizabeth Hodgson for this report.

During the past year there has been much discussion about the future of Quaker OPC as there are so few applications each year. Currently trustees are the body authorising payment on the recommendation of OPC. At this meeting we received a

proposal from trustees, that in future all applications for funding would be made direct to trustees.

The sense of the meeting was that a decision on this issue was too soon and that further consideration be given to the future of OPC. There is an opportunity to boost the work of the committee and publicise throughout Yorkshire meetings.

It's important that Quakers and all Meetings in Yorkshire know that funds will continue to be available to support outreach opportunities. We ask Ellie McCarthy to add a reference to the work of the OPC in the next QiY Newsletter.

7. Racial Justice Group

Ruth McTighe has read an article on language on behalf of Carol-Ann Hooper, who has joined as online.

REFLECTIONS ON LANGUAGE

Language matters. We all know words that are now considered offensive with regard to race, words that are used to express hostility or marginalise others. And the acceptable words change over time, leading to confusion and anxiety, and a fear of getting things wrong.

In 2020 Rosemary Campbell-Stephens, an educator and activist, wrote a paper that expressed her frustration at the ongoing debates about terminology, in particular the use of terms like "ethnic minority" which define people's identity in relation to a norm of whiteness. <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/schools/school-of-education/final-leeds-beckett-1102-global-majority.pdf>

She coined the term "global majority" referring to people who are "black, Asian, brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or have been racialised as 'ethnic minorities'" and "represent approximately 80% of the world's population". She describes her own identity as Black, of African Caribbean descent and heritage, and more specifically Jamaican parentage, and British nationality. And she describes herself as part of the 'global majority'.

Its use is growing. It has been formally adopted by a number of organisations including the NCVO, and Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends. It is increasingly being used by Britain Yearly Meeting. There are of course pros and cons of this approach, and much debate about it. See for example <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c981g43vmmro>

In the Racial Justice item at Quakers-in-Yorkshire in Leeds on January 17th we will consider this issue further, as well as looking at how the concept of "intersectionality" (addressing different forms of oppression together) affects the way we can respond to the potential divisiveness of identity politics.

We thank Ruth and the group for their work in bringing racial justice issues to our attention over the past 5 years. The Racial Justice group has come to the conclusion that now is the right time to end being a regular item on the QiY quarterly agenda but will continue to support reporting on racial justice issues in future.

8. Appointments and Releases

1. Clarification:

In order to clarify a misunderstanding around the dates of an appointment, we agree that we minute today that Juliette Healey has continued to serve on the Bootham School Committee since the end of the term of her previous appointment, from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2024 (Minute 6a of the QiY QM of 20 January 2020 refers), and agree that this term of service is until 27 March 2026.

2. Release from service:

Alex Parker, of Sheffield & Balby AM has requested to be released as Safeguarding Coordinator. To this we agree, with immediate effect, and thank Alex for his service. We ask QiY Nominations Committee to bring a name for the role of Safeguarding Coordinator to a Quarterly Meeting as soon as they are able to do so. Nominations [Committee] will need support from all Yorkshire AMs to find a suitable replacement for Alex Parker, the role being responsible to QiY trustees. Details can be received from Liz Schweiger, deputy Safeguarding Coordinator, or Ruth McTighe, the trustee responsible for safeguarding. The role description will be circulated.

3. Appointment as School Governor, The Mount School:

We have received the name of Owen Hillier, to serve as a Governor on The Mount School Committee from [today] 17 January 2026 to 31 December 2029. We accept this nomination, and the named friend is appointed accordingly.

We thank all friends in appointed roles, and none, for their continued service.

9. Report on Simplification and Reinvigoration

David Olver, Clerk of QiY Trustees, has spoken to us about the progress being made towards the simplification and reinvigoration of Quaker bodies in Yorkshire. YQ has applied for charity status, and initial trustees have been appointed. The first phone in on Zoom with 49 Friends online with an opportunity to ask plenty of questions and a further session takes place on Thursday 22nd January about the consultation process. It is important to note that the outcome is not decided but depends on mutual support between meetings. There is also a valuable video available on the YQ website. [<https://yorkshirequakers.org.uk>]

10. Plans for 2026

Jo Baynham has set out how he intends to use his time as the Youth Development worker for Yorkshire. He would really like to work until he is no longer needed in Yorkshire for involving young people and families, bringing our mission values to a wider community. We are not talking about volunteering, but training for Quaker ministry; perhaps a lofty aim.

Bringing the world in, an epiphany is continuous, why can't I be a coward,
We might see Jo facilitating more and supporting others to take on responsibility.

11. Eldership and Pastoral Care – a spiritual tradition

We were delighted to welcome Ben Wood and Robin Fishwick to lead this session on Eldership and Pastoral oversight. They gave us many insights into the origins of Eldership and Pastoral Oversight and how they influence behaviour in the current Religious Society of Friends.

The presentations are available on the QiY website.

The meeting then went into break sessions to consider three questions:

How do we pass on Quaker language and concepts without alienating newcomers?

Do we have unwritten rules of unfair expectations of how people conduct themselves in meeting for worship?

What models do you have for pastoral oversight and how well do they work?

We had an opportunity to share feedback from the groups, comments being available on the further slide from Robin.

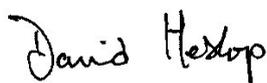
We thank Ben and Robin for their time this afternoon in leading us in a thought-provoking session. We hope that Friends will leave here with a mission to serve, having been persuaded that Eldership is rewarding service.

12. Concluding Minute

We thank Leeds Carlton Hill LM and Leeds AM for their hospitality today and for the technical support provided by Robert Keeble.

We are grateful to all those who have reported to us at this meeting and we are encouraged by the energy being demonstrated in the activities that we have heard about in Yorkshire

There being no further business to be taken today, we conclude. We intend to meet again in person and online at Ilkley Meeting House on the 18th April 2026, should nothing occur to prevent.



David Bunney & David Heslop

Clerk Assistant Clerk

Notices

On Saturday 13th June there is a gathering at York Friargate by Northern Friends Peace Board, 'Living our Peace Testimony'.