

YOUNG FRIENDS GENERAL MEETING (YFGM)

*Croydon Friends Meeting House
19th – 21st February 2010*

Minutes

Present:

Co-Clerks:	Cáit Gould & Siobhan Haire
YFGM Treasurer:	Andrew Rendle
YFGM Finance Officer:	Eleanor Coss
Co-Convener of Overseers:	Hugh Williams
Management Officer:	Tom Rowlands
Coordinator:	Hugo Finley

Area Meeting Representatives:

John Bacon - Southwark, Lewisham & Bromley
Christelle Blunden - Hampshire + Islands
Maud Grainger - Colchester and Coggeshall MM
Xi-Mali Kadeena-Guscoth - North London
Selina Larsen - Mid-Thames
Anna Lowden - Sheffield and Balby AM
Ellen Marshall - London West
Jenny McCathy - York
Katharine McIntosh - Cambridge & Peterborough
Angharod Rhys - North Wales
Mark Russ - London West Area Meeting
Ericka Smith - South East Scotland

Those Present:

Sam Barnett-Cormack, Simon Beard, Jennifer Brett, Kathleen Bright, Hannah Brock, Sarah Castle, Stephen Clement, Helen Close, Peter Doubtfire, Bryony Elias, Mary Estall, Tim Gee, Rajit Gholap, Toby Gibbons, Matt Godwin, Ian Goggin, Rosalind Haire, Tom Harris, Rhodri Hewilson, Jessica Kellgren-Hayes, Isabel Lane, Hannah Leavett, Sophie Loewendahl, Ged Manning, Rebecca Mattingly, Maurice Nagington, John Nicholls, Sally Nicholls, Jack Owen, Peter Parr, Lailah Peel, Helen Percy, Iwan Rhys, Becky Riddell, Oliver Robertson, Rosie Robison, Niel Ryan, Dorina Shahaj, Beatrice Shelley, Kristin Ethel Skarsholt, Hannah Spiers, Majk Stokes, Brigid Stoney, Rachael Swancott, Thomas Taylor, Edward Ullathorne, Ruth Wood

Total 66

10/01 Opening Minute

We welcome each other to February YFGM in Croydon and look forward to sharing this weekend together alongside our Enquirer's Gathering.

10/02 Budget for 2010

Eleanor Coss, our Finance Officer, has presented our budget for 2010, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. We acknowledge that there is historical information regarding the employment expenditure and BYM grant which need to be clarified by our finance officer as an addendum to this minute. We approve this budget and thank finance committee and others for their work in preparing it on our behalf. We thank them for enabling us to break even on our weekend gatherings and to live adventurously through our increased outreach budget and planned events. We are keen to live up to the trust placed in us by those who grant and donate to us.

We agree to increase our contribution to Europe and Middle-Eastern Young Friends from 2009 onwards from £800 to £900. We support their work in enabling young friends to experience the sense of community which we so value at YFGM.

10/03 Planning Weekend Report

Ged Manning and Rosie Robison have presented their report as newcomers to a very "gruelling" planning weekend, we thank them for their lively and detailed report. We will attach their report to the minutes.

10/04 Change in Trustee Structure

Siobhan Haire has presented Officer's reasons for wishing to appoint a 7th officer from quintessential rather than overseers. Trustees acknowledge and apologise for the communication of this process of finding a 7th officer not being clear or its urgency as felt by officers being clarified to the body of YFGM.

YFGM feels that it is important as a religious charity that the trustee body reflects our religious status by having a member from our spiritual oversight committee Quintessential and accept this suggested solution. There will now be only one convener of overseers.

We ask Quinty to bring a name forward at this YFGM to serve for two years until 2012. We note that the trustee structure isn't set in stone and that the needs of YFGM change over time. We ask our trustees to review how this appointment has worked and to communicate this to YFGM at October YFGM 2011.

10/05 Jennifer Kavanagh 'The 'O' of Home Speaker Session

Today Jennifer Kavanagh spent time with us exploring the concept of home. Some of us joined her in a special interest group and had the opportunity to play a board game she's developed (with help from some members of YFGM!). This game takes the players on a journey 'home'.

She spoke to us about how her book 'The 'O' of Home' has developed. She's had many conversations with a variety of people, some 'homeless', and some not. The responses she's had on what home means to others are very broad and often not geographically or physically based. 'Homelessness is a state of mind' was a comment from one individual.

We thank Jennifer deeply for coming to share and facilitate our exploration of this.

10/06 West Bank and the Environmental Impact of Settlement

Roman Goyal spoke to us about the environmental impact of the political situation on non-Jewish inhabitants of the West Bank. His explanation of the difficulties facing farmers in territory which is being rapidly settled and degraded, as well as the environmental risks of over-population it was both moving and frustrating. He spoke about the Bustan Qaraaqa community project, which aims to help Palestinian communities to reconnect with their land in a more sustainable way, as well as lobbying and campaigning for more responsible land use by both communities in the area. We thank Roman for his time and hope that the funding and awareness which his project requires will be forthcoming.

10/07 Appeal

We have heard from Majk Stokes about Firefly International, a youth reconciliation project based in Brko in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through a range of artistic, dramatic and sporting activities this charity brings young people from conflicting backgrounds together.

We agree to adopt and support this charity for the period of one year, starting from 21st February 2010. Now that the cameras have gone home and international media is not focused on the former Yugoslavia. By adopting Firefly as YFGM's appeal we can help to underpin current and future work by supporting building and staffing costs as well as specific projects. We look forward to supporting Firefly International and exploring the issues they deal with in future meetings.

10/08 Accessible Language

Helen Percy has shared with us her concern over Friends' publications, many of which are accessible only to people of a relatively high educational level, or for whom English is a mother tongue. We feel that this does not sit well with our testimony to equality, nor wish to speak plainly.

We recognise that Quakerism is a path which values the living word over the written word, and that no book can be placed on a pedestal for us. However we recognise that many of us find the Quaker Faith and Practice useful and we must make it useful to as many people as possible, and not allow 'words to become barriers between us.'

We ask that Britain Yearly Meeting through the Quaker Faith and Practice publications Group and other groups considers the use of simplified English in future redrafts of Quaker Faith and Practice and supporting documents so that documents being currently produced are more easily understandable to people of a lower reading age,

or for whom English is a second language. We recognise that this will be a challenging task and simplification of Quaker language does not mean that the message becomes simplified or diluted.

We ask that this minute be sent to Meeting for Sufferings to pass on this concern to the Quaker Faith and Practice Publications Group and other groups producing material on behalf of the Religious Society of Friends.

10/09 YF(GM) Free Event

Ged Manning, Hannah Spiers and Jennifer Brett (our events co-ordinator) introduced a planned informal event of fun aimed at people of a YFGM age-range they are organising at Osmotherly meeting house from 5th to 7th of March. We agree to adopt and support this as an official YFGM event and look forward to future exciting gatherings.

An addendum will be added to the Budget to cover this. We thank Ged and Hannah for their enthusiasm and initiative and all the help Jenn has given in making this happen.

10/10 Nominations Returns

We appoint the following people to serve in the following ways for the periods stated.
We release from service those mentioned warmly thanking them for all their work on our behalf.

POSITION	RELEASED	APPOINTED	UNTIL
Nominations Committee	Oliver Robertson	Helen Close	February 2012
Convenor of Nominations	Oliver Robertson	Erika Smith	October 2011
Overseers	1 Carried Over	Andrew Williams	February 2012
Co-Convenor of Overseers	1 Carried Over	Position Laid Down	
QPSW Representative	Majk Stokes	Selina Larsen	February 2013
NFPB Representative	1 Carried Over	Maya Williams	February 2013
Outreach Committee	Peter Parr	Edd Ullathorne	February 2013
International Secretary	Edd Ullathorne	Kristen Skarsholt	February 2013
Website Coordinator	Andrew Rendle	Sam Barnett-Cormack	February 2013
Appeal Group	New Appeal	Majk Stokes (Convenor) Charlotte Smith Ros Haire Jenny McCarthy	February 2011
Appeal Group Financial Oversight	New Appeal	Edd Ullathorne	May 2011
Finance Officer	Hand-Over Period	Bryony Elias	June 2013
Fundraiser	Hand-Over Period	John Bacon	June 2013
Planning Weekend Newcomers	Ged Manning Serena Britton Rosie Robison	Peter Doubtfire Rajit Gholap Kathleen Bright	June 2010
Quintessential Trustee	New Position	Rebecca Mattingly	February 2012
Quintessential Convenor	New Position	Rachel Swancott	October 2011
YF(GM) Free Event	New Position	Ged Manning	June 2010
YF(GM) Free Event Financial Oversight	New Position	Hannah Spiers	June 2010

10/11 Minute of Record - Minute to meeting for Sufferings

Toby Gibbons, one of our Meeting for Sufferings representatives has compiled the responses gathered during our session on committed relationships in October. We thank him for doing this and ask him to bring this minute to Meeting for Sufferings on our behalf.

10/12 Minute of Record - Appointment of Examiner

We appoint Peter Ullathorne to Examine our consolidated 2009 accounts. We thank him for doing this on our behalf.

10/13 Appointment of Trustee

Further to minute 10/10 we appoint Rebecca Mattingly as an officer and trustee of YFGM until February 2012.

10/14 Minute of record - Finance Policy Changes

To clarify our policy on expenses payment we are amending part 3, paragraphs e and f of our financial policy giving a specific list of which positions will have their expenses paid and when. [As shown below].

“Paragraphs 3.e. & f. NEW

e. The people whose travel will be paid from the General Fund to attend Business Meetings will be: Officers; Quintessential; Overseers; Nominations Committee; Special Interest Group Coordinator; Outreach committee (when preparing for or attending an Enquirer's gathering); Catering Co-ordinator; Caterers; and Pan Transport. Other people will have their travel expenses paid if they are required to attend a Business Meeting by their job description or if invited by an Officer or the Special Interest Group Coordinator – this may be from the General Fund or from a Committee budget as appropriate. If they are coming from outside the area of Britain Yearly Meeting they can claim expenses for travel from their point of entry into the area of Britain Yearly Meeting. If any other British Young Friends need financial help they may apply by contacting the Treasurer in advance.

f. If an Area Meeting or Friends' School representative to General Meeting cannot claim from that body, then General Meeting will meet their expenses.

Paragraph 3.e. & f. OLD

e. Officers, Overseers, Nominations Committee, Quintessential, and volunteers as minuted by General Meeting, necessary for the running of business meetings, may claim their travel expenses. If they are coming from outside the area of Britain Yearly Meeting they can claim expenses for travel from their point of entry into the area of Britain Yearly Meeting. If any other British Young Friends need financial help they may apply by contacting the Treasurer in advance.

f. If a Monthly Meeting or Friends' School representative to General Meeting cannot claim from that body, then General Meeting will meet their expenses.”

10/15 Minute of Record - Addendum to Budget

We authorise the Finance Committee to amend our budget to include our newly adopted YF(GM) Free Event and Firefly International as our appeal. It should now include:

YF(GM) Free Event - Income; £300, Expenditure; £300

Firefly International Appeal - Income; £800, Expenditure; £800.

10/16 Attendance at NFPB Conference

Rachel Swancott attended a Northern Friends Peace Board conference at Swarthmore Hall on November 28th on our behalf.

10/17 Minute of Record - Trustee Structure Change

Further to minute 10/04, we will amend the Finance Policy section 1, paragraph c to include “a Quintessential Officer” and change “co-convenor of overseers” to “convenor of overseers”.

10/18 Minute of Record - Volunteers

We thank the following people for volunteering in the following ways at YFGM.

In June 2010

Caterers: Ged Manning, Selina Larsen, Stephen Clements, and Isabel Lane

Pan transport: Hugh Williams

In Feb 2010

Caterers: Mark Russ, John Bacon

Pan transport: Kris Turner, and Hugh Williams

10/19 Minute of record - Clerks' Offering

We have heard the offering opposite from the clerks of YFGM.

“This weekend we have been excited to welcome many new faces to YFGM, many of whom took part in our Enquirer’s Gathering which ran alongside our main business sessions. It was also good to witness people who were newcomers at recent YFGMs returning and feeling part of our community. We look forward to seeing these friends again.

We felt a sense of unity in working together to build our gathering and our community, however it’s important that people who hold responsibilities on our behalf try to not become overworked to the extent that they do not gain from our time together. We should try to support all members of YFGM; new and long-standing.

Over the past 18 months a period of reflection and consideration of the YFGM appeal has taken place. YFGM as a group have looked at the power appeals can have to raise awareness and funds to make positive changes to the lives of people around the world. It was felt important that the appeal is 'owned' by all of YFGM and after this time of discernment we are happy that the time is now felt right to take on Firefly International, a youth reconciliation project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as an appeal we can all support.

We had two speakers this weekend, Jennifer Kavanagh and Roman Gaweł. Although different in their approaches both dealt with belonging and one's sense of where one's home lies, and the conflict which can arise when we lose this sense of belonging. We feel privileged to have the opportunity to create the community of YFGM and the support it gives us to take out to wider society.

Our next YFGM will be in Norwich in June and we look forward to meeting one another then."

YFGM 19-21 February 2010 - Newcomers Report

Rosie: The last YFGM, which was in Brighton in November, was our first one. During that weekend we were asked to be newcomers to planning weekend – anyone here in Croydon who's never been to planning weekend could be asked to go to the next one at the end of April. It just involves going to one planning weekend and the following YFGM. Your role as a newcomer is to ask questions at the planning weekend meetings, which encourages people to be more clear and hopefully helps the whole process along. We're happy as relative newcomers to be asked questions about how YFGM works, if we don't know the answer we may now know who does!

Ged: The planning weekend in January was in Wolverhampton, and we all were variously delayed by the snow, arriving between Friday lunch time and Saturday lunch time. Most of the business stuff happened on the Saturday, with a couple of meetings spilling over to Sunday morning. In between the meetings, we built a snowman, played the animal game, chatted a lot and were very well catered for by Oliver and Charlie – the menu ranged from gruel to an amazing layered roast vegetable couscous with a harissa style dressing.

Rosie: I went to the Officers meeting. There are currently 7 officers who are the Convenor (Maud), the Management Officer (Tom), the two Clerks, the Treasurer (Ellie), and two representatives from Overseers. These form the legally responsible part of YFGM. They discussed mostly practical matters, like the first aid and childcare policies. They were also planning a special Officers weekend for March, which happens every couple of years.

Ged: I went to the Quintessential meeting. Quintessential have the role of looking after the spiritual side of YFGM. They discussed possible ideas for spiritual sessions for this weekend, and the enquirers sessions. They also discussed changing the internal structure of their committee.

Rosie: We both went to the Outreach meeting. The Outreach committee is going through a period of increased activity at the moment – trying to attract more young Quakers to YFGM. They are especially looking at inreach to begin with - appealing to existing Young Quakers who are currently not involved in YFGM. They discussed their aims and actions for the next few years as a committee, which is likely to involve some exciting merchandising, the Young Quaker magazine, and possibly attending festivals and freshers' fairs. They also had to put together their budget proposal in time for the finance meeting.

Ged: I then went to the Finance meeting. At the last YFGM in November a feedback session was held where people chose areas where they would like to see their money spent. In light of guidance from that session the 2010 budget was discussed, and finalised. People said in November they wanted to spend more on events and on outreach, both of which have been allocated larger portions of the budget.

Rosie: Threshing is the biggest meeting of the weekend, which everyone attended at least part of. There were two parts – first the notices of things it was felt everyone should know about, but that were for all practical purposes already decided, and then

the second part where ideas were brought forward which needed to be thrown about, but on which no decision was supposed to be taken. This is also the time where anyone from YFGM can bring forward any matter that they want to be considered, and they will be helped to do so. We discussed the spirituality session ideas, Ged told us about an event he wants to run affiliated to YFGM, and we also talked about the accessibility of the language used at YFGM. There was also a general discussion about timetabling. The idea of running sessions parallel to the main business session was raised, and the pros and cons of different ways of implementing this.

Ged: One of the final jobs of the weekend was setting the Agenda for this YFGM. Here we saw the difficulties of fitting in enough session time, meeting time, and also including enough less structured time. Finally, there are a few closed meetings during planning weekend to discuss legal and confidential matters which aren't appropriate to be conducted in an open group. Obviously, we didn't go to any of these.

Rosie: Our impressions of the planning weekend included how easy it is to underestimate the amount of stuff that YFGM does, and has to do to keep itself running. A lot of business is covered in a short space of time, in order to make it easier for YFGM to digest it as a bigger group. This preparation work is easiest done in small groups, although they are open and inclusive to all who want to come to them. We were often impressed at the combination of the business method and more informal meetings to get everything sorted out. Altogether, we felt the planning weekend was effective at covering lots of material, and preparing it well to help YFGM run smoothly.

Ged: Over the weekend the two of us also had some in-depth discussions with different people about what YFGM is, what it does and what it is for. We found out that YFGM's focus has changed over the years. It has gone through phases of being very activist on issues, and phases of being very spiritual, phases of being introspective and phases of being more outward-looking, depending on the group of people who make up YFGM at that time. These different phases mean YFGM's focus is not always the same, although it always aims to represent young Quakers on a local, National and International stage.

Ged Manning and Rosie Robison

YFGM Budget for 2010

	2010 budget	2009 actual (to end Nov)	2009 budget
Income			
BYM grant	6,800.00	6,800.00	6,800.00
JRCT grant	11,076.00	7,692.50	7,692.50
Legacies	0.00	0.00	0.00
YFGM contributions	4,100.00	3,866.85	3,500.00
Meetings & Friends	7,000.00	7,061.12	7,500.00
Young Quaker	1,625.00	1,116.00	1,500.00
Pardshaw	n/a - laid down	100.00	120.00
Interest	110.00	110.00	100.00
Outreach	750.00	0.00	0.00
Events	850.00	n/a - new committee	
Firefly Appeal	800.00	n/a - new committee	
Other income	3,000.00	3,112.00	3,000.00
Total	36,111.00	29,858.47	30,212.50
Expenditure			
YFGMs	4,100.00	4,069.56	4,400.00
Planning Weekends	2,500.00	2,638.19	2,375.00
Accessibility	1,000.00	536.60	2,000.00
Bursaries	1,000.00	200.05	1,500.00
Training	750.00	287.20	750.00
Outreach	2,000.00	211.45	700.00
International	100.00	0.00	450.00
Interchurch/faith	150.00	0.00	250.00
Reps & Subs	700.00	684.95	600.00
Grants & donations	1,800.00	1,351.00	2,151.00
Contingency	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Employment	19,435.00	12,025.00	18,725.00
Young Quaker	1,700.00	890.65	2,000.00
Pardshaw	n/a - laid down	118.00	118.00
Quintessential	(no longer has own budget)	0.00	0.00
Events	1,380.00	n/a - new committee	
Firefly Appeal	800	n/a - new committee	
Other expenses	0.00	105.50	0.00
Total	38,415.00	23,118.14	37,019.00
Net spending	-2,304.00	6,740.33	-6,806.50