

YOUNG FRIENDS GENERAL MEETING (YFGM)

Newcastle-on-Tyne Friends Meeting House, 25th – 28th May 2007

Minutes

Present:

Co-Clerks: Guy Milner & Hannah Spiers
YFGM Treasurer: Huw Still
Co-Convenors of Overseers: Ellen Marshall & Tom Rowlands
Management Officer: Ruth Wood
Co-ordinator: Alison Squires

Monthly Meeting Representatives:

Bournemouth & Swanage	Mary Estall	Cambridge & Peterborough	[***]
Colchester & Coggeshall	Jez Smith	Colchester & Coggeshall	Maud Grainger
Darlington	Anna Rachel James	Darlington	Sally Nicholls
Darlington	Ian Nicholls	Dundee	Paul Dodwell
Hardshaw East	Amy MacPherson	Norwich & Kings Lynn	Ellen Elliot
Norwich & Kings Lynn	Ruth Wood	Notts & Derby	Marie Drouin
South East Scotland	Ericka Smith	South Wales	Tom Rowlands
Southwark, Lewisham & Bromley	John Bacon	West Scotland	Cait Gould
Westminster	Ellen Marshall	Witney	Alyn Still
Worcestershire & Shropshire	Simon Latham	York	Hannah Spiers

Sam Barnett-Cormack, Martha Beale, Julia Binns, Ed Blann, Adam Boardman, Nicola Bowerman, Ellie Colyer, C. Wess Daniels, Bluebell Eikonoklastes, Dawn Filtness, Toby Freeman, Toby Gibbons, Siobhan Haire, Chris Hanning, Tom Harris, Symon Hill, Adam Lee, Esther Leighton, Emily Maddison, Jessica Metheringham, John Nicholls, Anne Norton, Helen Percy, Andrew Rendle, Mark Russ, Neil Ryan, Rachel Sewell, Helen Sims, Charlotte Smith, Imogen Smith, Majk Stokes, Hilary Topp, Peterson Toscano, Kris Turner, Lucy White, Rachel Xerri

Total: 59

07/17 Opening Minute

We welcome one another to YFGM in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and look forward to sharing our time together. We extend a special welcome to Wess Daniels from Evangelical Friends Church Eastern Region.

07/18 Convener of Officers

We agree to create the position of Convener of Officers. This post holder will be an officer of YFGM and a Trustee if eligible.

07/19 Planning Weekend Report

Ellie Colyer and Esther Leighton have reported on the Planning Weekend in April held at Bourneville Meeting House in Birmingham. We thank Ellie and Esther for their report.

07/20 Management Group

We have heard from Management Group that the new YFGM Database will take online registrations for our next YFGM in October. To comply with the Data Protection Act we should not keep YFGM members' records for longer than necessary. Therefore records will be kept for 3 years from the last involvement with YFGM. This includes registering for a YFGM, YFGM organized event, or logging in to the online accounts. After this time period the individual will be given the opportunity to keep their details on the database or otherwise they will be removed. Individuals can have their details removed at any time, upon their request.

07/21 Rewrite Appeal

Molly Mullen and Soheila Ghodstinat from Rewrite, the current YFGM appeal, have led us in a workshop.

We have heard about Rewrite's projects using drama and creative writing to tackle the issues surrounding refuge and asylum. We have explored the issue of culture and have discovered how difficult it is to reduce a culture without stereotyping. We have also experienced the methods used by Rewrite. We have expressed ourselves through creative writing about our backpacks, group writings about our protests and group sketches.

We thank Molly and Soheila for running this workshop and look forward to working with Rewrite at future YFGMs.

07/22 Nominations – 'the new approach'

Nominations Committee have led us in considering YFGM's collective responsibility for the nominations process. We thank them for this and hope we can continue to support them, taking a collective responsibility for filling posts needed.

07/22 Report from Quaker Life

Simon Latham, a YFGM Quaker Life Representative reported back on the gathering he attended in March. We thank Simon for his report.

07/23 Bursary Policy

Huw Still has presented changes to the bursary policy. We agree to add "other Yearly Meetings (outside of Britain Yearly Meeting) and equivalent events" to the list of events that YFGM makes bursary money available for.

07/24 Traveling Minute

Emily Maddison is a member of YFGM, and is traveling in ministry to North West Yearly meeting taking place July 2007 in Portland, Oregon.

Emily is currently an editor of *Young Quaker*, the monthly magazine for Young Friends General Meeting, providing a forum for religious, social, environmental, and other issues. She is also a member of our nominations committee. Emily has previously volunteered with other European Friends at a peace camp in Northern Serbia. Emily has also attended a service at Olympic View Friends Church, Tacoma, Washington State.

We hope that Emily's visit will strengthen relations between British and North West American Friends, and between programmed and unprogrammed Friends, by helping to foster greater awareness between the two groups and also by encouraging discussion of the differences and similarities of our beliefs.

07/25 Pardshaw Young Friends Centre

Pardshaw Committee have updated us on YFGM's current status with Pardshaw Young Friends' Centre. We have had a chance in small groups to discuss some of the issues raised by the Pardshaw Strategy List. The notes from these discussions are attached to these minutes.

We thank Pardshaw Committee for the work that they have already done in trying to move this issue forward and are aware of the large amount of work that this has entailed in addition to their role as organizers of YFGM events at Pardshaw and management of the Young Friends Centre.

We feel that we have a concern to support Pardshaw Young Friends Centre in finding its new organizational structure and agree to form a committee to reach this position, drawing input from all interested parties and building on the work already done by Pardshaw Committee, the Pardshaw strategy list, and others.

We ask this committee to report back on its progress at May 2008 YFGM, and ask our Convener of Nominations Committee, Officers, and Pardshaw Committee to write a job description for this committee.

07/26 Helen Steven

Helen Steven has spoken to us about activism and her experiences. She is also running a Special Interest Group at our gathering. We thank Helen for coming to speak to us.

07/27 Outreach

Our Outreach Committee have led us in role-play exercises, discussion and worship sharing. We have considered the experience of enquirers, and our own ability to respond to their queries, and the difficulties and uncertainties we face.

We all share the responsibility to engage with Outreach, our own personal experience of the Divine being our most important resource.

We thank Outreach Committee for their work in planning and facilitating this session.

07/28 Glimmers of Grace

Maud Grainger and Toby Gibbons have led us in creative worship, exploring the glimmers of grace in each others' lives.

We thank Maud and Toby for this opportunity to share our experiences of the Spirit, giving our memories of God a good airing.

07/29 Peterson Toscano

Peterson Toscano has performed for us part of "Talking Trash in the Homo No Mo Halfway House, An Ex Gay Primer", a one-man play about his and others' experiences in the Ex Gay movement. He has also led a Special Interest Group on Bibliodrama.

We have received a traveling minute from Hartford Monthly Meeting (Connecticut, US) commending Peterson to us as a Friend traveling in the ministry. We wholeheartedly endorse this minute, and thank Peterson for sharing with us this weekend.

07/30 Nominations

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

Position	Released from service	Appointed	Until
Quintessential Overseer	Maud Grainger	Imogen Smith	May 2010
Co-convener of Overseers	Tom Rowlands	Adam Lee	May 2009
Fundraiser	Tom Rowlands	Mary Estall	May 2009
YQ Editor	John Fitzgerald	Sam Barnett-Cormack	May 2010
	Jez Smith	John Nicholls	May 2010
	Rob Osborne	carried over...	
Outreach	Tom Harris	Neil Ryan	May 2010
	carried over...	carried over...	
Convener of Outreach	Tom Harris	Alyn Still	May 2008
Financial Oversight for Outreach	Tom Harris	Alyn Still	May 2008
British Youth Council Rep	Ellen Marshall	Esther Leighton	May 2010
Northern Friends Peace Board Rep	Jonathan Riddell	Chris Hanning	May 2010
Akany Avoko Financial Oversight	Simon Best	Simon Best	October 2007
Newcomers to Planning Weekend	Toby Gibbons	Ellen Elliot	October 2007
	Rosalind Haire	Charlie Smith	October 2007
	Esther Leighton	Rachel Sewell	October 2007
Meeting for Sufferings Rep	carried over...	Toby Gibbons	May 2010

Nominations Committee	Hugh Williams	Julia Binns	May 2009
Co-Clerk	Guy Milner	Cait Gould	May 2010
Pardshaw	Erica Smith	carried over...	
	carried over...	carried over...	
Convener of Officers	New Position	Maud Grainger	May 2010
General Fund Treasurer	Huw Still	Ellie Colyer	February 2010
Pardshaw Moving Forward	New Position	Maud Grainger	October 2007
Working Group		Guy Milner	October 2007
		Majk Stokes	October 2007

07/31 Special Interest Groups

At our gathering we have enjoyed the following Special Interest Groups:

A walk around Newcastle

Bibliodrama

Sign language

YFGM Merchandise

Nonviolence training

Jesus and Peace

What shall we do with WGYF's money?

Outreach

Peace discussion

Prescription Art

A trip to the beach

We thank those who have run our Special Interest Groups for their work.

07/32 Minute of Record - Recruitment of a new Co-ordinator

We authorize Management Group to recruit a new Co-ordinator for YFGM to start in July 2007 and to enter into a contract with the successful candidate which will run to December 2009.

07/33 Minute of Record - Trustees

Further to Minute 07/30 we appoint Mary Estall as an Officer and Trustee of YFGM for a period of 2 years, and Ellie Colyer, Cait Gould, and Maud Grainger as officers and trustees of YFGM for periods of 3 years.

07/34 Minute of Record - Signatories

We authorize the following people to act as signatories for the following account:

General Fund Current and Deposit accounts: Ellie Colyer, Cait Gould, Hannah Spiers.

07/35 Minute of Record - Finance Policy

Further to minute 07/18, we agree to change section 1(c) of our financial policy to acknowledge the Convener of Officers post as an officer of YFGM.

07/36 Accounts

We authorize our trustees to employ an accountancy firm to complete end of year accounts for 2005 and 2006, in order to comply with the requirements to submit these to the Charities Commission promptly.

07/37 Closing Minute

We have met in Newcastle in the Spirit of Love, meeting old friends and forging new relationships grounded in sharing, listening and acceptance.

We have been blessed with the presence of Peterson Toscano and Helen Steven, two friends committed to activism and rooted in the Spirit. Their words and actions are a great source of inspiration for us. Three YFGM Officers have finished their periods of service this YFGM, and we thank them deeply for their dedication and commitment to our community. It is a cause for sadness that Guy Milner is standing down as our Co-Clerk earlier than expected. His commitment, diligence and humour will be missed. However, we recognize that this is a right move for him and we look forward to sharing in community with him in the future.

Tom Rowlands has served us as Co-convenor as Overseers with confident enthusiasm. His sense of fun and practicality are gifts which we greatly value, and from with the Overseers Committee have benefited greatly.

Huw Still has managed the community's finances with great care and patience, serving YFGM in a vital and demanding role. His quiet reliability has been a source of strength for all those who have worked with him.

This will be Alison Squires' last YFGM as our co-ordinator. We thank her for her courage and hard work in supporting our gatherings and the work of our committees. We are glad to know her as a friend as well as our employee.

We look forward to seeing one another at our October YFGM gathering in Croyden.

Signed in and on behalf of Young Friends General Meeting,

Mark Russ (acting co-clerk)

Guy Milner (co-clerk)

Pardshaw notes; four groups

- We think it should continue, but simplicity is no longer as simple as it was:
 - Sleeping on floors as a 'holiday' isn't appealing!
 - People use cars less, so it's harder
- Solar stuff – ambient underfloor heating – we have concerns about whether that's possible with listed status, but it would help the damp issues
- We like the idea of bunkbeds – it has been said one person doesn't go because a holiday without beds would be bad
- Is there a possibility of opening it to the community, i.e. local scout/youth etc. group – are there health and safety issues?
- We think environmentally enhancements are a good thing, and we should leave the specifics to an engineer!
- We feel we should broaden the width of who is encouraged to use it – e.g. simple living cottage rather than specifically YF thing. This wouldn't have to cut the link with YFs though.

- Can benefit beyond the YFGM-attending community – should be
- We need Pardshaw committee to maintain its strength to make it viable
- Updated facilities would be desirable but may not increase usage
- Under 18s good group to advertise to to increase usage
- 'primitive' facilities part of attraction of the place
- Key issue is advertising – spreading word through other Quaker channels

- More slightly structured events?
- Go for a holiday as opposed to DIY?
- If to be used by a more diverse group, perhaps helpful to have a more diverse group running it? YFGM reps and local reps?
- ECO stuff perhaps not primary concern – main thing to get people there to use it – create bigger income to help fund further refurbishments
- BASIC facilities wouldn't discourage us as a group – but may put other groups off. (How many other groups know of its existence?) (How many link groups know about it? – would be a good venue for link groups?)
- Suggestions – write about it for YQ/Friend

- ACCESSIBILITY – most relevant to most YFS because they don't have a car – possibility of hiring bikes? Borrowing bikes from where you get the key?
- Opening it up to older friends? Advertising in 'The Friend'? – more relevant as a Friends Centre rather than YFs centre
- Disable access a good idea – could get a grant for this?
- Renovate the barn (not the shower cubicles, but the area opposite them).
- Could extend to groups that have values in sympathy with Friends.
- Basic facilities not deterring people from going.
- Is what you can do in the area (e.g. hiking) no longer interesting to young Friends?
- Meditation solitary retreats? Simple life/eco-life retreats?