

Young Friends General Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

(Registered Charity Number 1064763)

Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2012

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Objectives and Activities

YFGM provides an opportunity for young adult members and attenders of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and people interested in Quakerism to meet like-minded people of a similar age, to share our interests, to explore the bounds of spiritual community and to get to know each other 'in the things which are eternal'.

The principal objective of Young Friends General Meeting is set out in our constitution as "The advancement of religion in accordance with the principles and practices of the Religious Society of Friends commonly called Quakers".

YFGM business meetings take place on three weekends a year, enabling us to plan a variety of other gatherings and activities to support this.

In 2011 YFGM adopted a strategic plan that developed our objectives into three long-term goals, against which our activities for the year are reported below.

Growing and developing as an organization

Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) held three weekend gatherings in the year. These provided an opportunity for Young Friends to meet and spend time together over the course of a weekend. There were three such gatherings in 2012 held in Liverpool, Bournemouth & Nottingham. Of the 89 Young Friends attending these gatherings, 30 were newcomers attending their first YFGM this year.

Volunteers carry out much of the work of YFGM with support from a paid coordinator. Some served in formal roles with specific duties or areas of responsibility. Many others support the community in other ways, catering at gatherings or organizing one-off "YF (GM Free)" events. These offer a chance for smaller groups of Young Friends to meet outside of the main business meetings. In 2012 two YF (GM Free) events were held, a conference of "Politically Engaged Young Quakers" and an event on "Spirituality and the Arts" (organised in conjunction with the Leaveners) at which Friends explored spirituality through media that included quilting, film, dancing, storytelling and journaling.

This year, Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre introduced a "Young Adult Leadership Programme". The programme aims to help participants to strengthen their knowledge of the Quaker faith and its history and develop their understanding of leadership within Quakers and the wider world. By sending three young Friends on the course this year we hope to nurture the future of YFGM and Quakers as a whole.

We have also been mindful of our limits as a volunteer-led organisation, and in particular the way in which we use the time and skills our members are willing to share. This has led us to re-examine the ways in which we use paid staff to meet our needs, and to consider whether we should outsource some of our administrative support as an alternative to employing staff directly.

Engaging in Social and Political Activism around YFGM Concerns

Gathering together as a community enabled us to share the issues that concern us. This fellowship has allowed us to uphold each other in individual concerns and to recognize those that we share.

The "Politically Engaged Young Friends" conference, which was run with the aid of funding from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust (JRRRT), brought together young friends with interests in political engagement of all kinds and kindled a growing concern amongst Young Friends about how we invest our money in keeping with our ethical beliefs.

May's gathering in Bournemouth coincided with the government's consultation on same-sex civil marriages. Many Young Friends have strong feelings on this issue and our main sessions and smaller special interest groups gave a space to share our views. This allowed us to submit a corporate response to the consultation, voicing our concerns.

We also adopted an appeal project, to support the Cape Town Quaker Peace Centre. As well as raising funds to support their work we have been reminded about how we are all peace workers, and we are excited by this opportunity to act on this aspect of our Quakerism in the wider world.

Strengthening our links with organizations with common values

As a group that meets infrequently, there is much we cannot do directly. We are grateful to have links with so many other bodies whose work we support and are interested in.

Throughout the year we have heard from our representatives about work being done by the Northern Friends Peace Board, the Leavers, Meeting for Sufferings and the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel.

We have also sent Young Friends as representatives to join the delegation from Meeting for Sufferings presenting a "Loyal address to the Queen" on the Diamond Jubilee. Another group of Young Friends attended the "Whoosh" conference at Woodbrooke, joining with Friends from across the country in exploring how Quakerism might be reinvigorated.

We welcomed these chances to engage with organisations beyond our bounds, as enriching to all involved both corporately and individually. We have made changes this year to allow our nominations committee to appoint representatives to other bodies more easily, without the need for routine appointments to wait until they can be brought to a business meeting. We have done this in the hope that being able to appoint representatives more responsively will help our community grow and connect with others.

Looking Forwards

In 2013 we are changing the way we support our administrative needs, moving from employing a member of staff, to outsourcing this function to Britain Yearly Meeting. Whilst a significant change, this will allow us room to pursue exciting work in line with our strategic plan.

Planning has begun for a larger YFGM gathering, to be held at Woodbrooke in 2014. We are planning for this to be a larger gathering than usual, which we hope to share with speakers & Friends from around the world, either in person or through video conferencing.

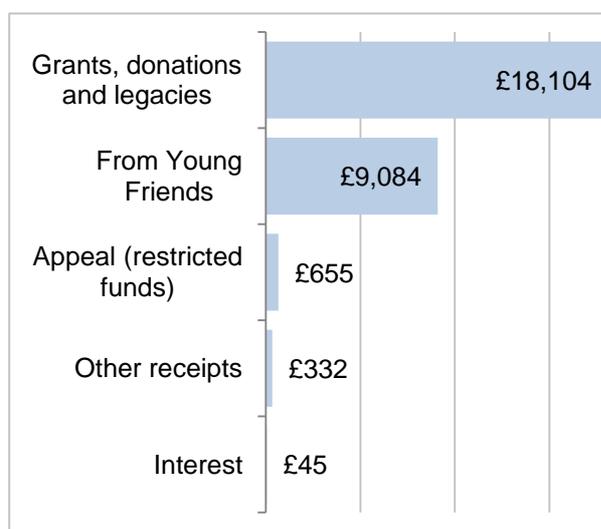
We have been challenged by how we define the age range our community serves, and spent time considering how we balance the need to be welcoming with the clarity which a fixed age range would provide. We wish to support our older members as they move beyond being "Young Friends" and are planning a "Transitions" event to explore ways of strengthening links between Young Friends, local meetings and Britain Yearly Meeting.

Financial Information

Income

The majority of our funding comes from grants made by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) and Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM). These were increased in 2012 by an additional grant from the JRRT to support the Politically Engaged Young Quakers event. Other donations were received from Local Quaker Meetings and individuals.

Attendees at YFGM gatherings are invited to make a donation towards the costs of the event, in 2012 these donations made up 32% of total income, significantly increased from 2011.

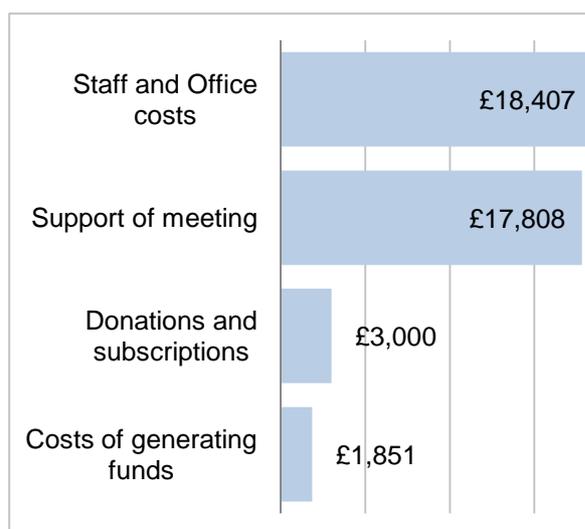


Expenditure

The “Staff and Office costs” category of YFGM’s expenditure includes the rent and insurance of the YFGM office at Woodbrooke, payroll costs for the coordinator and associated management expenses. Together, these were the largest area of expenditure for the year.

Expenditure on “Support of meeting” covers the costs of planning and running YFGM gatherings, including “YF (GM Free)” events.

The category “Donations and Subscriptions” covers the funding of three places on the Woodbrooke Young Adult Leadership Programme.



Reserves Policy

The minimum level of reserves that we aim to maintain should be approximately equal to one year to two years’ average turnover plus any expenditure required to honour existing employment contracts. We may also need to build up extra funds to enable us to offer a new contract on this basis. This is in order to enable us to survive a sudden drop in our expected income and to get new fundraising strategies in place without immediately curtailing our activities. The level of reserves required should be considered annually during the budgeting process, and the budget should be set in accordance with this policy.

YFGM’s finance policy requires that our investments “do not compromise the objects of the General Meeting, its work or testimonies, nor those of the wider Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)”.

Legal and Administrative Information

Structure, Governance & Management

Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) is the national organisation of young adult Quakers in Britain. It is constituted as an unincorporated registered charity and is governed by its constitution adopted 26th May 1997.

YFGM makes decisions using the Quaker Business Method. Quaker governance depends on all of those present to take part in discerning the right course of action.

Trustees

The trustees are Young Friends appointed by general meeting and comprise a minimum of two clerks and a finance trustee and then such additional trustees as the members at a business meeting shall decide. Trustees are appointed by YFGM business meeting.

The trustees during the year, and at the time of this report being approved were:

Management Trustee	Jessica Metheringham
Co Clerks	Ian Goggin Sally Nicholls (until May 2013) Brigid Stoney (from May 2013)
Finance Trustee	Bryony Elias (until May 2013) Alyn Still (from February 2013)
Overseers Trustee	Selina Larsen (from February 2012) Andrew Williams (until February 2012)
Quintessential Trustee	Rebecca Mattingly (until May 2012) Hannah Brock (from May 2012)
Convener of Trustees	Hannah Spiers (until February 2013) Rachael Swancott (from October 2012)

Principal Address

YFGM
c/o Friends House
173 - 177 Euston Road
London
NW1 2BJ

Bankers

The Co-operative Bank Plc	Triodos Bank
PO Box 101	Brunel House
1 Balloon Street	11 The Promenade
Manchester	Bristol
M60 4EP	BS8 3N

Independent Examiner

Anthony Haile