

# YOUNG FRIENDS GENERAL MEETING (YFGM)

*Newcastle Friends Meeting House  
16th - 18th February 2001*

## *Minutes*

### **Present:**

Co-clerks:	Sarah Donaldson Anne Pommier	Co-convenors of Overseers:	Carolyn Forrest Clare Lockwood
Treasurer:	Andy May	Officer of Outreach:	Nick Sturge
Convenor of Officers:	Carol Robinson	Co-ordinator:	Linda Batten
Convenor of Nominations Committee:	Mike Stokes		

### **Monthly Meeting Representatives**

Brighthouse:	Bethan Hillas	Bristol & Frenchay:	Marion Penn
Cambridge & Peterb'gh:	Alia Ganaposki	Darlington:	Tom Baker & Alice Elliott
Colchester:	Maud Grainger, Maddie Hurford & Hannah Leavitt		
Dorking & Horsham:	Blair Hunwick	Hampstead:	Nick Rendle
Hardshaw East:	Aidan McCartney	Hardshaw West:	Harry Kingham
Hertford and Hitchin:	Alan Reid	Kingston & Wandsworth:	Marguerite Page
Lancaster:	Helen Close	Leicester:	John Myers & Hugh Williams
Leeds:	Bluebell Eikonoklastes & Guy Milner	Luton & Leighton:	Rachael Veazey
Northumbria:	Tom Spence	Norwich & Lynn:	Richy Rushmer
Notts & Derby:	Paul Sladen	Pontefract:	Anne Pommier
Reading:	Simon Best, Sarah Donaldson & Alice Drewery		
Sherborne & Shaftesbury:	Sophie Buxton	Shropshire & Worcs:	Dawn Fowler
Southampton & Portsmouth:	Mark Siddal	South Wales:	Ruth Wood
Staffordshire:	Marie Drouin	Thaxted:	Ben Parker
West Devon:	Paddy Uglow	West Kent:	Helen Ferguson

James Barnard, Philip Batten, Charlee Bewsher, Flip Bridges, Rachel Bryers, Gavin Burnell, Rowan Burrough, Roz Currie, Chris Elliott, Owen Evans, Bryony Evens, Richard Evens, Simon Gray, Nicky Grimes, Ceri Hillas, Frances Hopkins, Irene Horne, Mandy Lawrence, Paul Levy, Alice Lynch, Alice MorningStar, Naomi Morris, Anna Morton, Jenny Moy, Matthew Naumann, Daisy O'Flynn, Nick Perks, Wil Quick, Jenny Shellens, Emily Smith, Ella Speirs, Hester Speirs, Juliette Stoller, Jessica Thatcher, Ruth Todhunter, Robin Vanner, Rob Wallis, Suzie Warden, Grant Welling, Nessa Williams, Stephen Wolfenden, Dillon Wright-Fitzgerald; TOTAL: 84

### **01/01 Opening Minute**

We welcome everyone here to Young Friends General Meeting in Newcastle upon Tyne, especially Matthew Naumann from the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva, Rachel Bryers from the Quaker Council for European Affairs in Brussels, and Dillon Wright-Fitzgerald from the United States of America. We also welcome those that are here for the Enquirers' Gathering and wish them a successful weekend.

### **01/02 British Youth Council**

One of our representatives on British Youth Council (BYC), Helen Evans, has written a report detailing the reasons for her dissatisfaction with the organisation. Helen was unable to be with us today and so Anne Pommier has explained Helen's concerns. She feels that membership of BYC does not help YFGM achieve its aims. The full council meets only once a year, and Helen found procedures confusing. Motions are passed, but it is not clear how they are to be translated into action. A former BYC representative, Rachel

Boyd has also written to us to share her point of view. She agrees that BYC is a talking shop, but feels that our membership is worthwhile because it gives us a chance to voice our concerns to other youth organisations.

We support Helen in her role as our representative on BYC. We understand that this is a difficult organisation to work in and that its method of doing business is not what we as Quakers are used to. We know it is possible for us to have influence within BYC through the passing of motions which reflect our concerns. We encourage our reps to be proactive in taking issues to BYC for consideration.

We also ask our representatives to explicitly evaluate our membership of BYC, asking what BYC achieves, and what our membership of it achieves. They may also feel able to investigate other organisations representing youth in Britain and to consider whether we might be able to join one of these. We are reluctant to withdraw from the one body we belong to which has influence outside the Religious Society of Friends. We hope to reconsider this within the next year.

### **01/03 Young Friends Appeal**

Anne Pommier, Rachael Veazey and Ali Ghanem have all come forward with ideas for a new Young Friends' appeal. Anne is interested in raising awareness of local mental health issues, Rachael wants to support work with Chechnyan refugee children traumatised by war, and Ali is keen to raise money to help victims of conflict in the Middle East. Ali could not be at YFGM this weekend, but Anne and Rachael held Special Interest Groups to discuss their ideas with others. They reported back to YFGM on these discussions. We have considered these two ideas in some detail and we have not included Ali's idea in our process of discernment today.

We are moved to support the request made to us for money for the Little Star project in Ingushetia. We look forward to co-operating with the Quaker Youth Theatre at Britain Yearly Meeting in 2002. We encourage the group with the mental health issue concern to continue its discernment and to bring us a session at May YFGM, agenda time permitting, and encourage Friends to contact Nick Rendle to join that concern. [email:furrysmile@yahoo.com]

We have had an uncomfortable exercise with three important concerns brought to us at once. The Little Start Project will be the Young Friends Appeal until May 2002. We ask Rachael Veazey to find people to help her with the Appeal.

### **01/04 Same Sex Marriage**

We have been asked to consider a number of issues relating to same-sex marriage within the Society of Friends. We have had time in small groups to discuss this, and have been specifically asked if as YFGM we want to support any couple wishing to marry.

As Quakers we believe marriage is a union by God, and this can be acknowledged through a ceremony - be it a legal wedding or a meeting for commitment.

We feel that we do want to celebrate and support these unions, whatever form they may take. However, we are uncomfortable with the inequalities implied in supporting a legal union that is only an option for couples of opposite sex. We reject British society's discrimination against same sex relationships and we affirm the equal value of all committed relationships, as well as valuing other lifestyle choices.

### **01/05 Meeting for Sufferings**

We have heard from our Meeting for Sufferings representative about the work they have been doing on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting. Quaker Peace & Social Witness are working on issues such as thermobarric weapons, and Sufferings is also involved in withholding of military tax and a rehabilitation project for sex offenders called circles of support and accountability.

### **01/06 Pardshaw Easter Gathering**

Pardshaw Committee have reported that usage of the centre was low in 2000, despite the great enthusiasm shown at May YFGM, and the fact that most of the necessary works have now been carried out. They are holding a Newcomers' Gathering at Easter 2001 to attract people who haven't been to Pardshaw before and have asked YFGM for funding up to £1,500 to make the gathering accessible and free to all attendees. The money will pay for travel costs and fund a minibus to be on call during the entire gathering. Pardshaw funds are being used to buy new mattresses and to pay for the food for the gathering. We agree to this request and hope that the gathering is successful.

Pardshaw Committee and YFGM positively encourage Friends to attend the organised gatherings this year, to use the Pardshaw Centre themselves and to promote its use amongst wider Quaker Circles.

### **01/07 Young Quaker**

The Treasurer and Editors of Young Quaker reported on recent developments with the magazine. In recent months the covers have been printed on glossy paper and a new printer has meant that photographs are now reproduced well. Both of these changes have increased the costs of producing YQ, and the Editors hope to institute further innovations such as colour pages every now and then. They have asked YFGM for £500 this year, over and above the £300 grant allocated to YQ in the budget. We agree to this request, and are excited by the creative potential for future issues.

### **01/08 Budget 2001**

We have heard our Treasurer's report on the state of our finances and present the budget for 2001. We are happy to approve the budget and particularly encourage YFs to use the money set aside for bursaries to help them attend EMEYF Spring Gathering and Residential Britain Yearly Meeting.

### **01/09 Minute of Record**

Appeal Accounts

We have adopted the Little Star Project as our Young Friends Appeal (Minute 01/03). All funds given to the Appeal will be directed to this project with effect from 01/03/01. We ask Anna Benedikz to close the YFGM SASSA Appeal Account and distribute the funds to the Charities supported as Minute 00/18. We ask Jenny Shellens to open a new account for the Young Friends General Meeting Little Star Appeal. Signatories to this account will be Jenny Shellens, Rachael Veazey and Paul Levy.

### **01/10 New Trustees**

At our last meeting in Bristol the following people were appointed as Officers and Trustees:

Carol Robinson - Convenor of Officers - 3 years

Mike Stokes - Convenor of Nominations Committee - 2 years

Clare Lockwood - Co-convenor of Overseers - 2 years

### **01/11 Membership**

YFGM considered the issue of membership in February 2000 and wrote two minutes. We agree to send Minute YFGM 00/03 and 00/04 to Agenda Committee to pass on to those presenting the session on membership at Britain Yearly Meeting 2001.

### **01/12 QUNO/QCEA**

This weekend we have been joined by Matthew Naumann, Programme Assistant at the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva, and Rachel Bryers, one of the Programme Assistants at the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) in Brussels.

As well as running a Special Interest Group, they have given us a short introduction to the work of QUNO and QCEA.

We appreciated this opportunity to hear more about Quaker work in Europe, and we thank Rachel and Matthew warmly for coming to talk to us.

### **01/13 Appointment to Nominations Committee**

Maud Grainger has been appointed to Nominations Committee from May 2001 for a period of 2 years.

### **01/14 Nominations**

The following people are appointed to the following posts and we thank those friends released from service for their hard work.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Released from service</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Person appointed</u>
Representative to Quaker Peace & Social Witness	Clare Lockwood	3 years	Bethan Hillas
Outreach	Edd Sellman	3 years	Daisy O'Flynn
Interchurch/Interfaith Secretary	Harry Kingham	3 years	Nick Rendle
Management Group	Chris Elliott	3 years	Alice Lynch
Pardshaw Committee	Robin Vanner	3 years	Harry Kingham
YQ Editor	Flip Bridges	3 years	Stephen Wolfenden

### **01/15 Volunteers**

The following volunteers have agreed to undertake the following duties for YFGM in May.

Caterers:	Wil Quick Rachel Ramaker Nick Rendle	Janitors:	Robin Vanner Vanessa Williams
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Pan transport: Chris Elliott, Richard Evens

Off-floor sleeping accommodation co-ordinator: Rachel Ramaker

### **01/16 Closing Minute**

This YFGM has been very well attended, giving us a chance to meet many old friends and to make new ones. Sharing with the Enquirers' Gathering has enriched the weekend.

We have now chosen a new Appeal and we look forward to getting involved in fund raising for the Little Star Project.

Many people have worked hard to make this weekend a success, and we especially thank our Janitors, Maud Grainger and Jenny Shellens, and our caterers, Jenny Moy and Daisy O'Flynn. We look forward to seeing everyone in Brighton in May.

Signed in and on behalf of Young Friends General Meeting

Sarah Donaldson

Anne Pommier

Co-Clerks