

YOUNG FRIENDS GENERAL MEETING (YFGM)

Brighton Friends Meeting House, 25th - 28th May 2001

Minutes

Present:

Co-clerks:	Sarah Donaldson	Co-convenors of Overseers:	Clare Lockwood
	Anne Pommier		Carolyn Forrest
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

Bromley, Lewisham & Southwark:	John Bacon	Colchester:	Maud Grainger
Chichester:	Plog Morris		Hannah Leavett
Dorking & Horsham:	Blair Hunwick	East of Scotland:	Matthew Gee
Hampstead:	Nick Rendle	Lancaster:	Phil Davies
Leeds:	Bluebell Eikonoklastes		Ximena
Leicester:	Hugh Williams	Lewes:	Sarah Elliott
Newcastle:	Nicola Hopper	Northants:	Sarah Peasgood
North of Scotland:	Emma Salt	NorthSomerset & Wilts:	Tim Hudson
North Wales:	Anna Jones	Norwich & Lynn:	Richy Rushmer
Notts & Derby:	Paul Sladen	Pontefract:	Anne Pommier
Reading:	Alice Drewery	Settle:	Anna Watson
Sherborne & Shaftesbury:	Sophie Buxton	Southampton & Portsmouth:	Mark Siddal
Thaxted:	Helen Evans	Warwickshire:	Alice MorningStar
West Devon:	Paddy Uglow	Westminster:	Ali Ghanem
Witney:	Naomi Morris		

James Barnard, Andrew Beney, Adam Boardman, Adam Boulter, Jennifer Brett, Rowan Burrough, David Carter, Joseph Coffin, Ffion Couch, Mike Eccles, Chris Elliott, Bryony Evens, Hugo Finley, Daphne Fisher, Natasha Gawlinski, Simon Gray, Michael Grimes, Nicky Grimes, Frances Hopkins, Klaus Huber, Stan Jiun Yih, Paul Levy, Zeph Lilburn, Kathryn Lum, Alice Lynch, Ben Maher, Aidan McCartney, Guy Milner, Daisy O'Flynn, Mike Powell, Wil Quick, Rachel Ramaker, Anna Sharman, Jenny Shellens, Simon Shepherd, Ella Speirs, Hester Speirs, David Sunderland, Andy Taylor, Katy Turquoise, Robin Vanner, Nessa Williams, Laura Wirtz, Stephen Wolfenden, TOTAL: 81

01/17 Opening Minute

We welcome everyone here to General Meeting in Brighton. We appreciate the longer time together and we look forward to growing together as a community.

01/18 Swarthmore Lecture 1998

We have been reminded of the two year process Young Friends engaged in to produce the Swarthmore Lecture in 1998. In small groups we have been asked to consider the impact of the lecture on ourselves and on the wider Society, as well as where we stand today on the issues of commitment and belonging. The lecture gave us an opportunity to listen to one another, and for God's guidance on those issues, and was itself our heartfelt response. There is some sense of disappointment that the Yearly Meeting as a whole has not embraced our expression more fully.

The lecture was powerful because people opened up and shared. As Friends, we are called to listen and respond to God. Young Friends did this in preparing the Swarthmore Lecture. The lecture was presented and the book published three years ago, but the same process of listening, sharing and responding is still important to our life as a community. This is something we take with us out into our lives as part of the wider Society of Friends.

01/19 World Gathering of Young Friends

We have heard a brief report from Aidan McCartney and Linda Batten about a meeting held in March to consider holding another World Gathering of Young Friends. This has come about following the gathering of the Young Quakers at the Triennial meeting of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, held in the summer of 2000.

They told us that the small group of people present at the March meeting has led to the need to have a feasibility study to see whether there is enough interest within Europe to actually carry out the large planning tasks required. We agree to give £1,000 towards the group to cover travel costs for people working on this. This money will be split, with up to £350 in this financial year, and up to £650 during 2002.

We offer our support to this proposal and encourage people to get involved with the planning at this stage.

01/20 Management Group

Management Group have updated us on the work in the YFGM Office. They are currently recruiting a co-ordinator to replace Linda Batten in August. This 20 hour post now includes Outreach work as well as administrative tasks and Young Friends are encouraged to apply.

01/21 Pardshaw Young Friends Centre

Pardshaw Committee has reported to us on recent developments with the Young Friends' centre, including the new purple waterproof mattresses.

The Newcomers' Gathering planned for Easter had to be cancelled because of foot and mouth disease. We hope it will go ahead in July. Even before the gathering was cancelled there were few applications, and Pardshaw Committee is very concerned about the lack of bookings. It has thought hard about the future of Pardshaw. Some of its ideas include reducing the number of YFGM organised gatherings from 3 to 1 a year, making organised gatherings more structured and advertising Pardshaw more widely within the Society of Friends. We support the Committee in these initiatives. We remind ourselves to make the most of the resource we have in Pardshaw.

01/22 Mental Health

In the spirit of worship we have considered how mental health issues affect us all. Some of us have told our personal stories of mental illness and we have been privileged to experience such open sharing.

Mental illness is still a taboo subject among Friends and in the rest of society. We feel strongly that we should not help perpetuate the silence and misunderstanding around mental health issues.

We would like time to look at these issues more fully. We will hold a Young Friends National Gathering to explore mental health issues. We agree to provide a float of £500 to meet planning costs. This will be returned if the event is self-financing. We ask Nominations Committee to bring forward names for a planning group.

01/23 Peace Tax

Linda Batten, our co-ordinator, has asked YFGM as her employer to withhold the proportion of her tax which would go on military expenditure. Her request is an expression of her beliefs and a form of conscientious objection. We strongly support Linda's request and ask Management Group to take this forward.

We hope that ways will be found to use this opportunity to declare our pacifism within and beyond the Society of Friends.

01/24 Meeting for Sufferings Report

Adam Boulter and Alice MorningStar, our representatives on Meeting for Sufferings, have reported to us on the recent business of Meeting for Sufferings. This includes action that Meetings for Sufferings could take on taxation for military purposes.

They have pointed out that the issue of membership is currently a hot topic in BYM as a whole. In particular, the issues of membership for mobile Friends and the need to bear in mind their oversight needs has been raised.

A comment in Meeting for Sufferings during its consideration of the status of Listed Informal Groups prompts us to clarify our status as a General Meeting. Adam Boulter and Alice MorningStar will draft a paragraph for possible inclusion in Quaker Faith & Practice. They will present this to us at our October meeting.

01/25 Quaker Life Representative Council

Following the restructuring of Quaker corporate work, Quaker Life department now has responsibility for Eldership and Oversight, Wardenship, Outreach, Children and Young People's Committee, and the Quaker Bookshop. Quaker Life Representative Council is the link between Quaker Life Central Committee and the rest of the Society of Friends.

Our representatives, Nicky Grimes and Anna Watson, have reported on their recent work. We were interested to hear that they have been considering committed relationships including issues around same sex marriage and also that Jocelyn Burnell gave a talk on relating physics to spirituality in terms of light. We look forward to hearing more in *Young Quaker*.

01/26 Appeal Group Report

Our current appeal is to support the work of Chris Hunter with children who have been psychologically and emotionally damaged by the war between Russia and Chechnya. We are specifically raising money to help train trainers to work with the children.

Paul Levy reported that we have raised £3718.63 to date. Publicity has gone in The Friend and to Preparative Meetings. The Appeal website is www.littlestarappeal.co.uk. Planned activities include publicity through *Young Quaker*, and joint work with The Leaveners.

We look forward to a presentation by John James and Camilla Carr at our October meeting. We encourage Young Friends to continue to support the Appeal.

01/27 Finance Report

Andy May, our General Fund Treasurer, has summarised our financial position as of the end of 1999. We accept the Annual Report and accounts for 1999. We look forward to receiving the Annual Report for 2000, hopefully by the end of October 2001. We thank the examiners of all our accounts for their hard work.

Finance Committee suggests the introduction of a mileage allowance for those claiming expenses for driving to business meetings. They have suggested a figure of 15p per mile. We accept this suggestion.

01/28 Nominations

The following people are appointed to the following posts and we thank those Friends released from service.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Person appointed</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Released from service</u>
Quintessential	Linda Batten Nessa Williams	3 years	Ali Ghanem Alia Ganaposki
Overseer	Daisy O'Flynn	2 years	Anna Jones
British Youth Council Rep.	Marion Penn James Barnard	3 years	Helen Evans Jenny Holmes
YFNG Planning Group	David Sunderland Maud Grainger Phil Davies Wil Quick	one off	NA

01/29 Volunteers

We thank the following people for volunteering to help in the following ways at the next YFGM in Nottingham on October 12th - 14th.

Paul Levy	}	Caterers
Mike Powell		
Sophie Buxton		
Paddy Uglow	}	Janitors
Adam Boardman		
Paul Sladen		Off-floor accommodation
simon gray	}	Pan transport
Paul Sladen		

01/30 Appointment to Nominations Committee

We appoint Frances Hopkins to serve on Nominations Committee for two years. We thank Paul Levy and Rob Wallis and release them from service.

01/31 QPSW Nominations Committee

We have been asked by Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) Central Committee to suggest names of Young Friends to serve on QPSW Standing Nominations Committee.

We feel that we have not received enough information to approve any names. We are very unclear about what we are being asked to do. We ask our Convenor of Nominations Committee to communicate with QPSW Central Committee. We hope he will be able to inform us of what is required at our October meeting.

01/32 Closing Minute

It has been a very full weekend here in Brighton. We have gathered in worship and business to explore a range of issues. We are grateful to Russell Gasser for his insightful talk on the landmines situation and to all those who have worked hard to make this weekend run smoothly. Special thanks go to the janitors: Nessa Williams and Robin Vanner, and to our caterers: Nick Rendle, Rachel Ramaker and Wil Quick. There has been much laughter as well as some tears this weekend and we are aware that each of us has a unique contribution to make. We look forward to meeting again at Nottingham FMH in October.

Signed in and on behalf of Young Friends General Meeting

Anne Pommier & Sarah Donaldson
Co-clerks