

YOUNG FRIENDS GENERAL MEETING (YFGM)

Croydon Friends Meeting House 10th – 12th October 2003

Minutes

Present:

Co-Clerks:	Nessa Williams	Co-Convenor of Overseers:	Hannah Leavett
	Nick Sturge	Treasurer:	Jenny Moy
Convenor of Officers:	Vivian Barty-Taylor	Officer of Outreach:	Ruth Wood
Convenor of Nominations Committee:	Ellie Colyer		
Coordinator:	Simon Best		

Monthly Meeting Representatives:

Southwark, Lewisham & Bromley	John Bacon	Bristol & Frenchay:	Andrew Rendle
Cambridge & Peterborough:	Lucy Baines	Colchester & Coggeshall:	Hannah Pennock
Guisborough:	Tom Lightowler	Hardshaw West:	Simon Shepherd
Hereford & Mid Wales:	Hazel Ray	Lewes:	Sophie Elliott
North of Scotland:	Emma Salt	Notts. & Derbys.:	Marie Drouin
Reading:	Jane Osborne	South Wales:	Becky Herring
Thaxted:	Ben Parker	Warwickshire:	Anna Dicker
West Devon:	Hannah Jones	Worcestershire & Shropshire:	Dawn Filtness

Adam Boardman, Aidan McCartney, Anne Norton, Ben Maher, Bettina White, Bluebell Eikonoklastes, Daniel Yeo, David Sunderland, El Field, Eudora Pascall, Flip Bridges, Heather Rowlands, Helena Wren, Hugo Finley, Hugh Williams, James Barnard, Jennifer Brett, Jessica Thatcher, John Fitzgerald, Jonathan Riddell, Joe Coffin, Juliette Stoller, Katy Turquoise, Leon Spence, Mark Russ, Marion Penn, Mike Stokes, Nick Wood, Nick Rendle, Paddy Uglow, Paul Levy, Paul Sladen, Rachel Arnold, Rachel Boyd, Rachel Barker, Ruth Todhunter, Sarah Castle, Sarah Freeman, Simon Gray, **TOTAL: 63**

03/38 Opening Minute

We welcome each other to Croydon for our October YFGM. We look forward to getting to know one another in friendship and in spirit.

03/39 World Gathering of Young Friends

We have heard from John Fitzgerald and Jennifer Brett about the progress of planning for this event which will be happening in Lancaster in 2005. They have asked us to appoint people to form a Logistics and Legalities Group to support the planning group by carrying out practical tasks to help the event run. We hope to be able to bring forward some suitable names.

03/40 Appeal Report

We have heard from our Mental Health Appeal Group about how the Appeal has been going and about plans for several events and activities in the next few months. So far we have raised about £4,000. We are excited about the momentum that our Appeal has and would like it to continue until May 2004, when we will review it again. Mental Health has been a concern within YFGM for some time and will doubtless remain a concern. Now might be a good time for other concerns to start growing within YFGM.

03/41 Radical Restructuring

Following on from Minute 03/30 we thank the Radical Restructuring group for the creative thinking they have put in to bringing these proposals to us. Change is often a frightening prospect – we move away from what we know about, for all its shortcomings, towards the unknown. Change is also an integral part of the living faith we witness as Quakers. We open ourselves to new possibilities, led by the promptings of God in our hearts.

We welcome the group's suggestions that we:

- a) Move to one open planning weekend before each YFGM instead of having committees meeting separately
- b) Have all the bookkeeping done by a paid bookkeeper; either the YFGM Coordinator or an outside organisation or individual.

We will move into the future together hoping that the changes we bring about will enable our business to serve our spiritual community. We must try to make sure that we carry this forward in faith, striving to maintain an inclusive, open place for everyone, where we continue to feel ownership as individuals of our meeting as a whole.

We ask that this be taken forward by Officers or by a group agreed by Officers.

03/42 Asylum Seekers and Refugees

We have shared our thoughts and ministry today, following group discussion around the question "What is our duty as Quakers towards Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Britain today?". We are concerned about the distorted picture that the mass media presents of asylum issues. As Friends we can use our skills for meeting and talking with people to help to bring polarised viewpoints towards more common ground.

Do we have the courage to stand up for what we think is right when we are faced with a situation where we can make a difference personally?

03/43 Finance Report

Jenny Moy, our General Fund Treasurer, has presented our 2002 end-of-year accounts to us. They are in the process of being examined and will then go to the Charity Commission. We thank Jenny, Simon our Coordinator, and Finance Committee for all their hard work in preparing these accounts.

03/44 YFGM Breaking Even

Section 3c of our Finance Policy says that we hope that income from contributions from people attending YFGM will roughly cover the costs of YFGM weekends. Finance Committee have found that recently this hasn't been the case. During their consideration of this they found that our current guidelines for contributions towards the costs of YFGM don't really make sense, and in fact should be slightly higher. They have brought us a new set of contribution guidelines including different figures for May YFGMs, a copy of the guidelines is attached to these minutes. We agree to switch over to these new guidelines, noting that the basis for attending YFGM has not changed, i.e. anyone may attend and we ask people to contribute what they can towards the costs.

03/45 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 their work on our behalf.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Released from service</u>	<u>Person Appointed</u>
Quintessential	3 years	Richy Rushmer	Eudora Pascall
	3 years		Rachel Barker
Overseer	2 years	Tim Hudson	Tom Lightowler
	2 years	Ben Parker	Anna Dicker
Management Group	3 years	Alice Lynch	
Outreach Committee	3 years		Leon Spence
Interchurch/faith Secretary	3 years	Nick Rendle	
Meeting for Sufferings Representative	3 years	Robin Vanner	John Fitzgerald
British Youth Council Representative	3 years	Emily Parr	John Bacon
Quaker Life Representative Council Representative	3 years	Anna Watson	Paul Sladen
Quaker Life Representative Council Representative	3 years	Nicky Grimes	Helena Wren
Quaker Peace & Social Witness Representative Council	3 years	Ruth Todhunter	Nick Wood Rachel Barker
Living Witness Project Representative	till February 2004	Linda Batten	Hannah Jones
Co-ordinator's Support Group	1 year	Nick Perks	Nick Perks reappointed
Mental Health Appeal Group	until May 2004	David Sunderland Paddy Uglow Sally Knowles Juliette Stoller Anne Pommier	David Sunderland reappointed Paddy Uglow reappointed Sally Knowles reappointed Juliette Stoller reappointed Rachel Arnold
World Gathering of Young Friends	2 years		Jennifer Brett Peggy Brett
Legalities and Logistics Group			Bluebell Eikonoklastes El Field Andrew Rendle Jonathan Riddell
Website Coordinator Representative to Summer Gathering & Support Group	3 years 1 year	Catrin Allen-Williams	
Nominations Committee	2 years	Adam Boardman	Joe Coffin

03/46 Appeal Minute for Meeting for Sufferings

Our Mental Health Appeal Group have brought us a minute about our appeal to be sent to Meeting for Sufferings:

Young Friends General Meeting has had a mental health concern for over two years, which has included a wide range of activities, past and planned. One of our concerns is that meetings may need help providing adequate pastoral support for those with mental health problems and/or distress. Within the Society of Friends (in particular for Elders and Overseers) we feel that one way to help would be to raise awareness of mental health issues and to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

We wonder if this is an area in which Quakers could develop further actions and make a corporate statement, building on the experiences of YFGM's concern.

This minute has been considered in detail during a Special Interest Group this weekend and has been adopted by YFGM in full session. We ask our clerks to forward this minute to the Clerks of Meeting for Sufferings, along with a covering letter.

03/47 Minute of Record – Closure of Accounts

Further to Minute 03/41 we agree to close the Pardshaw accounts, Events accounts and Young Quaker Magazine account and transfer the funds to the General Fund. From January 1st 2004 all transactions relating to these accounts will go through the General Fund.

03/48 Minute of Record – New Account

We authorise our General Fund Treasurer to close the Co-operative Bank Deposit Account and transfer the funds to an ethical investment deposit account with Triodos Bank. We authorise the following as signatories to the new account: Jenny Moy, Nessa Williams, Nick Sturge.

03/49 Minute of Record – New Account

We authorise our Employment Treasurer to close the Employment Fund Current Account held at Triodos Bank and transfer the funds to a Co-operative Bank Current Account. We authorise the following as signatories to the new account: Dawn Filtness, Nessa Williams, Nick Sturge.

03/50 Volunteers

We thank the following people for volunteering to help in the following ways at the next YFGM in York 20th-22nd February 2004:

Bluebell Eikonoklastes	}	Caterers
Nick Rendle		
Sarah Castle		

Mark Russ	}	Janitors
Simon Shepherd		

Nick Sturge

Pan transport

Nick Perks }
Carol Robinson }

Off-floor Accommodation

03/37 Closing Minute

We have enjoyed our time together here in Croydon building our community. It has been good to hear how well our Mental Health Appeal is going, and to get involved with the Auction of Promises on Saturday night. We embrace the changes our General Meeting is undergoing as we strive to be simple and to walk lightly with God. We wish each other well during the approaching winter before our next meeting in February in York.

Signed in and on behalf of Young Friends General Meeting

Nick Sturge & Nessa Williams

Co-Clerks

SUGGESTED CHANGES IN GUIDELINES FOR YFGM CONTRIBUTIONS

It currently costs about £20 a head to run a YFGM weekend (£10 for food and accommodation and £10 for the travel costs of people in essential roles). Rather than ask everyone to pay this amount, we have traditionally asked people to contribute on a sliding scale.

This principle was affirmed in the recent amendments to the Finance Policy (October 2002) but Finance Committee became aware at this time that the contribution guidelines printed in the registration form did not actually correspond to our stated policy (to ask for a contribution of two days income after housing costs).

At its last meeting Finance Committee considered various ways of increasing income at YFGM and/or reducing costs. This is necessary because our policy is for YFGM weekends to break even over the year but in recent years there has been a significant shortfall.

As a first step towards starting to break even again, we propose amending the guidelines so that they agree with our policy, hoping that people will in general be able to contribute the increased amounts suggested. We also propose that the contribution for May YFGMs be based on three days income after housing costs rather than two, which seems in line with the principle behind the policy.

The suggested new guidelines are given below

Weekly Income after Housing Costs	Current Contribution Guidelines	Suggested Contribution Guidelines	Suggested Contribution Guidelines for May YFGMs
< 50	£10	£10 - £14	£10 - £21
50 - 100	£11 - £17	£14 - £28	£21 - £42
100 - 150	£18 - £28	£28 - £42	£42 - £63
150 - 200	£29 - £40	£42 - £56	£63 - £84
>200	£41 - £60	£56 - £60	£84 - £90

They are just guidelines and people will continue to decide for themselves what they should pay, as they do now.

Finance Committee are also investigating other ways of addressing the shortfall, both by reducing costs and increasing other income (e.g. encouraging people to buy their train tickets via the virgin charity line; suggesting that well-off MMs pay the highest contribution for their reps).