

# Young Friends General Meeting

## York Friargate Quaker Meeting House

21st - 23rd Feb 2020

### Minutes

#### Those Present:

Alexandra Boliver-Brown, Alexandra Foley, Amanda Veale, Anna Goulding, Anne Seilly, Bianca Rawlinson, Billie-Jo Dearden, Ceridwen Jenkins, Charlotte McMenamin Walshe, Chloe Scaling, Ellie Harding, Eva Bird (1), Eva Penhallurick, Freddie Brasher (1), Grace Roberts, Gray Wood, Gwenllian Shippides (1), Hannah Cook, Hannah Davies, Hannah Larn, Hannah Stranex, Hannah Talbot (1), Jacob Webb, James Davies, James Ryan (1), Jane Ditchfield, Jennie Atherton, Jennifer Herbert, Jessica Beck, Jessie Fenn (1), John Waterworth (1), Joseph Fuller, Jules Ireng, Kaden Foley, Kieran Adamson (1), Laura McQuillian, Laurence Hall, Leilani Rabemananjara, Liam Brighton, Liam Roche, Lucy Baston, Matthew Alton, Miriam Chapman, Miriam Harrold, Morgan Gasson, Moya Barnett, Rachel Booth, Rebecca Cutts, Rebecca Pierson, Rici Marshall Cross, Rowan Langley, Rowena Bashforth, Sally Wrenwood, Samuel Cooper, Samuel Warner (1), Sasha Lawson-Frost, Simon Crane, Simon Overington-Hickford, Thomas Bell, Thomas Hancock, Tim Hall-Farthing, Tim Rouse, Zoe Marquis, Zoe Wide

Total: 64 Young Friends

Co-Clerks	Sam Cooper & Rici Marshall Cross
Trustees	Alexandra Boliver-Brown, Sam Cooper, James Davies, Rici Marshall Cross, Grace Roberts, Tim Rouse
Coordinator	Simon Overington-Hickford

#### 2020.2.1 Reports

Chloe gave an update from her first meeting as a rep to Quaker Gender and Sexual Diversity Community. She updated them on YFGM's work on gender diversity, and they're keen to be involved in what we're doing at Yearly Meeting. She told us that anyone is free to join if they consider themselves queer or an ally; the next meeting is in Glasgow in May.

We received a report from Simon from the Quaker World Relations Committee Consultative Forum. The subject was The Climate Emergency and Awareness of Privilege, with an eye to the topic of Yearly Meeting Gathering in August in Bath. They heard from activists from Extinction Rebellion, from Beverly Ward in the USA (by videolink) and Allan Asimba from Kenya who spoke of the challenges that the climate emergency is producing for Kenyan farmers. We heard that QWRC are keen to hear what young friends are doing in response to the climate emergency.

We have heard from Rachael, our rep to Meeting for Sufferings about what has been going on at Sufferings since the last YFGM gathering. Items ranged from minor updates to Quaker Faith and Practice and changes to committee terms of reference, to changes to the workings of the central nominations committee, and receiving minutes from area meetings. There has been little progress on taking forward the work of gender diversity and inclusion; this was a topic of the last meeting, but it is not yet clear how this will be brought back before Sufferings. Other topics considered have been the use of the term 'overseer', and assisted dying, as well as the actual 'sufferings': recording the names of Friends in the courts and prison register who have been arrested for their witness, with many Friends appearing for actions taken as part of XR.

We received a report from Elinor, our Pollard and Dixon Trust distributor, along with apologies for her physical absence. She told us that the Trust distributes grants to Friends facing financial hardship and for travelling in the ministry, ranging from small sums up to grants of £1500, and that you don't have to be in membership to apply. There has been an effort to raise the profile of the trust in the past year, and friends are encouraged to apply. Elena invites anyone who would like further information to get in touch with her at [elinor.g.smallman@gmail.com](mailto:elinor.g.smallman@gmail.com). All applications are treated with the strictest confidence and compassion.

Alexandra, the Convenor of Trustees, gave a brief overview of what the trustees do and the make-up of the committee. Since our last gathering, Trustees have been at work on updating accessibility, finance, travel expenses and other policies. She highlighted that four trustees have to be found to bring the committee up to strength and welcomed people to talk to her about being a trustee.

We thank all representatives for their work.

## 2020.2.2 Welcome

We gather in York for our weekend gathering. We have had an introduction to nominations by the nominations committee and have shared a period of stillness in which to uphold their work this week and suggest names for roles. We have had an introduction to the Quaker business method from our Elders.

## 2020.2.3 Travel expenses policy

Further to minute 2019.10.7, we have received a proposed travel expenses policy. As well as clearly stating existing policy items which apply for both role holder and newcomer travel, we have made the following major change:

- We have removed the £100 limit for newcomer travel and have instead asked that any newcomer or role holder who incurs a travel expense over £100 would notify the treasurer in advance of purchasing the ticket.

We thank Ellie Harding and Simon Overington-Hickford for their work in drafting this policy.

We feel that this document successfully captures the principles sought by minute 2019.10.7. It ought to clearly state our principles of inclusivity, covering all of the travel costs that have to be incurred for an attender to be here. Several suggestions have been

made, including flagging up our bursaries and the possibility of being an area meeting rep within the body of the policy, finding a way for YFGM to buy tickets directly in cases of financial hardship, giving greater clarity on what best practice around expenses is for attenders, and funding bicycle travel in line with HMRC guidance as part of our commitment to sustainability. We ask clerks, outreach and finance committees to look at the detail of the policy, in the hope of bringing a final version for approval at May's YFGM gathering.

## **2020.2.4 Trans and non-binary inclusion updates**

Further to minutes 2019.2.3 and 2019.5.1, we have received an update from the Trans and non-binary inclusion working group. Sally Wrenwood has given a report on the work carried out by the working group. They have provided two documents which were available to Friends in Documents in Advance and which we have had time to ask questions and discern their use:

- the gender diversity 101 workshop outline, and
- guidance for meetings on bookings for gender critical groups

We have also received a document with guidance for role holders, which was not in docs in advance. We will pass this document on to the committees and ask them to consider its recommendations; and we will set aside time at planning weekend to check up on it.

We ask Pastoral Committee to take ownership of the workshop material until our May meeting. We ask Friends to test the workshop out; and we ask anyone who wants to submit comments and suggestions on the material to communicate with Pastoral Committee. We ask Pastoral Committee to bring an updated draft of the workshop to put before next planning weekend.

We have had some time to consider the Guidance and make suggestions. Gleanings from the meeting included:

- Real concerns about social media backlash if it is seen as divisive. Suggestion that we ask Trustees to consider reputation risk and damage control of making the document available outside of YFGM.
- Highlighting that not all radical feminists are trans exclusionary; it has been suggested that we should consider how to avoid creating a feeling of 'us and them', especially one that excludes Friends within our meetings.
- Some language which is used in innocent questioning can be heard as sounding like more aggressive trans exclusionary opinions. Conversely, 'criticism' can make use of often innocent ways of using language with a deliberately aggressive intent.
- Targeting groups is not always appropriate. Often it is individuals within groups who are acting in a trans exclusionary way. It can be difficult for meeting house managers to deal with these specific situations.
- A suggestion that the document be made more inclusive of people who are intersex.
- That the document may never reach a position that we feel comfortable publishing it, but that we could offer conversation with meeting house management rather than making a document publicly available, to help them ensure that friends across the gender spectrum are considered in meeting house bookings.

- We feel that this work is important, and we remain committed to taking forward our discerned commitment to seeking gender inclusivity throughout BYM and in the spaces where Friends worship.

We ask Trustees to ensure that this document is taken forward, such that comments from within the community are incorporated and to bring it back to a future YFGM. Friends with comments are asked to communicate with the clerks.

We thank all of those Friends who have contributed to this work. We agree to lay down the working group.

## 2020.2.5 Nominations Returns

Role	Released	Appointed	Until
Co-clerk	Rici Marshall Cross	Zoe Marquis	Feb 2023
Management Trustee	Tim Rouse to be released April 2020	Tim Hall-Farthing	May 2023
Elder	Joseph Fuller Miriam Chapman	Jenny Herbert Jennie Atherton Sally Wrenwood	February 2023
Elder Trustee	Jane Booth	n/a	February 2023
Communications Trustee	n/a (vacancy carried over: role recently created)	Teala Dearden	May 2023
Logistics	n/a (vacancies carried over)	Ceridwen Jenkins Liam Brighton	February 2022
Living witness rep	Laura McQuillan	Becky Cutts	February 2023
Meeting for Sufferings	Eleanor Fuller	Alexandra Boliver-Brown	February 2023
Media committee	Sasha Lawson-Frost	Lucy Benton	February 2023
Outreach	n/a - two vacancies carried over	Leilani Rabemananjara (one vacancy carried over)	February 2023
Planning Weekend Newcomer	Mairi Jones Kaden Foley Lucy Benton	Rowena Bashforth James Ryan Leilani Rabemananjara	May 2020
Treasurer	Luca Bain-Lefevre	n/a (handover)	n/a

We ask Elders Committee and Logistics Committee to each nominate a Trustee from amongst themselves if they feel able to do so.

We thank Nominations Committee for their work in bringing names forward. We thank Friends who have been released for their service.

## 2020.2.6 Nominations to Nominations Committee

We have considered nominations to the nominations Committee and resolved as follows:

<b>Released</b>	<b>Appointed</b>	<b>Until</b>
Anne Seilly	Kaden Foley	February 2023
Jenny Baines	Becky Cutts	February 2023
Naomi Fairweather	Rachael Booth	February 2023
Tim Hall-Farthing	n/a - Noms numbers reduced in roles reform	February 2023

We note that Jane Ditchfield will be acting as convenor of Nominations.

We thank the members of the Nominations Committee who are being released for their service.

### **2020.2.7 Yearly Meeting Gathering**

Further to minute 2019.10.6 we have been asked by Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to run a session on an introduction to gender diversity at Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020. This may be as a Special Interest Group or supporting YMAC in leading a main session item. We ask Pastoral Committee with the support of Sally Wrenwood to oversee these arrangements and report back on plans made and support required at our meeting in MAY 2020.

### **2020.2.8 Co-options to committees**

Charlotte McMenamin-Walsh and Grace Roberts were co-opted to Logistics.

Jessica Beck and Amanda Veale were co-opted to Nominations.

Mairie Jones was noted in a minute of Trustees as a co-option to Elders, but was prevented.

We thank these Friends for their service.

### **2020.2.9 Catering**

We thank members of Logistics and Elders Committees for organising the catering this weekend. We are grateful to our community for the contribution that all YFGMers play in preparing, cooking and clearing up meals.

### **2020.2.10 Special Interest Groups**

The following Special Interest Groups were held this weekend:

<b>Special Interest Group</b>	<b>Led by</b>
Follow-up from community hope space	Lyndsay Burtonshaw
Gender Diversity Workshop	Sally Wrenwood

Epilogue Research Session	Matt Alton
Loving Earth Project	Rici Marshall-Cross
Beyond Young Adulthood	Ellie Harding

We thank Friends who have led sessions for their contribution.

## 2020.2.11 Change of Signatories

We note that Rici Marshall Cross has been removed as a signatory of our general fund account. We also ask finance committee to remove Sam Cooper and Lucas Bain-Lefevre as signatories

The signatories for the bank account are:

Alexandra Boliver-Brown

James Davies

Lucy Baston

## Clerks Offering York February 2020

We gathered in York for a weekend of friendship and hope. This weekend, everyone seemed to arrive with their arms open to each other, and we were reminded once again of the power of a space in which trust is easily given and love everywhere to be found; but we have also been shown something of its vulnerability and the constant work of care that is required to sustain it.

This weekend we have heard updates from our ongoing work on trans and non-binary inclusion. We believe that we are, within our meeting, putting some of our hopes into practice; but we have also found ourselves vividly reminded of the difficulties that face us as we bring our witness out into the world. We are still feeling our way forward.

We were given food for the heart in a session from Edwina Peart, where we asked how to approach disagreement within the Society in a spirit of love and care. With Lyndsay Burtonshaw, we asked how we could empower one another, and what we would heal in the world if we could not fail. We dreamed big. And when we went away, we were asked: what small thing can we do, this week - just to begin?

This weekend, in business sessions, we've changed our travel policy to make it easier for friends from far-flung parts of the UK to join us. A small step. But every little helps. Sometimes love is doing the washing up.

As always, we cooked and ate and tidied together; we had many fine SIGs (we got quite emotional talking about what epilogue meant to us) and people leapt up to offer activities

for our community time; we had a cabaret with music, improv, storytelling, poetry, hearty communal singing, and an unusual number of ships.

In Lyndsay's 'hope space' session we asked: what resources do we have to make the changes we'd like to see? Our time, enthusiasm, skills, communities were all suggested. And all of these *are* resources: things we can draw upon, but also things we have to manage and husband, things that will run out if pushed too far. But our book of discipline constantly connects our action in the world to the Spirit which leads us and nourishes us. We do not manage the Spirit; we do not store it up; it does not run out; it does not fail. Our own energy and skills are finite. Our ability to understand and care for others is finite. Our pain and hurt is finite. But the spirit is endless; love is endless. It is the living water. This is why we always believe that there is a way forward. This is what permits us the most radical of hope.

## Appendix

- written reports??