

Young Friends General Meeting

Online

23-25 May 2020

Minutes

Those Present: Jennie Atherton, Henry Atkinson, Frankie Austin, Moya Barnett, Jessica Beck, Thomas Bell, Andrew Biden, Alexandra Boliver-Brown, Rachel Booth, Liam Brighton, Eleni Burgess, Miriam Chapman, Hannah Cook, Tas Cooper, Simon Crame, Charly Curry Brown, Rebecca Cutts, Victoria Daborn Tedder, Hannah Davies, Billie-Jo Dearden, Tesla Dearden, Kim Edwards, Caroll Ewen, Toby Freeman, Marie Giraud, Laurence Hall, Lucy Halton, Freya Harding, Miriam Harrold, Emily Herbert, Jennifer Herbert, Victoria Hodgkinson, Bel Ingham, Brian Jones, Edward Owen Jones, Thom Kirkwood, Sasha Lawson-Frost, Johanna Longmore, Silas Manjera, Zoe Marquis, Nicole Marr, Roisin Murdock, Simon Overington-Hickford, Leilani Rabemananjara, Bianca Rawlingson, Tim Rouse, James Ryan, Elly Shine, Gwenllian Shipsides, James Stark, Hannah Stranex, Timothy Tim, Amanda Veale, Catherine Whittle, Gray Wood, Eva Wrenwood, Sally Wrenwood.

Total: 57

Co-Clerks	Samuel Cooper and Zoe Marquis
Trustees	Alexandra Boliver-Brown, Liam Brighton, Sam Cooper, James Davies, Teala Dearden, Zoe Marquis, Tim Hall-Farthing, Grace Roberts
Coordinator	Simon Overington-Hickford

2020.05.1 [New Finance Policy](#)

James, our Finance Trustee, has presented a proposed new Finance Policy for YFGM.

We accept the policy, with the amendments made to the document during the meeting and shared with us via screen-sharing.

We thank James, the Finance Committee, and everyone else who has contributed to the new policy, for the work they have put into it.

2020.05.2 [Amendments to the YFGM Constitution](#)

YFGM adopted a new constitution in October. Our October minute reminded us that the adoption of the constitution was part of a process of change which the whole meeting was encouraged to take part in, and we today consider further changes to the constitution.

We have heard from Samuel Cooper about five proposed changes.

We accept proposals 1 through 4, and amend the YFGM Constitution accordingly.

We ask that Trustees seek consent from the Charity Commission to amend Clause 4 of the constitution in accordance with Proposal 5. This amendment will come into effect if and when consent from the Charity Commission has been received.

YFGM is a religious body, and we often wish the documents that define us as a charity in law to show the spirit of our Quaker practice, to capture the centrality of our discernment in General Meeting, and more generally to embody the spirit in which we hope to treat one another. The mismatch between this wish and what can practicably and appropriately be expressed in our legal documents has troubled us before and will likely do so again. We must, therefore, trust and encourage our community as a whole to practise and safeguard what the documents allow for, but can't do, or make us do, by themselves.

We thank everyone who offered proposals, or feedback on them, for the work they have put in to improve YFGM's constitution.

2020.05.3 [Report From Planning Weekend Newcomers](#)

PWNs gave us an account of what happened at planning weekend.

In the weekend's first worship Friends began with their microphones muted, but after one Friend asked if this created the right atmosphere, people experimented with turning them on and off: a first example of the

challenges of online meeting and how we were so obviously learning.

The advantages of having an online planning weekend first, to find our feet, were clear, and we figured out how to communicate, make decisions and worship with one another in an online way.

Newcomers commented on the spirituality sessions, which helped attendees connect with the everyday aspects of one another's spiritual lives.

2020.05.4 Finance Report

Lucy Baston, our Treasurer, has presented the YFGM accounts. The overview of these finances was shared with us via screen share. Our Finance Committee has changed from a cash basis to an accruals basis this year. Clarification on the reasons for the change to an accruals system was given.

We thank the Finance Committee for their hard work in putting together and presenting such clear and well-organised accounts for 2019. We provisionally approve these accounts, with the understanding that they will be subject to examination, and attach the accounts to these minutes. Further notes will be added to the accounts, and the matter will be presented to the General Meeting in October if there is any change to the numbers once the notes are added.

2020.05.5 Nominations

YFGM will appoint only a few names to roles this weekend. In these unprecedented and difficult times, and still finding our feet with running online general meetings, we have not been able to maintain the full nominations process in which we place so much value.

We ask Nominations, Trustees, and our September planning weekend to

consider how best to run a nominations system for October if the October YFGM should prove to be an online one, including circulating the roles descriptions in advance and making sure that people have the time and space to consider names and nominations.

We release Anne Seily as QPSW rep, and Abigail Rowse as Quaker life reps.

We ask the clerks to speak to Cara Edwards, Matt Alton, and Laura McQuillan to ask them if they are willing to continue in their roles (Pastoral and Logistics respectively) until our October meeting. These names are appointed to serve one more YFGM if they consent to being so appointed.

We appoint Gwenllian Shipsides and Gray Wood as Planning Weekend Newcomers.

The nominations carried over for October are:

- 1 member of Outreach committee
- 1 member of Logistics committee
- 1 member of Pastoral committee
- 1 QPSW rep
- 2 Quaker life reps
- An unknown number of Media committee members

2020.05.6 Co-options to committees

There were no co-options to committees this YFGM.

[this minute is in so that ppl have the chance to correct us about that]

2020.05.7 Special Interest Groups

Special interest groups were:

Kitchen Karaoke, facilitated by Hannah Cook

Solidarity in Lockdown and Beyond, Laurence Hall

Arts and Crafts, Grace Roberts

Activism in Current Times, Gwenllian Shipsides

We thank all of them for their work and their inventiveness in bringing these contributions to this, our first online YFGM.

2020.05.8 Clerks' Offering

Our first online YFGM was a relatively stripped-back, slow-paced thing, our business interspersed with a lot of community time and SIG slots and long lunches. We were glad of the chance to spend time with each other in different ways, the silly times, the quiet worship, the evening events that went on outside the agenda, the simple contentment of hearing friends talking to one another in the background while we made our lunches. Our worship had little speech; but there was much ministry.

It's been a funny weekend for us, the clerks - our first weekend together at the clerk's table, and we don't even have a table. And yet meetings for worship for business have felt remarkably ordinary - some of the usual deep satisfactions of YFGM's business, and some familiar challenges.

There were even positives to an online YFGM: the ability to slip in and out, to see and speak to everyone at once, so that our members could connect with people that they might not have otherwise, allowing people who could not have reached a physical event to come and go for what sessions they wanted to or were able to.

We heard in ministry how arriving at a YFGM feels like coming home; and are very, very glad to discover that our home is still there when we can't meet in person: even if different, even if attenuated; even if the furniture has been moved around in our absence.

We miss each other, and the missing hurts, it really hurts, and there's no denying it; and that too is a homecoming, a way of experiencing how much we love and are loved.

We've always known - and are often reminded, this weekend as much as any - that YFGM isn't the charity; nor is it our structure and our roles. Nor, indeed, is it the event where we all travel and meet together. YFGM is the people; YFGM is us.

A house may be built by human hands; but the home we come back to in YFGM is built by the Spirit; and Love lays the cornerstone.

Appendix 1: Amendments as per Minute 2020.05.02

1 Addition of a new section

Insert Section 16A: Statements on behalf of Young Friends General Meeting

1. In accordance with the practice of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain, if a formal statement is required on behalf of Young Friends General Meeting, this is best and most appropriately prepared as a discerned minute of the General Meeting, recorded by the clerks. Such minutes can be referenced as the view of the General Meeting.
2. The clerks have responsibility to manage requests for statements between general meetings. The clerks may make statements on behalf of YFGM in line with the discerned positions of the General Meeting. In doing so they should exercise judgement as to who should be properly consulted in response to any such need or request, and consider whether the matter can wait until a General Meeting can be convened, or if previous discerned minutes are relevant in responding to the query at hand.
3. It is understood that general factual statements about the operations of YFGM, how it operates, where and when it will meet, its objectives, material for fundraising, outreach, policies, and so on may be prepared by the role holders of YFGM in line with the scope of their responsibilities, and do not constitute statements of the General Meeting itself.
4. The views expressed in The Young Quaker and other media related to and/or funded by YFGM are (unless stated otherwise by clerks) understood to be the views of those individuals and not the view of the General Meeting.

Amend clause 6.7 to:

“Membership shall not grant the authority to make statements on behalf of Young Friends General Meeting (see section 16A).”

2 Addition of a fourth clause to section 19

Insert clause 4 to section 19:

4. Use of powers in service of general meeting:
 - a. Trustees should ensure that the charity shall be managed and administered in accordance with the discerned decisions of the charity in general meeting (as outlined in section 12.1 above).
 - b. In many cases trustees will exercise these powers in line with implicit or explicit strategic direction that arises out of the discerned minutes of the general meeting and the objects of the charity. It is not necessary for the general meeting to agree minor or trivial decisions where this is clearly aligned with a broader goal previously agreed by the general meeting or where it is clearly aligned with the legal interests of the charity as an association.
 - c. If a matter arises which substantively affects the future of the charity or its

financial viability, has significant expenditure or legal consequences, or seriously impacts the charity's ability to fulfil its objectives (see section 3), and the matter is the subject of controversy amongst members and/or no strategic direction has previously been provided by the General Meeting, then the trustees should seek a discerned direction from the wider membership, whether at a scheduled general meeting, or if necessary by calling a special general meeting. If the exigencies of the situation require the Trustees to take a substantive decision or action concerning such an issue swiftly, between general meetings, in order to preserve and protect the charity or its members, they should try to favour reversible decisions, or limit their actions to what is reasonably required to stabilise a situation until such a time as a general meeting can be convened, wherever this is possible and appropriate to the situation; though Trustees should never feel obliged by this or any other clause to deny themselves such resources (for example, legal advice) as are needed for them to meet the demands of the situation appropriately.

3 Change to the 'policies' section

Amend clause 1 of section 16 to read:

1. The charity as a general meeting may from time to time make policies for the conduct of the business of the charity

Delete clause 3 of section 16 and add clauses 3 and 4:

3. When a new policy is prepared by Trustees, or if it is proposed that a policy is amended (whether the proposal comes from Trustees or other members), this will be introduced for threshing at the next planning weekend. A new policy or amendment will not usually come into effect until and unless it has been adopted by the general meeting.
4. Where change to a policy has to be made swiftly, a policy may be adopted, altered or added to by minute of trustees (this might be due to, for example, legislative developments in charity law or data protection law; to correct an identified error; or other justifiable imperatives). In such cases:
 - a. The policy as adopted or amended will be in effect provisionally, and shall be brought to threshing at the next planning weekend
 - b. Planning weekend may choose to send it to the general meeting for consideration; to hold it over for a future general meeting; or to determine not to send it to the general meeting, for example because the change is too minor or provisional to warrant time in a business session. If the policy is sent to the general meeting or held over for a future general meeting, it remains provisionally in effect until it considered by the general meeting. If planning weekend chooses not to send the policy to the general meeting, the change will become lasting,

and Trustees will report on it during the next general meeting.

- c. If a policy change is considered by the general meeting in a business session but not adopted, it lapses at the end of that general meeting.
- d. Trustees should minute the reason for the requirement that they implement the policy prior to seeking the agreement of the General Meeting.
- e. if a policy needs to be changed as part of the Trustees' response to some urgent matter which has a substantial effect on the charity or its future, Trustees should follow the guidance laid out in clause 19.4.c concerning urgent and emergency situations.

Renumber clauses 4 to 7 accordingly

4 Limits to Trustee revocation powers

Amend clause 23.3 to read:

- 3. The trustees may revoke or alter a delegation where there is an exceptional reason to do so (such as, but not limited to, concerns about the conduct of a role holder, or the misuse of the powers in question) though delegation will ordinarily align with the roles agreed by General Meeting. Any such change must be minuted by trustees, and reported to the next General Meeting. The reasoning for any such change must be recorded in a minute of trustees which may be kept confidential if necessary.

5 Amendments to Section 4

Due to the existing provisions of Section 4, Clause 1, this proposal requires the consent of the Charity Commission before it can be adopted.

Add a subclause 1.d. to clause 4.1 to read:

- d. a statement of the general nature of the amendment and, if at all possible, a draft text of the proposed change, has been included with the notice of the general meeting or circulated to members fourteen clear days before the General Meeting.