

Young Friends General Meeting

YOUNG ADULT QUAKERS IN BRITAIN

Documents in Advance part II

Hearts & Minds Prepared

Young Friends General Meeting 23rd - 25th February 2024

This is the second part of Documents in Advance for YFGM's February 2024 gathering, which will be held at York Quaker Meeting House.

This document provides information on the items on our agenda for the weekend. It should be read in conjunction with **YFGM FEB24 Information & Practicalities**, which covers information & practicalities about the weekend.

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Introduction

Each YFGM is a mixture, a blend of the perspectives, passions, and thoughts that each person brings. It's a mix of different types of activities - some structured, some more free-form. This document contains information that will help you come to the weekend's sessions with, in the words of Advices & Queries, 'heart and mind prepared'. There are descriptions of the items we expect to consider as a community this weekend.

Nominations

Our nominations committee will be working all weekend to find people willing and able to take on certain roles, and to discern which names are the right ones at this time.

Roles we are looking to appoint to this YFGM are:

- Planning Weekend Newcomer
- Logistics Committee
- Elders Committee

Details of the nominations process and how to make suggestions can be found in **Documents in Advance part I** and on the YFGM website <https://yfgm.quaker.org.uk/>, and will be given in the intro to nominations.

To submit suggestions:

<https://yfgm.quaker.org.uk/documents-forms/nominations>

Sessions

Spirituality Session: Saturday, 11.15-12.15

We will have one Spirituality Session this YFGM, facilitated by our Elders.

“Faith in action”

This session will focus on exploring what "letting our lives speak" means to us, including drawing inspiration from Quaker activists past and present.

Palestine: Practical action for peace

This session is time put aside to encourage local, concrete actions to end the genocide in Palestine.

Entertainments (Ents)

This YFGM our entertainments or “ents” will be an Open Mic night. Please do bring along any instruments you would like to play, and York Meeting House has a piano for anyone who would like to use it. To put your name down to share your talents, please speak to a member of Pastoral before Saturday evening.

We will also be running a book swap (so please do bring along any old books) as well as discussing beginning an informal YFGM book club as an option for “quiet ents”. This is for anyone who wants to discuss their current reads, swap their old books, and chill with others in a quieter environment.

Meeting for Worship for Business

Introductory business & reports: Saturday 10.00-11.00

Session 1: Saturday, 17:15 - 18.15

Session 2: Sunday 12:00 - 14:00 with break

In our business sessions, we make decisions together as a community about things we care about, using the Quaker business method which is rooted in Quaker worship.

On Saturday morning we'll start with an introduction on how the Quaker business method and our nominations process works, along with reports.

We will share what items will be discerned in each business session at the weekend, both verbally and on a written agenda, but this may change at short notice so listen out for announcements.

Each session is open to everybody, although it is helpful for discernment if you can be present for the whole of an agenda item rather than coming and going part-way through. For some items, it will be very helpful to have read the available information in advance - which is what this document is for! If you have questions about any item, please contact the clerks, elders, or the person presenting the item.

Reports

In this session we will hear reports from members of the YFGM community, including:

- Trustee report
- Switchboard report
- Report from Clerks about Meeting for Sufferings
- Report from our Planning Weekend Newcomers

Intro to Nominations (Noms) & Nominations Returns

On Saturday, we will hear an introduction to Quaker Nominations process (often called Noms for short), and on Sunday we will receive nominations from the committee and discern on whether to appoint the nominated Friends.

Discernment on Palestine

This will be a worship-based business session responding to the ongoing conflict in Palestine, and considering what the Spirit leads us to do or say as a community.

Budget: How we use our money

We need to plan for the future, and set a budget for how we will spend our money in 2024.

YFGM currently has very high levels of reserves, and we need to work out how we can use these to achieve YFGM's objectives, bringing together and supporting Young Friends. In the session on Saturday, we will be introduced to a draft budget and there will be opportunities to suggest changes or additional activities that YFGM could spend funds on.

Further information is in the appendix below.

Special Interest Groups

SIG Slot: Saturday, 16:00 - 17:00

Special interest groups are usually smaller sessions running in parallel in different spaces. In our SIG slot you will be able to choose from various options, which are still to be decided!

The ones we know about so far are:

- **Quaker Disability Equality Group:** Join our guests from QDEG to find out about:
 - What is disability?
 - How common is disability?
 - Invisible disabilities
 - Models of disability
 - The Quaker approach to disability
 - Making Quaker Meetings more accessible.
- **Outreach discussion group:** what should our outreach goals be and how can we achieve them?

Appendix 1: YFGM Budget session

In our session on Sunday, Friends will be asked to consider how YFGM wishes to prioritise our spending over the next year. This is an exercise in setting goals and aspirations; as well as ensuring that we meet our existing commitments in law and our policies.

Context: Last's year's budget

Over the previous year YFGM ran a deficit budget i.e. planned to have more expenditure than income. This choice was made due to high overall reserves.

We ended up with a slight overall surplus. This was due to generally low use of funds for activities that occur between YFGMs such as training, fundraising, advertising etc., as well as very low costs on space hire. This is of course difficult to plan for but we are appreciative nonetheless.

The largest areas of expenditure are covering travel costs for those who need to be at YFGM, the cost of food, and the cost of hiring venues. We were fortunate enough that venue hire was very cheap in 2023, however this should not be expected to be the norm. Food and travel expenses were also cheaper than budgeted last year, but not by as large of a margin as venue hire.

Introduction and process

Below there is an overview followed by a series of reports on our spending categories. Friends are invited to reflect on if we should **maintain**, **restrict** or **expand** our activity in each area.

- **Maintain** means that we will not adjust our behaviour from 2023
- **Restrict** means that we are planning to do less - resulting in lower expenditure
- **Expand** means we wish to do more, and are willing to spend our money accordingly

Finance have compiled a draft budget showing what 2024 will look like if the meeting **maintains** income (with a modest increase due to having a full team) and **maintains** spending (with modest increases due to inflation) These are an attempt to inform and predict **only**. The duty for setting our goals sits with the meeting.

In the session Friends will be given the opportunity to consult in small groups and leave comments on more detailed budget items. There will then be an opportunity to present these to the meeting, which will be able to discern on suggested changes.

The draft budget will be amended to reflect these comments and presented to the meeting for approval alongside a high level overview of how our spending has changed.

We hope this will both expedite the process and give members a better understanding than attempting to do the entire budget in discernment.

Overview of income and expenditure

| 2023 | Planned (2023 budget) | Actual |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Income | £29,000 | £17,316 |
| Expenditure | £42,692 | £15,648 |
| Surplus / deficit | -£13,692 | £1,668 |

Last year we set ourselves a challenging budget for income, and our efforts were hampered by not having finance working on all cylinders. Much of the shortfall from our predicted income came from not receiving as much as hoped for from ex and current yfgmers, as well as below expected income from small grants. We now have much more active fundraising plans, which should inspire us that in the upcoming years we will have greater income than past performance.

Our major forms of income from 2023 are in order: Britain Yearly Meeting (£10,000), Area and Local Meetings (£2,700), Other Charities (£2,600), YFGMers (£2,500).

| 2024 | Draft budget |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Income | £20,000 |
| Expenditure | £47,157 |
| Surplus / deficit | -£27,157 |

We can afford to run a deficit budget of this scale for three years before depleting the current account.

YFGMs

“Cost of a YFGM” appended breaks down these figures, as they tend to be fixed.

- **Expand:** Running one or more YFGM at a conference centre, hiring outside catering staff.
- **Maintain (£12,967):** Run three events per year sleeping on the floor and feeding Friends ourselves.
- **Restrict:** In this category the only practical restriction would be running fewer events.

Planning Weekends

Planning weekends are mostly in line with YFGMs, apart from a lower overall food and travel bill due to being around 25 Friends. Last year we planned for 2 in person and ran 3.

- **Expand:** As for YFGMs
- **Maintain (£6,000):** Run 3 in-person planning weekends.
- **Restrict:** Run fewer than 3 in-person planning weekends

Administration

This covers our office costs and insurance. This is an area where more concrete figures are possible for all options, as again many of our costs are fixed and the options relatively limited.

- **Expand (£4,500):** Deepen our relationship with Mindful Business Services via a proposed retainer. Move more of the administrative volunteer tasks onto paid workers.
- **Maintain (£2,500):** Keep paying ad hoc.
- **Restrict (£1,500):** Rely more on volunteers and have little or no paid support. This will cover insurance and contingency only.

Role Holders and Activities

This is an area where historically we have never spent our budget. Please bear in mind that “maintain” would in fact be an effective shrinking of the budget from last year.

- **Expand (£9,500):** This means attempt to match previously high budgets, provide specialist training to committee members in their field. It also includes being active in media output and website investment, and with our representatives at Quaker events.
- **Maintain (£1,500):** Continue with the behaviour of 2023 plus contingency.
- **Restrict (£1,000):** Some training (most notably first aid) is non-negotiable if we are to meet our obligations, we have been running close to this level for 2023

Bursary

Accessibility for accommodation has been factored into the “running a YFGM” as it is part of how we have chosen to run our events and set our policy (£4200 is the current maintenance figure for access needs at YFGM and Planning Weekend). This section refers to other funds YFGMers can access, we offer these to Friends according to the finance policy in order to attend other Quaker events or to deepen their ministry.

- **Expand (£1,000):** Do we wish to promote more yfgmers travelling in the spirit?
- **Maintain (£600):** We get little activity on this budget - in reality usage has not been at this level, but lowering the budget any more would not provide a very practical item.
- **Restrict (£0):** We could choose not to offer this support to our members

Standalone Items

These are items that ask questions so specific that they are not appropriate for the small group format and will have to be addressed in the round.

Charitable Giving

We give to other charitable bodies. At the moment this means European and Middle Eastern Young Friends.

- **Expand:** The meeting could choose to increase charitable giving for specific purposes, for example as part of the session about Palestine at York.
- **Maintain (£500):** We give to EMEYF the annual grant in line with past practice.
- **Restrict (£0):** We do not give to charity.

NETQT

We hold and distribute £4,170 on behalf of the North East Themes Quaker Trust. This can offer hardship grants and the like to YFGMers.

Finance would like to request the meeting consider returning these funds or ask for the restrictions to be lifted, as the distribution is adding a noticeable workload keeping these funds restricted and finding ways to distribute them in line with NETQT policy.