

Young Friends General Meeting

YOUNG ADULT QUAKERS IN BRITAIN

Documents in Advance part II

Hearts & Minds Prepared

Young Friends General Meeting 24th - 27th May 2024

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

This document provides information on the items on our agenda for the weekend. It should be read in conjunction with **YFGM MAY24 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
- Pastoral Committee
- Co-Clerk

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: "What is Ministry?"

How do we know if something is ministry? What prompts it? What is it that makes discernment work? Why do we do things this way? In this session we'll be talking about ministry and discernment; answering questions about the Quaker Business Method, hearing some stories, sharing our own experiences, and asking ourselves and each other what's behind all this.

Entertainments (Ents)

Entertainments (known as Ents) is a block of time dedicated to socialising with the YFGM community through structured activities. This YFGM our entertainments or "ents" will be a Taskmaster themed evening and screen printing tea towels on Saturday, and a quiz and Quaker meme making on Sunday.

Meeting for Worship for Business

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.

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 we do ask that you wait for gaps between agenda items if joining a session part-way through and if possible when leaving as this helps the discernment. 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.

Business items expected this YFGM are;

Reports

Over the course of the weekend will hear reports from members of the YFGM community who have been asked to do work on our behalf, including:

- Trustee report
- Switchboard report
- Report from Clerks about Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee
- Report from our Planning Weekend Newcomers
- Report from Quaker Rainbow representative
- Report about plans for holding a gathering as a remembrance and celebration of the life of our Friend Naomi

Intro to Nominations (Noms) & Nominations Returns

In intro to nominations we will hear an introduction to the Quaker Nominations process (often called Noms for short) and the roles we're trying to appoint to this weekend. Nominations returns is the final part of the process, where we receive nominations from the committee and discern on whether to appoint the nominated Friends.

Closer links with EMEYF

European and Middle East Young Friends, usually abbreviated EMEYF, is the community of young Friends in the 18-35 age group across Europe and the Middle East (in practice, mostly in Europe).

It can be thought of as a sort of sister organisation to YFGM, and many YFGMers are involved with EMEYF and attend its events already.

Following conversations at the last EMEYF Spring Gathering, several of us are bringing proposals to build stronger links between EMEYF and YFGM, which will involve making funds available for this

Details of the proposals can be found in the appendix below or at [this Google Docs link](#).

Future of British Quakerism conference

We have been approached by Woodbrooke and BYM about [the Future Of British Quakerism conference](#). They would like as many young friends as possible to attend. This conference clashes with YFGM's October dates (18th to 20th Oct).

We are considering how we might support young friends to contribute at both events. This could potentially involve big changes to our October gathering. Please read through the proposals in the third mailing or at this link: [v.2 Future of British Quakerism proposals](#)

Marriage: What words do we use?

There's currently a consultation happening about the wording used in Quaker marriage declarations. A Quaker wedding involves each of the partners making declarations, using a set wording (with some limited options) that's set out in *Quaker Faith & Practice*. The current wording requires both partners to say either that they promise "through divine assistance" or "with God's help".

The consultation is on two questions:

- Firstly, about adding the option to omit either of these. Some Friends have objected that neither option is consistent with their theology and beliefs and asked for alternative options; the consultation suggests that any third option would still be likely to exclude someone, so it's suggested that the third option would simply be to use neither.
- Secondly, about adding the option for each partner in marriage to use different options for this part of the declaration, reflecting their own beliefs.

The full consultation document is available to read here: [PDF](#)

At YFGM, there will be a special interest group to discuss this on Saturday, which might produce a draft response to the consultation from young friends. Then in business on Sunday, we'll consider the draft and decide if we want to respond as YFGM.

Accounts

In this session YFGM will be asked to consider the 2023 accounts and make comments. The meeting will then have time between now and the next YFGM to make any significant changes, for a speedy adoption in the Autumn. The accounts will be provided before the weekend in an attachment to this document.

Special Interest Groups

Special interest groups (SIGs) are smaller sessions running in parallel in different spaces. We usually have quite a variety, with a mixture of discussion-based, movement-based, and creative sessions and different topics to choose from.

At this YFGM we have 4 SIG slots, which will each contain a selection of SIGs.

The ones we know about so far are:

- **Could we have online YFGM business sessions?**
- **Ideas for new venues for YFGMs**
- **Let's talk simplicity**
- **Engaging with Yearly Meeting 2024**
- **Dance & Movement**

Exercises on getting into your body and moving with another person. All exercises can be done from seated and as gently as each body needs. No complicated steps, just nice ways to think about and practise moving together.

- **Trans inclusion: how do we support and take action?**
- **Poetry sharing**
- **Marriage: What words do we use?:** This SIG will engage with BYM's consultation about the wording used in declarations as part of Quaker marriages. As young Friends, what do we have to say about this? This SIG will prepare for the item of business on this topic on Sunday.
- **Taking forward our action on Palestine:** Following the sessions at our last YFGM, and the minute we agreed, how are we taking this forward and maintaining action?
- **What is a concern anyway?**
- **Rest!** This SIG will be designed to introduce theories of rest, discuss some key concepts and texts, as well as reflecting on our own relationship with rest and how we can take action to improve our rest lives.

Appendix 1: Proposals for closer links with EMEYF

European and Middle East Young Friends, usually abbreviated EMEYF, is the community of young Friends in the 18-35 age group across Europe and the Middle East (in practice, mostly in Europe).

It usually holds two events each year; a weekend-long Annual Meeting (AM), typically in Brussels or Bad Pyrmont in Germany, and a week-long Spring Gathering (SG), which is held in a different country within the region each year.

It can be thought of as a sort of sister organisation to YFGM. While many of the Yearly Meetings within the region have structures for young adult Friends, YFGM is by far the biggest, reflecting the fact that Britain Yearly Meeting is the largest Yearly Meeting in the region.

Many YFGMers are involved with EMEYF and attend its events already. Eight of the thirty people at the last EMEYF Spring Gathering, in Austria this Easter, were current YFGMers, and several others were British young Friends who do not currently attend YFGM.

This proposal is about building stronger links between EMEYF and YFGM, to share our experiences and build connections between young Friends in Britain, and those in the rest of Europe.

There are four ideas we want to bring for consideration.

The details of each would need working out, but indicative proposals are included in italics. YFGM could choose to adopt some, all, or none of these proposals. If all were adopted, this would increase YFGM's budgeted expenditure by £2,000 per year.

1) Asking EMEYF to send a representative to attend YFGM.

We would invite EMEYF to send a rep to each YFGM.

EMEYF would be responsible for finding a representative, using their nominations process or by finding volunteers. The representative might be the same person for several YFGMs or might change from one event to another. They might be from the UK or from another country.

YFGM would likely need to commit to meeting some or all of the representative's travel costs, which could be substantial, and the cost of a place at YFGM. Both EMEYF and YFGM have in place travel policies which encourage the use of sustainable travel.

Proposal: Invite EMEYF to send a rep. Budget £200 per YFGM (£600 per year) to subsidise travel costs for the representative.

2) Asking to send a representative from YFGM to EMEYF.

We would ask EMEYF to allow us to send a rep from YFGM. This would mean using our nominations process, or our process for finding representatives.

We might ask EMEYF to meet the resulting travel costs, and the cost of a place at the event, although YFGM could offer to take on some or all of these costs.

Proposal: Ask EMEYF to invite a representative from YFGM to their AM, SG, or both. Budget £150-200 for the cost of a place at Spring Gathering and £200 to subsidise travel costs, per year. This would likely involve asking Nominations to find a name in October or February, if EMEYF agrees.

3) Providing regular funding to EMEYF

Currently, YFGM provides £500 per year as a grant to EMEYF. Both EMEYF and YFGM have significant reserves at the moment, and are struggling to spend them effectively.

BYM has previously declined to fund EMEYF directly, telling EMEYF that they see their contribution to YFGM as including funding for young adult Friends activities across Europe, so our grant includes some responsibility for our Yearly Meeting's contribution! We could consider changing the amount of funding we give, or looking for ways to collaborate on making the most of our shared resources.

Proposal: Agree in principle to continue funding EMEYF at £500 per year. Ask our Treasurer and EMEYF's Treasurer to discuss opportunities for collaboration.

4) Making funding available to bring EMEYFers to YFGM generally

It would be great to have more EMEYFers, from across the section, visiting or attending YFGM, even if it's not as formal representatives. Obviously, travel costs are often higher from outside the UK.

One way YFGM could support this would be by making a fund available for EMEYFers to travel to YFGM events.

Proposal: Establish a fund of up to £1,000 per year, limited to £100 per person, available to people who have previously attended EMEYF gatherings but are not currently members of YFGM. This would be in addition to funding available to newcomers, and access to accessibility funding.