

# Young Friends General Meeting

24-27 May 2024

Liverpool

## Minutes

**Those Present:** A Ballard, Ailish Carroll-Brentnall, Anya Nanning Ramamurthy, Ari Kenny, Artemis, Aspen Stopard English, Beatrice Clamp, Becky Shirley, Bel Ingham, Calum Freeman, Ceridwen Jenkins, Charlie Appleyard, Charlie Irving, Chloe Scaling, Dan Dickson, Daniel Marrs-Gant, Elisabeth Mill, Eliza Martin, Ella Booth, Elliot Mears, Eve Park, Frankie Austin, Freddie Brasher, Georgia Campbell, Grace Roberts, Gray Wood, Hannah Stranex, Isabelle Jones, Izzy Hepburn, Jacob Webb, Jak Smithson, James Pett, Jane Swinney-Seivwright, Jennie Ainger, Jennie Atherton, Jenny Baines, Jessi Fenn, Jessica Beck, John Wadsworth, Juno Lee, Kenneth MacIver, Kevin McNamara, Kim Edwards, Leilani Rabemananjara, Liam Lawson, Limes Brighton, Lucy Licious, Maë Punter, Maisy-May Gilhart, Matthew Burnell, Michaela Jenkins, Morgan Gasson, Niamh Echo Swinney-Seivwright, Rachael Booth, Ro Bashforth, Robbie Barker, Rowan Connell, Rowan Queerly, Sammy Gilbert, Samuel Cooper, Sasha Lawson-Frost, Sasha King-Smith, Skye Dutton, Steve Calvosa, Tas Cooper, Theo Whitlock, Tim Hall Farthing, Tim Rouse, Vanessa Balogh, Willoughby Densham, Zoe Badrick (71)

Co-Clerks:	Tim Rouse, Hannah Stranex
Trustees:	Leilani Rabemananjara, Georgia Campbell, Bel Ingham, Kevin McNamara, Liam Lawson
Area & Local Meeting Representatives	Gray Wood - Hampshire & Islands AM Dan Dickson - South East Scotland AM Maë Punter - Jesus Lane LM Juno Lee - North East Thames AM

### 2024.05.1 [Minute of record: Business Method](#)

We have gathered together in the spirit of worship, seeking to know God's will for ourselves and the gathered group (QF&P 3.02). We have heard an introduction to Quaker business method from our elders, and look forward to exploring the theme

of ministry, in and out of Meeting for Worship for Business, in our spirituality session later today. Will we find out what 'right ordering' actually means? We hope so.

#### 2024.05.2 Minute of record: Nominations

*Much of the work of meetings for church affairs and committees will be undertaken by Friends especially appointed by the meeting or committee responsible for the work, most often on the recommendation of a nominations committee. QF&P 3.23*

The convenor of our Nominations committee, Chloe Scaling, has given us an introduction to the nominations process. This process is the way we find and appoint people to serve in the roles that facilitate YFGM. We were asked to reflect on the roles for which we hope to make appointments on Monday, make suggestions by putting names in the box, and reminded that putting our own names forward, as well as the names of others, is welcome.

We were also reminded that being asked by Nominations if we are willing and able, we should answer honestly, and not feel pressured to accept a role we cannot fulfil. The aim of our nominations process is to appoint the right name to the right role, and our Nominations Committee use spirit-led discernment to find the right name from among those who are willing and able; not being appointed now does not mean that your name isn't the right one for a future role.

#### 2024.05.3 Closer links with EMEYF, part 1

EMEYF, or European and Middle Eastern Young Friends, is YFGM's sister organisation, the representative body for Friends aged 18-35 across the Europe and Middle East Section of the Friends World Committee for Consultation. We have heard proposals from Tim Rouse on how we might strengthen our relationships with EMEYF, and briefly heard a report from Jess Beck on the most recent EMEYF gathering. The written proposals are attached to these minutes.

We are enthused by the proposals offered, although we are aware of details still to be worked out. We have heard about the importance of representative exchanges being on an equal basis with EMEYF, and a suggestion for online events that may be a way to build community between EMEYF and YFGM in a more accessible way. We have also heard a desire to explore ways that funding for reps could be managed collaboratively.

#### 2024.05.4 [Minute of record: A wake for Naomi](#)

We have heard a report from Jenny Baines on the progress made regarding arranging a celebration of the life of Naomi Haigh. They reported that the original eighteen month timeline from our May 2023 gathering (minute 2023.05.03) would not be met, but that the gathering should be able to take place within eighteen months from now. A survey will be distributed to YFGMers and Ex-YFGMers to establish expected numbers.

#### 2024.05.5 [Future of British Quakerism Conference, part 1](#)

The Future of British Quakerism conference, hosted by Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke, is scheduled to be held from 18 to 20 October at Yarnfield Park in Staffordshire. Although the organisers are keen to have young friends in general, and YFGM specifically, involved in the conference, the dates clash with the planned dates for our next gathering in Brighton.

Several Friends from YFGM have held discussions with BYM and Woodbrooke on how to facilitate participation. We have heard an introduction to this item from Rowan Queerly and Becky Shirley, who outlined four basic options, which are:

- To fully move our October YFGM to be at Yarnfield Park and integrated into the conference
- To have our YFGM at Brighton as planned but with space in the timetable for a FoBQ facilitator to run a session
- To send reps from YFGM to the conference, so the reps would not attend YFGM but attend the FoBQ conference instead. At least 5 reps are suggested.
- To hold YFGM as usual, and ignore the conference altogether.

The financial costs, as well as the energy and practical difficulties of organising, vary between the different options.

They also noted that other options, such as having fully blended participation from Brighton, have been considered but were felt to be impractical.

We will return to this item later in the weekend to consider how we wish to proceed.

#### 2024.05.6 [Closer links with EMEYF, part 2](#)

We have returned to this item to consider the specific proposals we heard earlier.

The first two proposals are around sending representatives between EMEYF and YFGM, to attend each others' events and act as points of contact between our meetings. We invite EMEYF to send a representative to YFGM gatherings, subject to their own appointments process. We also ask EMEYF if they would be willing to invite a representative of YFGM to attend Spring Gatherings and/or Annual Meetings. If so, we would add this role to those appointed by the meeting through our nominations process.

We would expect each organisation to cover the cost of the representative they have invited, but are clear that we could offer to cover some or all of the costs of our rep to EMEYF, subject to discussion with EMEYF.

The third proposal is regarding providing regular funding to EMEYF. We currently give EMEYF £500 per year towards their core costs. We commit to continuing this funding for the foreseeable future, and in addition we ask the treasurers of the organisations to consider ways in which we might collaborate with each other, including looking into ways to pool funding for shared projects as part of working more closely together.

The fourth proposal is around making additional funding available for EMEYFers to attend YFGM, whether or not they are representatives. We agree to create a fund of up to £1,000 per year, limited to £100 per person, available to any EMEYFer who is not also a member of YFGM. We are clear that the process for claiming this funding should be as straightforward as possible for the applicant, with a single process to claim this in addition to the funding available for YFGM newcomers, and the access bursary.

We currently budget £600 per year for YFGMers to attend other Quaker events, including EMEYF. We agree to create a further fund of £1,000 per year, limited to £100 per person per year, to support YFGMers attending EMEYF events. We ask all those who attend EMEYF events to be part of reporting back to us.

We have also heard the suggestion to arrange online inter-community events to bring EMEYF and YFGM together, and ask our Pastoral Committee to liaise with EMEYF Communications Committee about this.

We amend our budget to reflect the proposals and as noted above.

## 2024.05.7    [Marriage: What words do we use?](#)

Meeting for Sufferings is currently consulting on proposed changes to the declarations made as part of the Quaker marriage process.

Currently, the wording of the declaration requires both people getting married to promise either 'with God's help' or 'through divine assistance' to be a loving and faithful partner in marriage. In various places in the declaration, individuals can use the wording most appropriate to them, and we welcome the recent addition of the option to use any appropriate pronouns for people, in addition to the options of 'him', 'her' or the person's first name.

The consultation asks two questions: firstly, should there be the option to say neither 'with God's help' nor 'with divine assistance'; and secondly, whether the option should be allowed for each person in the couple to use different wording.

We discussed these earlier in the weekend, in one of our Special Interest Groups, which has brought us the following report:

The key theme that came through in our conversations is that when you make a declaration upon entering into marriage, you're being true to your faith, and honest to your partner, and you're both making this promise to one another with the support of the thing that is most spiritually important to you.

We see it as essential that the declaration includes an element of asking for assistance, a recognition that this monumental promise isn't something to be kept alone. This could, in practice, be as simple as allowing an option for the declaration to include 'with assistance'.

We were strongly moved by 22.41 of Quaker Faith and Practice, the first paragraph of which reads *"Marriage, says the Christian, is for life; and the wedding is a declaration that it is so. It is a fearsome declaration to make, and without the grace of God, arrogant and absurd..."* [Harold Loukes, QF&P 22.41]

We could reluctantly accept the suggested option of making no request for assistance, but only on the basis that it is better than excluding those who cannot use either of the current options truthfully.

However, we much prefer the idea of adding one, or if necessary more, additional options. We suggest the wording "promising, and trusting that this union be held in the light, to be unto [them] a loving and faithful [partner in marriage]". We also discussed, with less unity, options including 'in the care of this meeting', 'with support from the worshipping community', and referring to the Spirit.

We felt a clear unity that each partner should be able to differ in the exact wording that they use among these options. We heard that the same words can mean different things to different people, and equally that different words can mean the same thing. The key principle is the notion that each

person is being truthful in the promise that they are making, and that this is reciprocated with an equally truthful promise, irrespective of the chosen Quaker wording.

We unite with the report and agree to send this minute as YFGM's response to the consultation, emphasising that as young Friends, this is a matter that affects us, and that this will be a choice that many of us are considering or will be in the future.

We recognise the range of views on this within our own community, including around the degree to which there is a difference between the role of the divine, and the role of the community, in a marriage. We would welcome further consideration of the optional prefixes to the declarations, which address these themes but which also contain wording that can be an obstacle for Friends of differing theologies.

#### 2024.05.8 [Minute of Record: Report from YMAC](#)

Our co-clerk Hannah Stranex has reported on their attendance on our behalf at the most recent meeting of the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee.

They reported on YMAC's decision to refuse to allow the Salter Lecture, on the subject of war and peace by Jeremy Corbyn and Paul Ingram, to be delivered in Friends House at the time of Yearly Meeting. The lecture will happen nearby at the planned time, instead.

A further discussion at YMAC was around a vigil for the victims of war planned as part of Yearly Meeting. The committee proposed blocking the use of materials other than those produced by QPSW, with the express intention of preventing the presence of pro-Palestine materials such as Palestinian flags. Hannah raised strong concerns over this policy and has been promised updates on further decisions.

#### 2024.05.9 [Receiving annual report and accounts](#)

##### a. [Receiving accounts for 2023](#)

Tim Hall Farthing, our treasurer, has reported on the annual accounts for 2023, which have been prepared for us by Mindful Business Services. He noted an error in the draft accounts circulated which results in restricted funds being overstated by around £1000 and unrestricted funds understated by around £1000; this will be corrected in the next version of the accounts.

These accounts show income totalling £18,300, compared to £19,700 in 2022, with expenditure of £15,100, up from £6,000 in 2022. Overall, YFGM made a surplus of

£3,200, in excess of our budgeted deficit, and down from the £13,700 surplus in 2022 as a result of underspends.

Our Treasurer, and Trustees have confirmed that they consider that the charity was and remains a going concern, and we affirm this view.

We acknowledge receipt of the draft accounts, subject to correction, and ask that they be independently examined between now and our October gathering, where we will approve them. Friends are encouraged to look at the draft accounts and direct queries about the accounts and how we spend money to the finance committee.

#### b. [Increases to budget](#)

In addition to the changes to the 2024 budget minuted earlier this weekend, we plan to increase the budget for certain items, specifically adding an extra £1500 to the accessibility bursary, and increasing the bursary for travel and expenses regarding other Quaker events to £2000.

#### c. [Receiving the trustees' annual report](#)

We have heard a report from Georgia Campbell, one of our trustees. The report includes descriptions of our activities in 2023 and the aims of the charity's existence. The report mentioned our weekend gatherings in Brighton, Bristol and Lancaster, our response to being asked to be part of delivering a loyal address to Charles Mountbatten-Windsor, and the creation of the Switchboard committee. Also included is a summary of our financial activities.

As with the annual accounts, the annual report will be submitted to the Charity Commission in October, so there is scope to amend the report, and Friends are encouraged to talk to Georgia or other trustees if they have questions or suggestions.

### 2024.05.10 [Reports](#)

#### a. [from Planning Weekend Newcomer](#)

Calum Freeman gave us a Planning Weekend Newcomer report. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

#### b. [from Switchboard committee](#)

We heard from Georgia Campbell on Switchboard. She reported that the function of Switchboard is to serve as inter-committee communications and cooperation, and that it was serving well in that capacity.

c. [Quaker Rainbow representative](#)

Juno Lee, our representative to Quaker Rainbow, gave us a report from Quaker Rainbow's recent residential weekend. He selected a few prominent points from the report to read out to us, and the report in full is appended to these minutes. Quaker Rainbow actively welcomes younger Friends to their community, and is seeking younger Friends to join their Listening Friends.

d. [from Meeting for Sufferings](#)

Our clerks have reported on the last meeting of Meeting for Sufferings, which received a minute from Trustees asking YMAC to exclude the Salter Lecture from Friends House, which prompted much ministry.

We also heard about further progress in the dialogue with QCOP. We expect this to conclude at next weekend's Meeting for Sufferings at which QCOP's status as a Quaker Recognised Body will be considered.

With regard to our previous minute, 2023.02.06, on the Loyal Address made to Charles Mountbatten-Windsor, in March 2023, we heard read a minute of Pendle Hill Area Meeting which united with our minute.

[2024.05.11 Future of British Quakerism Conference, part 2](#)

We returned on Sunday, and again on Monday, to consider the question of how to respond to the Future of British Quakerism conference. This was deeply challenging discernment; although we felt early on that we could rule out the option of ignoring the conference altogether, we found ourselves caught between the choice of integrating our October gathering into the conference, accepting the risk that the event we arrange will be so different from a typical YFGM that we may not get, or get to share, the benefits of this community; or, on the other hand, of sending representatives to speak in our name, alongside reflecting the conference's agenda in a session at YFGM; in doing so we might play to our strengths and better serve the needs of our existing community, but potentially forfeit the ability to be a larger part of shaping the discussion on this important topic, and the opportunity to do something different and radical that could be transformative for us as an organisation.

When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community?



*Part of A&Q 27, QFP 1.02*

Part of the difficulty we have faced is in how urgently this question needs to be decided. We are deeply grateful for the work that has been done by members of our community to research and prepare options, and mindful of the further work that will need to be done between now and October regardless of the decision we make. This urgency makes good and worshipful decision-making hard, all the more so when it feels like we have to choose between two mutually exclusive options.

Through patient and remarkably disciplined worship, we found that some strong and clear themes emerged.

- Firstly, we were clear that we wish to engage with the process that begins with the Future of British Quakerism conference, in some way, despite its flaws;
- Secondly, a shared recognition of the importance of 'providing that safe warm environment that we all enjoy at YFGM', wherever and however we make YFGM happen.
- Thirdly, we very strongly felt the importance of engaging with the wider processes that affect and will continue to affect the, lower-case, future of British Quakerism, particularly through attending and being part of Yearly Meeting in 2024 and beyond.
- Fourthly, the importance of accessibility, which we strive to achieve in the things that we do. We are not fully confident that in a merged conference we would be able to achieve the standards of accessibility which we reach in our regular events; equally, we are aware that we ourselves are not perfect in terms of accessibility. The conference provides an opportunity to see how other Quaker gatherings attempt to attain accessibility, in a way that we might learn from.

For our next gathering, we have decided to combine options two and three, inviting a facilitator from the Future of British Quakerism conference to our event in Brighton in October 2024, and sending representatives to the conference itself both in person and online. The organisers of the Future of British Quakerism have suggested that we send at least 5 reps, and we would like to send more than that - ideally at least 10-15. We will continue to have conversations with the organisers of the conference about making provisions, including eldership and pastoral support, for our reps and other Young Friends at the conference.

Whoever we send, we send with love and trust, recognising that their presence will shape the conference, and equally the lack of presence of the rest of us will shape the conference too. We are aware that regardless of the decision we have made regarding this conference, we are part of the future and past and present of British Quakerism, and will continue to shape it along with the rest of British Quakers.

We do not have the time to appoint representatives using our normal Nominations process, and recognise that the number we hope to send will be a sizeable chunk of both YFGM, and of the conference. We ask Nominations Committee to facilitate the process of finding up to 25 representatives from YFGM using the process outlined in minute 2023.10.13. A form will be added to the website after this YFGM to allow expressions of interest from Young Friends. We agree that YFGM will fund the places for these representatives, subject to match funding promised by BYM. If more than 25 names are found through this process, we ask that our Finance Committee consider whether additional funding can be raised or made available from reserves.

In addition, we are keen to encourage Young Friends to attend Yearly Meeting. Earlier this weekend, we have increased our budget to support YFGMers attending other Quaker events. We will find out what other support, including financial support, is available from BYM to young Friends, and will share information within our community - as well as seeking ways to make this support both more generous and more accessible. We ask our Elders to lead this work.

Looking beyond 2024, we have heard a clear call to be radical in the events we hold and the ways in which we work with the wider community. We have heard ideas including holding gatherings in and around future Yearly Meetings.

Neither we, nor other Young Friends groups, were brought into this process early enough to shape the agenda and design of this conference, rather than just the outcomes. We hope that future events and discussions around the future of British Quakerism involve Young Friends in earlier stages.

Despite our caution, we are excited and hopeful about this process, and we affirm our support for our representatives, who we hope will be passionate and illustrative of our community and have the trust and love of those of us here, and will give witness to our motivation to work with people here and people there as much as possible.

#### 2024.05.12 [Nominations Returns](#)

We appoint the Friends named in the below table to the roles specified. We release Friends as indicated in the table and thank all those named below for their service.

We note that these appointments temporarily expand the Pastoral committee to six members rather than five; we accept that this will increase the associated role-holder costs and approve this change, confirming that the normal number of roles on this committee remains at five.

Role	Released	Appointed	Until
Planning Weekend Newcomer	Calum Freeman Willow Bevington Jack Pipe	Daniel Marrs-Gant Eve Park A Ballard	October 2024
Pastoral	Ro Bashforth	Kenneth McIver Maisy-May Gilhart	May 2027
Co-Clerk	Tim Rouse	Chloe Scaling	May 2027
Nominations	Chloe Scaling	<i>Role vacant</i>	

### 2024.05.13 [Special Interest Groups](#)

Special interest groups this weekend were:

- Marriage: what words do we use?
- What is a Concern anyway?
- Ideas for new venues for YFGMs
- Rest!
- Engaging with Yearly Meeting 2024
- Talking about simplicity
- Dance and movement
- Stitch and bitch

We thank those who facilitated Special Interest Groups, and encourage anyone who would like to run a SIG at a future YFGM to speak to the Logistics committee.

### 2023.05.14 [Our next gathering & Planning Weekend](#)

We look forward to our coming gathering in Brighton from 18–20 October, which will incorporate threads from the Future of British Quakerism conference.

Ahead of that, we will gather in Swansea in September for a Planning Weekend, considering the shape of the next and future YFGMs. All are welcome, and anyone with ideas for future sessions or business is encouraged to share them on the Discord ahead of Planning Weekend.

### 2023.05.15 [Trustees report](#)

We have received a written report from Trustees which is appended to the minutes and which Friends are encouraged to read.

### 2023.05.16 Catering

We thank all those who have had a part in planning, preparing and serving food this weekend, in particular Chloe Scaling whose hard work in coordinating this process is greatly appreciated.

### 2024.02.17 Clerks' Offering

Being back in Liverpool means a lovely big meeting house, the sound of really quite a lot of partying drifting in through the window, and of course, a newly minted member of Logistics getting trapped in an enclosed space for a prolonged period of time. As is traditional.

For the first time in a long time, this has felt like a YFGM about reaching outwards. Our internal structures are finally stable enough for us to think about taking our place in the wider Quaker community. Although it's taken a little while to get off the ground, we've been able to think about going to new places, inviting new people, and engaging with the world in new ways. With internal encouragement and external help, we've been, sometimes with difficulty, thinking outside the box.

What a joyful experience it is to disagree with one another. Our discernment this weekend has included times when we have heard strong leadings in seemingly irreconcilable directions; and yet what has shone throughout has been the love and trust we have in one another. Even difficult to hear ministry, that which challenges and confronts both your inner thoughts and other outward ministry, is made easier to hear when you know and trust that people will be honest, passionate and true; when all know and trust that they will hear your truth and that you will hear theirs; when you know and trust that the speaker is a vessel of their own divinity, whose ministry has been tested and flows from the heart and spirit. We have shared in really difficult business, and we have loved one another through it, and will continue to love one another afterwards.

When we go into business, what we're trying to achieve is not mere good-decision making; we demand from ourselves nothing less than the divinely-inspired path. We don't half make life difficult for ourselves! But as one friend said, business method is about recognising that "all humans are flawed to some extent, and all humans have the spark of the divine within them". Our task is to reconcile that, as best we can, and we go to that task joyfully.

That deep, powerful love for one another has been felt throughout the weekend, lifting one another up when the systems we depend upon don't work quite right. The bonds of friendship are quick to grow here - one minute you've never met someone before, the next you're joking around with each other, the next you're friends for life. There's nothing quite like the feeling of seeing a Friend walk into worship who you haven't seen since the last YFGM, and feeling a sense of joy at seeing them, and love for everyone in the room.

It's not just the friends who are here who we love. A poignant moment was opening up a copy of QF&P while drafting a minute and finding that it had belonged to Becky Garnault, a Friend we lost in 2018; it was a reminder that even community members who aren't physically here any more are still part of this community because they helped to build it and shape what we are now.

Looking through twenty years of comments books also brought insight into where the community comes from, and came with an important reminder: no matter how much we love one another, no canoodling in Meeting for Worship for Business!

In friendship,

Hannah Stranex & Tim Rouse, co-Clerks

## Appendices & Further Information

- A. Planning Weekend Newcomers' Report**
- B. Report from Quaker Rainbow representative**
- C. Draft Annual Report and Accounts**
- D. Future of British Quakerism Proposals**
- E. EMEYF Proposals**
- F. Minute of Pendle Hill Area Meeting**

### **A. Planning Weekend Newcomers' Report**

I was made to feel welcome, my contributions were encouraged and it was interesting to see some of the methods used to plan YFGM. It was also helpful that, when I was confused, people were keen to explain the processes and components of not just YFGM, but wider quakerism as well.

My one criticism is that it felt a little like I was being welcomed into the inner circle, and we shouldn't have an inner circle. The planning weekend provides an opportunity for those attending to move closer and form stronger friendships, which is wonderful, and it's great that anyone can attend, but outside of those with committee roles, few do.

Of course this 'inner circle' problem isn't unique to YFGM, and YFGM puts more effort into solving it than most: I just came back from a physics conference where far less effort was put into making people feel welcome than at YFGM. So this criticism is really written in support of the efforts already being made by many.

That noted, I had a great time, it was lots of fun, and the food was fantastic.

### **B. Report from Quaker Rainbow representative**

Quaker Rainbow's 2024 Residential Weekend Event report for YFGM  
By Juno Lee

Quaker Rainbow gathered at Gladstone's Library from Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 for their first in-person residential event since before the COVID pandemic.

There were 20 participants, 6 of whom were young Quakers, the youngest being 15 years old.

Participants arrived from 2pm on the Friday. After dinner was the first session of the gathering where the participants came together for introductions and shared their hopes for the weekend. The first day ended with an Epilogue at 9:30.

Saturday started with breakfast at 8 followed by the first morning session where we explored our individual relationships with the group, Quakers in Britain, and the

global community of Friends. We asked each other what our individual relationships with Quakerism look like and what are the things that matter to us right now. Many expressed they felt a dwindling connection with their local meetings and grief from losing Woodbrooke as a physical space, which was highlighted by the beautiful grounds at Gladstone Library. Almost everyone shared that they were coming to the event with the hope to rekindle a sense of community within Quaker Rainbow and were apprehensive and even anxious that the event might not bring that.

In our second morning session, we were asked to reflect on our intersectional identities and how we express and explore our individual experiences as well as being LGBTQ+ whilst upholding the Quaker value of truth. Some shared that the language they used to express themselves changes depending on what they anticipate their audience would understand and some expressed a reluctance to share their experiences in certain aspects of their life to avoid being stereotyped. There was an opportunity to discuss certain topics further later in the day in smaller groups.

After lunch, the afternoon was for the participants to enjoy some free time. Popular suggestions included exploring the library, grounds or local area and there was an option for banner-making from materials brought by a Friend.

Afterwards was an opportunity for Friends to further discuss some of the themes that came from our earlier session on intersectionality in smaller groups. One of these discussions was exploring Quaker Rainbow's voice where Friends identified aspects of the community's identity, our values, our relationship with Yearly Meeting and what we want to achieve as a recognised body. The result was a list of proposals and actions for the next community meeting to approve, some of which included:

- Asking Quakers in Britain what action they've taken to oppose conversion therapy
- Publishing an article about Quaker Rainbow's activity in Quaker publishers such as the Friend
- Finding out how Quaker Rainbow has a voice in Quakers in Britain as a recognised body

Other smaller group discussions were building our community and why are we Quakers.

Before the event, Friends were asked to bring something meaningful to them to the late evening sharing session. Friends shared poetry, some written themselves, music, and a few joined together in dancing. There was contemplation, laughter, and a great sense of love. We ended the evening with an Epilogue.

On Sunday, everyone gathered for Meeting for Worship at 9:30. The local chapel rang their bells intermittently throughout the hour, intruding slightly on our "silent" worship.

In our ending session, all were asked to reflect on the weekend and identify what we were going to take away from our time together. Many expressed they felt a

strong sense of connection and community that they didn't have at the beginning of the weekend. To celebrate being together after a challenging few years was such a valuable and healing experience.

Many also shared they felt rejuvenated and motivated, and strongly advocated that Quaker Rainbow practise activism as well as fellowship, for the sake of the community's present and future. Members of the community brought forward some ideas, such as:

- Organising more in-person events that are accessible regionally and in physical spaces that are actively trans-inclusive
- Facilitating a conflict resolution conversation at Yearly Meeting

Whilst there was renewed motivation to achieve newly identified goals, there was also an awareness that change requires action and ongoing dedication. We hope this event was the beginning of long-lasting momentum for an active community.

### **C. Draft Annual Report and Accounts**

[W](#) [Trustee Annual Report and Accounts FINAL DRAFT 2023 \(1\).docx](#)

### **D. Future of British Quakerism proposals**

[E](#) [v.2 Future of British Quakerism proposals](#)

### **E. EMEYF Proposal**

Link to proposal: [E](#) [EMEYF Proposal v0.1](#)

### **F. Minute of Pendle Hill Area Meeting, 18.05.2024**

Our Friend Damian Entwistle has raised the matter of the Loyal Address delivered to a monarch at the time of their accession to the throne and whether this might be discussed at Yearly Meeting 2025. Damian has told us of his concern arising from the Loyal Address (March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024), and the circumstances surrounding it. He asks that Area Meeting support Young Friends General Meeting in their request for an exploration of the topic of Britain Yearly Meeting's standing as a 'Privileged Body', and the 'Loyal Address' that arises from that status. Friends are in unity with the vigour and passion of Young Friends. We note the sensitivities of this topic and the importance of having opportunities to 'speak truth to power'. We affirm our position as a dissenting group. Local Friends have been inspired by the example of Young Friends to engage more fully in listening to, and supporting, young voices. We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings and ask that it request of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to devote time to consideration of this topic at Yearly meeting, 2025. A copy of the Loyal Address is attached to these minutes. A copy of the minute from YFGM is similarly attached.