

General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain

Spiritual Review Weekend

22nd-25th May 2026

Bristol (Redland Meeting House)

Minutes

Those Present: Aaron Longdon, Adam Woods, Alexandra Boliver-Brown, Anand Madhvani, Anya Doliczny, Anya Nanning Ramamurthy, Aodh Ballard, Arjun Nanning Ramamurthy, Artemis, Ash Sutherland, Aspen Stopard English, August Brown, Becky Shirley, Bel Ingham, Calum Freeman, Ceridwen Jenkins, Chloe Scaling, Dan Dickson, Dominic Rawlinson, Ed Rugg, Ellie Taylor-Gill, Elliot Kirk, Elliot Mears, Emil Brierley, Eva Batten, Felix Matthews, Finn Taylor, Finn Longman, Frankie de Vos, Freddie Brasher, Georgia Campbell, Gray Wood, Gwen Baines, Hannah Stranex, Iola Wallace, Izzy Hepburn, Jacob Webb, James Stark, Jenny Baines, Joan Miller, Juno Lee, Kenneth MacIver, Kes Ward, Kevin Lawson-McNamara, Liam Lawson-McNamara, Limes Brighton, Louis Willis, Maë Punter, Maisy-May Gilhart, Mary Casson, Michael Vere, Morgan Gasson, Nessa Balogh, Nicole Marr, Remy Dimmock, Rosie Gilbert, Russet Oliver, Sammy Gilbert, Samuel Cooper, Samuel Collyer, Sasha Lawson-Frost, Sasha Mir King-Smith, Skye Simpson, Theo Healey, Thomas Sutherland, Will Reed, William Statham, Willoughby Densham (68)

Co-Clerks:	Chloe Scaling and Will Reed
Trustees:	At Open of Meeting: Georgia Campbell, Bel Ingham, Kevin McNamara, August Brown, Maë Punter, Finn Taylor, Kenneth MacIver At Close of Meeting: Bel Ingham, Kevin McNamara, August Brown, Finn Taylor, Kenneth MacIver
Area & Local Meeting Representatives	Will Reed - York AM Willoughby Densham - West Scotland AM Mary Casson - Mid Thames AM Emil Brierley - Hardshaw & Mann AM Becky Shirley - Central England AM Ed Rugg - Central England AM

2026.05.1 Draft accounts

Nicole Marr, our Treasurer, presented the draft 2025 accounts. These have not been independently examined yet, but they will be examined before submission to the charity commission.

We note that this is the second year in a row that we have had a deficit of £10,000. We have been using our reserves to fund our deficits. We have also seen an increase in donations from individuals.

We thank our finance committee for putting the accounts together and look forward to seeing them again after they have been examined. We approve the draft accounts, pending independent examination.

2026.05.2 Minute of record: Reports

On Tuesday 19th May 2026, a separated reports session was held online. We heard the following reports:

- Trustee report
- EMEYF report
- Finance report
- Final Meeting for Sufferings report
- Planning weekend newcomers report

The reports were included in Documents in Advance 2 and are appended to these minutes.

We thank our report writers for their service.

2026.05.3 Nominations and co-options

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.

Role	Released	Appointed	Until
Trustee	Maë Punter (no handover period)	N/A: vacancy closed for now	
Treasurer	None (handover until October)	Tom Sutherland	May 2028
Planning Weekend Newcomer	Theo Healey Robin Henderson Rosie Gilham	Aspen Stopard English Eva Batten	October 2026
Nominations	Russet Oliver	N/A: vacancy carried forward	

EMEYF Rep	Louis Willis	N/A: nominations in October	
Assistant Treasurer	Tom Sutherland	Mary Casson	May 2029
Fundraiser	Juno Lee (following handover period)	N/A	
Finance Trustee	Georgia Campbell (following handover period)	N/A	

We thank Jennie Atherton for her extended handover of the safeguarding lead role and release her from this role.

We note the following co-options to committees for this YFiB and thank the Friends below for their service:

- Logistics: Morgan Gasson
- Elders: Izzy Hepburn, Jenny Baines, Liam Lawson-MacNamara, Elliot Mears, Willoughby Densham, Hannah Stranex.
- Nominations: Theo Healey.

We thank Sam Cooper for his support with clerking this weekend.

We thank Kes Ward for being our catering co-ordinator for this weekend, including co-ordinating volunteers from Quaker Vegan Witness, Kerri Wright and Lauren Foster, to enable our community to fully engage in our Spiritual Review.

We were joined by facilitators to help us conduct this Spiritual Review. These Friends were Adam Woods and Anand Madhvani; we asked much of them and we thank them very much for their service.

[2026.05.4 Yearly Meeting representatives for July 2026](#)

Nominations have asked for volunteers from amongst the body of standing YFiB roleholders to temporarily carry on the clerks' duty of attending Meetings for Sufferings, as it transitions to Yearly Meeting in its new form. From amongst those volunteers, Nominations appoint Finn Taylor, Sasha King-Smith and Hannah Stranex to attend Yearly Meeting at King's House in Manchester on 18th July 2026 and return a report to the general meeting in October 2026.

[Appendices & Further Information](#)

[Appendix 1 - Received in Separated Reports Session](#)

A. Trustee Report

- B. Last Ever Meeting for Sufferings Report
- C. April 2026 Darlington Planning Weekend Newcomer Report
- D. Finance Report for May 2026
- E. EMEYF Spring Gathering 2026 YFGM/YFiB Representative Report

A: Trustee report

By Georgia Campbell

I'm not sure I can say any more that trustees have been unusually busy, as that seems to be how I've started every trustee report for at least the last year. Perhaps we're just busy as usual.

A full-strength trustee committee came out of February YFiB, to the delight and relief of the existing trustees. We have been in handover mode, ensuring knowledge is passed from old hands to new with a minimum of overwhelm (on either side!). A grand to do list has been formulated as a central port of call for tasks to grab. To indulge some corporate speak, we are refining our Ways of Working to facilitate a balanced, proactive committee.

Still underway are communications with BYM. The (hopefully) final draft of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that will get us admin support has been informally agreed, only pending final signatures. We are aiming for a start date by early June at the latest.

We have also minuted to sign the Safeguarding MoU with BYM and Area Meetings. This will strengthen the sharing of information between organisations that could impact our members. It was minuted by General Meeting in October 2023 that Trustees would take the decision on whether to sign this MoU, and we are now moved to do so.

As this is the first trustee report under our new name, it's worth mentioning that it proved surprisingly simple to navigate adding General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain as a working name for this charity. Currently, YFGM is also still listed, while we do the work of updating the name in our policies and constitutional documents, and while everyone (including other Quakers!) gets used to the change.

The summer is set to be no quieter, with constitution and policy review, the onboarding of our admin support, and the outcomes of the Spiritual Review. Our committee has a number of transitions ahead, with nominations due in May, October and next February. We ask our community to consider whether this may be service that you are led to, and offer support in the decision making and, of course, if you are nominated.

August Brown will be taking over from me (Georgia Campbell), and I hope you all join me in wishing them, and the rest of the committee, the best of luck. They have all the support and light holding I can give.

B: Last Ever Meeting for Sufferings Report

By Chloe Scaling

Since our last General Meeting, there has only been one Meeting for Sufferings, the last ever one, on 7th March 2026. Meeting for Sufferings was the meeting responsible for making Yearly Meeting decisions outside of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), meeting around four times a year. It was made up of mostly representatives from Area Meetings (one per meeting per event, with alternates appointed in case the representative could not attend) and General Meetings like our own, as well as BYM's Trustees. There would always be a report from the BYM Trustees and Treasurer, often Meeting for Sufferings would record in the Court & Prison Register when someone had been involved in the court and prison system due to action they had taken as a Quaker (historically, this recorded persecution for simply being a Quaker, more recently, non-violent direct action around issues like peace and the climate have tended to be the reasons). Apart from the above, Meeting for Sufferings often made decisions around governance, for example minor changes to *Quaker faith & practice*, but often there was discernment on much bigger topics and issues, which inevitably there was not enough time for. The meeting usually ran from 10am to 4pm on a Saturday, with one weekend gathering every three years. There were usually decent breaks, including an hour for lunch, the rest of the time was spent in business meeting.

At Yearly Meeting in 2024, it was decided that Meeting for Sufferings would be laid down. Yearly Meeting will meet around four times a year, with three day-long meetings and one weekend per year. Each Area Meeting, General Meeting etc. will send representatives, but other Quakers will also be able to attend. Will this work any better than Meeting for Sufferings? Who can say?

The most shocking thing about this Meeting for Sufferings was that they not only were able to receive our minute about our name change from February 2026 gathering, but actually updated *Quaker faith & practice* during the meeting. There was already an item on updates to the online version of *Qf&p* on the agenda for the day, so we snuck in there. The minute on that item said *Qf&p* would be updated on 1st May 2026, but at the time of writing this in May, this has not yet happened.

Most of the other business this time was procedural, including wrapping things up for the laying down of Meeting for Sufferings. Some Quaker Recognised Bodies were laid down and some had their registration renewed. We also heard from Quaker Committee on Christian and Interfaith Relations and members of the Quakers in Britain peacebuilding team. As always, the minutes are public, so you can read them in full here:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes>

After lunch, a meeting for worship was held to “commemorate and celebrate the work of Meeting for Sufferings”. Some Friends gave ministry about Meeting for Sufferings over the years and a final minute was read. It felt like a funeral. We even had a wake afterwards, with tea and cake. Now we can say, suffering is over.

C: April 2026 Darlington Planning Weekend Newcomer Report

By Theo Healey and Robin Henderson (Stained Glass Robin)

This past planning weekend took place from the 10th to the 12th of April at the Friends Meeting House in Darlington. There were 34 Friends in attendance, and the meeting house also had a Resident Friend who would come down frequently to answer questions and assist in finding things throughout the building. The weekend was an interesting one, and from what we have been told was different to previous planning weekends.

The weekend was used to plan the Spiritual Review weekend which is coming up in May, and as this is very different to a usual YFIB, the planning weekend was as well. There was no threshing and instead we opted to have meeting for worship for business, which resulted in the meeting having minutes to present, something which there was uncertainty about. We discerned about numbers and catering as well as how to take stress off of roleholders and ensure that everyone feels supported in what they are doing within the Meeting. Sometimes these discussions could be challenging, with many Friends feeling initially strongly led in different directions. This reflects the level of passion that many YFIB members have for their community, as well as the challenges of finding new consensus when turning away from the beaten track. Alongside several meetings for business the committees met individually and were able to set things in motion for May. The logistics team began creating the sign up sheet with special thought being given to making sure that newcomers knew this was not an event that would be particularly catered towards them due to the nature of figuring out where YFIB stands identity wise and the work that is going to go into that. We also heard from the pastoral team and finance as well.

It was not all work and meetings however, with people doing crafts, getting bubble tea, and stacking electric tea lights onto a Friend in a post dinner bit of fun. There

were Morris Dancers in town and a lovely indoor market square. Darlington had several Friends who owned and operated storefronts near the Meeting House, and there were some local Friends about whom we were able to speak to. Many people felt spiritually refreshed after the weekend and others noted the feeling that the spiritual review weekend was well underway and that the planning weekend went well.

D: Finance Report for May 2026

General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain

“Openness in business is a Quaker tradition arising from our testimony to truth” - Quaker Faith and Practice, 14.16

This report intends to shine a light on the efforts of the Finance committee and to bring some transparency on the ways in which the Finance committee oversees and manages the meeting's finances. We will focus particularly on the expenditure and income which relate to our last GM in February.

At the February 2026 GM we spent:

- **£2372.1** on Access (accessible accommodation, and travel for non-roleholders and non-newcomers) - this amount is 26% of our annual budget for this category in 2026, which is £9,000.
- **£82.30** on newcomer's travel - this amount is 3.2% of our annual budget for this category in 2026, which was £2,500. This event seems to be an outlier in the general trend of newcomer expenses as there can be up to 30 newcomers per event.
- **£509.63** on food - this came to roughly £1.03 per person per meal, £0.75 below the budgeted amount of £1.78 per person per meal.
- **£32.73** on committee expenses (primarily transport for our cooking equipment) - this amount is 8.2% of our annual budget for this category in 2026, which is £400.
- **£2,051.48** on role-holder travel - this amount is 34.2% of our annual budget for this category in 2026, which is £6,000. This is encouragingly close to a third of our budget for the year, hopefully we can continue this trend for the rest of the year.

There was **£65.50** donated by card at YFGM in February 2026, other donations received between May and the start of the year include:

- **£674.34** in online donations made via People's Fundraising.

- **£1300** in donations from Local and Area Quaker Meetings - made via bank transfer.
- **£1352.36** in regular donations from individual Friends - made via bank transfer.

The Finance committee prefers to receive donations online through People's Fundraising - as this reduces a large amount of the administration when reconciling our accounts. But we are also able (and willing!) to take donations via cash or card at YFiB.

*In summary, the total expenditure for the February YFiB general meeting 2026 was **£3513.24**, and the total income received from donations between January and May was **£3326.7**. During this period we also received **£11,700** in grants from charitable trusts.*

Currently, there are no predicted overspends for this year, but it is possible that the Access or Roleholder's travel costs may climb higher for the next two events, we ask that the meeting supports our committee in continuing to make the decisions needed to run YFiB.

We are looking forward to welcoming a new Treasurer to the committee in the coming months. Should any Friends have any questions or queries for the Finance committee, please let us know by emailing us at finance@youngfriends.org.uk, or by sending us a message on the ask-a-committee channel on the YFGM Discord.

E: EMEYF Spring Gathering 2026 YFGM/YFiB Representative Report

Or: Spirit and Silliness in Silesia

By Louis Willis

In January of 2026, I was discerned as the representative from the at the time Young Friends General Meeting to the Europe and Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF). My task was to attend the Spring Gathering of that body. EMEYF, despite the name, is mostly composed of Friends from Central Europe. There is a more than healthy crop of Germans among them. Indeed, not a few YFibbers attend on their own initiative and some of them hold roles jointly. There is a prophecy at least twice proven true that any YFiB rep to EMEYF will come away with a role.

My journey was a hard one. It began with a train to London and then the Eurostar to Brussels. Jacob and I didn't actually notice the tunnel and it was only when the graffiti began to be worded in French that we realised we were on the other side. Myself and Jacob had the dubious privilege of being on the first sleeper train running from Paris to Berlin in many years. We were concerned it might also be the

last. The train was packed full of journalists and merch-toting tourists and the carriage I was supposed to be in was entirely without power. Fortunately, as is often fated in my life, the error was in my favour and I was upgraded with a nice mix of folks to the premier class (read: given actual bed sheets!). The train driver was apparently on a mission, as we made up approximately 40 minutes in the night and were surprised to hear we were almost there first thing on Friday morning.

Jacob and I journeyed on from Berlin to the city of Poznan. We were to stay with a lovely Polish Young Friend by the name of Konstancja or Kosia. She also confusingly goes by the Polish words for consternation and condensation. Poznan has some excellent museums that we patronised while we were there for the night. However, the real highlight was some short but intimate worship we did with Kosia's Landlady/Neighbour/Quaker Godmother Magda. She made us cookies and talked our ears off long into the night. On Saturday morning I reflected on what an incredible experience I had already had, and we weren't even at the gathering.

Our venue was in the woods of Silesia or Śląsk, an old coal mining region in Western Poland. On the outskirts of a beautiful little town called Janowice Wilke lies an estate called "Lesny Dwor" or "Forest Manor". While certainly in the Forest, the manor was in a state of "Refurbishment", not fit for our purposes, and it became clear that the host was a convinced conman. Nevertheless, the location was exceptionally pretty, if cold. On the first couple of nights, we sourced some terrible quality deadwood from the forest with which to keep ourselves warm to generally positive if smoky results. EMEYF and YFiB have shared custody of Limes Brighton. However, in Poland Limes had custody of nothing more than shorts and beer with which to brave temperatures that at one point plunged down to -5. The decor was very charming and rustic except for one cabin that stood alone and foreboding. It was called Cabin 6 but we rechristened it the witch's cabin and stuffed in many of our roleholders. The facilities were reasonable when they worked.

After settling in on Saturday, we were sorted into small groups and engaged in some icebreaker activities. I know that as a practice this has lapsed somewhat at YFiB, however here it initially worked very well and built much fellowship. The small groups were to be the basis of doing our tasks and certainly working in mine was very positive. Some care has to be taken that not too many roleholders are concentrated in one group and if people are sick or leaving early others are transferred to fill gaps, but as a concept I would like to see it return. On Sunday, we saw to Gathering Nominations. This works a little differently than at YFiB, as there are some roles such as Elders in which the committee is split between two people on 3 year terms, and several vacancies that are appointed only for the duration of a Spring Gathering. Essentially, several committees co-opt on a permanent basis. I do not think that would be suitable for our needs necessarily, but I believe it contributes, along with other factors, to there being less of a gap at EMEYF between those with roles and those without. Sadly, the EMEYF Spring Gathering was my first opportunity to hear in-person feedback from YFiB non-roleholders as to their

experience of our own gatherings. Heartbreakingly, it was not overall positive. I expect much of the difference lies in the fact that EMEYF is held over a week, while YFiB is at best a long weekend. But there is room and time at EMEYF for discussions of a depth I don't always find possible in the UK. The running of YFiB and the growth of our committees may have unintentionally led to the forming of cliques. This is not unheard of at EMEYF: a German friend shared me with a criticism that he felt his countrymen didn't make a big enough effort to connect with EMEYFers from other backgrounds, but overall I found over the course of the week I had a chance to get to know almost every one of the 50 odd attendees present. I have formed friendships with many of them that I hope will last the rest of our lives.

The theme of the gathering was "Borders". This by no means dominated sessions and was not always perceptible, but at various points in worship sharing we were encouraged to think about how they were enforced, how we benefit from them and how they conflict with our faith. We heard from a German Friend, Juergen Menzel, about his work helping Russian Conscientious Objectors flee to the EU, activities related to which he is currently facing criminal charges for. We were also joined for one of our Epilogues by a Palestinian (small f) friend by the name of Mohamed, virtually from Gaza. He told us of his and his family's desperate situation "within the yellow borders of Palestine" and how he wished they could escape them. He longed to be somewhere where the privilege of safety was a given. However he thanked us for holding him and his community in the light, and we thanked him for making our gathering truly "European and Middle Eastern".

The attendance of Juergen and Mohamed was primarily facilitated by a device known as "The Owl". Much confusion has been had over this thing's name and frankly the jokes are a little stale at this point. It is essentially a large combined webcam and microphone that can both display a 360 panorama of a room, and also display a series of closer shots of people in person activated by speech or movement. It does occasionally hoot for reasons which are unclear to me. It has been whispered to me that it is named Karl. It allowed for a generally high quality experience for the 7 or so attenders who at one time or another were coming over the airways to us. The hybrid nature of some sessions put a small amount of labour onto Elders who had to take it in turns to supervise the Owl and its laptop. However, given we now exist in a reality with a YFiB numbers cap, I would encourage the meeting to explore ways in which we can learn from this example and allow friends that cannot attend YFiB in person to be there online. Some issues with video quality and the meeting making too much of a racket notwithstanding, the online feedback was positive. I was even able to acquire one of the socially distanced friends as a pen pal with which to polish up my German (at the time of writing this has amounted to teaching me the meaning of the words Stövchen and Gurkensalat). On a related note, Tim Rouse (in person) and Paula Christophersen (through the medium of the Owl) gave a report on a visit they made to Uganda and Kenya as European and Middle Eastern Section (EMES) representatives to the World Executive Committee of Young Adult Friends (WECYAF). I think. There may

also have been some FWCC in there somewhere. Anywho! Both reported on the joy of encountering other YAFs from all corners of the globe. In particular Tim reported his feeling of shared tradition with Friends from very different kinds of meetings, despite perhaps initially thinking that as Quakers from liberal and unprogrammed backgrounds he and Paula might stick out.

Alongside the official theme of borders, an unofficial one arose from tension. This was the question of children at EMEYF. There were about 7 minors present at one point or another who themselves were not a point of contention and on the whole the meeting was very welcoming to them and helpful to the parents. Possibly too much, as we were told off for getting too distracted making faces at The Baby during meetings in which we should have been upholding a more worshipful manner. A worship sharing session was held in which we heard from friends for whom the presence of children could be a source of pain. Due to the nature of what was shared in the session, I am very limited in what details I can supply. I can only try to impress upon you that it was challenging, emotional, and necessary. The session spoke to me of something very special in Quakerism. Nothing was settled or sorted. No consensus or decisions were reached. Differences were aired and held and all that changed was we knew our friends better in their sorrows.

The bonfires in the evening were a real highlight, although they were rained off the first couple of nights. Many times myself or another friend would orate our life stories or how we came to Quakers. Workers' songs or selections from the Quaker songbook were sung by firelight, generally very sweetly and occasionally in time. The Planning Committee was decimated by disease in the leadup and the workhorse of the event was our great German mensch Fridtjof. The poor fellow, sturdy as he was, was in a state of inhumane stress for most of the week. He was the best placed linguistically to attempt to communicate with our rascal of a host, to the detriment of his sanity. Around the campfire, he was usually seen with a cigarette in hand, making jokes about his Maoist girlfriend who had brought them for him from China. I asked him how long he had smoked for and he told me a story of how, approximately two weeks before he was discerned for the Planning Committee at Spring Gathering 2025, he'd found a pouch of tobacco and some rizlas on the street. He'd taken it as divine intervention in his approaching time of need, but hoped to leave his carcinogens at the border of Poland at the conclusion of his trial.

Despite this worrying indictment, I upheld the role prophecy and confirmed myself willing and able to serve on the planning committee for the Spring Gathering in 2027. It was threshed that the location should be in the Schwarzwald or Black Forest in southwest Germany, and that the theme, in a similar vein to our own Spiritual Review Weekend, should be a spot of "Who are we as a community" navel gazing. Ministry was heard on how we can listen and learn from Trees and the Forest as a fellow living community. The location was deemed to be most appropriate as it was approximately central to the EMEYF community and would

allow the largest proportion of its members to attend as possible. Although some concerns were raised by the gathering nominations committee that German EMEYFers weren't nominating as many of their friends as we would like, in the end we did end up with at least one fluent German speaker on the committee. The rest of us have or are in the process of acquiring a questionable proficiency in the language. But I am very confident in the committee overall and look forward to the event we and the community will create.

Many things at the venue were a struggle. Plunging temperatures caused some issues for those who had not packed with the temperatures in mind. Issues in the kitchen caused more. Generally, a catering co-ordinator is meant to be found from amongst the members of the planning committee, however, with their reduced numbers Connor, the EMEYF transient Australian, and YFiB's very own Tim Rouse stepped into the breach. Their efforts were heroic and much appreciated. The cooking woes came to a head when, unbeknownst to us, the gas bottle ran out during a process of us in the kitchen subjecting pierogi to what ended up being little more than a tepid bath. Once gas had been restored, we ended up panfrying the soggy rascals. Due to having been prepared in pork fat, many of them were labelled "evil" and several unscrupulous and pig-eating friends took home great pierogi loot.

The worship sharing sessions at EMEYF were a real highlight. There was one in which we were posed questions such as "What do we value most about Quakers?". There was some quite intense ministry given. I ministered that I valued most amongst ourselves the ability to find inspiration in sorrowfulness as well as joyfulness, in the spirit of Advices and Queries 7 and 18. There was a great big sheet of paper on which friends wrote their bits and pieces, which I did not take a picture of and can no longer recall. If you want to know what British friends valued most in Quakers, you can ask them yourselves. It was possibly the non-Quakers I was most interested in at EMEYF, however. There were a few attenders very insistent they were a small friend. I saw several of them seek explanation on Quaker processes, values and spiritually. I saw one of them make a really heartfelt apology to a young Friend they didn't have to make, and even against the protestations of that Friend that there was nothing to apologise for. I really was very moved by how people of various levels of Quaker curiosity seemed to find themselves pulled along in our wake and taking part in the spirit that suffused the event, whether they knew it or not. I also saw a very few instances of Friends not behaving as I thought they should. Whether this was allowing their anger to lead them into speaking harshly to a well-meaning but clumsy Friend. Or in allowing old hurts to fester into a grudge. I found these small numbers of incidents, as in any instance where a Quaker falls below what I think the standards our values suggest, surprisingly hurtful. The Wednesday of the week was a day as led and I decided to do nothing but laundry and moping. Coming through my sorrows, I felt taken up by an opening that reassured me that I was maybe being a bit silly and this was really a very tolerable level of discord for a week in each other's sometimes vexatious company.

Too many other things happened at EMEYF for me to do them all justice. Also, Skye is now bullying me to finish and submit my report. In many ways I am still processing the impression made upon me at Spring Gathering, and I recall a fond memory almost every day. Please hold the planning committee in the light while we hopefully deliver the next one :-)

Appendix 2 - Reflections on the Spiritual Review

- A. Elders' Update
- B. Clerks' Offering
- C. Received Ministry
- D. Report 1
- E. Report 2

Note: These items were not received by the General Meeting and are instead included as reflections on the event.

A: Elders' Update

May YFiB

From the 22nd to the 25th of May 2026, the General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain met to have a spiritual review. Within this meeting there were many meetings, different groups of people brought different hopes and expectations; and they left having had many different experiences of the weekend. As the clerks' offering notes, there is no way to summarise this weekend or tie it together. The Spiritual Review part of the weekend produced no minutes or concrete outcomes; instead much of the unaddressed pain, particularly around role-holder burnout/expectations was brought out into the light. We heard a minute written by the nominations committee in 2017(!) showing these problems are long running and structural, not simply a feature of the current people involved.

Throughout the weekend, the idea of stripping YFiB all the way back to an agenda-less event came up a few times in ministry. This wasn't minuted, and shouldn't be claimed as the sense or discerned will of the meeting, but to the elders this feels like a hopeful and open way to re-imagine YFiB. We think it's the right thing for the October gathering.

Plans for October

The current plan is that both the YFiB in October and its planning weekend will have a minimal agenda (meal times, legally required business and the rest as community time). The elders will meet over the coming months to work out exactly what this will mean, please be patient with us, and hold us in the light.

B: Clerks' Offering

On Friday 22 May 2026, Friends met at Bristol Redlands Meeting House for a Spiritual Review of the General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain (YFiB).

At a typical gathering, your clerks bring an offering to closing worship to try and speak to a little of what we have witnessed. When it came to the Monday afternoon of our long weekend, it felt beyond our power to write what had happened, particularly because it was still happening. It definitely continues to be beyond our power, but we'll offer what we can.

We came with love for our Meeting, and we came with fear that it would be changed and too much would be lost. We feared that we would be lost from it. There was so much that was needed and wanted and hoped for, and these were gifts we couldn't hold. We tried and tried to pull in tightly to ourselves so we could carry on and look for a way through, but we had deep wounds in our sides, and our arms were nailed open.

The weekend started hot and it got hotter, until Monday was the hottest day ever recorded in May.

Over the weekend, we weren't all one meeting. Instead, we'd been like the acapella group in Pitch Perfect 2; some Friends were singing and some were putting out a fire. We hadn't been all one meeting outside of the weekend either. We can be a place for rest, but our gatherings are not events with event planners and event attendees. We belong to each other.

We heard that YFiB is a place to be together. It can be good when we meet and that can be reason enough for meeting. When we looked at what we want to bring to the world, we saw that we want to bring Friends. We can help each other to understand where we are led, and help us to act in the world. We are called to be patterns, be examples; this is where we can learn the shape of them. We are equipping one another for our lives as ministers to the Truth and we long to share this with the Friends who seek it.

And yet, we are fallible and we fail. We were reminded of ministry that has been alive in our Meeting for over a decade, that Nominations Committee might be a meat-grinder, feeding in Friends to be mashed up by roles.

We want to be good. We ask so much of ourselves as a Meeting, and in doing so we ask too much of each other. We wish to be accountable to Friends, and we find no space left to be accountable to God. We have so much demanded that we have nothing more to offer.

There have been so many times we've heard this and tried to change it, until a caught breath has held us back from the totality of it. This time, we were called to let the fire burn: clarifying, complete and redemptive. "Even if a tenth part remains in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump." [Isaiah 6:18]

On late Monday morning, elders and clerks were huddled. We were asking what form the next session needed to take. The Meeting hadn't even decided next steps for our October gathering in Edinburgh. We were caught so fractiously between our desire for an output, a way to justify that the Meeting was okay with the leadings it had discerned, and our desperate need for us to worship together as one body. We heard a lamentation: "Friends, we are grinding the meat *right now*."

There had been moments before this when the bounds of our weekend had broken and the Spirit couldn't be held in by our own demands, but this was the moment when we let the call for the Spirit lead; we invited it in and we were transformed.

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There was so much grace throughout the weekend. Friends carried ice and lollies and forced water and suncream on us. We were given tissues and *Advices and Queries*. The heat got the better of us and we were grateful for that, because we needed the worse in us that it revealed. We hugged Friends and didn't tell them that they smelled and we shared keys to a local Friend's shower reverently. We held worship in every room, in the garden, by the bike racks, on the street next to the bins. A fox visited us in worship and later pooped on our bench.

We're thankful for the Friends who fed us. We're thankful for the newcomers who came without knowledge but chose to uphold us anyway. We're thankful for our elders and our facilitators, and we're sorry we couldn't receive what we'd asked you to give.

How do we let the fire burn? We don't have to decide what gets lost in the flames, we can just let it be taken. We can grieve this. When we find ourselves turning inward, asking what is wanted from us, we can stop and let this impulse catch light, offering as we are led instead. We shouldn't be afraid to fail; we need to be allowed to let that happen. We will hold grace for each other and we can trust that the Spirit will remain with us. We gather because something sacred happens when we do. We gather because we love each other.

At our Planning Weekend for the Spiritual Review, we said we were called to fuck around and find out, and we did. At the end, we sang together.

C: Received Ministry

Dearest Friends,

Oh! I was there when it all went wrong - I was doing the dishes. The people jangled and raged but The Lord was over them and the Lord was over all.

“Sing and rejoice; for even in this darkness of night, the Seed of God is within us. Truth doth flourish as the rose; and the plants grow atop the hills; there shall grow lilies from among the thorns, and the lambs shall spring and leap.”

A spring of fresh water breaks the rocks. Hands reach across, palms open. We are again children of love, learning anew the melodies of the divine.

It is not easy to learn; it is not easy to grow - Love's first name is patience. We wait, seemingly without end, for our lives to break before us into joyful singing. No sound emerges: we wait.

I have lived a thousand heart breaks. Never have I seen such resilience as this.

It is not that we must trust the Will of Love to deliver us.

It is that we will find a way to Love even if it seems impossible for such a thing to be right.

Perhaps our frustrations are a grief.

- Evergreen, undying.

Break the cycle. Be a fist of flowers through the thorn of wretchedness.

Love's first name is patience - Love's primary action is the open hand.

Reach for the hand and it shall find you.

This is eternal. This is forever.

It has been my ministry to uphold the griefs of this gathering with a gentle hand and a well-greased elbow.

I hope that my labours of Love could bear fruit - if not now, then at the right time.

Dear Friends, go forth well,
Ed :)

D: Report 1

Report by Joan

Last weekend, I spent the better part of four days in a very warm meeting house in Redland, Bristol, with a group of about 60 young Friends. We ate and slept together, with food provided by Quaker Vegan Witness and sleeping arrangements which involved camping mats and the meeting house floor. Fans were placed in the main meeting room, and there were many excursions to the nearby ice cream shop.

This YFiB weekend was different to our usual events. We termed it a "spiritual review" and went in with a big agenda which tried to accommodate for all of the big discussions that we felt we needed to have: about money, our structures and committees, what it is that we actually want and feel led to achieve within this community. We invited facilitators, Anand and Adam, to help guide us in our sessions.

As the sessions went on, it became clear to us that we need something to change, potentially quite drastically. The words "burn it all down and start again" came up quite a few times - first as some crazy extreme, and slowly as a more serious idea. A lot of our role holders are very burnt out, and it is clear that the way we're currently operating is not sustainable. Many Friends expressed that our structures are not serving us, nor are they allowing us to serve the leadings of the Spirit.

Over the course of these many conversations, we gave voice to our pains and frustrations, and at the same time we hurt and frustrated each other. We were filled with a sureness that we needed to do something differently, and yet a total uncertainty of what the future might hold. By the end of the sessions on Sunday, our agenda had been rearranged, with no real ideas of what we would be doing the following morning. The plan by that point was that we would have some kind of big business or discernment session, that our clerks and elders might present us with a question or a minute or proposals for us to discern on. After several delays to the start of this final big meeting, none of those things happened. Instead, we threw the remains our agenda and business plans out of the window and we had a meeting for worship.

In that hour, we remembered that we love each other, and that we have been angry and frustrated because we love each other, because we care about doing the best we can for our community. Several Friends expressed their fears over this weekend that they had stopped hearing the Spirit, or that we had inadvertently turned it away. In our meeting we heard ministry from a Friend who said,

Friends, do we really think that the Spirit can be killed? Do we really think that we are capable of building a wall high enough that it cannot break through? Do we not think that the anger and pain we have felt in trying to find the right way forward is the anger and pain of the Spirit itself?

We heard ministry from a Friend reminding us of our need for safeguards, and also that we our structures are not set in stone. They reminded us that we do not have structures for the sake of tradition but because they aid us in our spiritual needs. If they are failing to do that, we need to rethink their usefulness to us.

One Friend told us that we had heard so much spoken ministry that what we needed was silence. So they stood and ministered silence. Another Friend gave really quite compelling ministry inspired by the plot of the film Pitch Perfect 2. Our newly appointed treasurer enthusiastically told us that, contrary to the anxieties we'd been having about our finances, we should actually be coming up with more and bigger projects to spend our money on. He wants to be excited by what we come up with, to have something that really feels worth writing funding applications over. The meeting ended as always with us all holding hands, and with one of our clerks spontaneously leading us in singing one of the Taizé songs we'd sung in Saturday night's epilogue.

We did not finish our weekend with the answers to all of the practical questions that we'd possibly hoped to find, but we did end with a sense of spiritual unity and a trust that everything else can grow from that.

My own experience of the weekend ended in what should have been a 2.5-hour train journey turning into 5. All of the trains were thankfully air conditioned, and I was blessed to be accompanied by Friends for the entire journey. With the post-YFiB buzz, those five hours were easily filled with the many ideas we had from surveys about pacifism to a shawl one of us had been gifted which might turn into a Quaker embroidery project. One of the big ideas that stuck was that we would like to set up a Young Friends meeting in South Wales. We now have a WhatsApp group, and loose plans for a monthly meeting, which could alternate between Cardiff and Swansea.

Laudate omnes gentes,

Laudate dominum

Sing praises all you peoples,

Sing praises to the Lord

- Taizé

E: Report 2

Report by Kes Ward

Disclaimer: I offer this report as constructed by my own experiences and through conversations with others who also attended, together with my own reflective attempts to sensemake the turbulence YFiB is in right now. Like all such reports, it should be taken as definitely incomplete and possibly incorrect.

What a weekend, ay?

I think we actually managed to answer the question “what are we?”. The answer is “a bunch of young adults tasked with running BYM’s young adult Quaker outreach and development programme, critically under-resourced in doing so”. For a few people there it was “attendees of BYM’s young adult Quaker outreach and development programme, who like it very much and would like it to continue happening please”, but mostly it was a weekend defined by echoing voices of organisational lament.

It seems that there are some roleholders who feel like they’re being treated like staff members (that is, having all the niggliest bits of work and criticisms from the community landing upon them and only them to fix) that are “paid” only in travel costs and sorely in need of a workplace risk assessment. And there are some roleholders who probably should resign their roles and ask for YFiB’s bursary fund instead (assuming that the reason they haven’t already done so is because their financial situation is dire enough that they need their travel paid). And there are some roleholders whose committee / “corner of YFiB” seems to be functioning basically fine, who weren’t actually aware of all this until wounds were metaphorically ripped open in front of them.

Notably missing through the ideas of what we *are* was the feeling of being an independent-of-BYM Quaker political discerning and acting body. It seems that the reason we discern on matters of import to young adults is not actually to act on them and thereby be a necessary thorn in the side of older Quakers - it is to give young adults the experience of participation in gathered Quaker discernments on things they may personally care about, and in doing so teach them Quaker discipline. I have always wondered why there has been such heavy resistance within YFiB to the idea of online joiners to our business meetings: now I think I understand, that the maintenance of discipline as a teaching opportunity (far easier when not blended) is actually worth far more to the community than gathering all so-led voices into the room for the actual topic under discernment (whether they are free to cross the country that weekend or not). I tentatively offer the proposal that that Quaker political centre has shifted or is shifting to somewhere in the Society that is not us. I suspect those more in want of the second kind of community might better find it elsewhere these days, including at the young adult spaces at BYM/CYM itself, far closer to the beating political heart of British Quakerism.

I think, Friends, that we are starting to do the necessary internal work towards the task of prioritising. Part of defining who we are is defining who we are *not*, and stopping trying to be those things. This is something YFiB has shied away from recently, as we have tried to be all things to all people, and thereby burned out our capacity at certain critical points within our organisational structure.

Here's my thoughts on the exactness of those tension points, and a series of conversation starters for "how to fix YFiB's structures".

- Our feedback collection and sharing mechanism needs to change to a more inherently relational mechanism that encourages useful suggestions and compliments, rather than subject our roleholders each planning weekend to somewhat narratively incoherent collections of biting anonymous criticisms. As someone who basically doesn't care about mildly upsetting people while getting jobs done, I wasn't aware before this weekend about just how much rejection-sensitivity YFiB's attendee base is carrying, and therefore how much pain the idea of someone thinking you're doing it wrong causes and so the way our feedback mechanisms are burning people out. (To anyone reading this who is young, I promise it gets less painful after about age 25!). Possibly we could do something about collating reports, instead of an anonymous feedback form?
- Something needs to be done about Switchboard, that it is convened in a way that better supports the mental and spiritual health of its attendees, and that efforts are taken to repair the communication gap between it (and through it, committees) and other long-time attenders at YFiB. This is probably an issue with the Switchboard convenor finding themselves critically overburdened with other things to do (not least helping fix the things that come to Switchboard), and so it's something about workload allocation / facilitation training for whoever the convenor is or becomes.
- Those in roles who aren't actually taking on the work of those roles should have a more well-worn pathway of exit from them. It's not a great and devastating failure to be taken in the moment by the idea of helping at something, but ultimately find a three year commitment to be too long in the timespan of a young adult's life. Might our Nominations check in at about the one year mark with a conversation with the roleholder as to whether their leadings are flourishing, they secretly want out but are afraid to say this in front of their social group, or what they actually need is a travel bursary?
- Those who count themselves as "attendees of BYM's young adult quaker outreach and development programme, who like it very much and would like it to continue happening please", need to make sure they pay for the value they gain somehow. If they cannot afford to pay for it themselves, then they need to ask their Area Meeting to pay and write reports each time for their Area Meeting to justify the spend, or otherwise perform some kind of fundraising activity on behalf of YFiB (why not apply for a young adult events and learning grant? Why not ask your parents, if they're Quakers?) if their connections with their Area Meeting are weak for reasons not up to them.

The structures of YFiB need to change to make this part of the expected administrative workflow of attendance.

- As for those who might be inclined to financially pay above their way, of which we demonstrably have extremely few if any: Young adult Quakers seem to be quite poor at the topic of giving, which is a shame as I feel it core to my experience of lived Quaker simplicity. I would quite like to cultivate a Friend group who understands the joys of dematerialising and deconveniencing one's life in favour of supporting the causes and relationships they deeply care most about, and I would like to see more of those people (who exist within Quakers) attending YFiB. Perhaps it is simply a matter of waiting a while for our membership to age and get onto better overall financial footings.

I will finish with a brief note on the catering. Kerri and Lauren (and myself) from Quaker Vegan Witness did a fantastic job supporting the spiritual review. I personally look forward to developing more relationships with Quaker Vegan Witness (particularly the young adults therein) on matters of food and catering across the Society of Friends.

I will note that, capacity-wise, YFiB's catering fell apart in approximately the beginning of 2025 when it was noted that the formal structure simply wasn't adequate for YFiB's size. What it has been since then has been a series of informal structures and backend coalitions forming to better identify and distribute the workload, something which we will be formalising at some point soon (the document is open for commentary). In some sense, the reason catering is fine(ish) now is precisely *because* it came to crisis point some time ago, and the coalitions of the willing have gotten in touch with each other to identify and forge paths other than that of the set structure. I might hope that something similar could happen at other structural tension points within YFiB, and that we could emerge from this process stronger than we went in.