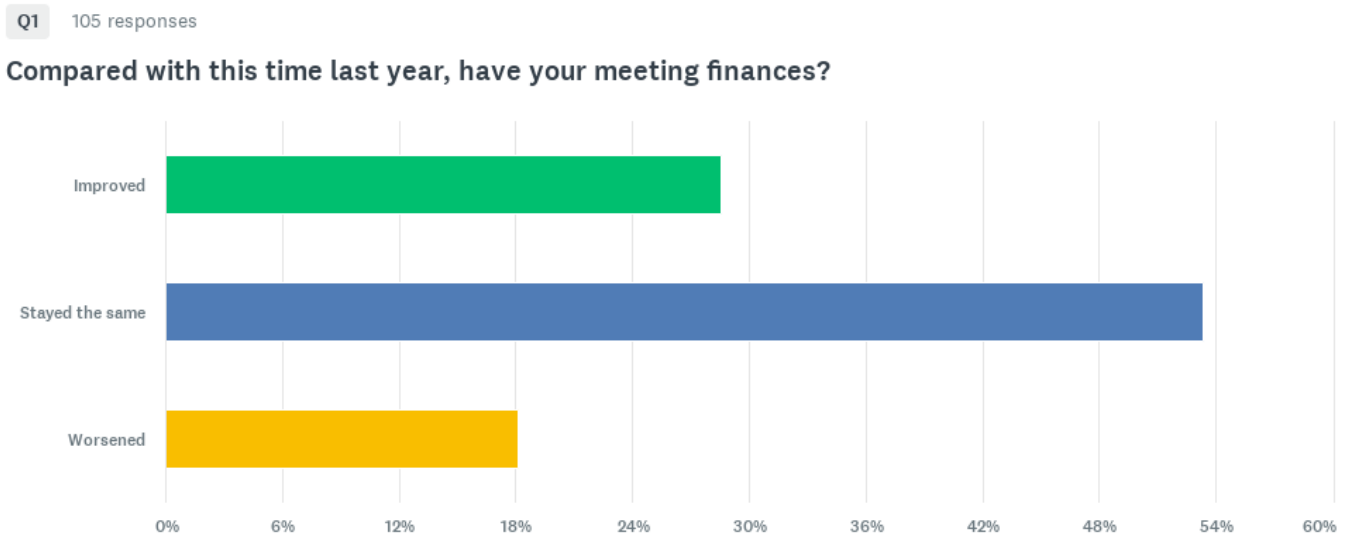
BYM Treasurers Survey - 2026

Background

The Annual Treasurers' Survey was circulated to all 476 local meeting treasurers to gather insights into the current financial situation across meetings. The survey aimed to identify trends, challenges, and areas of stability or growth, helping Quakers in Britain better understand how meetings manage their finances and where additional support may be beneficial.

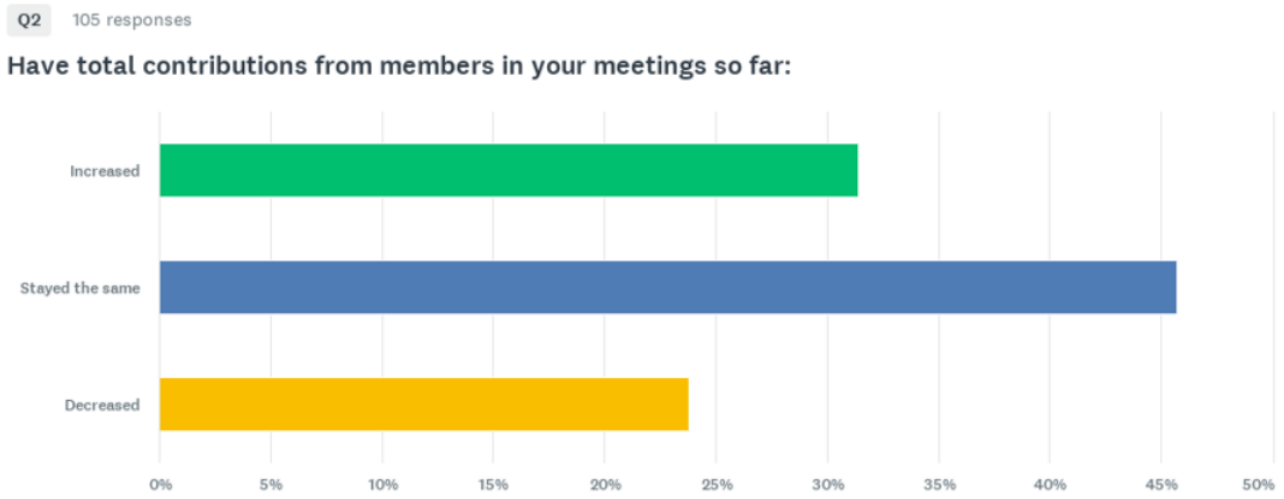
In total, 105 treasurers responded, representing a 22% response rate. While the findings do not reflect the experiences of every local meeting, they provide a snapshot of the financial landscape across the Quaker community. The responses highlight both encouraging signs of resilience and stability, alongside ongoing challenges that some meetings continue to face in managing income, expenditure, and financial sustainability.



The survey results suggest a generally positive and stable financial picture across local meetings. Over half of respondents (56%) reported that their meeting's finances had stayed the same compared with last year, a slight increase from 54% in 2025. A further 29% reported that their finances had improved, up from 27% in the previous survey. Meanwhile, 18% reported that their finances had worsened, down from 25% in 2025.

Taken together, these findings indicate that many meetings have either maintained or strengthened their financial position over the past year. The reduction in the proportion of meetings reporting worsening finances is particularly encouraging and suggests that some meetings may be recovering from previous financial pressures.

Many treasurers highlighted rising costs associated with maintaining historic meeting houses, major building projects, insurance, and staffing costs. Several respondents also expressed concern about declining membership, ageing congregations, and the impact this may have on future income levels. One treasurer noted that their meeting was considering selling its meeting house due to financial pressures and reduced capacity to manage a large property, while others reported increasing reliance on reserves, investment income, or legacies to maintain financial stability.



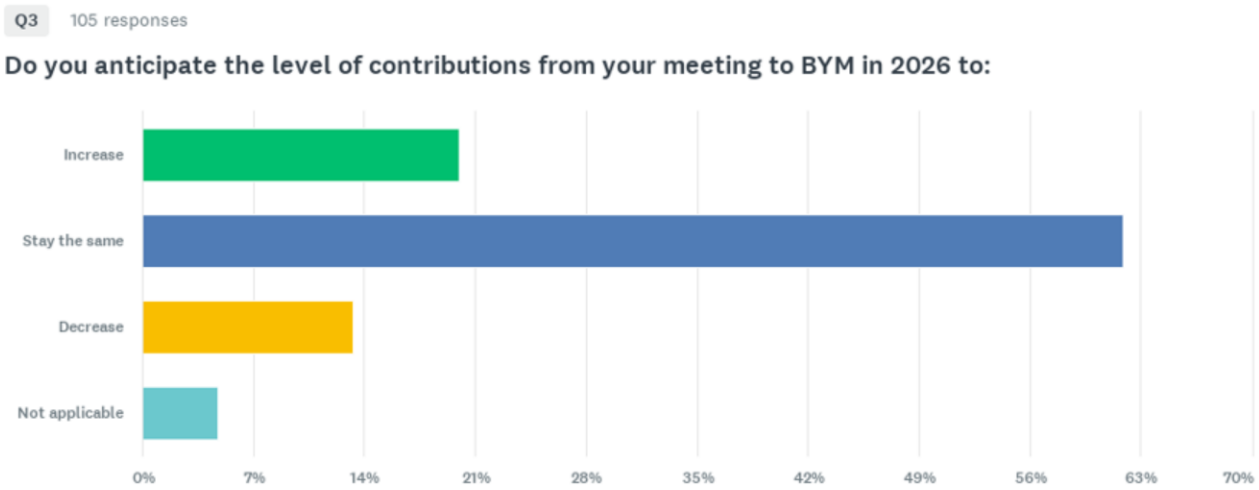
Nearly half of respondents (46%) reported that member contributions had remained stable so far this year. Encouragingly, almost one-third (32%) reported an increase in giving, while 24% reported a decrease. The findings suggest that charitable giving among Friends remains relatively resilient, despite ongoing economic pressures and wider uncertainty. For many meetings, continued generosity from members has helped maintain financial stability and support local activities and contributions to Area Meetings and Quakers in Britain.

A number of treasurers reported an ageing membership profile and the loss of older Friends who had historically been significant contributors. The comments section reveals some underlying concerns:

- *“We have very few active members (with 4 deaths in the last two years)*
- *“We have experienced a few deaths of elderly and generous Friends and it is a challenge to replace that income from newer/younger members.”*

Despite these challenges, many treasurers described their meetings as financially stable, with contributions generally sufficient to meet current commitments. Some comments made:

- *“We have been fortunate with legacies lately - without them the large increases in the costs of maintenance work and insurance make balancing the budget and finding money for BYM a huge challenge as the number of live Friends contributing slowly falls.”*



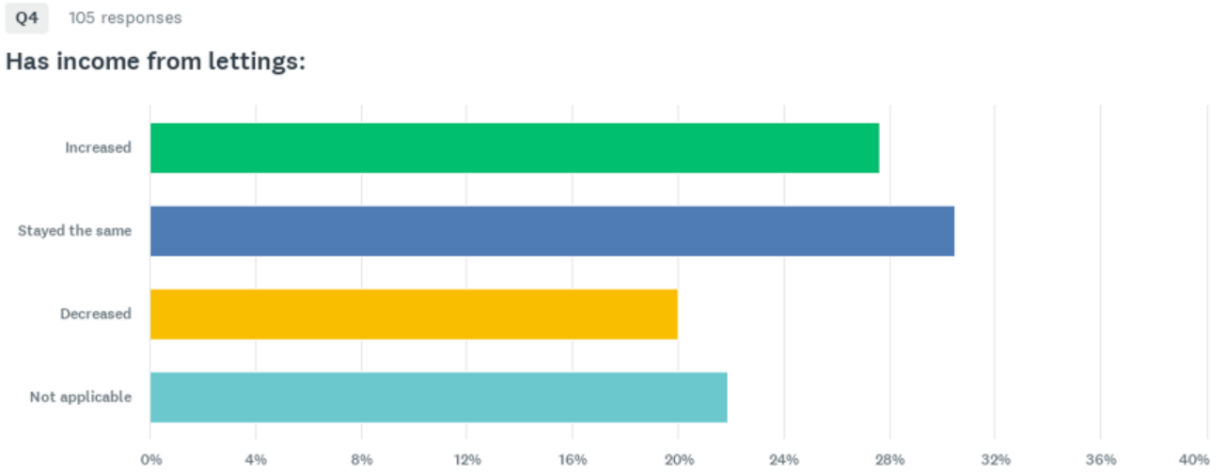
Most respondents (62%) expect their meeting's contribution to QiB to remain at a similar level during 2026, while one in five (20%) anticipate an increase. Only 13% expect contributions to decrease. These responses suggest that most meetings remain committed to supporting the work of QiB and expect to maintain their current level of giving despite ongoing financial challenges. The proportion expecting contributions to increase also reflects a degree of confidence among some meetings regarding their future financial position.

Comments provided in the survey indicate that decisions regarding contributions to QiB are often influenced by local priorities. Several treasurers described the financial pressures associated with maintaining meeting houses, supporting Area Meeting structures, or funding local projects and staff roles. These obligations limit the funds available for contributions to BYM. The comments section reveals some underlying concerns:

- *"Lettings and regular contributions are sufficient to cover our annual expenditure and the suggested contribution to AM, but leaves little if any available for BYM"*
- "*Members often make only one contribution. It either goes to BYM or the local meeting. As local Treasurer I prefer that money to support our local needs. I think a different system is needed."*
- *"We have to try and keep our Meeting going, not BYM."*

The forthcoming restructuring of Quaker governance in some regions also emerged as a recurring theme. Respondents involved in the creation of Yorkshire Quakers, Quakers in London, and other regional arrangements noted uncertainty about how future finances and contribution processes would operate. The comments section reveals some underlying concerns:

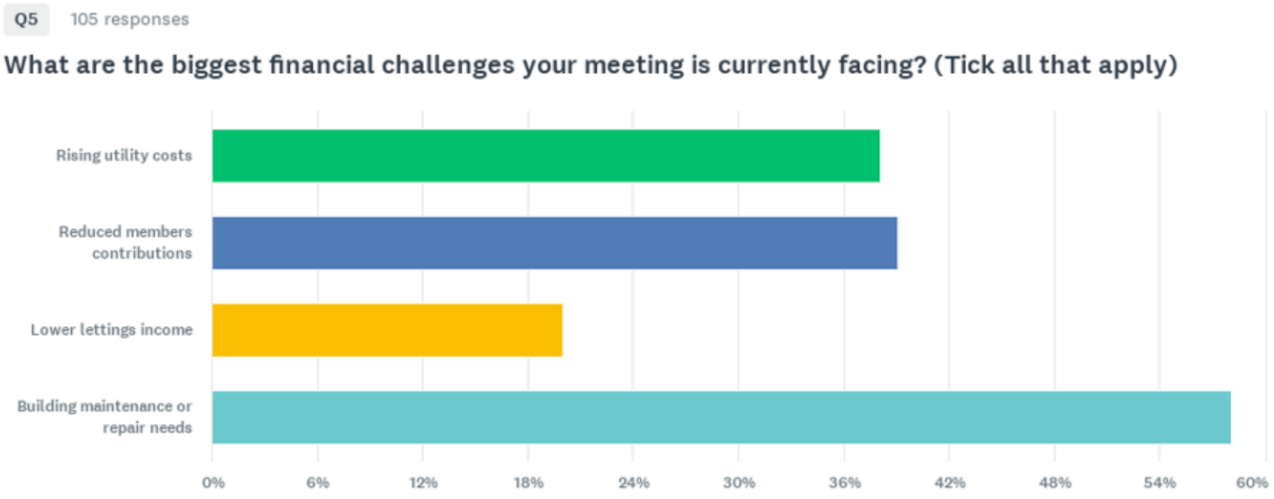
- *"We are very keen that local meetings retain control of their own finances, while supporting AM where we can. We do not wish to lose financial independence by being amalgamated into a larger, less responsive financial body at area level. Friends are concerned that should this happen, contributions will drop off significantly. We value our relative autonomy!"*



31% of respondents reported that lettings income stayed the same. A further 28% reported an increase, while 20% experienced a reduction in income from lettings. About 22% of respondents indicated that the question was not applicable because many meetings do not own a meeting house or generate lettings income. These findings suggest that lettings continue to be an important source of income for many meetings. Several respondents highlighted that income from room hire and property lettings plays a significant role in supporting meeting finances and offsetting rising costs.

One treasurer observed, *"It has a lot of spare capacity. There has been no active promotion of the lettings business."* This points to potential growth in lettings income in some meetings.

Others highlighted the challenges involved in managing buildings and lettings:
"We face the fundamental dilemma that I suspect is somewhat widespread, namely the importance of our let properties to our long-term financial stability, set against limited resources to manage them."



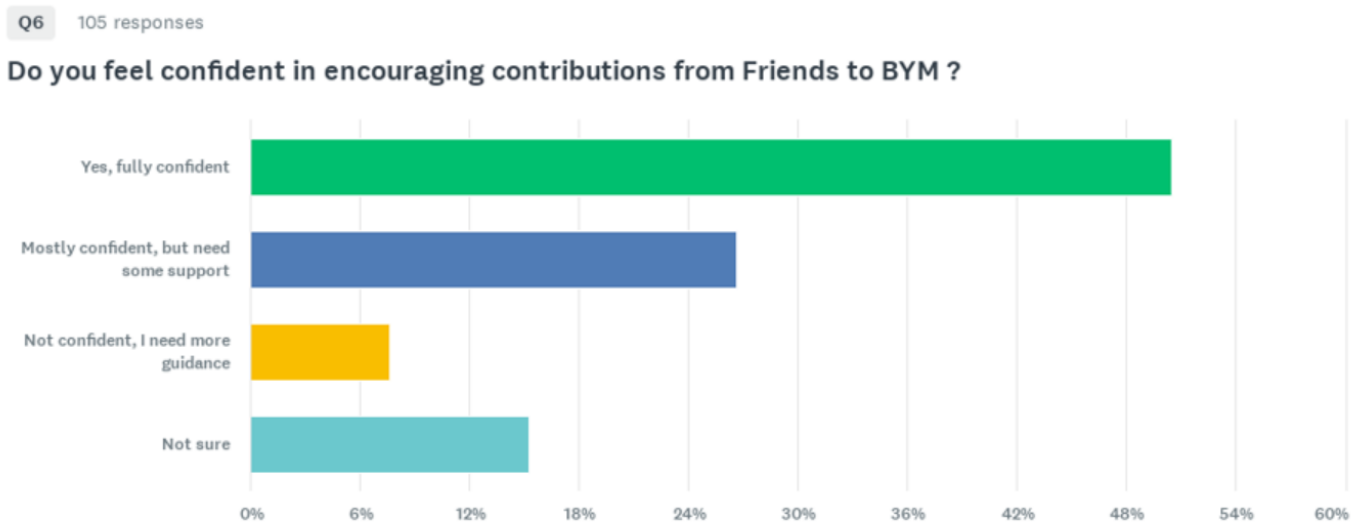
The most frequently reported financial challenge was building maintenance and repair, selected by 58% of respondents. This reflects the significant financial burden associated with maintaining meeting houses, particularly older and listed buildings that require ongoing investment to remain safe, accessible, and environmentally sustainable. Many respondents highlighted the growing burden of maintaining historic meeting houses. One treasurer commented:

"Three of our five meeting houses require significant spend to bring them up to standard (new flat roofs, remediation of subsidence and renewal of heating system). This will bear down heavily on our financial resources this year and next."

Lower lettings income was selected by 20% of respondents. While this was the least commonly reported challenge from the options provided, several comments emphasized the importance of lettings as a source of income and the difficulties some meetings continue to face in rebuilding utilisation levels after the pandemic.

Reduced member contributions (39%) and rising utility costs (38%) were cited as challenges. Responses suggest that many meetings continue to experience demographic pressures, including ageing memberships and the loss of long-standing contributors. Several treasurers expressed concern about replacing income previously provided by older Friends, as well as the impact of the wider cost-of-living environment on members' ability to give. Several treasurers linked financial concerns to demographic change. As one respondent noted:

" We have experienced a few deaths of elderly and generous Friends and it is a challenge to replace that income from newer/younger members."



Most respondents (51%) reported feeling fully confident in encouraging contributions from Friends to Quakers in Britain. A further 27% said they were mostly confident but would welcome additional support, meaning that over three-quarters of respondents feel broadly equipped to discuss and encourage giving to BYM.

However, almost 15% of respondents either felt unsure or reported needing more guidance (8%). This suggests there remains an opportunity to provide further support, resources, and clarity to help treasurers communicate the impact and importance of contributions to Quakers in Britain.
While most treasurers felt confident encouraging contributions to BYM, several respondents indicated they would welcome more information about how contributions are used.

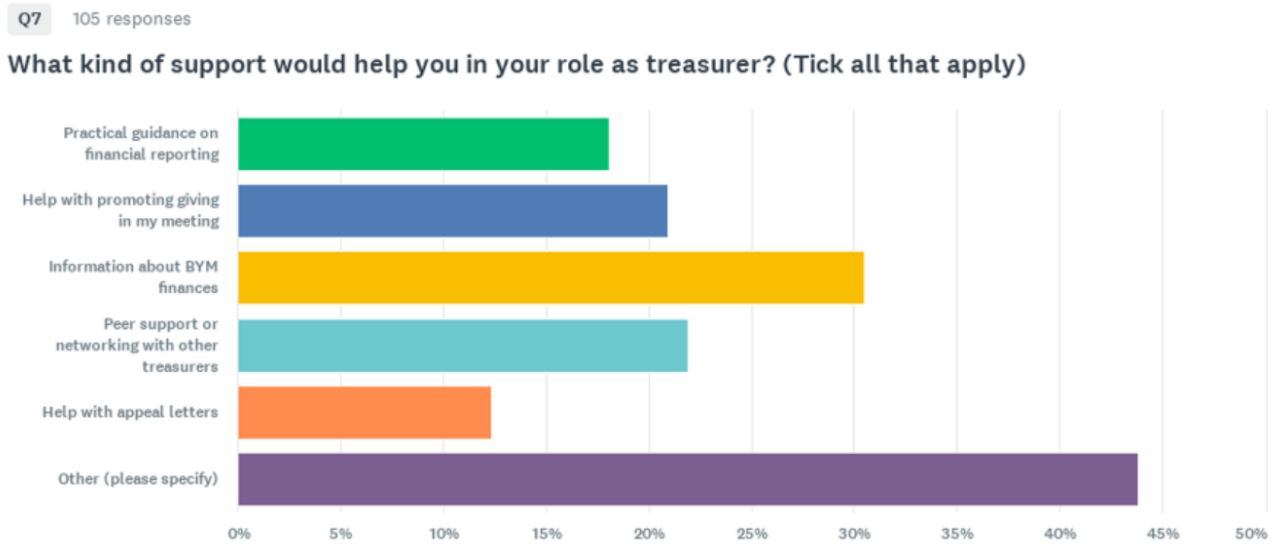
One treasurer commented:

"I think it would be helpful if BYM shared more information about their own budgeting assumptions and financial performance. Some Friends lack confidence that money given to BYM will be spent wisely."

Others highlighted challenges in balancing local and national priorities:

"As meetings decline in numbers it becomes more difficult to get Friends to look beyond the local."

Several respondents also highlighted the complexity of current contribution arrangements, with some Friends finding it difficult to understand the different ways of contributing through local meetings, area meetings, or directly to BYM. Despite these concerns, many respondents expressed strong support for the work carried out by Quakers in Britain and a commitment to contributing wherever financial circumstances allow.



Information about BYM finances: 31%

- suggesting that many treasurers would welcome a greater understanding of how contributions are used and the financial context within which Quakers in Britain operate.

Peer support or networking with other treasurers: 22%

- several treasurers described increasing complexity in their role, citing responsibilities relating to property management, insurance, employment law, pensions, investments and charity regulation. Others expressed a desire for opportunities to share good practice and learn from the experiences of other meetings

Help with promoting giving in my meeting: 21%

- These findings highlight the value of sharing experiences, good practice and practical approaches to fundraising across the Quaker community.

Practical guidance on financial reporting: 18%

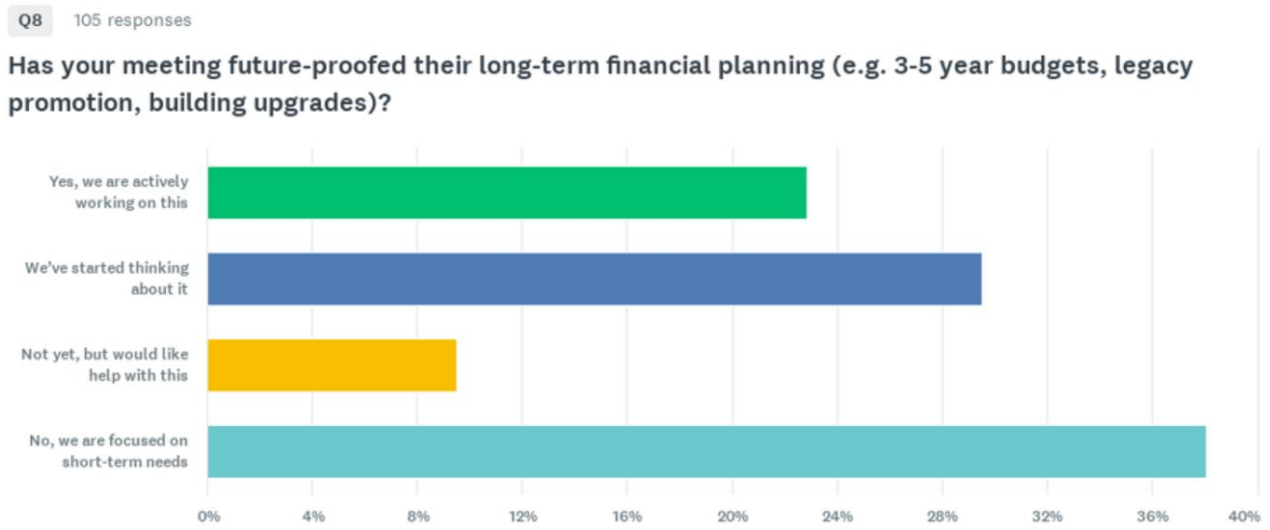
- Some respondents involved in regional restructuring and charity mergers also identified a need for guidance on governance, financial planning and adapting to new financial arrangements.

Help with appeal letters: 12%

- the results overall suggest that treasurers would benefit from a mixture of financial information, practical guidance and opportunities to connect with peers facing similar challenges.

Other: 44%

- indicating a wide range of individual circumstances and support needs that may not be fully captured by the options provided.



The responses indicate that long-term financial planning remains a challenge for many meetings. More than 38% reported being focused on short-term needs rather than longer-term financial planning. A further 30% said they had started thinking about future-proofing but had not yet fully developed plans, while 23% reported actively working on initiatives such as multi-year budgeting, legacy promotion, building improvements or sustainability projects.
Only 10% of respondents stated that they had not yet started this work but would welcome support. Taken together, these findings suggest that while many meetings recognise the importance of long-term planning, competing priorities and limited capacity often make it difficult to move beyond immediate financial concerns.

Although some meetings are planning for the future, others reported that uncertainty around structural changes has limited long-term planning. For example:
"We are facing an impending merger, so we are not in a position to make long-term projections."

Another respondent commented:
"Even preparing a budget for 2027 is very much guesswork. I should think asking for a projection for 3 years hence would be laughed out of court."

Many treasurers referred to uncertainty arising from regional restructuring, including the formation of Quakers in London, Yorkshire Quakers and other emerging arrangements. Several respondents noted that mergers and governance changes make long-term financial forecasting particularly difficult at the moment.

Building maintenance also featured strongly in responses. While some meetings described significant investment in sustainability projects, major repairs and accessibility improvements, others reported that the financial burden of maintaining ageing properties limited their ability to plan beyond the next annual budget cycle. A number of treasurers also highlighted concerns about declining membership, ageing congregations and the long-term sustainability of meeting finances.

At the same time, some meetings demonstrated a proactive approach to future planning through the development of reserves, property strategies, environmental improvements and longer-term maintenance plans. These responses suggest that there is both awareness of the importance of future-proofing and a need for practical support to help meetings develop longer-term financial confidence and resilience.

Comments on meeting finances or contributions

"Everyone appreciates the hard work carried out by BYM and we are committed to contributing what we can afford."

"Our meeting's finances are very simple, our main outgoings being rent for the premises where we meet and our annual contribution to BYM. We have ample reserves which at present could see us through 2-3 years if contributions from our members were to fall substantially."

" Our Area Meeting has had to increase the per capita quota levied on LMs. This is a substantial element of our total Local Meeting budget."

"Our meeting finances are very simple and accounting is handled partly by AM anyway. Members/Attenders decide for themselves if they would like their contributions to AM and BYM handled by the LM."

"We rent our premises and that expenditure takes up most of our income. We contribute what we can afford to BYM, based on any surplus funds at the end of the year."

"Finances seem to get ever more complicated - insurance, employment law, pensions, investments and savings, financial regulations etc. All increase size of treasurers job. Can we do more to share good ideas and best practice?"

"When I do send cash to BYM the process with the supplied form seems to work well."