

Clerks Update

A newsletter from Quaker Life

Issue 16: Winter 2025



Welcome to the winter issue!

Welcome to issue 16 of Clerks' Update, Winter 2025. It is a communication channel for clerks of local and area meetings and Quaker communities. You can view an archive of past messages on our website at www.quaker.org.uk/clerks-update.



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Information for Quaker clerks

An important update about Quaker Life Representative Council

Quaker Life Central Committee, supported by the discernment of Quaker Life Representative Council Planning Group, has decided that now is the right time to lay down Quaker Life Representative Council (QLRC). This decision will be reported to Meeting for Sufferings in Spring 2026.

QLRC was created as a “two-way channel of communication for education, inspiration and consultation” and “so that Friends can share both spiritual and practical experience of living their Quaker lives” (*Quaker faith & practice*, 8.09). This sharing and communication is still vital, and the decision to lay down QLRC can be seen as an indication of the success of new ways of working and communicating, and a joyful opportunity to simplify structures.

Some of the ways Friends can continue to be involved in communication, education, inspiration and sharing our Quaker lives are:

- **Yearly Meeting** – From 2026 there will be several sessions a year.
- Quaker Life networks for **Outreach**, **Youth, children & families**, **Children and young people's events**, **Chaplaincy**
- Connect with your **Development worker**
- **Quake! weekly email newsletter** and other **newsletters** and **role-holder updates** from Quakers in Britain and **Woodbrooke**
- **Revising *Quaker faith & practice***
- One-off themed events like the *Future of British Quakerism conference* held in 2024 and this year's *Radical Hearts, Open Minds* days.

Abbreviations: BYM – Britain Yearly Meeting; CCQW – Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales;
LM – local meeting; AM – area meeting; YM – Yearly Meeting; QLCC – Quaker Life Central Committee;
FWCC – Friends World Committee for Consultation

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When is the next Yearly Meeting?

The next Yearly Meeting is 1-4 May 2026. It will be held online and in Friends House, London. Everyone is welcome. Everyone attending, whether online or at Friends House, will need to register. We expect registrations to open on **Monday 12 January**.

Junior Yearly Meeting, for Friends aged 15-18, will be held **3-7 April 2026** (see details below).



Please share the [Yearly Meeting Calling letter](#) with Friends in your Quaker community.

What will be on the agenda?

While the agenda for Yearly Meeting in May 2026 has not yet been finalised, we expect it to include discernment on aspects of these questions:

- In a divided world, what unites us as a Spirit-led community? How do we foster acceptance and belonging?
- As a Spirit-led community, how can we handle conflict well in a way that builds connections, nurtures community and finds common ground, overcoming divisiveness and polarisation?

Friends may wish to spend time reflecting on these questions in advance of Yearly Meeting, individually or in groups. We will offer some suggestions of activities to help Friends of all ages prepare for Yearly Meeting. We expect this to be published by **Friday 19 December**.

The agenda for Yearly Meeting in May 2026 will also include several reports and some changes needed to implement the decision we took at Yearly Meeting in 2024 to move from holding Yearly Meeting once a year to holding it four times a year.

We will hold online preparation sessions covering some of the topics due to be considered between **Monday 13 April and Friday 17 April 2026 starting at 7.30pm**. There will be more information about online preparation sessions nearer the time. Please put the dates in your diary.

Who decides what goes on the agenda?

The agenda for Yearly Meeting is decided by Friends on the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC), this is done through prayerful discernment. Friends on YMAC are of different ages and experiences and from different parts of Britain. YMAC is helped in its discernment by input from Friends on various Quaker committees and other bodies who share how the spirit is moving in their work. The leadings of these bodies help YMAC discern the Yearly Meeting agenda.

Where can I find out more?

You can find out more about Yearly Meeting in May 2026 on the Yearly Meeting page of the Quakers in Britain website, www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Call for appointments: Yearly Meeting representatives

From July 2026 all area meetings plus Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales, Quakers in Scotland and Young Friends General Meeting will be asked to appoint a Yearly Meeting representative.

Yearly Meeting representatives will help foster communication so that Friends in meetings can feel more connected to what happens at Yearly Meeting. The presence of representatives will also ensure continuity of attendance from session to session. Representatives will be asked to attend Yearly Meeting and to find ways to let Friends in their meetings know what is going on and encourage them to attend for themselves.

Find out more about the role, what you need to do, and how to get more information here,

www.quaker.org.uk/documents/ym-call-for-reps

Consultation Survey – Radical Hearts, Open Minds

What kind of support do you think would help Quaker Communities thrive over the next decade? Tell us what you think.

During Autumn 2025, Quaker Life and Woodbrooke have been consulting with Quakers across Britain on the priorities for the support we offer. This is another chance for you to let us know what you think the priorities should be.

Please fill in our [online survey](#).

The information gathered will support Quakers in Britain and Woodbrooke create a new strategy to support Quaker communities over the next five years. The strategy will be called “Approaches for the Future: Faith, Inclusion and Growth”.

You can read more about the consultation on our website, www.quaker.org.uk/approaches.



New Contributions Materials – share with Friends

The new contributions materials are out! This year, every meeting will be receiving the Contributions Leaflet, with a cover letter from BYM treasurer Paul Whitehouse and a copy of the leaflet, [How much should I give to Quaker work?](#)

Give every Friend and attender in your meeting the opportunity to support the work by sharing these materials with them. The materials will be hitting your mailbox in mid-December. Electronic copies of the materials are available on the website, please go to www.quaker.org.uk/contributions.



Order for Burial form

Quakers in Britain provides an order for burial form. This is an official document used when arranging a burial or for the interment or scattering of ashes. The document is now a stand-alone form and no longer part of a book. The form has been updated following feedback from Friends who use it. It is available to download from the Quakers in Britain website, www.quaker.org.uk/funerals. The direct link to the document is: www.quaker.org.uk/documents/order-for-burial-form

National Churches Trust – Survey Summary

Earlier this year the National Churches Trust (NCT) carried out a survey of churches across Britain. The survey was to help policymakers, the media, and the wider public better understand the challenges churches face and to highlight the vital work that churches do. Quaker meetings were encouraged to submit responses so that Quaker meetings are represented.



NCT has produced a full report and a summary report, both of which are in English and Welsh language. Visit the NCT website to read the report, www.nationalchurchestrust.org/survey.

Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) survey on refugee support

QARN is gathering information about how Friends are supporting refugees and people seeking sanctuary in the UK. They are asking Friends to [complete this short questionnaire](#).

If you are an AM clerk: Please complete the questionnaire if you are personally involved in this work or if you are aware of anything happening at AM level.

If you are an LM clerk: If your meeting has any collective or meeting-wide activities, please complete the questionnaire yourself or forward it to someone in the meeting who can. If there are no meeting-wide activities, we would be very grateful if you could pass the questionnaire on to anyone in your meeting who is involved as an individual.

QARN hopes to learn more about the activities of individual Friends and Local Meetings, so they can help connect people, support this work, and strengthen our collective witness. They are interested in all kinds of involvement, from one-off learning events to ongoing projects, and will share a summary report next year.

Youth, Children and Families

Junior Yearly Meeting 2026

3-7 April 2026, Pioneer Centre, Kidderminster

Nominations are open for a few more weeks. The deadline is **Monday 12 January 2026**. All documents have been sent to Area Meeting Clerks – please check if they've been received and do all you can to offer this opportunity to young people in your area. For more information about JYM, including dates and deadlines, please visit www.quaker.org.uk/events/junior-yearly-meeting-2026.

"I have felt the Light in whatever form and I know that being together can be so powerful"

"Talking to others, finding common grounding, realising that we all share very similar core values is so energising"

Save the date: Children and Young People @ Yearly Meeting 1-4 May 2026

As usual, there will be a Children's Programme and Young People @ Yearly Meeting in 2026.

The Children's Programme will be running as part of Yearly Meeting in Friends House, London. We expect it to be packed with fun and engaging ways for children to share community time and explore their spirituality together.

Young People @ Yearly Meeting will be residential, taking place at the Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire and joining the event at Friends House for the final day. Fun and fellowship with a bit of adventure!

Booking for these events will open on **12 January 2026**.

Keep a look out for more information!



Events



Hope for the future in dark and difficult times

Friday 13 to Sunday 15 March 2026, The Hayes (Swanwick, Derbyshire) and online

In a world facing many challenges, how can Quakers work with other churches and faiths to find hope for the future? This conference, for Quakers throughout Britain, offers space to reflect, connect, and be inspired.

Area Meetings are encouraged to appoint Friends as representatives as soon as possible. AM nominations bookings are **open until 5 January**. General bookings will open on **6 January** and the **final booking deadline will be 6 February**. The conference will be blended and Friends can choose to attend residentially or join online.

Find out more: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/QCCIRCon

Registering Officers Gathering

Monday 26 January 2026, 3:30pm, online

There is going to be an online gathering for Registering Officers which will be an opportunity for Friends giving service to come together as peers and explore experience.

Register in advance: https://quaker.zoom.us/meeting/register/R8_jSG8_Qg2iL1oJxtgDqw

Training and Learning from Woodbrooke Learning



Navigating Change Well as Quaker Communities

Wednesday 7 January to Wednesday 28 January 2026

All Quaker communities experience change, whether small or significant. Change can open up new possibilities, but it can also bring challenge, especially for role-holders. In this four-session course, we will create a supportive space to share experiences and explore ways forward together.

Find out more: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/navigating-change-well-as-quaker-communities



Quaker Clerking in a Nutshell

Saturday 31 January 2026, 10:00-16:00

Whether you are a new or experienced clerk for a Quaker Meeting, Group, or Committee, this one-day course provides clear guidance on Quaker clerkship and practical tips for becoming a more effective clerk.

Find out more: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/quaker-clerking-in-a-nutshell



Exploring Threshing and Clearness

Thursday 5 February 2026, 19:00-21:00

How can Quaker methods of threshing and clearness help us make good decisions even in difficult situations? This course will help you understand these processes and consider how to use them, with particular emphasis on the responsibilities of role-holders.

Find out more: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/exploring-threshing-and-clearness



Being a Quaker Registering Officer

Wednesday 18 February to Wednesday 25 March 2026

Quakers have celebrated marriages since the time of Margaret Fell and George Fox. We have distinctive practices, and our weddings are recognised as legally valid. This course provides essential preparation for Friends wishing to serve as Registering Officers.

Find out more: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/being-a-quaker-registering-officer



Spiritual Nurture and Pastoral Care Gathering

Friday 13 March to Sunday 15 March 2026, Highgate House, Northamptonshire

This residential weekend is an opportunity for in-depth discussion, learning and reflection for Friends with responsibilities of eldership or pastoral care in their Meetings and groups. It is designed to help you grow in understanding and confidence in your role.

Find out more: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/spiritual-nurture-and-pastoral-care-gathering



Grants

Hope Grants

These are small grants to improve the quality of life of Quaker members and attenders who are unemployed or unable to make a living wage. Friends in financial need can apply for a grant of up to £750 towards items or activities that will improve their quality of life. More information and the application form are available from our website: www.quaker.org.uk/hopegrants.

Pastoral Care Grants

These grants supplement funds available to pastoral care role-holders locally and can be used in situations of hardship and suffering through old age, or to support women Friends in need. Please contact the Grants Programme Officer (grants@quaker.org.uk 020 7663 1053) for further information and an application form.

William Gunn's Charity

The William Gunn's Charity welcomes requests for grants to assist individuals who are in Membership of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain and are experiencing financial need or hardship.

Grants cannot be to pay taxes and would not usually be for on-going payments. However, Friends may apply as often as is necessary, each request for a grant being taken as a separate and fresh application and dealt with on its merits.

Examples of some of our grants can be seen on the website:

<https://williamgunnscharity.org/examples-of-grants>.

Apply online: <https://williamgunnscharity.org>



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