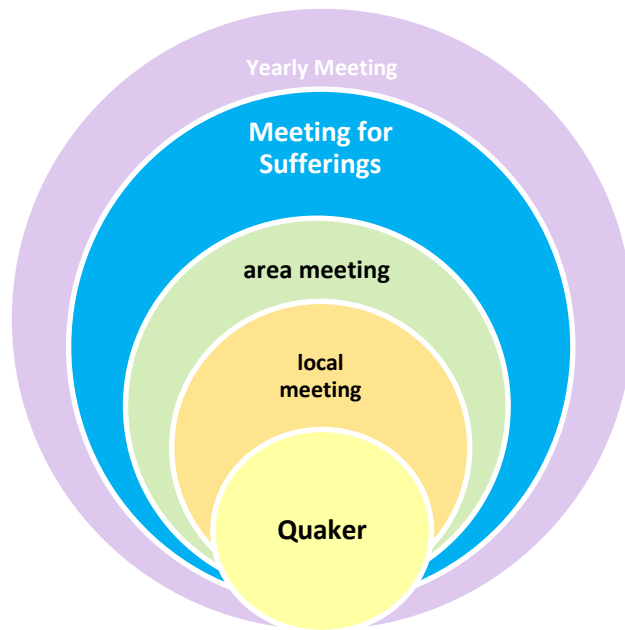




Meeting for Sufferings

Essential information for representatives - 2021-2024 triennium

Available on the [BYM website](#):



1 Checklist

Before the Meeting

- Register your intention to attend at forms.quaker.org.uk/sufferings
- Read the documents in advance.
- Discuss items with Friends in your AM if possible.
- Remind yourself of Advice 13.

On the Day

- Arrive (in person or online) in good time – the meeting for worship starts at 10am.
- If you're late:
 - For in-person meetings, the doorkeeper will show you to the overflow room where you can join the worship; you'll be able to join the main meeting just before the start of business.
 - For online meetings, the administrator will let you know what's happening and will admit you at a suitable point.

When you return to your own meetings

We hope you will have had an inspiring and enriching experience during Meeting for Sufferings and that you will be able to enthuse and stimulate your meetings back home!

Support Group

A Search Group has been appointed to find nominations for the Support Group. Once the Group has been appointed, this section will be updated with the appointed names.

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2 Introduction

Welcome. This handbook is for all Friends, particularly those serving, or about to serve, on Meeting for Sufferings (MfS).

Attending Meeting for Sufferings for the first time can feel daunting. You will find the published [Practical arrangements for Sufferings](#) information helpful. Remember that if you don't understand something, a member of the Support Group can help.

You can also seek help from the group of Friends who nominated you for this service - your Area Meeting or other Quaker body.

3 About Meeting for Sufferings

3.1 Role and Function of Meeting for Sufferings

For full information about the role and function of Meeting for Sufferings, see [chapter 7 of Quaker faith & practice](#).

Meeting for Sufferings is a worshipping community; its functions include:

- to discern the furtherance of the spiritual life of our Yearly Meeting and of the development of its visionary and prophetic role
- to set the priorities for the centrally managed work
- to issue public statements in the name of BYM
- to receive regular interim reports from BYM Trustees
- to make a report of its own activities to Yearly Meeting each year
- to foster communication throughout the Yearly Meeting
- to receive and take appropriate action on minutes received from Area Meetings and other committees

We use a checklist to summarise the business that we have dealt with, and to help us check we're doing what we should.

Some representatives meet regularly with their alternate or with a local support network to help them discharge their responsibilities as these include not only participation in the meetings but also feedback within the area meeting.

Meeting for Sufferings is connected with most of the Quaker networks and is an excellent place to find out what is going on. It is also a forum whose members can guide Quaker work, drawing on their wisdom and knowledge.

See sections 9.2.2 and 9.2.3 for information about the role of BYM Trustees and central and standing committees, and how they all relate to Meeting for Sufferings.

3.2 Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

The membership of Meeting for Sufferings is set out in [section 7.05 of Quaker faith and practice](#) - the number of members present at any meeting can be up to 102.

Meeting for Sufferings, at the discretion of the clerk, is empowered to invite other Friends, committee members or staff members to participate for specific business or at particular meetings.



3.3 Meeting for Sufferings Working Groups

Meeting for Sufferings has several working groups.

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group (MfSAG) discerns the agenda and oversees general arrangements. It is formed of the MfS clerks and three members of Meeting for Sufferings, working with the Recording Clerk or Deputy Recording Clerk. They are nominated by Central Nominations Committee and appointed by MfS.

Meeting for Sufferings Support Group (MfSSG) provides eldership at sessions of Meeting for Sufferings and oversees some practicalities. All of the Support Group are members of Meeting for Sufferings. They are nominated by a nominations group of MfS.

Church Government Advisory Group (CGAG) prepares changes to the church government parts of *Quaker faith & practice* as required by decisions made by Yearly Meeting. It brings suggested changes Meeting for Sufferings and if they're approved, the changes are forwarded to Yearly Meeting for approval.

Sustainability Monitoring Group is a small group which is tasked with monitoring whether the various parts of our Yearly Meeting are doing the work needed to address our Canterbury Commitment, and particular in our 'Recommendations for Action'. The Group reports to Sufferings at least once a year.

Book of Discipline Revision Committee is working to prepare our [new book of discipline](#).

3.4 Meeting for Sufferings appointments

Meeting for Sufferings appoints Friends to serve on other bodies. Most nominations are brought by Central Nominations Committee (CNC) - which is appointed by Yearly Meeting.

We also have a Standing Nominations Group for any working groups who must be members of Sufferings: currently Support Group and Sustainability Monitoring Group.

Below is a list of the appointments that Meeting for Sufferings makes.

Body	No. of appointees
Meeting for Sufferings	
Meeting for Sufferings Clerk and Assistant Clerk	2
Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group	4 or 5
MfS Working Groups	
Sustainability Monitoring Group	3
Church Government Advisory Group	up to 5
Other central bodies	
Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations	up to 15
Quaker World Relations Committee (formed of representatives to Friends World Committee for Consultation)	6
Quaker Life Central Committee	12
Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee	15
Friends Trusts Ltd.	5-10
Quaker Housing Trust	12
Other organisations	
Quaker Council for European Affairs	2
Quaker United Nations Council (QUNC) Geneva	3
BYM Reps to other European Yearly Meetings	
Belgium & Luxembourg YM, Denmark YM, Finland YM, France YM, German YM, Netherlands YM, Norway YM, Sweden YM, Switzerland YM	9 (1 to each YM)
Ireland YM	2

4 Meeting for Sufferings agendas

4.1 Setting the agenda

The agenda is discerned and planned by Arrangements Group, and approved by the members at the start of each meeting.

Items for the agenda can come from various sources, but [only certain Quaker groups can communicate formally with MfS by minute](#). Usually, minutes sent to MfS will be considered at the first possible opportunity, but sometimes they are taken to a later meeting, to allow more time for preparation.

Minutes can be for information only but may also request discernment and action. MfS acts as a 'hub' for information and communication, so we spend time considering reports from the key committees and Quaker bodies.

MfS Arrangements Group works hard to plan meetings that are meaningful, balanced, interesting and timely. Of course, routine business needs to be done, and it is important to make sure MfS attends to all its functions.

When possible, time is included for preparation sessions and/or Home Groups, so that members have an opportunity to discuss issues in more detail. It is also helpful to have time to get to know each other better.

4.2 Meeting for Sufferings agenda items

The 'forward agenda', circulated periodically with documents in advance, gives information about major matters that might be coming to future meetings.

Agendas usually include at least some 'required' or 'routine' business. This section explains when those items can be expected.

Most meetings:

- Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees
- Prison & Court Register
- Quaker Recognised Bodies

At an appropriate time each year:

- Yearly Meeting
 - dates of future Yearly Meetings
 - information about the agenda of the upcoming YM
 - post-YM reflection and receipt of minutes
 - Meeting for Sufferings' Annual Report to YM
- Meeting for Sufferings
 - Dates of future Meetings for Sufferings
 - Appointment of Sufferings clerks for next year
- Other YMs
 - Approval of the letter to other European Yearly Meetings
- Reports on other Yearly Meetings in the last year

Every three years:

- Quaker Housing Trust triennial report
- Quaker Council for European Affairs triennial report

Central and standing committees are not required to report to MfS on a regular basis, but we generally hear each year from:

- Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR)
- Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC)
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC)
- Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC)

We find these reports a useful way to have two-way dialogue between the committees and Meeting for Sufferings. In the same way, we are experimenting with receiving reports from Young Friends General Meeting, Meeting for Scotland, and Meeting of

Friends in Wales, probably every three years. Just like area meetings, these committees and groups can send minutes to MfS at any time.

For more information about these committees, see the separate leaflet about Britain Yearly Meeting governance, or *Quaker faith and practice* chapter 8.

5 Meeting for Sufferings Dates

The dates set out here are confirmed. However, please note that Meeting for Sufferings has asked the Arrangements Group to keep dates under review, and to consider adding additional sessions if appropriate.

Please also note that at the time of preparing this Handbook, we cannot confirm the exact format and location of meetings.

2021

- 2 October – blended meeting (in Friends House/online) preceded by online inductions to the new triennium - dates to be confirmed
- 4 December – online, with a preparation session in advance

2022

- 4–6 March – residential meeting (venue to be confirmed)
- 2 July – online, with a preparation session in advance
- 1 October – online or in-person (London) with a preparation session in advance
- 3 December – online, with a preparation session in advance

6 Your role as a member of Meeting for Sufferings

At the first meeting of the triennium there is an online induction for all members (i.e. representatives and alternates). If you miss this, or if you are appointed in the middle of a triennium, please seek advice from other Friends with experience of MfS, including the Support Group.

6.1 Responsibilities of Meeting for Sufferings members

We need everyone to help make sure that Meeting for Sufferings is effective as possible. So all members are asked to:

- Participate fully in the worship and discernment of the meeting.
- Take your share of responsibility for the conduct of the meeting. Members need to agree the agenda, and then assist the clerk to carry it through efficiently.
- Be courageous when decisions have to be taken. It is no help to the Yearly Meeting if Meeting for Sufferings ducks or fudges difficult decisions. Help to ensure that the minute communicates the decision, and reason for it, clearly to those who may have not heard the preceding discussion.
- Take your share of responsibility for the atmosphere in which Meeting for Sufferings works. Our work can be much improved if members remain mindful of our Quaker business method. During the meeting, this might include:
 - asking others to uphold the clerk during minute-writing;
 - suggesting a period of worship when things go awry;

- taking care of someone who is upset;
- giving spoken ministry during the opening and closing periods of silent worship.

At other times you can uphold the Meeting by:

- volunteering to mentor new members;
- spotting and suggesting appropriate uses for the skills of fellow members;

Undertake, if you feel you are able, particular tasks you are asked to do.

6.2 Being a ‘representative’

As a representative, it is your responsibility to be aware of leadings and concerns within the meetings or committee you represent, so that you bring insights to the discernment process at Meeting for Sufferings. This might be particularly important, when a minute has come from your AM or committee. Similarly, you’re expected to report back to the bodies they represent.

6.3 Alternates and representatives working together

At each meeting there should be one Friend from each of the Quaker groups represented on Meeting for Sufferings. Each of those groups is asked to nominate [one representative and one alternate](#). Both the representative and alternate receive all the papers and communications.

The representative and alternate arrange attendance at Meeting for Sufferings to suit the body they represent, and themselves, ensuring there’s always one representative present. For example, you may decide to have one ‘main’ representative with a backup, or to take turns. The important thing is to make an arrangement which suits both people.

Experience shows that this system works best when the representative and alternate communicate regularly and fully with each other. Ideally, you will discuss agenda items with each other prior to the meetings and agree what you will do to take a report back to your area (and local) meetings. You can uphold each other and share tasks, even with only one attending each meeting.

6.4 Visitors and additional participation

There are times when we welcome visitors to the Meeting. They’re recorded as visitors, but not as observers: everyone in a Quaker meeting is a full participant.

6.4.1 Visitors in lieu of representatives

Each AM or committee should always be represented at Meeting for Sufferings. If you’re both prevented, please inform us as early as possible (email sufferings@quaker.org.uk). [Another Friend from the AM or committee can attend](#) – they’ll be recorded as a ‘visitor’ but participate fully.

6.4.2 Other visitors

When Friends visit Meeting for Sufferings, perhaps to speak to an item or represent a particular group, we're glad to welcome them, and we minute their attendance.

6.4.3 Additional visitors

Sometimes, it is helpful for two Friends to represent an AM or committee at the same Meeting. For example, if the AM's representative is also a member of Support Group, their alternate may not have many opportunities to attend. Or, when MfS met in Manchester in 2017, we welcomed additional visitors from local AMs.

At the same time, for practical reasons we can't open the meeting to an unlimited number of people.

If you feel there's a good reason for another member of your AM or committee to attend MfS as well as you, please contact the clerk at least one week in advance. They wouldn't expect to have more than one request a year from each AM.

7 Before and during the meeting

At the time of preparing this version of the handbook, we're not able to confirm the exact format and location of meetings. Most meetings are at Friends House, or online.

We hope to hold at least one residential meeting during the triennium. Residential meetings will be held in a venue which can safely host a large meeting of about 100 people.

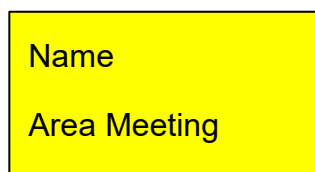
This section complements the information you will receive with your documents for each meeting. If you don't understand anything in it, please ask: either email sufferings@quaker.org.uk or call Graham Spackman 020 7663 1021 beforehand or speak to a member of the Meeting for Sufferings Support Group on the day.

7.1 Support Group

The Support Group acts as elders to the meeting, and its members can also offer practical guidance.

Support Group members are available on the day before the meeting starts, and in the breaks throughout the day. To contact them by email, use sufferings@quaker.org.uk, and the message will be passed to them so they can be in touch with you direct.

For online meetings, you can meet with members of the Support Group in a dedicated breakout room. When we meet online, these Friends will have 'SG' after their name. When we meet in person, you can recognise the Support Group by the yellow name badge and lanyard:



7.2 Preparation

Meeting for Sufferings documents are available electronically, about two weeks in advance of meetings, in the [Documents and Minutes](#) section of the BYM website. All members (representatives and alternates) are sent an email when they're published.

Please let us know you will be attending by completing the online registration form (the link will be sent to you).

If you have any difficulties with accessing or using them, please email sufferings@quaker.org.uk or call Graham Spackman 020 7663 1021. From time to time late documents are added - in that case, all members of Meeting for Sufferings are alerted by email.

The documents include:

- A calling letter, which gives the provisional agenda and refers to any related papers in the batch, with their reference numbers; this letter may give an indication from the clerk as to which matters are likely to need most preparation
- The agenda (which is put to the Meeting by the clerk, for acceptance, on the day)
- All documents related to the business

Please go through all the documents before the meeting. The agenda can seem overwhelming; you may wish to focus on particular items. Allow time beforehand to check anything you are not clear about. Do not be afraid that this is wasting staff time – it is wasting everyone's time if you are not fully prepared. For some items MfSAG recommends a way forward, but it is for the meeting as a whole to decide.

Allow time for reflection and prayer.

It is really helpful for the representative and alternate to go through the business together, in advance of the meeting, if possible.

If someone in the body you represent has particular knowledge or expertise on one of the subjects on the agenda, talk with them about it.

If a minute from the group you represent is being considered, you may be invited to speak to it on the day – so you should be prepared to give background information if called, or if you feel moved to speak.

7.3 On the day - online or in person

7.3.1 Starting the meeting

Please join the meeting before the start time. The meeting begins when the clerk opens the meeting by saying 'Meeting for Sufferings held [date]'. We then have a period of open worship. During this time there is usually a reading, and the assistant clerk may read the names of recent members of Meeting for Sufferings who have died.

7.3.2 Spoken ministry

Once a matter is before the meeting, any Friend moved to speak will rise (in the room) or raise their hand electronically (online) and wait to be called by the clerk.

Consider prayerfully before indicating you wish to contribute - and especially if you feel led to speak more than once on a particular topic, or more than once or twice during the day. The meeting may need other wisdom than yours.

If you are called to speak:

- If called please wait for the microphone (or unmute in an online meeting) before speaking.
- Begin by giving your name and the area meeting or other body you represent.
- Bear in mind *Advice 13* on vocal ministry, which applies equally to vocal ministry in business meetings.
- Be wary of adding anything new when it was well left before, and the clerks are moving towards making a minute.
- Uphold the clerks; while they are preparing the minute, remain silent and seated, and do not rise in the hope of being called to speak.
- After the minute has been offered to the meeting, do not add new material – only comment on the minute.

7.3.3 Breaks

There is usually a short shuffle break during the morning and the afternoon session; it is good to keep an atmosphere of quiet stillness in the meeting.

7.3.4 Closing the meeting

The meeting closes with open worship, terminated by the clerk/s. Try to avoid leaving before the end if possible.

7.4 On the day - meetings at Friends House

7.4.1 Arrival

If you have not been to Friends House before, consult the plan on page 17. Even if you have registered online, please 'sign in' when you arrive by ticking your name on the list; and collect your badge from the table (please return it at the end of the day, ready for next time).

There is a supervised cloakroom - it may be locked for periods during the day, so if you expect to leave early please let staff know.

Refreshments are available before the meeting; this can be a good opportunity to get to know other members of Meeting for Sufferings. You may also wish to take the opportunity to visit the Quaker Centre Bookshop.

7.4.2 Refreshments

Hot and cold drinks, before and after the meeting, and lunch, are provided.

It is helpful if you let us know if you don't want the provided refreshments, through our online registration form, to help us avoid food waste.

7.4.3 Taking your seat

Go to the meeting room in good time to settle into worship before 10.00. In general you may sit where you wish (you may see notes on seats reserved for a particular reason). Please leave the ends of the rows free for latecomers.

If you need a hassock, these are normally placed inside the door at the entrance.

The meeting room has a built in hearing loop. If you wear a hearing aid, please set it to the 'T' position. It may help to arrive early to check the system. If your hearing is good, leave free the seats in the centre for those who need to see the speakers' lips.

Latecomers may use the overflow room from 10:00. They are normally admitted after the worship in the stillness, when the clerk opens the business.

7.4.4 Support Group

Support group members are responsible (among other things) for eldership and oversight. They wear yellow name badges. Two elders sit to the right of the clerks' table during the meeting and can answer questions before the meeting starts and in breaks.

7.4.5 Electronic devices and wifi

When we meet in-person, please use electronic devices only for the documents related to the meeting and make sure the sound is turned off.

To use wifi at Friends House, use the 'FH Conferencing' network. The password changes - we aim to let you know each time but if necessary ask reception staff.

7.4.6 Microphones

These are essential for those using the loop system. If you are called to minister please make sure you hold your microphone in the correct position.



The clerks have microphones, and other microphones will be brought by stewards. If you stand to minister during open worship, please wait for the microphone before speaking.

7.4.7 Breaks

There is usually a short break in the morning and another in the afternoon. Please maintain the silence in the room during the short breaks – if you wish to talk at these times go out of the room.

7.5 On the day - meetings online

For blended or online meetings, the link to join the meeting will be sent in advance.

7.5.1 Arrival

The zoom session is usually opened before the meeting itself begins. Please arrive in good time to settle down and be ready for opening worship together.

Make sure your zoom name is correct, and add the name of your Area Meeting or the body you represent. If you're not automatically muted, please mute yourself before worship begins.

7.5.2 Zoom etiquette in a Quaker setting

- If possible, position your camera so that others can see your face
- Keep your microphone off, unless you are speaking to the whole meeting
- If you need to move away from the screen, turn off your video to avoid distracting others
- Don't raise your 'zoom' hand unless the clerks have invited contributions
- Only use the 'chat' facility to contact the Support Group, or to ask staff about technical difficulties

7.5.3 Offering ministry

If you are led to offer ministry, please raise your zoom hand. The clerks won't see if you wave your physical hand, or if you use the zoom 'wave' or 'thumbs up'.

The clerks call Friends to speak name. You'll need to unmute first. Start by telling the meeting your name and area meeting or committee. When you have finished, mute your microphone again.

If you're not called to speak, this may be because the clerks want to leave a little more time for reflection or because they are considering a minute. If others are offering ministry, please lower your zoom hand and wait for the clerks to invite contributions again.

7.5.4 Support Group

Members of the Support Group are available in breakout rooms between formal sessions. You can also send them a message direct using the 'chat' facility or via email.

7.5.5 Breaks

The clerks will make sure there are short comfort breaks during the meeting.

8 Between meetings, including reporting back and taking soundings

All the [papers and minutes](#) are available online. Minutes are usually available about a week after the meeting, and when they're published an email alert is sent to all representatives and alternates.

8.1 How Meeting for Sufferings communicates

It will help you to know how information about Meeting for Sufferings is communicated:

Agenda headlines	Emailed to Area Meeting clerks	at least 2 weeks before each meeting
Documents in advance	Published online: with an email alert to representatives and alternates	2 weeks before each meeting
Minutes and follow-up letter	Published online: with an email alert to representatives and alternates	1 week after each meeting
Meeting headlines and link to the minutes	Emailed to Area Meeting clerks	1 week after each meeting
Review of the meeting	Published in <i>The Friend</i> (which is independent from BYM)	the week after the meeting
Media releases	Co-ordinated by the BYM Media Relations Officer	as appropriate, usually on the day of the meeting or early the following week

8.2 Your role as a communicator

Take the opportunity to share with local Friends about the work of Meeting for Sufferings and its place in the Yearly Meeting work programme. You are a vital link in the two-way communication chain between local Friends and central work.

If you have comments for the clerks between meetings, email sufferings@quaker.org.uk.

When reporting to the body that **you** represent on Meeting for Sufferings, you may need to concentrate on just a few matters – perhaps consulting with the (AM or committee) clerk beforehand. You could point out issues that are particularly relevant to Friends, especially where they are asked to consider further. You can use the follow-up letter prepared by the MfS clerk as well as the minutes. You'll want to highlight any issues where your meeting has particular concerns. Offer to share the full minutes if Friends want more information and point them towards the report in *The Friend*.

Friends are much more likely to be interested in Meeting for Sufferings if your reports – whether they are written or spoken – are lively, relevant to them, and personal.

Members of Sufferings may be specifically asked to take soundings in their meetings about future agenda items. How you do this depends on you and your meeting.

8.3 Minutes sent to Meeting for Sufferings

Perhaps as a result of one of your reports, or for other reasons, your Meeting or committee may wish to send a minute to Meeting for Sufferings. The concerns of Friends, tested and minuted at local and area meetings throughout Britain, are a key part of our Quaker witness and contribute to our vision for Quaker work.

When a meeting has decided, after thorough investigation and testing, to forward a minute to Meeting for Sufferings, the purpose of the minute should be made clear. Is it for information, for action, to test a concern, or a response to consultation? Please encourage your clerk to read the [guidelines on the BYM website](#) before deciding to send a minute.

Minutes are dealt with as follows:

- Minutes sent for information are received, usually on draft minute.
- Minutes relating to current centrally managed work, where action is wanted or proposed, are usually received and passed to an appropriate central or standing committee.
- Minutes bringing concerns which need testing at Meeting for Sufferings level are taken as substantive agenda items.
- Minutes responding to formal consultations go directly to the appropriate working group. Representatives receive a list showing which AMs have sent minutes, which subjects have been discussed, and what follow-up action has been taken.

Staff will notify area meetings of the progress and outcome of their minutes, and may ask for reports on an area meeting's follow-up activities where appropriate.

9 Discernment

Quaker faith & practice chapter 3 equates discernment with 'the recognition of God's will' (3.02).

Discernment is essential to decision-making in a meeting for worship for business and to the perception of what is right to offer as vocal ministry in worship.

Coming to a corporate decision on priorities, and on the public voice of the Society, requires the same skills as Friends will have developed in their own meetings for church affairs.

Meeting for Sufferings also takes responsibility (along with Yearly Meeting) for expressing the public voice of Friends – conveying our insights to the wider world.

We find guidance throughout chapter 3 of *Quaker faith & practice*, especially from 3.02 to 3.11. Discernment is promoted through:

- silent waiting and listening
- an active, seeking spirit
- knowledge of facts and the ability to estimate their relevance and importance
- the sharing of knowledge, experience and concern

- the willingness of us all to seek the truth in each other's utterances
- openness to persuasion
- willingness to recognise that we may be mistaken
- recognition that we are all different
- a willingness to recognise and accept the minute
- loyalty by the meeting as a whole once a minute is accepted as representing the discernment of the meeting.

Learning to listen to the Spirit is a life-long process.

9.1 Discernment: references/useful reading:

- Barry Morley, *Beyond consensus: salvaging the sense of the meeting* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet 307), Wallingford (PA): Pendle Hill Publications, 1993.
 - Quaker faith & practice, chapters 1 and 3.
 - Michael J Sheeran, *Beyond majority rule: voteless decisions in the Religious Society of Friends*, Philadelphia: Philadelphia YM, 1996
 - Patricia A Williams, *Quakerism – A theology for our time*, York: Sessions, 2007. (especially chapter 4)
 - Rex Ambler, *Light to live by: an exploration in Quaker spirituality* London: Quaker Books, 2002
 - Minute 6 of Meeting for Sufferings (Quaker Business Method), June 1999
 - Jane Pearn, *The language of leadings: A reflection on faith, action and concern*, July 2017
 - Jane Mace, *God and Decision-Making: A Quaker Approach*, 2012
- The published books listed here can be purchased from the Quaker Centre Bookshop in person or from www.quaker.org.uk/shop

9.2 Decision-making within the BYM structure

This section is about Meeting for Sufferings' relationships with Yearly Meeting, BYM Trustees and central/standing committees – there's a simple diagram in section 13.

9.2.1 Yearly Meeting (*Qfp chapter 6*)

[Yearly Meeting](#) (YM) is an occasion when the concerns of Friends can be shared with the meeting as a whole, as it seeks God's guidance and relates each particular insight or service to the others brought before it.

The YM clerk is a member of Sufferings. MfS is expected to report to YM each year.

MfS determines the Yearly Meeting dates, on the recommendation of the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee. MfS may summon a Special Yearly Meeting if necessary.

9.2.2 Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) Trustees (*Qfp 18.17-18*)

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees (BYMT) act on behalf of the YM as managing trustees of the work, assets and property held directly by BYM. They are appointed by YM and accountable to Yearly Meeting, and report to it each year.

Trustees are all members of Meeting for Sufferings. Trustees are not formally accountable to MfS, but they are expected to listen to its guidance, and they keep in close contact by sharing information about their work.

In relation to Meeting for Sufferings, BYMT should:

- Ensure priorities for the centrally managed work as discerned by MfS from time to time are carried out in an efficient and prudent manner, consistent with BYM's religious and charitable objects and in accordance with MfS' long term plan (currently, 'Our Faith in the Future');
- Implement MfS' priorities by approving an annual operational plan and budget for centrally managed work and the means for measuring progress;
- Provide interim progress reports on the centrally managed work;
- Approve the *Annual report and accounts*, which are shared with MfS and formally forwarded to Yearly Meeting and to the Charity Commission.

9.2.3 Central and standing committees (Qfp 8.04-14)

Britain Yearly Meeting's centrally managed work is overseen by committees.

Four of the committees have a representative on Meeting for Sufferings, and we aim for a constructive two-way dialogue between them and us. MfS appoints their members of but the committees themselves are accountable to Yearly Meeting through Trustees:

- Quaker Life Central Committee (Qfp 8.08)
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (8.11)
- Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (8.12; 9.13)
- Quaker World Relations Committee (8.13; 9.06)

10 Data protection legislation for MfS

Britain Yearly Meeting Data Protection Policy

As a member of a committee, covered by Britain Yearly Meeting's data registration, you need to be aware of the Yearly Meeting's policy on data protection.

Data which you collect for your own use, including minutes of committee meetings and membership information (including personal details of members of your committee) must be kept and used in accordance with Britain Yearly Meeting's data protection policy.

You must obtain explicit permission for the listing or processing of personal data from individuals who are not members or for details of children and young people under 18.

Guidance on data safety, including the BYM policies is given in Data Safety and Information Security Guidance Notes for meetings (4th edition 2014).

In brief, the main guidance for committees is:

- Contact information about members may be used by the constituent bodies of the Yearly Meeting for their legitimate business. It is accepted that lists of committee members' contact information may also be used to help members contact one another and be shared with other central or standing committees as appropriate to facilitate the centrally managed work.
- Information on attenders and non-member partners may also be held but used only with their explicit consent. Information on children and young people under 18 may only be used with the consent of their parents or guardians.

- All members of BYM have a responsibility to protect personal information that they collect. This includes contact lists, books of members, papers, electronic files and information held by your meeting, committee, staff or passed to other organisations.
- You are responsible for ensuring that the principles of data protection are observed if you delegate responsibility for maintaining a membership or mailing list or other records or for completing the compliance form to another person – a member of the meeting, committee or to staff. If you ask another organisation to use the personal details that you hold, for example to produce an address list or a mailing, you need to make it clear to them what they can and cannot do with the information that you provide to them.

If you have any further queries, please contact Graham Spackman, Communications Officer, grahams@quaker.org.uk

11 Travel, accommodation, and claiming expenses

Claim the expenses you incur in attending Meeting for Sufferings and helping to carry out its work. Expenses could include telephoning, copying, postage, travel, accommodation and childcare costs. If you're not sure what you should claim for, please talk with a member of staff. Britain Yearly Meeting needs to have a realistic picture of what running Meeting for Sufferings costs.

Most people prefer to make their own accommodation arrangements. Graham Spackman can provide an up-to-date list of accommodation near Friends House (grahams@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1021. If necessary you may ask Graham to book accommodation on your behalf.

Expense forms can be provided electronically, or on paper. You will be asked for your bank details at the beginning of your period of service so that you can be paid by bank transfer. If you don't have a bank account, a method of payment will need to be set up for you. Our auditors require that receipts be attached to expense claims: please make sure you provide receipts on every occasion.

Normally expenses are claimed in arrears, because it is then clear what the actual expenditure has been. If this causes cash flow problems for you, ask Graham Spackman on grahams@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1021 to make arrangements for an advance payment to cover the expenses you are likely to incur.

Consider the environmental impact of your travel. Meeting for Sufferings does not wish to exclude from service those for whom travel by air or by car is the only practical way of attending, but our shared commitment asks all Friends to minimise carbon spending.

Similarly, balance the advantages of cheaper tickets, purchased in advance, with the flexibility that an open ticket provides. If you have to stay overnight in order to reach Meeting for Sufferings in good time the next morning, then do so. If you are eligible, please use a railcard.

If there are occasions on which you use your own transport (cycle, motorcycle, car), then the current rates that you can claim are available from Graham Spackman on grahams@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1021. When travelling by car, you should attach mileage print out(s) from the internet to your expense form. If you are making a return

journey, please attach the mileage which reflects the amount paid for both journeys. Any car parking tickets should also be attached to your expense claim.

If you wish to donate all or part of the expenses you claim back to the Society, do so as a separate donation. If you Gift aid the donation, BYM can claim back the tax. Please see the BYM Website for information about [how to donate](#).

If you would like to receive an electronic or hard copy of the Volunteers Expenses Policy, please email sufferings@quaker.org.uk

12 Feedback, complaints and grievances

We are keen to receive feedback, including positive comments. Written feedback can be emailed to sufferings@quaker.org.uk or (at in-person meetings) put into a box on the sign-in table.

If you have any problems or concerns, then speak to the Meeting for Sufferings Support Group (one of whose roles is to give advice to individuals in confidence). They are available on the day. If you send a brief email via sufferings@quaker.org.uk one of them will contact you direct to discuss any details.

13 Clerks

In 2021 and 2022 the clerks are:

- Clerk - Margaret Bryan, York AM
- Assistant Clerk - Robert Card, Dorset & South Wiltshire AM

14 Contacting Meeting for Sufferings

Please email: sufferings@quaker.org.uk

- To send minutes to Meeting for Sufferings
- To discuss the content and process of meeting for Sufferings
- For administrative matters (dates of meetings, papers, claiming expenses etc)
- To communicate with the clerks

Or for any other matter to do with Meeting for Sufferings

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15 Finding your way around Friends House

Friends House floor plans

2 Second floor

- Elizabeth Fry Suite (1 and 2)
- Margaret Fell Room
- George Fox Room
- William Penn Suite (1 and 2)

1 First floor

- Marjorie Sykes Room
- Hilda Clark Suite (1, 2 and 3)
- Abraham Darby Room
- Kathleen Lonsdale Room
- George Bradshaw Room
- Sarah Fell Room
- The Light (Upper Level)

G Ground floor

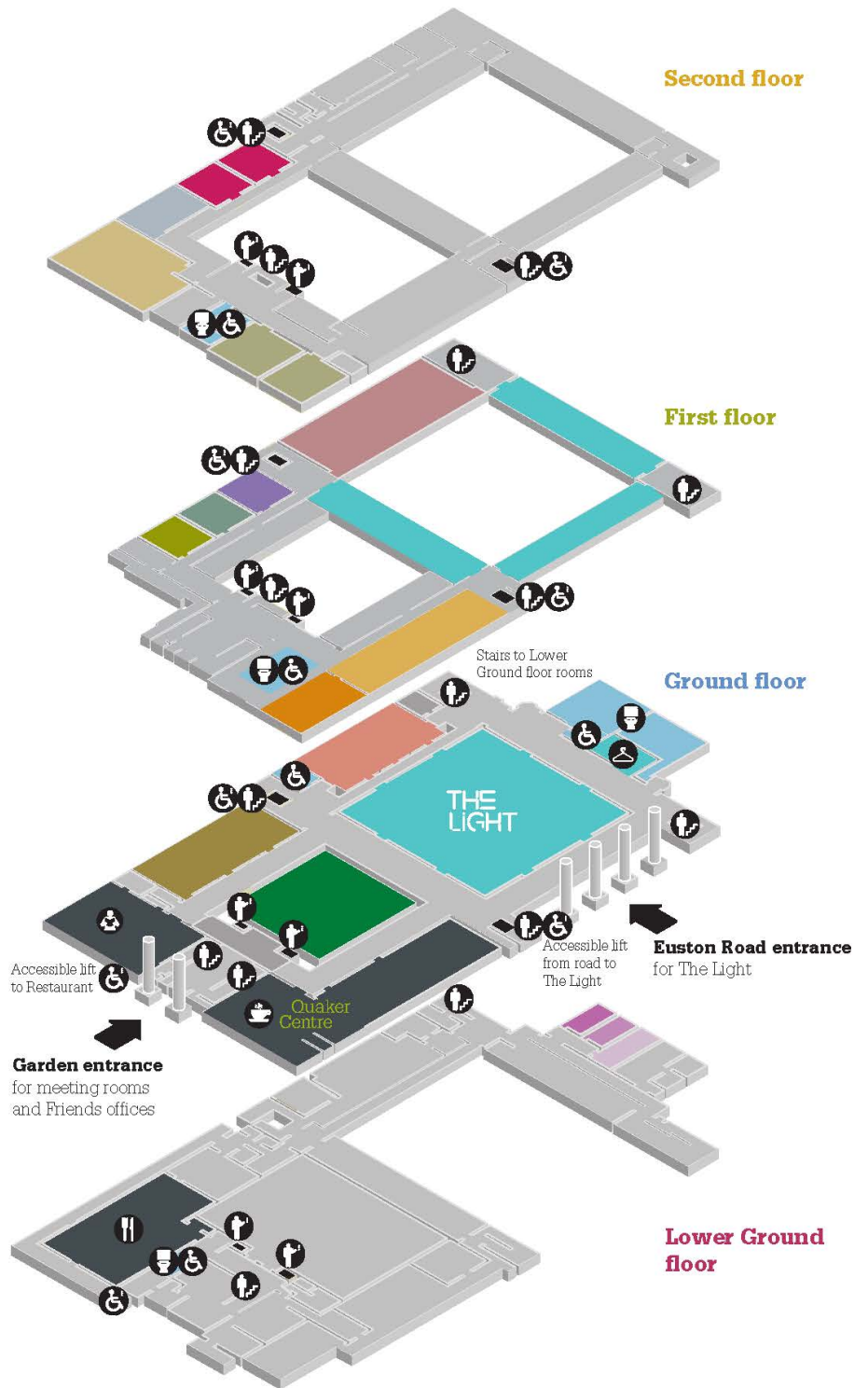
- Ystafell Waldo Williams (1 and 2)
- Ada Salter Suite (1, 2 and 3)
- The Light
- Courtyard
- Café / Bookshop / Worship space

I.G. Lower Ground floor

- Bayard Rustin Room
- Lucretia Mott Room
- John Woolman Room

Key

-  Toilets
-  Accessible toilets
-  Stairs
-  Lifts
-  Accessible lift
-  Restaurant
-  Café
-  Cloakroom (The Light)
-  Library



17 Yearly Meeting structures overview

This is a simplified diagram of our central structures. There is a more detailed version in *Quaker faith & practice* chapter 8 <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/8/>

BYM Trustees (BYMT) are accountable to Yearly Meeting.

All trustees are members of MfS and BYMT reports to Sufferings at most meetings

The central and standing committees are accountable to Yearly Meeting via BYMT; they are represented on Sufferings and can engage with Sufferings at any time

