



13 March 2026

To members of Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings 6 March 2026

Dear Friends,

It was, as ever, a pleasure to be with you at a bittersweet final session of Meeting for Sufferings.

Friends noted with concern the recent police raid on Westminster Quaker Meeting House in which non-violent activists were arrested, reflecting wider anxieties about increasing restrictions on peaceful protest.

During our business sessions we covered a wide range of matters. We approved several appointments and membership changes across Quaker committees and roles, including representatives to European Yearly Meetings. We also agreed the re-registration of three Quaker Recognised Bodies and removed two charities that have now closed.

Friends recorded the arrest and court appearance of a Friend in the Court and Prison Register in connection with protest activity, and noted how the register will be maintained by Yearly Meeting in the future.

We also recorded several governance developments, including the establishment of the *Cymar* charity to support Quakers in Wales and the Marches, and the decision of *Young Friends General Meeting* to change its name to *General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain*. We received minutes from a number of meetings and committees, including the decision of *Quaker Life Central Committee* to lay down *Quaker Life Representative Council*, further work on proposals for non-geographic membership, concerns from *Sussex West Area Meeting* about restrictions on the right to protest, and warm greetings from *Quakers in Scotland*.

Friends approved letters of greeting to Yearly Meetings in the *Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation*, noting with sadness the conflicts affecting many parts of the region. We also approved several minor changes to *Quaker faith & practice* and the final annual report of *Meeting for Sufferings*.

We heard an introduction to the agenda for *Yearly Meeting*, which will take place at Friends House and online from 1–4 May 2026. Friends will be invited to reflect on what unites us as a Spirit-led community and how we seek peaceful resolution of

conflict within our meetings and in the wider world. Further information and registration details are available at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Reports were also received from the *Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations* and from *Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees*. Trustees shared their proposed new strategic priorities for centrally managed work, which *Meeting for Sufferings* endorsed. We heard that Trustees have endorsed the *Challenging antisemitism* document. While some disquiet was expressed during the meeting, which needs to be heard, I encourage Friends to engage with the document. Feedback may be sent to rco@quaker.org.uk.

We also heard from staff in the *Peacebuilding in Britain* team and were encouraged to reflect on how love and nonviolence can guide responses to conflict in our communities. Friends can find further resources at www.quaker.org.uk/action/peacebuilding-and-nonviolence/peacebuilding-in-britain or contact peacebuildinginbritain@quaker.org.uk for more information. Some of the slides shown at the meeting are also included in this pack.

Finally, we held an extended period of worship to mark the laying down of *Meeting for Sufferings* after around 350 years of service. Friends shared gratitude for the faithfulness of those who have served this meeting across the centuries, sadness at the end of an era, and hope for the work that will now continue through Yearly Meeting.

Enclosed with these papers is a letter from the Recording Clerk that will be sent next week to the clerks of Area Meetings, *Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales*, *General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain* and *Quakers in Scotland*, outlining practical matters arising as *Meeting for Sufferings* is laid down. You may find this useful if Friends ask you what is happening.

As I said in the meeting, it has been a privilege to serve as your clerk. I am grateful to the assistant clerks who have shared this work with me, and to the many members of staff—especially the technical team—whose care and support have made the role both possible and a pleasure. As *Meeting for Sufferings* is laid down, I feel a deep gratitude for the faithfulness of Friends who have sustained this meeting over the years, and confidence that the work entrusted to it will continue in new ways through *Yearly Meeting*.

In Truth,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Card', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Card
Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings

The following papers are included in this mailing:

- MfS minutes March 2026
- Functions checklist
- PowerPoint slides from the *Peacebuilding in Britian* presentation
- Letter from the Recording Clerk outlining practical matters arising as MfS is laid down



At a meeting of

Meeting for Sufferings

Held at Friends House and by video conference on 7 March 2026

Minutes

MfS/26/03/01 Opening Worship and welcome

We have begun our Meeting in worship during which *Quaker faith & practice* 8.01 was read.

As we have gathered, we have heard that on 5th March 2026, the Metropolitan Police raided Westminster Quaker Meeting House for the second time in a year and arrested several young nonviolent activists. The activists, linked to the group Take Back Power, were meeting for nonviolent direct action training, and police said the arrests were due to suspected conspiracy to commit a criminal act.

Quakers in Britain have criticized the raid, arguing it targeted peaceful activists and reflects a broader trend of suppressing dissent in the UK. Oliver Robertson, head of witness and worship, has emphasized that peaceful protest and nonviolent action are central to Quaker beliefs and warned that restricting the right to protest threatens democratic participation.

MfS/26/03/02 Agenda

The Clerk has introduced the draft agenda and we have agreed to this, as amended today.

MfS/26/03/03 Membership of Meeting for Sufferings

Since our last meeting we have received the following nominations and requests for release for Meeting for Sufferings until the rise of Yearly Meeting May 2026:

Release requests received:

Antony Froggett – Quaker World Relations Committee alternate
Klaus Huber – Quaker Life Central Committee representative

Nominated:

Zélie Gross – Quaker Life Central Committee representative

We agree to this appointment and the requests for release.

Visitors invited to represent area meetings/committees in the absence of the appointed representative or alternate:

Esther Boyd – Central England AM
David Bull – Wirral & Chester AM
Sally Eaves – South Wales AM / CCR De Cymru
Steph Scoltock – Thaxted AM
Anne Shilton – Norfolk & Waveney AM

Apologies:

Dorset and South Wiltshire AM
Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire AM
Pickering & Hull AM
South London AM
South East London AM
Swarthmoor AM
Teesdale & Cleveland AM

Other visitors:

Judith Baker – BYM staff, Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer
Martin Burnell – Church Government Advisory Group Convener
Lisa Cumming – BYM staff, Peacebuilding & Non-Violence Manager
Ingrid Greenhow – Agenda Planning Committee clerk
Cato Pedder – BYM staff, Media Officer

MfS/26/03/04 Appointments

Central Nominations Committee brings forward the following names for appointment or release as indicated:

Yearly Meeting Elders

Nominate to serve from now until 31 December 2028:

Katie Evans, Devon AM
Jessica Bishop, Cambridge AM/South Africa YM
Marion Littler, South East Scotland AM
Cathy Holman, South East Scotland AM

We note that to correct a mistake in the December Meeting for Sufferings papers and minute MfS/25/12/04 Appointments - Yearly Meeting Elders, the end date for the following appointments, has been changed from 31 December 2028 to the proper date of 31 December 2026:

Gill Grimshaw, Banbury & Evesham AM
Paul Hodgkin, Ipswich & Diss AM
Cathy Khurana, Central England AM
John Miles, Gloucestershire AM
David Simpson, Teesdale and Cleveland AM
Lee Taylor, Luton & Leighton AM
Dic Williams, North Wales AM/CCR Gogledd Cymru

Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee

Nominate to serve from now until 31 December 2028:

Matthew Bittle, Quakers in Scotland

Carole Rakodi, South Wales AM

Release from service with immediate effect:

Charlotte Lake, Southern Marches AM/CCR y Gororau Deheuol

Book of Discipline Revision Committee

To nominate to serve from YM in May 2026 until the work is done:

Sarah Hagger-Holt, Luton and Leighton AM

Juliet Prager, Leeds AM

Sam Winder, London West AM

Release from service with immediate effect:

Antonia Swinson, Kingston & Wandsworth AM

Andrew Williams, Quakers in Scotland

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

To nominate to serve from now until 31 December 2028:

David Bunney, Central Yorkshire AM

To extend the term of service from the original end date of YM in May 2026 until 31 December 2026:

Elaine Green, Ipswich & Diss AM

Release from service with immediate effect:

Liz Eddington, Lancashire Central & North AM

Derek McLean, Quakers in Scotland

BYM Representatives to European Yearly Meetings

To nominate to represent BYM at the following European Yearly Meetings:

Belgium and Luxembourg YM – James Brookes, North West London AM

Finland YM – Mary Woodward, Quakers in Scotland

France YM – Annie Dickson, Bournemouth Coastal AM

German YM – Jenny Tipping, Bournemouth Coastal AM

Ireland YM – Jonathan Adams, Northumbria AM

Ireland YM – Kirstie McQueen, North East Thames AM

Netherlands YM – Jasmine Piercy, West Somerset AM

Norway YM – Deborah Hansen, Leicester AM

Sweden YM – Kersti Wagstaff, West Weald AM

Switzerland YM – Alan Fricker, North East Thames AM

Between meeting appointments

Appointed by the clerks of Meeting for Sufferings between meetings:

BYM Rep to Middle East Yearly Meeting

Kit King, London West AM

We agree to these appointments and requests for release.

MfS/26/03/05 Quaker Recognised Bodies

We have received requests for re-registration from the following Quaker Recognised Bodies:

- Restoring Relations
- John Horniman Children's Trust
- Francis Camfield Charitable Trust

We agree to re-register these organisations and ask that the registrations be further reviewed during 2031.

The following independent charities have now closed:

- Quaker Service Memorial Trust
- Quaker Bolivia Link

We agree to remove these organisations from the list of Quaker Recognised Bodies.

MfS/26/03/06 Court and Prison Register

Meeting for Sufferings records in the Court and Prison Register the names of Friends who have appeared in court or been imprisoned as a result of their faith and acting under concern.

We receive part of minute 26.13 of Sussex West Area Meeting, which informs us that Abigail Maxwell was arrested whilst attending an event on August 9th 2025 held in Parliament Square against the proscription of Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation. Abigail has been charged under the Terrorism Act and appeared in court on 27 January 2026.

We agree to include these details in the Register and hold our Friend in the Light.

We note also paper MfS 2026 03 07a, which gives information about future plans for the recording of the names of Friends who appear in court or are imprisoned for their faith.

MfS/26/03/07 Changes to Quaker charity governance in Wales and the Marches

In 2023 Meeting for Sufferings endorsed a proposal for a single Quaker charity in Wales and the Marches, brought forward jointly by Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales (CCQW) and by the area meetings of Mid Wales/Canolbarth Cymru, North Wales/Gogledd Cymru, Southern Marches/y Gororau Deheuol and South Wales/De Cymru.

The new single charity was registered in April 2024 as The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Wales and The Marches – Cymdeithas Grefyddol y Cyfeillion (Crynwyr) yng Nghymru a'r Gororau CIO. It is known as Cymar. The object of Cymar is the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious

Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain. Its trustees have recently agreed the following mission statement:

Responsible stewardship

For Friends - By Friends - With Friends

Underpinned by our shared values of integrity and inclusion and guided by the Spirit

Assets were transferred from CCQW and the four area meetings to Cymar in 2025. The five constituent organisations have now laid themselves down as independent charities. They continue to operate as Quaker bodies.

MfS/26/03/08 Young Friends General Meeting: change of name

We have received the following minute from Young Friends General Meeting:

2026.02.2 Changing our name

Matthew Burnell introduced the item.

Young Friends General Meeting has not always been our name. In 1993, we changed from Young Friends Central Committee to Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM).

In May 2025, a Special Interest Group was held to discuss whether YFGM might change our name and, if so, what our next name might be.

We have reflected on the importance of the word "Friends" for our community and of the need to speak plainly about who we are.

We have discerned that our new name will be 'General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain'.

We ask our Trustees to begin the process of officially changing our name with the charity commission, noting that we will also be known as Young Friends General Meeting until this is finalised.

We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings so that our name can be changed in Britain Yearly Meeting's book of discipline.

We note the change of name of what has been Young Friends General Meeting to 'General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain'. We ask Church Government Advisory Group to prepare suitable text for *Quaker faith & practice* to reflect this change.

MfS/26/03/09 Letters of greeting to European & Middle Eastern Yearly Meetings

Quaker World Relations Committee has provided draft text (MfS 2026 03 09) for a letter of greeting to be signed by the Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings.

Plans had been made for Middle East Yearly Meeting to meet in session this year for the first time since the 1990s, but the recent escalation in the conflict in the region

has required that the in-person meeting be cancelled, but Friends may meet online. We uphold our Friends in Middle East Yearly Meeting and send our love and prayers to all those around the world whose lives are affected by violence and war.

We agree to the text of the letter as amended at the meeting, and after final checks by staff, and ask that it be sent to all Yearly Meetings in the Friends World Committee for Consultation - Europe and Middle East Section.

MfS/26/03/10 Meeting for Sufferings annual report to Yearly Meeting

We receive the clerks' report on Meeting for Sufferings for 2025. The report will be presented to Yearly Meeting in May. Our clerk's spoken introduction will include an update to cover our work in 2026.

MfS/26/03/11 Yearly Meeting May 2026

Fred Langridge (Yearly Meeting Clerk nominate) has introduced the agenda for the Yearly Meeting session to be held 1-4 May 2026, at Friends House and online.

Yearly Meeting will spend time reflecting on what unites us as a spirit led community, and how we let the spirit guide us to peaceful resolution of the conflicts within our Quaker meetings and our communities. We will have business to attend to concerning the changes to our structures and governance. As well as planned sessions, there will be 'as-led' time which may be an opportunity to consider how we react to the state of the world.

We have been encouraged to take up the volunteering opportunities, and together in our area meetings to prepare for attending Yearly Meeting.

There is still time to register to attend Yearly Meeting and all details can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/bookings. Special interest meetings will be taking place from 20 to 26 March 2026 and preparation sessions from 13-17 April 2026.

MfS/26/03/12 Changes to *Quaker faith & practice*

We have received proposed changes to *Quaker faith & practice (Qf&p)* from our Church Government Advisory Group (CGAG), with an explanatory paper (MfS 2026 03 12). They include the further removal of references to Meeting for Sufferings, changing references to General Meeting for Scotland to references to Quakers in Scotland, removal of the term 'standing committee', and a suggestion for a new appeals process. These changes will be made to the current online version of Qf&p and take effect on 1st May 2026.

Martin Burnell has introduced these changes and proposed three further amendments:

1. The changes proposed to 5.04, which deals with Quakers in Wales, have been withdrawn to allow further work on this section, so the current text will remain in place at this time.

2. It is now proposed that in 5.03, which deals with the responsibilities of Quakers in Scotland, the order of sub-paragraphs (b) and (c) be reversed.
3. There is a further amendment to proposed text for section 5.08. As Young Friends General Meeting has now agreed that it should in future be known as General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain, this section needs to be changed.

We are satisfied that the changes before us are minor changes, and we agree the proposed changes to 3.09, 4.25, 5.02, 5.03, 5.07, 5.08, 5.09, 8.05, 8.23, 9.09, 13.54, 14.36 and 15.14.

We agree to the proposed changes to 8.06, plus an additional minor amendment to 8.06 (c). This paragraph will now read:

c. establishing an effective nominations process, working closely with the Central Nominations Committee (6.21) as appropriate;

We send the changes we have made to Yearly Meeting for information.

We note that there is further work for Church Government Advisory Group to do and we thank them for all that they have done so far.

MfS/26/03/13 Peacebuilding in Britain

We have heard from Lisa Cumming (Peacebuilding & Nonviolence Manager), who joined us today, and Rebecca Bellamy (Peacebuilding Coordinator), who shared a pre-recorded video outlining the work of the Peacebuilding in Britain staff team.

The work aims to develop and strengthen responsive, creative, and transformative approaches to peace and conflict in communities across Britain. Much of this is achieved through “accompaniment”—working alongside practitioners, Quakers, and organisations with humility, attentive listening, reflection, and practical support. We heard examples of this approach in action, including supporting a network of peacebuilding practitioners and facilitating workshops that link storytelling with mediation and other peace practices.

Major threats to peaceful coexistence in Britain include rising political polarisation, which deepens divisions over issues such as immigration, economic inequality, and national identity. Misinformation and online radicalisation can intensify distrust between communities and institutions, sometimes fuelling extremism or hostility towards minority groups. Economic pressures, including the cost-of-living crisis and regional inequality, can also heighten social tensions and make divisive narratives more persuasive.

We reflected personally on how love and nonviolence can guide responses to conflict, recognising the importance of balancing the challenge of injustice with maintaining human connection, and of nurturing relationships and hope within our local communities.

Meeting for Sufferings affirms the radical Quaker commitment to peacebuilding through faithful witness, direct action, and advocacy grounded in conscience and spiritual discernment. Friends continue to engage in nonviolent protest despite restrictive legislation, support those who face risks for their witness, and reflect deeply on the forms their activism may take—from rebellion to reform to social change—always guided by the Light and communal discernment. This tradition of prophetic peacebuilding exemplifies the Quaker practice of confronting oppression, upholding justice, and fostering reconciliation.

We note that further resources are available on the website:

www.quaker.org.uk/action/peacebuilding-and-nonviolence/peacebuilding-in-britain.

We are grateful for the work of our staff and for what they have shared with us today and encourage them to be courageous and innovative in their work.

MfS/26/03/14 Annual report from Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

We receive the annual report of the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) for 2025. Elaine Green, clerk to QCCIR, has spoken to the report.

QCCIR keeps Britain Yearly Meeting informed about developments in ecumenical and interfaith relationships and promotes dialogue and cooperation between churches and other faiths. During 2024–2025 the committee experienced significant membership changes while continuing its activities through meetings, webinars, Yearly Meeting events, interfaith dialogue, and preparations for future initiatives such as a 2026 conference and revised resources on Quakers and other faiths. We have also heard concern about the high turnover of members and the challenge of finding Friends able to sustain this long-term, relational service.

As ever, QCCIR has accomplished a great deal with a small membership, and we are grateful to all Friends involved for their thoughtful and careful attention to this important ministry.

MfS/26/03/15 Minutes received

(a) From Quaker Life Central Committee

(i) Minute QLCC 25.68 Quaker Life Representative Council

We receive minute 25.68 from Quaker Life Central Committee and record the committee's decision to lay down Quaker Life Representative Council.

We ask Church Government Advisory Group to recommend appropriate changes to *Quaker faith & practice*.

(ii) Minute QLCC 25.69 Membership

We receive minute 25.69 from Quaker Life Central Committee. Meeting for Sufferings has been part of the discernment process that led to the development of proposals for non-geographic membership. The same minute has been sent to the

Agenda Planning Committee of Yearly Meeting and we consider that this matter should be taken forward by Yearly Meeting at this time.

(b) From Sussex West Area Meeting

We receive minute 26.03(c) from Sussex West Area Meeting.

A Brighton Quaker Meeting newsletter article about protesting the proscription of Palestine Action raised concerns that it might be interpreted as supporting a banned organisation under the UK Terrorism Act. After seeking advice, Sussex West Area Meeting trustees decided to withdraw the newsletter due to the potential risk of prosecution, causing significant distress within the meeting. Quakers in Brighton and Sussex West said that such legal restrictions threaten their tradition of nonviolent protest and their ability to live out their faith, and they forwarded these concerns to Meeting for Sufferings.

We share Sussex West Area Meeting's concern about the growing restrictions on freedom of protest and freedom of expression.

(c) From Quakers in Scotland

We receive minute 26/02/23 from Quakers in Scotland. We note that it reads, in part, "After their meeting on 7th March the work of Meeting for Sufferings moves into a new era, becoming part of Continuing YM. We hold in the Light their clerks, arrangements committee, staff, representatives and alternates, as they, like us, set off on a new adventure. We trust that Continuing Yearly Meeting will know the guidance of the Spirit."

MfS/26/03/16 Report from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees met on 7 February 2026 and their minutes are included in paper MfS 2026 03 16a.

The business included welcoming a new trustee and receiving routine reports from several committees, including updates on risk, employment, equity, and whistleblowing. Trustees reviewed progress on the 2025–2027 operational plan, with 87% of tasks reported to be on target. They also approved a new Library & Archives Collections Development Policy, focused on preserving the historic archive and managing digital records, and commended new resources such as the Challenging Antisemitism guide. Financial pressures due to reduced donations were noted, alongside the need for continued attention to cybersecurity, health and safety, and preparations for disruption arising from HS2 works near Friends House.

BYM Trustees have continued their work reviewing the strategic priorities for centrally managed work and bring an updated draft for our consideration (paper MfS 2026 03 16b).

We accept this document as a framework for the centrally managed work of Britain Yearly Meeting over the next five years.

MfS/26/03/17 Closing minute

After some 350 years, this is the final session of Meeting for Sufferings. Over the centuries, the Meeting has evolved, yet we have consistently gathered in worship, to acknowledge and direct the work and witness of Friends.

As a manifestation of the Church, we are a people called out for service. Our focus must be less on duties and more on responding faithfully to the promptings of love and truth. Some of our work has been administrative, ensuring the functioning of our yearly meeting. Some has been part of the teaching ministry of the Church, offering guidance and support. Much has involved the quieter work of healing, nurturing compassion and community, and seeking to restore the body of Friends when we have hurt one another.

Meeting for Sufferings has been concerned, above all, with how we might reweave the world so that it more nearly reflects the Gospel Order to which we bear witness. We have sought to exercise “a general care of whatever may arise ... affecting our religious society” (*Quaker faith & practice* 7.01).

In doing so, we have tried to hold before us both the condition of our community and the condition of the world. We live in a time marked by deep challenge: geopolitical conflict and nuclear risk, an accelerating climate crisis that threatens the stability of ecosystems and communities, and technological and systemic disruptions that can reshape societies faster than wisdom and governance can respond. In such times, the call to faithful witness remains urgent.

The Friends World Plenary Meeting in 2024, held in Johannesburg and online, reminded us that “with radical hope, we trust in our collective ability to recognise, repent, redeem and restore, and to work together in beautiful and transformative ways”. This captures something of the spirit to which we have aspired.

It is easy to compare ourselves with the remarkable achievements of earlier Friends. Yet those moments were made possible by patient preparation, by relationships carefully tended, and by the quiet faithfulness of many people over long years. We are not called to be remarkable, but to be faithful; to lay foundations, to support one another, and to trust that our service matters.

We feel deep gratitude for all who have sustained this Meeting across the centuries. As this final session closes and its responsibilities return to Yearly Meeting, we do so in trust: that Friends will continue to discern the leadings of the Spirit, and that we shall meet again in that shared work and purpose.

Robert Card
Clerk

Meeting for Sufferings: Functions Checklist (*Quaker faith & practice* Chapter 7.02)

	Requirement	March 06 (minute #)
A	To set the priorities for the centrally managed work	16
B	To issue public statements in the name of BYM	
C	To receive regular interim reports from BYM trustees	16
D	To receive the BYM trustees' annual report & accounts for information	
E	To make a report on its own activities to YM	10
F	To determine the dates of YM	
G	To deliberate on how best to support the spiritual life of the yearly meeting and to further the development of its visionary and prophetic role	14
H	To keep under review and to test as appropriate the existing and new concerns referred to it by AMs and others	15
I	To foster communication throughout the yearly meeting	
J	To receive minutes from area meetings	15
K	To make appropriate entries in the prison and court register	6
I	To appoint representatives to attend other Yearly Meetings	4
M	To receive information about changes in the composition or status of general meetings and gatherings	7 & 8
N	To make changes in the composition of area meetings	
O	To give assistance to area meetings in the amicable settlement of disputes	
P	To hear appeals against area meeting decisions	
Q	To give guidance on policy matters referred to it by the BYM trustees from time to time	
R	To authorise action and minute as required under other sections of <i>Quaker faith & practice</i>	
S	To set up an arrangements group and support and working groups to assist its own work as it sees fit	

Peacebuilding in Britain



Lisa Cumming

- Peacebuilding in Britain

- East Africa Programme

Goal

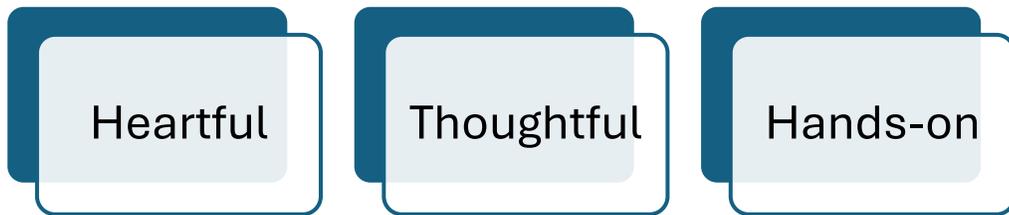


To develop and strengthen responsive, creative, and transformative approaches to peace and conflict in communities in Britain.

A C C O M P A N I M E N T

Peacebuilding in Britain

Accompaniment



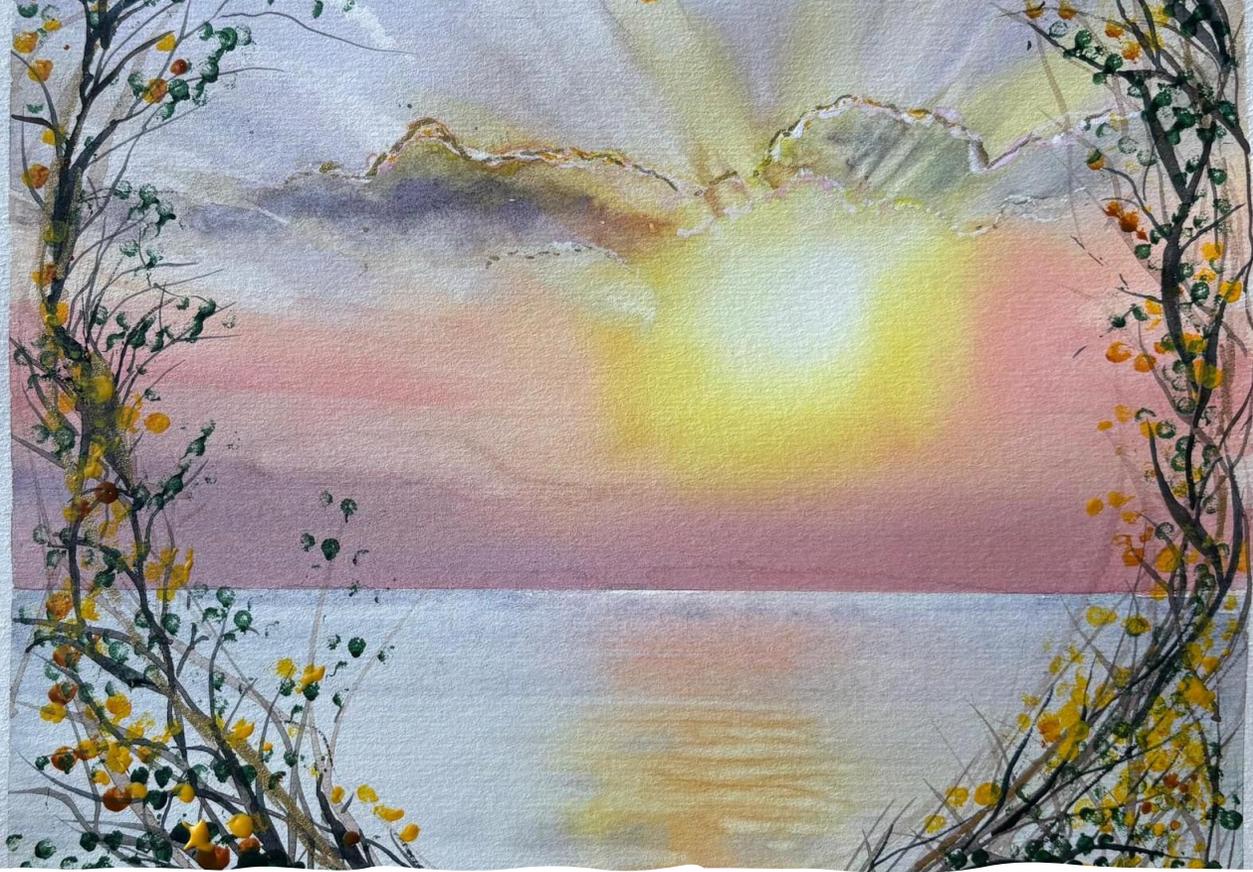
Our roles

Peacebuilding Coordinator –
focusing more on work with
Quakers

**Peacebuilding and
Nonviolence Manager** -
focusing more on work with civil
society practitioners

QPSWCC Strategy

“We have seen that slow, long-term support and accompaniment can build trust and new relationships in communities, which then serve as a strong foundation for further peace work.”



- *“The sense of community”*
- *“Learning about challenges and approaches across the UK.*
- *“Mutual support, shared wisdom.”*
- *“Shared experiences of issues and responses to community unrest.”*



"If we can combine storytelling and peace practices like mediation we have the potential to create something quite radical."

For more information

- Peacebuilding in Britain:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/action/peacebuilding-and-nonviolence/peacebuilding-in-britain>

- Resources:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/action/news/how-can-we-address-violence-and-conflict-in-our-locally-and-across-britain>



To Clerks of all Area Meetings, Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales, General Meeting of Young Friends in Britain and Quakers in Scotland

Dear Clerks,

Yearly Meeting is changing

In 2026 there will be three sessions of Yearly Meeting: 1-4 May, 18 July and 21 November. All Friends are welcome and you can find the details for how to register at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/bookings.

In parallel with this change to how Yearly Meeting is held, we will lay down Meeting for Sufferings.

There are many opportunities for Friends and meetings to engage with Yearly Meeting and I have outlined some of them below. Please also note the specific request for your meeting to appoint a Yearly Meeting representative.

The final section of this letter explains how you can ask questions and find out more about Yearly Meeting.

Encouraging Friends to attend Yearly Meeting

We want the changes to the holding of Yearly Meeting sessions to support greater participation in and engagement with national level Quaker decision making. We hope that the full spectrum of Quaker experience can be present and heard.

To make that a reality we need Friends to come to Yearly Meeting sessions and to feel connected to the community and business of the yearly meeting. The first thing that we need from meetings is for them to encourage Friends to attend Yearly Meeting – either online or by coming to the venue. Friends can attend as many sessions each year as they wish – they are welcome at all of them, but if they cannot attend one then they can still attend the others.

Yearly Meeting Representatives

As well as encouraging all Friend to engage with Yearly Meeting, we are asking your meeting to appoint a Yearly Meeting representative.

Full information is available in a downloadable document on the website: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/ym-call-for-reps>. Please share that document with your nominations committee. The key points are summarised in this letter.

Yearly Meeting representatives will have an important role in:

- Creating continuity of attendance – making sure there is a group of Friends committed to attending most or all sessions.
- Strengthening connections between local Friends and the yearly meeting as a whole – making sure that there is someone in the local Quaker community who knows what is happening at Yearly Meeting sessions, and who can encourage Friends to attend sessions and to use the preparation materials.
- Together reflecting the diversity of Quaker experience – ensuring Friends are present from across the yearly meeting and hopefully with a range of experience to share.

Your meeting should appoint a representative as soon as you can and in time for them to attend the Yearly Meeting sessions from July onwards. You should make the appointment in accordance with your usual nominations practice and inform us of the name(s) and contact details on rco@quaker.org.uk.

Appointed representatives whose details are notified to us will have their expenses paid from BYM funds. Your meeting can of course use its own funds to pay expenses for any additional Friends to attend.

The role of Yearly Meeting representative is new and we haven't tried to produce a definitive role description – different meetings will need to think about different considerations. You can appoint someone of any age, with any amount of Quaker experience – what is important is that they are willing to engage, learn and participate. Think widely about the diverse experiences you have within your meeting and consider appointing someone whose perspective might not otherwise be heard at Yearly Meeting. Your current Meeting for Sufferings representative might be the right Friend to take on this service, but please ask your nominations committee to exercise its discernment rather than assuming that the same Friend should continue in a new role.

In terms of practicalities, please appoint a representative with the expectation that they will come to the majority of the Yearly Meeting sessions scheduled during their term (find the dates through to the end of 2028 here: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/our-structures/continuing-yearly-meeting>). You can appoint an attender as a Yearly Meeting representative if you wish although Yearly Meeting maintains an ability to close any part of the meeting to non-members if it feels the need to do so.

Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales should appoint one representative in addition to those appointed by area meetings located wholly or partly in Wales.

Young Friends General Meeting should appoint at least one and up to three.

Area meetings and Quakers in Scotland should appoint according to the following formula:

- If there are 1-6 local meetings in your meeting area, 1 representative
- If there are 7-12 local meetings in your meeting area, 2 representatives

- If there are 13-18 local meetings in your meeting area, 3 representatives
- And so on ...

There is no need to appoint an alternate. If, unusually, you need to send someone in place of the representative then please notify us in good time so that the expense claim can be processed.

Sending minutes to Yearly Meeting

Agenda Planning Committee (APC) is the new committee which will work with Yearly Meeting clerks to set the Yearly Meeting agendas.

Part of the role of APC will be to receive and consider minutes sent in by meetings like yours.

At present, minutes that are sent to Meeting for Sufferings are considered by its Arrangements Group and not all of them are included in a Sufferings agenda. This will also be true for minutes received by APC. For example: some minutes will need further testing (perhaps by the meeting that sent them or by a committee); some minutes will be most suitable for sharing with other meetings to see if there is parallel discernment happening that could help to take the matter forward; some minutes will not need any further discernment at all but could be shared for information.

Meetings are invited to consider the following before submitting a minute to APC:

1. Do you have as full a picture of the situation as possible?
2. What background information will be needed to help Friends understand the issue?
3. Do you know who else is working on this, whether they are Quakers or not? What can you learn from their experience? Have you discussed the matter with Quakers in Britain staff?
4. What makes this a Quaker concern? You may feel it is inherently Quaker, but can you explain how?
5. Is there any urgency or time constraint? - you may know (for example) that a scheduled meeting will soon be discussing the same issue, or about forthcoming legislation. This may be a current issue in the public domain that demands immediate attention: if so, it's worth considering what Friends' particular engagement with the issue should be.
6. What are the implications of your minute? Do you understand what will be involved in taking this forward?

If your meeting has agreed a minute and has agreed that it should be sent to APC, please ensure that you:

1. Send in the full text of the relevant minute, and any relevant previous minutes or helpful background documents

2. Include a clear ask of APC – is this minute being shared for further discernment by the Yearly Meeting; simply to share news of, or invite support for existing work; to encourage Quakers to take action locally, or for another reason?
3. Include any details of work relating to the minute which has already been done by the sending group
4. Explain who to contact from the sending meeting or group and include their contact details to enable follow up communication

From now on minutes should be sent to: YMagenda@quaker.org.uk. Minutes can no longer be sent to Meeting for Sufferings.

Quakers in Britain staff will log receipt of your minute and will contact you to let you know when you can expect a substantive response. At that stage they might send follow-up questions by email or arrange a call to make sure they are clear about what your meeting thinks should happen with the minute, and to request any necessary additional information.

The minute will then be shared with APC for its discernment. If APC needs more information or discerns that the matter is not ready for discernment by the Yearly Meeting at this point then someone will contact you to discuss the next steps. If APC discerns that the minute should be added to a future Yearly Meeting agenda then someone will contact you to discuss whether and how your meeting might help with introducing it.

This guidance will be available on the Quakers in Britain website soon.

Find out more

There is a lot of information packed into this letter and if anything is unclear you can send any questions to rco@quaker.org.uk.

Our website will be changing with more information being shared about how to engage with Yearly Meeting – keep an eye out for new pages being added to <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation>.

The best way to keep up to date with Yearly Meeting developments is to subscribe to our newsletter Hope So! You can read about the newsletter and find a subscription link at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/newsletters/hope-so>.

I very much look forward to seeing you at a future session of Yearly Meeting and hope you will be in touch with any queries you may have.

In Friendship,

Paul Parker
Recording Clerk