

# Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting

## Held at Friends House, London, 26-30 July 2024



To all Friends everywhere,

From the 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2024, 51 young people from across Britain and further afield gathered at Friends House alongside Britain Yearly Meeting for five days of inward and outward reflection on the theme “How can we nurture love in our actions?”.

Full of exciting new prospects, we lived alongside yearly meeting, with participants engaging in multiple sessions and enjoying the created space for rare conversations across generations. With new people, a new venue, and new structures a strong community was fostered as we faced new challenges. We were positively affirmed when integrating with wider BYM, with our discussions opening new grounds to explore in the future.

Each day we were embellished with insightful worship. We experienced self-growth in meeting, with many led to share for the first time. In All Together Worship with BYM, we were inspired by ministry comparing a meeting to a calm lake, with contributions like pebbles causing ripples. In some of our meetings there were lots of ripples and we felt unified when we held guided meditation for yearly meeting.

Celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> birthday of George Fox united us. We felt connected with our past and present, through circle dancing and cake, uniting through our closing singing. Music filled the air at our joyous ceilidh, shared with Young People at Yearly Meeting - a lovely occasion with great height differences.

How can we nurture love in our actions? This theme echoed throughout Junior Yearly Meeting. The Arrangements Committee opened the event, sharing personal experiences on the theme. Participants felt inspired and moved, drawing together ministry that continued throughout the event.

We were grateful for Dave Wiles’ speaking of his journey, which was transformed when he attended church and found love, in a deeply powerful and moving session for all. The Quaker Faith in Action team encouraged us to think about non-violent and violent scenarios, with complex philosophical questions arising as we discussed what constitutes violence and what actions we could take within our own communities to assert our desire for change.

Friends held victims of conflicts around the world in the light during our shared Outdoor Witness. Although we were saddened while considering the various different forms of conflict that take place - not just war - we found hope rekindled within us upon hearing the horns of passing cars. A desire for peace is not something confined to Friends.

Ben Jarman, Swarthmore Lecturer challenged both our preconceptions about the people who inhabit our prisons and the systems which control them. As youth we often

feel powerless, even within our wider Quaker community, and his emphasis on the “tiny slices of power” that we hold gave a portion back to us.

The connections that we have created here will stay with us for life, affirming our convictions. We have found everyday power in the love we can share, and feel inspired to take this out into the world with us. To find and belong to a group that perceives the world in a multitude of ways is something we find precious, and to come to this event is to never feel alone.

*Signed,*

*Willoughby Densham*

*Seren Melling*

*Rosa Keene*

*Scott Denmead*

*Junior Yearly Meeting 2024 Arrangements Committee*

## **Appendix**

We appendix Love in Action, a poem by Dave Wiles:

*It's soft and squishy in the film*

*Romanticised with plastic lips*

*That drip the lyrics carelessly*

*While a thousand hearts skip*

*To tunes of stereotypical love*

*That just make me sick!!*

*Love in action costs*

*It's the extra mile trip*

*It's being there with no agenda*

*Other than bailing out the ship*

*Or a kind touch to reassure*

*Steadfast and strong it doesn't slip*

*A verb not just a noun*

*Not forced with a conscientious whip*

*It gives not takes*

*No egotistical trip*

*So love in action*

*Go ahead - let it rip!!*