

Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting at Clacton, 13.03.2016

Representatives

Clacton-on-Sea - Liz Prockter (prevented), Margaret Ahmed, Karl Sage and Hazel Jones

Colchester – Carol Holding, Tim Holding and Anne Watkinson

Sudbury – no representatives

Present were 17 Friends, including 4 Attenders and all but 1 of our representatives.

2016/11 Friends being met in the presence of God, *Quaker faith and practice* 29.01 was read.

2016/12 Death of Friends

Jane Carter, a Friend of Sudbury Meeting, died on 13th January, and a memorial meeting held at Sudbury Meeting House on 10th February 10. We ask Sudbury Friends to prepare a testimony to the grace of God in her life for the AM Book of Memorials.

Opal Reeves, a Friend of Colchester Meeting died on 26th January. Opal's funeral was held in the manner of Friends at Colchester Crematorium and afterwards at Colchester Meeting House on 2nd March. We ask Colchester Friends to prepare a testimony to the grace of God in her life for the AM Book of Memorials.

2016/13 Appointments

a) Triennial Appointments

Trustees Nominations Committee brings forward the name of Colin Keen to serve as Trustee. We appoint Colin to serve from April 2016 to end March 2019.

AM Nominations Committee

The sudden death of Jane Carter requires us to appoint a Friend in her place to the AM Nominations Committee. In addition, Jacky Hall has asked to be released from the committee, after serving more than two years, for which we thank her. We ask Colchester Meeting to bring forward the name of a Friend to serve on the committee and we ask Clacton, Sudbury, Harwich and Earls Colne Friends to liaise with the Clerk, with a view to bringing forward a name from these meetings and thus broaden the representation on the committee.

Elders

Anne Watkinson has asked to be released as Elder for Colchester Meeting, due to her recent appointment as LM Clerk. We thank Anne for her service as Elder and ask AM Nominations Committee to bring forward the name of another Friend.

Safeguarding Coordinators

Jane Wolton will come to the end of her third triennium as Safeguarding Coordinator later this year. Emma Steadman has asked to be released from her role as Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator. We thank Jane and Emma for their service, we release Emma with immediate effect and ask Nominations Committee to bring forward the names of Friends for both these roles at the earliest opportunity.

b) Representatives

Gathering on Our Sustainability Commitment: Being a transformational community

We appoint Rosemary Sturgiss to attend the Gathering on Our Sustainability Commitment: Being a transformational community, to be held at Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, 18 - 20 March. We agree to fund Rosemary's attendance as our representative.

Quaker Life Conference

We appoint Lucien de Leon as our representative at the Quaker Life Conference in April.

2016/14 Responsibilities of Area Meeting

We heard last year's AM Minute 2014/15, which reminded us to make provision for appropriate pastoral care in all our meetings. AM Elders and Overseers have met twice during 2015 and endeavour to support the pastoral care offered in local meetings. A Woodbrooke on the Road workshop for Elders and Overseers is planned for March 19.

A priority of the AM was to continue the process of discerning our purposes as an AM. AM Minute 2015/48 summarises our progress with this task. Here is an extract from that minute:

The discernment process has shown us that it is vitally important to maintain a Quaker presence in our Area through the maintenance of our Meeting Houses, while at the same time using our money for good, as led by our testimonies, in the Quaker and wider community. Trustees were guided by AM decisions. Discernment has led us to support Friends in their educational development through bursaries and also to support BYM. We united behind a concern brought by Colchester Friends to provide financial support for Glebe House (Friends Therapeutic Community Trust) which will enable the Trust to provide ongoing support for the young men in their care after they leave Glebe House.

We invite and challenge LMs to return, if they wish, to the questions given in Minute 2014/46 as a guide for future discernment. We will keep the doors and windows open for further discernment as an AM if we are so led.

We went on to consider the responsibilities listed in Qfp 4.10 and agree that as an AM we have largely met our responsibilities over the past year.

2016/15 Trustees Report on current matters

Jenny Kay read a report prepared by Martin Rayner, on behalf of Trustees, to update Friends about proposed changes to bookkeeping arrangements. Following a Woodbrooke course, Trustees plan to change the AM bookkeeping arrangements with the purchase of a software package (Paxton) that has been assessed and is recommended by Quaker Stewardship Committee. This package has been tailored to meet Quaker practices; for example it will facilitate the operation of managing contributions and donations and the claiming of Gift Aid. With the purchase of a dedicated laptop and a printer/scanner for the purpose this will give us flexibility in the provision of professional support to AM and LM Treasurers.

We thank Trustees for their report on current matters, which is attached to these minutes.

2016/16 Quaker Tapestry at Chelmsford Cathedral

We agree to offer Mid-Essex AM the sum of £3000 to support the costs of bringing the Quaker Tapestry to our region.

We ask Mid-Essex Friends to include SEAQM in its public list of contributors, as a way of signposting visitors to other Quaker Meetings within easy reach of Chelmsford.

2016/17 Meeting for Sufferings Report

We heard Robert Parkes' report from Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) held 6th February at Friends House. Robert drew our attention to the epistle of the 2016 Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) that had met recently in Peru. AM had supported FWCC by funding a delegate to attend.

Other matters raised by MfS included possible Quaker involvement nationally in a scheme to support the private sponsorship of refugees. For more information, see the MfS minutes in the 12th February edition of the Friend, or on the Quakers in Britain website.

We thank Robert for his report, which is attached to these minutes and appears in the newsletter and is on the AM website.

2016/18 Friends World Consultation Committee (FWCC) Gathering

Further to Minutes 2015/33, the Clerk reported that the FWCC Gathering had made use of our donation (£2000) to fund a Friend, Edith Mijegah Kidaya, from Nairobi to attend the World Gathering held in Peru. Edith would not otherwise have been able to attend. We are pleased to have supported an event that brought together Friends from around the world.

2016/19 The Refugee Crisis - update

Further to Minutes 2015/52, 66 and 2016/08, Mary Grocock told us that the Quaker befriending group for our Syrian family continues to support the family whenever possible. The group has made use of AM funds by purchasing a laptop for the 18-year-old son of the family, who is studying English at Colchester Institute. We have discussed the situation with a lecturer at the Institute, as well as Fresh Beginnings, to ensure that our support in this way is appropriate and helpful. Friends have taken the family shopping for essential items and continue to liaise with Fresh Beginnings to direct funds through them, as needed.

The Quaker befriending group is one small element of the welcome and support being offered by Colchester. Several Friends took part in an interfaith event at the Town Hall, prompted by the refugee situation, which enabled people of many faith groups to get to know one another better.

Robert Parkes and Jayne Meleschko attended a daylong event at Cambridge, organised by the East of England Local Government Association, entitled Resettling Vulnerable Syrian Refugees: a multi -agency approach for the East of England. This enabled the sharing of experience and good practice, including the role of the community and faith sectors.

We thank the Friends involved in the befriending group and once again encourage them to seek additional support from Friends as appropriate.

2016/20 Greenwood Educational Trust report

Carol Holding, Trustee to the Greenwood Educational Trust, reported that 39 young people (under 25) whose parents are members or attenders of three Area Meetings in Essex and Suffolk and who are in need, benefited from the Trust; its purpose is to advance their education.

Last year SEAQM agreed that we would support our own young people, in order to make the Trust funds go further for the young people of other AMs. Overseers will be writing to families encouraging them to seek funding for educational purposes through our AM bursary applications.

2016/21 AM Residential Gathering High Leigh November 2016

Further to Minute 2015/67, Friends are invited to book their places for the AM Residential Gathering from 18-20 November 2016 to be held at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddeston, Herts EN11 8SG. The theme will be "Leadings... How can we walk with a smile into the dark?" (Qfp 29.01). The programme will include worship, an introductory talk on the theme by Sandra Berry (Friend of this AM and Director of Woodbrooke), various sessions on the theme, and opportunities for walks in nearby woods, or other outings.

AM has paid a deposit of £1152. There are 40 places reserved, at a cost of £150 per person, and which will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Please book early, preferably by the end of April. Booking forms and bursary application forms are available at Meetings, from the Events page of the AM Website and in the Files section of the Colchester Quakers Yahoo group, or you can ask Overseers for a printed form.

Regrettably we do not feel able to cater for the needs of children and young people at this gathering.

An article about the gathering will appear in the newsletter.

2016/22 Yearly Meeting

Friends are encouraged to attend Yearly Meeting (YM), to be held at Friends House, London, 27-30 May, and to record their intention to go by registering on the website. Colchester Elders plan to offer opportunities after Meeting for Worship (including an Attenders Event on April 17) to discuss YM themes by way of preparing for and engaging with YM. See the newsletter and AM website for details.

Signed,

Alison Parkes

Alison Parkes
Clerk