

Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting at Clacton, 13.09.2015

Representatives

Clacton-on-Sea - Silva Garton-Rogers, Hazel Jones

Colchester – Carol Holding, Tim Holding, Robert Parkes

Sudbury – Betty Scrivener, Jane Carter

Present were 25 Friends, including 8 Attenders.

2015/44 Friends being met in the presence of God, the Meeting for Sufferings statement about the refugee crisis was read.

2015/45 Death of a Friend

Faith Widdicombe, a longtime member of Sudbury Meeting, died in July. Faith, an active and gentle Friend, was given a green burial at a woodland burial site near Cambridge. A memorial meeting for Faith was held at Sudbury Meeting House on Friday, September 11th, followed by refreshments provided by her son.

2015/46 Membership matters

2015/47 Appointments

a) Triennial Appointments

Richard Waynforth Trust

Further to Minute 2015/29, Bob Crowley was appointed in July as a trustee for the Richard Waynforth Trust, in consultation with AM Trustees. Bob has asked to be released from this role. The name of another Friend was brought by Trustees, and this name being acceptable to the meeting, we appoint Martin Rayner to serve from September 2015 to end August 2018.

Trustees

Nominations Committee brings forward the name of Eliza Jones to serve as an AM trustee. This name being acceptable to the meeting, we appoint Eliza to serve from October 2015 - end September 2018.

b) Representatives

QPSW Conference 30 Oct - 1 Nov 2015 at Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick We

appoint Jan Squire and Patrick Squire as our representatives to QPSW Conference .

Quaker Council for European Affairs/Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QCEA/QPSW) biennial conference

We appoint Jet Grommell to attend the Quaker Council for European Affairs and Quaker Peace and Social Witness biennial conference, to be held in Belgium 4-6 December. We look forward to receiving Jet's report of the conference early in 2016.

Quaker Life Rep Council

We appoint Lucien de Leon to attend Quaker Life Rep Council as our representative this time, which will take place at Woodbrooke on October 9 - 11.

2015/48 Discerning our purposes - bringing to a close

We have devoted considerable time over the past two years to discerning our purposes as an Area Meeting. Past minutes (2014/39, 2014/46 and 2015/22) trace our discernment. Minute 2014/46 invited LMs to consider questions which arose from our discernment, and the responses of LMs have helped to shape the decisions reached.

Our motivation for discerning our purposes sprang, in particular, from a lack of clarity about how Area Meeting funds should be rightly used. 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.

The period of discerning our purposes has challenged and illuminated our AM and given us a sense of shared purpose and understanding. We recall the words of Francis Howgill, an early Friend, who wrote: "We came to know a place to stand in and what to wait in...We met together in the unity of the Spirit, and of the bond of peace, treading down under our feet all reasoning about religion." (*Quaker faith and practice* 19.08)

2015/49 Sudbury Meeting

We heard from Betty Scrivener, clerk of Sudbury LM, that Sudbury Meeting is struggling with the management of lettings and other financial matters. Henry Ruse's input to the meeting is sorely missed in many ways. As Betty told us, "Henry did practically everything for the meeting."

A sub-group made up of AM Clerk, AM Treasurer (Tom Tebbutt) and another Trustee (Peter Whiteley) will explore with Sudbury Meeting the ways in which Meeting House hirings and money matters of the meeting might be managed. Trustees are in discussion with a professional bookkeeper.

2015/50 Trustees Report on current matters

Hazel Jones, clerk of Trustees, reported to us about current trustees matters. Although we are making substantial inroads into our savings, we are nevertheless pursuing our purposes. We thank Hazel for her report, which is attached to these minutes.

2015/51 Meeting for Sufferings Report

Robert Parkes reported from Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) held on Saturday September 5.

MfS has agreed a 6-point Long Term Framework based on responses from Friends and Meetings across all of Britain Yearly Meeting, and to which this AM contributed. We are asked to become familiar with the vision of the Long Term Framework (to be called "Our Faith in the Future") and consider how to respond to it in terms of action taken by AM and LMs. We ask that LMs, Elders and Overseers and also the Colchester discussion group "All Things Considered", consider how we might respond to "Our Faith in the Future" and to bring their findings to AM.

We heard that MfS considered the urgent and unfolding refugee crisis, and they agreed the statement read out during worship at the beginning of this meeting. The refugee crisis has distressed and challenged us all. This has become an important issue for all of us and we will consider what action we might take as an AM.

We thank Robert for his report, which will appear in the next newsletter and will be uploaded to the Business page of the AM website, as will the document "Our Faith in the Future".

2015/52 The Refugee Crisis

Friends wish to respond urgently to the refugee crisis which affects us all. John Hall offered the research he has done into local agencies offering support to asylum seekers and refugees. The list of John's research is attached to these minutes.

We agree that a working group of Friends monitor the situation, draw up a provisional list of Friends who could offer accommodation or support in other ways, and consider both the immediate and the complex long-term issues facing refugees who may come to our Area.

We were reminded of the urgent need of those refugees still on the journey, and ask that the needs of these refugees be considered by the group.

The working group will include our Friends Peggy Lewis, Mary Grocock, Tim Holding, Carol Holding, Jayne Meleschko, Robert Parkes, Helen Lewis and John Hall. Robert will be the convenor of the first meeting of the group.

We thank John for taking the initiative to research this issue.

2015/53 Friends School Saffron Walden General Meeting

We have been approached by Friends School Saffron Walden. Ten years ago our AM supported Friends School General Meeting when it was set up. At that time, we committed ourselves to attendance by an AM representative in support of the General Meeting.

Our appointed representative to FSSW GM is Tim Holding, who will endeavour to attend the GM in November. Tim is willing for his name to go forward to FSSW GM for the group who are considering a revision of the constitution.

2015/54 Regional Gatherings in 2016

Colchester Meeting, on behalf of the Area Meeting, is hosting Regional Gathering later this month. The dates of Regional Gathering for next year are as follows:

Saturday February 27th 2016: Thaxted AM

Saturday June 25th 2016: Southern East Anglia AM

Saturday September 24th 2016: Mid Essex AM.

Our AM is therefore asked which LM will host Regional Gathering on June 25, 2016. We ask our LMs to consider whether they might be able to do this, and to report back to AM in November.

The clerk of Regional Gathering, Susan Garratt, has requested the names of representatives to Regional Gathering Nominations and Agenda committee for the current triennium, which began in January of this year. We ask Friends to consider whether they might be able to serve in this capacity and Nominations Committee to make the necessary arrangements in discussion with the clerk of Regional Gathering.

2015/55 Welcome to Quakers folders

Further to Minutes 2015/34 and 2015/43, the clerk reported on progress regarding the production of "Welcome to Quakers" folders. Ipswich and Diss Area Meeting decided against joining us to order copies of card folders. Having explored other options, the clerk proposes making use of A5 plastic wallets with labels printed with the "Q" logo and the words "Welcome to Quakers". The clerk can access plastic wallets at a cost of less than 50 pence apiece, and John Hall is able to supply 80 labels free of charge.

We agree to proceed with the use of these "Welcome to Quakers" plastic wallets. Each LM can decide what to put inside. This is likely to include a sheet with the wording agreed by AM Elders and Overseers, a copy of Advices and Queries, and other free leaflets such as "Your first time in a Quaker meeting".

Signed,

Alison Parkes

Alison Parkes

Clerk