

Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting at Sudbury, 14.05.2017

Representatives

Clacton-on-Sea - Karl Sage

Colchester – Phyl Reid, Tim Holding, Carol Holding, John Hall, Jacky Hall, Mary Grocock and Honor Chamberlain

Sudbury – Sylvia Frith, Betty Scrivener, Graham Johnston

Earls Colne – John Kay, Jenny Kay, Una Lawrence, Dave Lawrence

Harwich - Hazel Jones

Present were 29 Friends, including 6 Attenders and all but 1 of our representatives.

2017/25 Friends being met in the presence of God, *Quaker faith and practice* 2.41 was read.

2017/26 Membership matters

2017/27 Appointments

Triennial Appointments

Safeguarding Coordinator and Additional Verifier

Martin Rayner has already been appointed as our Safeguarding Coordinator. We have learned that we need to appoint him as Additional Verifier in order to make applications for DBS certificates. We agree to combine these roles and appoint Martin to serve until the end of December 2019.

Elder

Di Naylor has asked to be released from serving as an elder at Colchester Meeting, for personal reasons. We hold Di, her husband and family in the light at this difficult time for them all.

We thank Di for her service and ask Nominations Committee to bring forward the name of another Friend to serve as elder.

2017/28 Responsibilities of Area Meeting

We referred to the guidance to Area Meetings in QFP Chapter 4 and read the first paragraph of 4.02. We believe that during the year 2016 we have carried out the responsibilities set out in Chapter 4.

We referred to Qfp 4.11 and acknowledge the work done on behalf of many of us by relatively few Friends.

2017/29 Conference on Forced Migration report – Robert Parkes

Robert Parkes gave us his feedback from the Conference on Forced Migration which he and John Lewis attended in February. Robert shared his response to a play, presented by the

Journeyman Theatre called "The Bundle". This play raised challenging questions about how to initiate difficult conversations with those who are unsympathetic to the plight of refugees. How can we reach out to those with views and perceptions which may be different from our own? How might we offer space for differing and deeply held views and feelings?

We feel moved to consider how we might make "The Bundle" available to as wide an audience as possible. Possible venues include the Headgate Theatre, Mercury Studio Theatre, Essex University, Castle Park open-air theatre, the Town Hall and potentially schools. Mary Grocock is willing to coordinate interest in this proposal. Friends are asked to contact Mary to offer their support.

We are reminded that within East Anglia a notable amount of bigotry and antagonism is expressed. We are also reminded that some of our fellow citizens may be bereft, disengaged and disconnected. How might we counter this in our own back yard? How can we better inform ourselves to know and understand the perspective of those whose experience is so different from our own? How far can each one of us put ourselves in the place of those who are impoverished?

These are big questions requiring further discernment. We will return to this topic at a future AM.

We thank Robert for his report, which is attached to these minutes and will appear in the newsletter and on the Business page of the AM website.

2017/30 Refugee working group update

We heard from Mary Grocock and Freya Sandford about the ways in which our befriending group is supporting refugees in the town. Peggy Lewis, Mary Grocock and Alison Parkes are visiting Khadija and Fayhaa on a regular basis for English conversation.

Fresh Beginnings has organised lessons for teachers to help them prepare to teach English. Freya described a lesson she attended which was entirely in Mandarin. She is teaching a group of mainly Nepalese women at Fresh Beginnings, which has now moved its premises to the Bunting Rooms in Colchester, with admin offices on East Hill.

We ask Tom Tebbutt, AM Treasurer, to create a general expenses claim form so that small expenses, such as petrol and stationery, of the befrienders, as well as other Friends, can be claimed for.

2017/31 Refugee Microcredit scheme update

Further to Minute 2016/60, we heard from John Lewis that the micro-credit scheme being initiated by Refugee Action Colchester is in abeyance for the time being, subject to further consideration.

A future scheme may still involve micro-credit, but not immediately and may also involve other forms of assistance related to employment and independent work.

We understand the absence of direct progress, and maintain support for the small group seeking to help refugees towards an independent life. We agree that the £5000 previously allocated (Minute 2016/60) remain for the use of this group and we look forward to hearing about further proposals for its use.

2017/32 Meeting for Sufferings Report

Robert Parkes reported on Meeting for Sufferings held at Friends House on April 1, 2017. Across the Yearly Meeting, Friends are challenged to maintain Quaker structures, in terms of our buildings and our organisation. Our Society is not as diverse as we would wish, and it is ageing, which means a shortage of Friends to carry out essential roles. As an Area Meeting, we recognise this pattern. We ask ourselves, what can we do? on both a personal level and as Meetings. As we seek answers that we can sustain in our Area Meeting, we must be open to fresh discernment.

We are interested in engaging with Friends worldwide and will consider how we might do this. The Quaker World Relations Network is one source of suggestions. Eliza Jones will look into possibilities; Friends are invited to pass their suggestions to Eliza.

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

2017/33 QPSW Conference report

Karl Sage attended the QPSW Conference in March as our representative. He attended a workshop on militarisation which informed Friends of militarisation in schools and the government funding to schools for running cadet forces. Karl took part in a small-group discussion which centred on rape and torture and which led to a discussion of how to raise young men in the modern world.

Karl welcomed the opportunity to meet with people from abroad who were working in the areas covered by the conference.

2017/34 Quaker Life Representatives Council report

Our Friend Eliza Jones reported on the Quaker Life Rep Council held on April 21-23, 2017. Eliza's report can be summed up by the experience of Street Quaker Meeting: "When we use our gifts we are fulfilling our ministry most effectively". Eliza told us about questions and resources referred to at this event which meetings might usefully consider. The questions will be included in Eliza's report, which will be attached to these minutes and appear in the newsletter and on the AM website.

Some Friends were surprised and dismayed that a keynote speaker at this event should be a Quaker chaplain administering sacraments. We ask the clerk to write to the organisers of the conference and seek clarification.

2017/35 Walden School (formerly Friends' School Saffron Walden)

We heard of the proposed closure of Walden School (formerly Friends' School Saffron Walden) due to falling numbers.

We appreciate the ways in which the school sought to provide education in Saffron Walden and we send our loving wishes to all those whose energies and vision has sustained it until now.

Signed,

Alison Parkes

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