

Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting at Harwich, 09.09.2018

Representatives

Clacton-on-Sea - Karl Sage

Colchester – Di Naylor, Ecky Provingheuer (prevented), Anne Watkinson, Rosalind Kaye, Jan Squire and Patrick Squire

Sudbury – no representatives

Earls Colne – Jenny Kay

Harwich - Hazel Jones, Ros Eaton, Tony Eaton, Marion Heath, Roger Chapman, Simon Banks, Audrey Hind and Donald Hind

Present were 21 Friends, including 2 Attenders and all but 1 of our representatives.

2018/45 Friends being met in the presence of God, Quaker faith and practice 10.03 (paragraphs 3 and 4) was read.

2018/46 Death of a Friend

We record with sadness the death of our Friend Bob Hurley, at the age of 84, on August 5, 2018. Bob had been an active and trusted member of Colchester Meeting over many years. His funeral was held at Colchester Crematorium in the manner of Friends, with Charles Bather and Helen Lewis serving as Elders. Bob's ashes were buried in Roman Road Burial Ground.

2018/47 Membership matters

2018/48 Appointments

Triennial Appointments

Overseer - We appoint Jenny Linstead as Overseer for Colchester Meeting, to serve from September 2018 - September 2021.

Area Meeting Clerk Alison Parkes has asked to be released from her role as AM Clerk at the end of this year. Alison has completed one triennium and two years of a second triennium. We thank her for her service and ask Nominations Committee to bring forward the name of another Friend to serve as Clerk.

Representatives

Quaker Life representative Eliza Jones has served as our Quaker Life representative for two triennia and is half-way through the third. She has asked to be released from this role. We thank Eliza for her service and appoint Lucien de Leon to serve from September 2018 - September 2021. Lucien is able to attend the Quaker Life Rep Council which meets at Woodbrooke in October.

2018/49 Annual Report and Accounts 2017

(a) Jenny Kay, Clerk of Trustees, presented the Annual Report for the year ending December 2017, on behalf of AM Trustees, who have approved the report. Jenny referred us to a summary of the report, which appeared in the September AM newsletter, and to the full document, which is on the AM website and can be emailed to individual Friends on request. We thank Jenny for presenting the report, which is attached to these minutes.

(b) Tom Tebbutt, AM Treasurer, presented the Accounts for the year ending December 2017.

We have received and we accept the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2017 prepared by Whittles and Co, independent examiners, signed by Tom Tebbutt, Treasurer, and Jenny Kay, Clerk of Trustees. The Annual Report and Accounts have been uploaded to the AM website. We agree to retain Whittles as our independent examiners for the year ended December 31, 2018.

We gratefully acknowledge the work done on our behalf by our Treasurer and Trustees, and also our bookkeeper, Sue Dowden, maintaining the functioning of the AM. The involvement and awareness of all Friends in the work of trustees is an important obligation of being a member of the Religious Society of Friends.

2018/50 Eden's Youth Centre Project in Sudbury

Sudbury Friends have asked that we make a donation of £500 towards the purchase of the Eden's Youth Centre which has been used in Sudbury for the past 18 years. Eden's Project is a Christian charity seeking to raise £180,000 by January 2019. Anne Holloway, a former Clerk of Sudbury Meeting, was involved in getting the youth centre started, and Florence Skeels, Dennis Skeels' grand-daughter, was a member.

In view of a concern expressed by a Friend about safeguarding of young people and others, we agree to seek reassurance that Eden's Youth Centre policies and procedures are comprehensive and effective. Subject to the satisfaction of trustees, we agree to give £500 immediately and ask to be kept informed as to progress on reaching their target. We ask trustees to monitor this progress with a view to making a possible further contribution. If the full amount needed for purchase of the premises is not reached, then we ask that any contribution we have made should be returned.

We are glad to support Sudbury Meeting in "giving back to the town" from legacies originally received from Sudbury residents.

2018/51 Review of AM business arrangements

Jenny Kay presented a vision for changing our AM business arrangements. Her thoughts on this are based on her experience as clerk to AM Nominations Committee (further to Minute 2018/40, Report from AM Nominations Committee), which has been reduced to a committee of one (herself). Currently Colchester LM Nominations Committee is supporting Jenny by meeting with her. The AM Nominations Committee has reduced the list of appointments. However, those Friends in appointed roles often find themselves taking on more work as there are fewer Friends to do the necessary tasks, and this especially applies to Trustees. We

are now in the position of needing to identify an AM Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Treasurer, three key roles which need to be filled in order for the AM to function properly.

We considered the following questions:

- Would it help to reduce the number of AMs to three?
- Would each LM be prepared to organise an AM event (for fellowship or learning) to be held at their Meeting House or premises? This could include such things as the National Friends Fellowship of Healing, a Kindlers workshop, a talk from a Quaker speaker (including ourselves), etc. These events would aim to be enjoyable, uplifting and possibly challenging.
- LMs are asked to bring forward the names of Friends willing to serve on the AM Nominations Committee, as a matter of urgency. For the time being, we thank Colchester LM Nominations Committee for its willingness to support AM Nominations Committee and ask that this continues until other arrangements can be made.
- Would Friends agree to setting up a committee of clerks, to include AM Clerk and LM Clerks, which would meet to manage some of the business of AM and help reduce the agenda for the AMs.
- Is there anything more you could do to help with the Area Meeting?

We took a sounding of the responses of Friends present. We recognise the desire of Friends to be open and participative in business arrangements, which has at times contributed to unnecessarily lengthy meetings. It might be possible to consider detailed and instrumental matters in other ways, perhaps by a committee of clerks. Trusting the people to whom we give responsibility would reduce our business meetings and make them more interesting.

We must be sensitive to our needs, our lives and our different gifts, pulling us in different directions, and yet find ways to support one another joyfully.

We ask each Local Meeting to consider the suggested changes to our AM business arrangements and report back to AM in November.

2018/52 Dates of AMs in 2019

We ask the Friends of our Local Meetings to consider whether they could host the following AMs in 2019, and report back to AM in November:

6 AMs

January 13 - Colchester

March 10 - Clacton

May 12 - Sudbury

July 14 - Earls Colne

Sept 8 - Harwich

Nov 10 - Colchester

3 AMs

January 13

May 12

Sept 8 - or perhaps the following Sunday to avoid Heritage Weekend and Harwich Motorcycle Run and Family Fun Day.

OR Why not make all 3 AMs on 3rd Sunday of those months?

January 20

May 19

Sept 15

OR 2nd Sundays as follows:

Feb 10

June 9

Oct 13

OR

March 10

July 14

Nov 10

2018/53 Benjamin Lay

Benjamin Lay (1682-1759) attended Colchester Two Weeks Meeting and Colchester Monthly Meeting, as well as other Quaker Meetings in London and America. Four Meetings are said to have disowned him: Colchester Two Weeks Meeting, Devonshire House Monthly Meeting (now North London Area Meeting), Abington Meeting PA, and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting), the latter three having since reinstated him in recent months or minuted their unity with the spirit of Benjamin Lay. We have been approached by Tim Gee, on behalf of South East London AM, to reconsider his disownment by Colchester Two Weeks Meeting.

Rosalind Kaye, our AM Archivist, is doing further research to establish precisely what took place. If we wish to right a wrong, we need to know exactly what wrong that is. We ask Rosalind to report to AM in November, when we will meet in Colchester.

Background information about Benjamin Lay can be found in the book by Marcus Rediker entitled "The Fearless Benjamin Lay: the Quaker dwarf who became the first revolutionary abolitionist". The minutes from three Meetings on both sides of the Atlantic reinstating Benjamin Lay can be found on our AM website, Business page.

We agree to consider closely what is being asked of us, and will revisit this matter when we meet at Colchester in November.

Signed,

Alison Parkes

Alison Parkes

Clerk