

Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting at Colchester, 11.11.2018

Representatives

Clacton-on-Sea Liz Prockter

Colchester Rosalind Kaye, Phyl Reid, Eliza Jones, Di Naylor and Julia Usher

Sudbury None

Earls Colne Jenny Kay

Harwich None

Present were 20 Friends, including 2 Attenders and all of our representatives.

2018/54 Friends being met in the presence of God, part of extract 11.03 of Quaker Faith and Practice was read.

2018/55 Death of a Friend

We record with sadness the death of our Friend Tim Holding, at the age of 78. Tim had been an active and involved member of Colchester Meeting over many years. The funeral has been arranged for 13th of this month. A memorial meeting for worship will be arranged for a later date

2018/56 Membership Matters

Membership application. Jayne Adams and Charles Bather visited Kate Powis on her application for membership and have presented their report.

We agree to accept Kate into membership and appoint Phyl Reid and Ecky Prolingheuer to welcome her.

2018/57 Appointments

Area Meeting Clerk - Nominations Committee brings forward the name of Di Naylor to serve as Area Meeting Clerk. This name being acceptable to the Meeting, we appoint Di to serve from January 2019 - December 2021

Area Meeting Assistant Clerk - Charles Bather has agreed to extend his current appointment. We appoint him to serve until December 2019.

AM Treasurer - Nominations Committee has brought forward the name of Liz Prockter to serve for three years, until December 2021. We appoint our Friend accordingly

Trustees - Jenny Kay has agreed to serve a second triennium.

The name of Liz Prockter has been brought forward to serve as a trustee for 3 years. These names being acceptable we appoint both these friends to serve until December 2021

Elder/Overseer at Harwich - Simon Banks has completed two years in this role but has indicated his readiness to serve for a further two years. We appoint him to serve until December 2020

Elders at Colchester.

Nominations Committee will continue to seek names to increase the number of elders. Ray Attrill and Alison Parkes are both prevented from attending regular Meetings for Worship at present, but their current appointments as elders continue for the time being.

New role:

AM Assistant Treasurer Sudbury

Sue Dowden, book keeper/accountant for the AM, runs the Sudbury account but is not able to make payments. Hitherto this has been done by the AM Treasurer. Nomination Committee has asked AM to create a new role of Assistant Treasurer for Sudbury. Tom Tebbut is prepared to serve in this position for three years, until December 2021. This name being acceptable our Friend is hereby appointed.

Appointment to be laid down for the time being

AM Contributions Secretary

As Nominations Committee is unable to bring forward a name to fill this position, Trustees have agreed to make alternative arrangements for this work to be carried out. We agree to lay down this role, but to review the position next year.

2018/58 Review of AM business arrangements

Further to Minute 2018/51, We see advantages in freeing up the Clerks to work efficiently and joyfully on AM tasks, while sustaining proper discernment and right ordering. We wish to encourage full participation in our business

meetings and hope that streamlining our procedures will go some way to ensuring this. We agree that the AM Clerk, supported by the Assistant Clerk and Trustees, may manage routine business matters by conferring or meeting outside convened AMs. Simplification of our business procedures might emerge. We ask that this arrangement be reviewed after one year, in January 2020, and a report brought to AM.

We ask each Local Meeting to organise one or more AM events 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), and so on. These events would coincide with the dates of AM and would aim to be enjoyable, uplifting and possibly challenging. Smaller meetings should feel free to call upon AM for assistance with catering and other arrangements. Communicating with Friends across the AM, well in good time, is key.

2018/59 Dates of AMs in 2019

We agree to hold 5 AMs in 2019, all 2nd Sundays, on the following dates and venues.

Feb 10 Clacton
Apl 14 Sudbury
Jun 9 Earls Colne
Sep 8 Harwich
Nov 10 Colchester

2018/60 Area Meeting Gathering 2018

Area Meeting Gathering was held at High Leigh Conference Centre the weekend of October 13-15. Twenty-five Friends and Attenders from three LMs took part. The theme of the weekend was **“From the Individual to the Collective”**.

Friends who had attended spoke warmly of their rewarding experience of the weekend.

We thank Peter Whiteley, Anne Watkinson, Sylvia Jeffcock, Sue Rhodes and Kate Powis for enabling the gathering to take place, and we ask them to pass on our thanks to Mark Russ, a tutor at Woodbrooke, who facilitated much of the weekend.

We agree that Peter Whiteley should go ahead with a booking for early in 2021, providing a suitable date is available, and that this should be for 30 places.

We authorise the AM Treasurer to pay any necessary deposit involved in making an advance booking.

We invite Friends who would wish to help organise a further gathering to volunteer to Peter Whiteley.

We agree to subsidise all places and charge participants a nominal sum of £50. Our Treasurer has confirmed that we can afford to do this. Friends who could afford more could be invited to pay an extra amount.

As 2021 is a long way ahead, we hope that we might arrange another weekend occasion to be held locally, some time in 2019.

2018/61 Meeting for Sufferings report

Robert Parkes is prevented from joining us today but we have heard his written account of the most recent Meeting for Sufferings which he attended as our representative.

We thank Robert for his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

2018/62 Quaker Life Representatives Council report

Lucien de Leon has reported on the October meeting at Woodbrooke of QLRC. He explained that children who had been brought up within a church tradition generally leave it as they grow up. Those not involved with churches do not go on to join one. Quakers are also affected by this trend and need to develop solutions. Quakers are not generally well-known - we need to raise our profile.

We thank Lucien for his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes and which will also appear in the newsletter.

2018/63 Seed Money

John Lewis introduced this subject. Some time ago AM set aside £5000 to be used as seed money, in the form of repayable loans, to support refugees wishing to start small businesses. In the event this has proved to be too ambitious. We agree to a request from John Lewis and Robert Parkes that this money be used instead for making small non-repayable grants to help refugees and asylum

seekers with training expenses, language courses, bus fares to courses, tools, protective clothing etc.

2018/64 Benjamin Lay

Further to Minute 2018/53, our AM Archivist, Rosalind Kaye, provided us with more background to help our discernment regarding Benjamin Lay, the fierce 18th century abolitionist. We have been asked by Tim Gee, on behalf of South East London AM, to reconsider his disownment by Colchester Two Weeks Meeting in the early 1700s.

Rosalind read to us the minute from Colchester Two Weeks Meeting:

"We therefore in concurrence with our Friends of Devonshire House Monthly meeting do signify our great dislike to and dissatisfaction with his irregular disorderly and evil practices tending to Confusions as well as at London as amongst us wherefore we can have no Unity with him until he has given ye Friends of ye Monthly Meeting of Devonshire House satisfaction for his offence during the time of his residence in London and afterwards gives this meeting satisfaction also."

Rosalind pointed out that Benjamin Lay's membership had evidently been at Devonshire House (now North London Area Meeting) rather than Colchester Two Weeks Meeting, so that to "undisown" him would not necessarily be relevant or appropriate. However, we can reconsider whether we are in unity with him, recognising the intent behind his often provocative behaviour.

Benjamin Lay was a prophetic voice who was ahead of his time. Today, in a reputedly "post-truth" era, we must speak up for the value of truth, and in particular examine our own consciences. While we cannot put right the wrongs of the past, we can quietly declare what our consciences have revealed to be the truth of what happened to Benjamin Lay.

We, the Friends of Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting, recognise the integrity and courage of a man who called slave-holders, including Quakers, to account, who protested the abomination of slavery, upheld the equality of the sexes, and lived his life with integrity according to his Quaker beliefs. We hold that Benjamin Lay was a Friend of the Truth; we are in unity with the spirit of Benjamin Lay.

2018/65 Oral History Project

We have received from Jane Herd and Kate Powis, a proposal for an oral history project to create a record of the experiences of Quaker life of the more senior members of our Area Meeting. This would be led by Jane and Kate, both of whom have relevant experience of such projects. If we agree to this suggestion in principle, they would come back to Area Meeting with a more solid proposal. We suggest that they might find it helpful to consult with Colchester Recalled.

We hope our Friends will proceed as suggested.

Signed,

Charles Bather

Charles Bather
Clerk this time.