



Minutes of the Meeting held Saturday 27th February 2016 at Cemmaes Road

2016.01 Opening worship and welcome

We have welcomed 36 Friends to this Meeting, as listed on the attendance sheet.
Quaker Faith and Practice 26.64 has been read in Welsh and English in our opening worship.

D. Bryn Jones has provided simultaneous translation today.

The following Friends were appointed by their Area Meetings to attend:

- North Wales: Martin Hughes, Catherine James and Frances Voelcker (reporting).
- Southern Marches: no representative appointed but Peter Hussey will report.
- Mid Wales: Gethin Evans
- South Wales: Julia Lim

Our elders today are: Sonia Kuznetsov (Machynlleth) and Gethin Evans (Aberystwyth)

2016.02 *Calon and The Friend*

Ben Lightowler has agreed to write about this Meeting for *Calon*.

Gwyneth Clapham has agreed to write for *The Friend*.

2016.03 Cytûn Report Deborah Rowlands has reported in relation to the work of Cytûn. Some of its activities are presence at Royal Welsh Show and Eisteddfod; matters to do with the Assembly, including briefings for the election and Cytûn's support for refugees. Its membership of EcoChurch is new and matches Friends' concerns about sustainability. Deborah has said that she experiences a sense of shared journeying in Friends' working with Cytûn. We thank Deborah and record also that we uphold her in her role as Yearly Meeting Clerk in 2016.

2016.04 Meeting for Sufferings Report (February 6th meeting)

Frances Voelcker has reminded us of the breadth and depth of Friends' commitments. 'We need a vision of wider society' one piece of ministry had declared, and the meeting had included continued deep wrestling with how to determine our responses to refugees and working on *Our Faith in the Future*. The report from The Sustainability Group had been presented by Frances herself. Engaging all of our AMs on matters of sustainability is important, she reminded us. All the papers are available on the new website at

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes>.

2016.05 Cymru'n Cofio report: Alan Armstrong, our representative to *Cymru'n Cofio* provided a report of the The Steering Group for a proposed Wales- and Quaker-focussed exhibition entitled 'Faith and Action'. This had met on Monday January 18th 2016. As there have been relatively few Quakers in Wales who have been Conscientious Objectors the scope of the exhibition will be broadened beyond Quaker work. Friends are invited to contribute to the

exhibition with stories about work for peace in Wales. It is not expected that it will be ready to be shown before June at the earliest, and could take longer to assemble.

2016.06 Update on peace projects and Wales

Jane Harries has given us a report on the different projects to do with promoting peace in Wales, including the following: The *Wales for Peace* exhibition in Aberystwyth makes people aware of actions that have been taken on the basis of Faith; The yearly peace messages of Urdd Gobaith Cymru (The Youth Movement of Wales) have been digitised; The 'Llyfr Cofio', the Book of Remembrance, is being exhibited in the National Library of Wales until April, together with stories about conscientious objectors. People are encouraged to share their stories. A resource pack is being created for schools and volunteers are required to run assemblies. Disadvantaged communities and refugees are prioritised in this work. Also a petition has been sent to the Welsh Assembly to establish a Conscientious Objectors' Day. The militarisation of schools has been mentioned and the Assembly is taking this into account in considering their guidelines to the careers service. The Wales Peace Academy is looking for partnership organisations, especially universities that could take the work forward.

2016.07 Minute to Meeting of Friends in Wales from SWAM

In accordance with their own Minute 15:09:11 (Appointments x), SWAM has asked MFW to consider appointing a 'contact' for the Drones Network Campaign / Rhwydwaith Ymgyrch Dronau Cymru. Organisation started in 2013 when Drones began to be tested in Aberporth. They are also tested in Llanbedr in North Wales. South Wales AM felt that it would be important to have a presence there. It was expressed in the Meeting that MFW knows of numbers of concerns in Wales with which Quakers can be involved. Some of us are involved in campaigns locally and work with them as much we can. MFW will not be appointing a contact person to this Network but Friends across our AMs are encouraged to create a communication network for themselves and report to each other. With the agreement of the clerks the MFW website can be used as a medium to publicise some campaigns and events, in addition to the email network, with the MFW administrator putting links on the site as appropriate.

2016.08 (a) The National Eisteddfod, Abergavenny 2016:

The Area Meeting appointees to be co-ordinators of Friends' presence at the 2016 National Eisteddfod in Abergavenny, Hilary Beynon and Stevie Krayner, have attended the first planning meeting. Meetings will be circulated in due course with details and requests for volunteers. Stevie Krayner has indicated already that visiting Hedd Wen, a place of spiritual hospitality under Friends' care with a meeting room and peace garden, might provide one activity to be organised by Friends at the eisteddfod this year.

(b) The Royal Welsh Show 2016:

SMAM has been unable as yet to appoint a person to organise Friends' presence at the Royal Welsh Show, though several Friends in the Area Meeting have said they are willing to visit it. Peter Hussey will forward to the clerks the name of a Friend who will take a co-ordinating role.

2016.09 The Eisteddfod lecture 2016

From the Eisteddfod Lecture planning group Lynn Moseley has reported on plans for the first of the proposed three lectures organised by Friends in Wales. The lecture in Welsh by Gethin Evans, will be in the Societies' Pavilion at the National Eisteddfod in Abergavenny and will be on the Quaker publisher John Edward Southall of Newport (1855-1928). This will be advertised

among Friends and others and we encourage people to attend the Eisteddfod that day and support both the speaker and this new form of outreach. There will be simultaneous translation for any who want it. The lecture and the lecturer will be introduced by J. Gwynfor Jones, Professor Emeritus of the History of Wales (Cardiff University).

2016.10 Resources

The Resources group has been auditing our provision of English and Welsh language outreach material and considering subjects which need to be covered. Ros Morley reports that a bi-lingual *Quakers in Wales* pull-up banner is to be created, usable at events. The group would welcome recommendations from Friends as to what Quaker material might be considered for future translation into Welsh. Resources group is willing to take responsibility for overseeing the provision of AM Contact Books. This will be of considerable help to MFW clerks.

2016.11 Pre-election statement from Friends in Wales

This Meeting has received for consideration a pre-election statement in advance of the Wales Assembly elections. MFW's Wales Focus Group will finalise the Statement at its next meeting. It will be sent to all candidates for election to the Assembly; published on our website; sent to Cytûn for distribution through its own networks; copied to Meeting for Sufferings, BYM's parliamentary liaison officer, the clerk of General Meeting for Scotland (GMS) and otherwise circulated to media. It was drafted by MFW's Wales Focus Group. We thank that group for the work it is doing.

2016.12 Quakers and devolution (see also 2016.15 [iv] below)

Christine Trevett has told us of her meeting with the Recording Clerk Paul Parker and with Martin Burnell, clerk of General Meeting for Scotland, in Edinburgh in January. There is a growing recognition among Friends' House staff that political devolution has present and potential significance for BYM structures and business. This needs more consideration as also does the language used in Quaker documents to describe Scotland and Wales in a Quaker context, so as to avoid an Anglo-centric understanding and presentation of Quakerism. At a future date the impact of increasing devolution is likely to figure on Yearly Meeting agenda. We are reminded that it is important for there to be presence from Wales at the Threshing Conference for Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee and Meeting for Sufferings, taking place in Woodbrooke in November this year. This Edinburgh meeting was felt to have been valuable and it was agreed that clerks of MFW and of GMS would meet annually with the Recording Clerk and the clerk of Meeting for Sufferings. Paul Parker will be visiting us at our October 2016 meeting in Llanidloes.

2016.13 Trustees and Finance

Frank Brown, clerk for Trustees of MFW, has spoken of the Annual Report which has been accepted by Trustees. It is available on the website and paper copies may be obtained via our administrator. The Trustees will report to the Charity Commissioners as required.

Financial report

The outgoing Treasurer Lynn Moseley reports that MFW's financial position is stable after a busy period, with adequate reserves to meet unforeseen demands. The 2016 grant from BYM has been received. We note that with the end of the Digital Voices of Conscience Project the balance of monies in the restricted fund which MFW was overseeing has now been released. It

has been decided to close a further two small restricted funds so that all such funds are now closed. What was formerly the JRCT Fund (now known as the Project Fund) contains £2725.62, in the first instance to be used to fund continuing work on MFW website. By year end, £965 had been spent on the IT consultant's help. Since this fund should also service general outreach too, the expenditure should figure in the review of website matters to be undertaken in 2016.

Martin Hughes replaces Lynn Moseley as Treasurer and we thank her for her ministry in that role.

2016.14 Speakers: Alan and Marilyn Thomas, 'Working with Refugees Now, in Practical Ways'.

Marilyn and Alan Thomas of Swansea Meeting have given us a rich and thought-provoking picture of their work with City of Sanctuary. The charity 'Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers' are supporting people who are dispersed to Swansea. They initially met as a friendship group, from which different initiatives have developed, like a legal group as well as a group of people who offer their spare rooms as accommodation. They want to designate Wales as a nation of Sanctuary.

Refugees make a significant contribution to society. We heard moving poems of loss, that brought home the destitution refugees can experience. Our government's offer to take 20,000 refugees over five years falls woefully short of the needs of the millions who are displaced and need to be relocated. The speakers described how Asylum seekers have to go through a long and worrying process before they are accepted as refugees by a government who cares little about the hardship they suffer. Many are made destitute or are being unfairly deported. If asylum is refused, the little support that has been given is cut off. The excuse for making people destitute is often false and the interviewers' default attitude is one of disbelief. Often people who have been refused at first get Leave to Remain on appeal, which shows the large margin of error in the decisions. Detention centres and hostels are increasingly run by private companies, which are not controlled and can bring the standard of accommodation down to appalling. As deportation is expensive, people are often left destitute for years and go into exploitative work or prostitution. Offering people accommodation within the support scheme can give a lot of satisfaction and joy, if certain conditions for home life are agreed. Fundraising events are needed and people are encouraged to organise them.

Considering the problems that asylum seekers experience made us more aware of the predicaments with which they need help. Personal connections are essential and many different activities can be organised to raise awareness or provide practical help. *Nacom, Syria Relief* and many other organisations are working on this already and Friends are encouraged to cooperate with them as well as challenging the official narrative that people in Wales are hostile to refugees. We could write letters to the press that demonstrate local people's generosity.

City of Sanctuary has offered six practical ideas of how we could help, please refer to their website www.cityofsanctuary.org. Welcoming people makes any community a better community. Nothing makes us more human than reaching out to our fellow human beings.

We thank Marilyn and Alan for their moving contribution.

2016.15 Minutes of Record – between meetings

(i) On November 4th 2015 the clerks Ros Morley and Christine Trevett sent a letter on behalf of MFW to the Petitions Committee of the Assembly, urging creation of a CO's day in Wales.

(ii) MFW's Wales Focus Group, convened by Gethin Evans and in consultation with the clerks, provided a Quaker response to the Wales Government's November 2015 consultation on the 'Minimum Pricing of Alcohol Bill'.

(iii) On January 28th 2016 in Cardiff Gethin Evans represented Friends at the Inaugural meeting of the new Welsh Places of Worship Forum, coinciding with the launch of the Welsh Government's Strategic Action Plan for Historic Places of Worship in Wales.

(iv) At the request of the Recording Clerk, Paul Parker, Christine Trevett attended a meeting with him and the clerk of General Meeting for Scotland, in Edinburgh on January 29th 2016, furthering discussions on MFW's Minute (2015.19) to BYM agenda committee, in respect of devolution and BYM. The Minute had read as follows:

2015.19 Minute to Yearly Meeting Gathering Agenda Committee

With increasing devolution to Scotland and to Wales, it is important that Britain Yearly Meeting is clear that it is not speaking for the whole of Great Britain when, inadvertently, publications, activities of centrally managed work, or statements ignore the reality in the devolved nations. We agree to send this minute to the agenda committee suggesting that an item at a future Yearly Meeting should discuss the effects of devolution on the Society of Friends. We agree to send this minute to Agenda Committee.

2016.16 Nominations and Appointments

The following were reported and / or agreed

MFW Wales Focus Group dates of end of service

Catherine James December 31st 2016 Gethin Evans December 31st 2017

Alun Williams December 31st 2018 David Harries December 31st 2018

In the light of a longstanding difficulty in finding a young Friend to serve on the Focus Group this item has been removed and Nominations Group will explore with the convener of Focus Group other ways of gaining younger Friends' input.

Correction to Minuted term of appointment

The appointment of Julia Lim to Nominations Group, Minuted in 2015.31 as ending December 2016, should have read 2017.

AM appointments to outreach work:

SMAM has been invited to appoint one or two Friends in each case to co-ordinate Friends' contribution to ecumenical activity at the 2016 National Welsh Show in Llanellwedd (18th-21st July) and the National Eisteddfod in Abergavenny (July 29th-6th August).

For the eisteddfod: Hilary Beynon and Stevie Krayner (Abergavenny).

For the Royal Welsh Show: awaiting a named co-ordinator.

Meeting for Sufferings appointee

David Jones has been released from the role of MFW representative on Meeting for Sufferings. Between Meetings the name of Gethin Evans has been forwarded to Meeting for Sufferings for consideration.

Between Meetings Appointments

To serve on Arrangements Committee from 01.01.2016 to December 31st 2018: Pauline Brind and Joyce Gooding.

Names brought forward (nominated Friends leave the room)

A Southern Marches Friend to serve on Wales Focus Group immediately and to December 31st 2018. Peter Hussey (SMAM)

A Friend for Resources Group immediately and to December 31st 2018. Greg Hill (MWAM)

A Friend with experience of website technology to work in a Task & Finish group reviewing the website, to June 2016. Alma Whitton (MWAM)

A Friend to work in a Task & Finish group reviewing MFW clerkship and administration, to June 2016 Liz McDermott. (SWAM)

These names being acceptable, the Friends concerned are appointed.

Nominations sought

A Friend to serve on the Resources Group, immediately and to December 31st 2018.

A Friend from NWAM to serve on Arrangements Committee with immediate effect and to December 31st 2018.

An assistant clerk with immediate effect and to December 31st 2016

An Archivist for MFW records to serve immediately and to December 31st 2018

A Welsh-speaking Friend to work in a Task & Finish group reviewing the website, to June 2016.

Signed by co-clerks

Christine Trevett

Efa Wulle