



## Minutes of the Meeting held Saturday 25 October 2014 at Aberystwyth

### 2014.33 Opening Worship and Welcome

We are pleased to welcome 37 Friends here today, as listed on the attendance sheet. Part of the Epistle from Yearly Meeting Gathering 2014 has been read during our opening worship.

The following Friends have been appointed by their Area Meetings to attend:

**North Wales:** Frances Voelcker

**South Wales:** Liz McDermott

Other area meetings in Wales have not appointed Friends to attend on this occasion but the following have agreed to report back to their respective area meeting:

**Mid Wales:** Dorothy Bell

**Southern Marches:** Hilary Beynon

Deborah Rowlands and Christine Trevett have been appointed to act as Elders for today.

### 2013.38 Calon and The Friend

Gwyneth Clapham has agreed to write a report on this meeting for *The Friend* and for *Calon*.

### 2014.35 National Service of Commemoration 4 August

Maryse Newnham attended the National Service of Commemoration in Llandaff Cathedral on our behalf. We have heard her report, which is attached. The report finished with the Message of Peace and Goodwill from the young people of Wales to young people around the world. We thank Maryse for attending on our behalf.

### 2014.36 Eisteddfod & YM/YMG Gatherings – how do we avoid a clash of dates?

The next Gathering, in 2017, does not fall on the same week as the Eisteddfod because Yearly Meeting Gathering starts in July that year. Deborah Rowlands has spoken about this as she is currently part of the committee that decides the dates. Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee does have in mind the needs of Welsh Friends, and since 1997 they have tried to avoid a clash.

Our presence at the National Eisteddfod is important not just because it is the main cultural event in Wales, but because for Quakers this is about our ministry to the people of Wales. We are grateful that there is no problem in 2017; we hope this matter will be borne in mind in future.

We will send this minute to the clerk of agenda committee.

## **2014.37** Sufferings Regional Days

The first **Sufferings Regional Gathering** was held at Glantwymyn Community Hall (Cemmaes Road) on 18 October; 25 participants and 3 facilitators were present. None of us were sure what to expect – for many of us it exceeded expectations. All participants shared in writing the report – just a few of the comments made:

“A very thought provoking day made much more enjoyable than its title might suggest by very able and friendly facilitation by two Meeting for Sufferings members plus the assistant Recording Clerk. They worked us hard but it never felt like it.

I found the "Testing Concerns" exercise especially helpful, revealing the need for local and area meetings to sharpen up their focus on a concern before expecting MfS to take action.

Even having read *Becoming Friends* several times, I hadn't fully realised how crucial MfS was in the life of the Society. So little of its activities trickle through to LMs, despite us having such a keen and efficient rep as Frances.

I learnt that Meeting for Sufferings is bigger than I thought, about 100. Good to have the opportunity to get to know people from the other AM.

I thought the day was exceptionally good. I came prepared to be bored and found I was gripped by it. It is a meeting for worship for business; I had assumed it was a load of boring business.”

The South Wales/Southern Marches event will be on 22 November in Cardiff FMH.

## **2014.38** Meeting for Sufferings

Dave Butler has sent the Meeting for Sufferings report of the 6 September Meeting, which has been tabled.

Frances Voelcker has spoken about the Meeting on 4 October. She felt that the early part of the meeting suffered from feeling limited by time, but the worship in the afternoon session provided ministry which shared what Meeting for Sufferings should be doing. Frances's report will be circulated to AM clerks.

We thank our representatives for these reports.

## **2014.39** Outreach matters

### **i. The Royal Welsh Show**

John Senior attended the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show at Llanelwedd from 21–24 July 2014. Quakers were again invited to participate in the activities in the Cytûn Churches Together marquee.

On two of the days there were Church Cafés in the afternoon, an interactive up-beat phenomenon with which John was not familiar, where participants considered hectic rail journeys alongside their spiritual journeys. John regretted there was no quiet carriage, and no tunnel with a light at the end.

Each day there was the Quiet Corner Meeting for Worship. On the final day a worker on the stall for planting olive trees in Palestine joined for the last ten minutes; he said others would have liked come too, but there was so much to do.... John reflected ruefully on 'green pastures' and 'still waters'. We thank John for this report.

### **ii. National Eisteddfod in Llanelli**

Carey Thomas has reported on her time spent at the Eisteddfod in August this year – she and John Lewis felt that everything went well in the Cytûn tent. Carey said it was good to listen to other denominations giving their services even though they sometimes didn't agree with the content, but Carey did enjoy going to Mass one evening with a nun from Llanelli.

A number of Quakers visited the tent and also some enquirers – they were given pamphlets. We thank for Carey for the report and John and Carey for the work involved.

Lynn Moseley has spoken about her ideas for future Quaker events at the National Eisteddfod. She would like us to consider whether there is something specific that can be offered. In 2016 the Eisteddfod will be held in Abergavenny; It has not been there for one hundred years. The Quaker John Southall could be the subject for sharing there – lectures can be held in the Pabell Len.

We are reminded that many lectures are held at the Eisteddfod. It would be possible for us to organise such a lecture each year, not necessarily always about Quakers, but giving a Quaker message. Lynn recommends that a designated fund could be set up that people could contribute to which could then pay speakers.

Jane Harries tells us that the Quakers had a strong presence at the Eisteddfod this year – not just in the Cytûn tent. Our presence has a positive effect on other churches and has, perhaps, provided an outlet for ideas they may not have expressed before.

We ask our nominations committee to bring forward names of Friends willing to contribute to the above arrangements. Friends could then make suggestions of future events to this committee.

### **iii. Quaker Week Posters**

The posters produced this year which were translated into Welsh were organised by Communications Department in Friends House. When the clerk, administrator and Huw Owen visited Friends House in June 2013 it was suggested that Meeting of Friends in Wales might seek an appointment to attend the Friends House Project Group meetings in order to put forward a Welsh voice in the choice of style for the posters. In future we might like to produce our own posters but that might need the finances of Meeting of Friends in Wales to be in a position to give the Project Group a budget. In 2015 the Project Group does not have a budget; neither does it yet have a convenor. The Project Group will report back to a future meeting once they have met.

### **2014.40 Arrangements – Residential Weekend**

In June this year (see Minute 2014.20), Meeting of Friends in Wales asked for a Residential Gathering, and the weekend of 27, 28 February and 1 March 2015 has been identified as one in which none of the four constituent AMs has an event. The topic is “Taking the next step in fulfilling our commitment to be a Sustainable Community”, and it will be held at the Centre for Alternative Technology.

**Possible speakers:** Sunniva Taylor from QPSW Gill Westcott.

We hope that as far as possible participants will be able to use public transport. Frances Voelcker will arrange for a flyer and booking forms to be sent to local meetings and would appreciate names of those interested as soon as possible. We hope that some participants will be able to contribute to a bursary fund, and maybe area meetings will contribute also.

### **2014.41 Christian Aid Letter to the Press – Gaza**

Mari McNeil of Christian Aid Wales asked if we and other faith group leaders would put our name to a letter regarding the crisis in Gaza, this letter to appear in the Western Mail and other English and Welsh language media. Trustees and others consulted agreed that there was no reason for MFW to have any concerns about this letter and so the clerk replied to Mari McNeil to this effect. The letter with signatories has been tabled.

### **2014.42 Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914–1918**

The Programme Board in the Welsh Assembly Government who lead on the Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914–1918 programme invited a representative from Meeting of Friends in Wales to join the

membership of the Programme Board. Friends contacted agreed that a Quaker voice on the panel could be important. Alan Armstrong was appointed to represent Meeting of Friends in Wales on the Programme Board of Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914–1918 through the 'Between Meetings' procedure.

Cymri dros Heddwch/Wales for Peace is a five-year project part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is led by the Welsh Centre for International Affairs and involves a range of partners, including Cardiff and Aberystwyth Universities, the National Library, Cymdeithos y Cymod/Fellowship of Reconciliation, Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Academi Heddwch Cymru/the Wales Peace Institute.

The project aims to raise awareness to the effects of World War One on individuals and communities in Wales; to emphasise Wales' tradition of peacemaking (including conscientious objectors); to spark off a national conversation about conflicts in the modern world and to question the use of war as a means of 'solving' problems. As part of the project children and young people will be encouraged to research and share the lives of peacemakers in Wales.

Jane Harries offered to keep Friends informed of the activities of the project and to flag up where Friends might be involved. The WCIA website is [www.wcia.org.uk](http://www.wcia.org.uk)

### **2014.43 United Reformed Church Synod**

We were invited to send a representative to the United Reformed Church Synod, which took place in Carno on 18 October 2014. Bryan Scrivener was appointed to represent Meeting of Friends in Wales through the 'Between Meetings' procedure.

### **2014.44 Trustees' / Treasurer's Matters – Budget for 2015 and the last quarter of 2014**

Our income this year was £9600; the budget for next year is slightly more. Our expenses next year will use all but £500 of this. So we need to increase our income by asking either Britain Yearly Meeting or Area Meetings to increase the amount they pay to us.

Although our balance looks healthy at present, much of it is designated money.

We can produce a balanced budget for 2015 on condition that no unidentified pressures are put on the account. Identified projects include the website, much of which will be paid for by the JRCT Fund. We are pleased that the JRCT books are selling well.

The membership books cost Meeting of Friends in Wales over £300 last year. Some meetings charge for the Lists of Members, others give them free to Friends. The trustees recommend that in future a small number of copies are given free to officers and that we avoid handling copies for individual members. We ask the clerk to list the officers who need a free copy.

### **2014.45 Nominations and Appointments**

#### **i. Between Meetings appointments**

Bryan Scrivener to represent Friends at the annual meeting of the United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales at Carno Village Hall on Saturday 18 October 2014.

Alan Armstrong to represent Friends on the Programme Board of Cymru'n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914–1918 Meeting of Friends in Wales.

#### **ii. Nominations sought**

- Co-clerk to December 2016
- One member of the Project Group to serve to December 2016

- We ask Mid Wales Area Meeting to appoint a Friend to represent Quakers at the 2015 Eisteddfod planning meetings, to organise a rota for the Cytûn tent and to arrange the Quiet Corner, should Friends have charge of it. The Eisteddfod will be held in Meifod, Powys.

### **lii Nominations received**

- Assistant clerk to serve from January 2015 to December 2015 – Efa Wulle
- Calon editor from January 2015 to December 2017 – Stevie Kraye
- One member of arrangements committee from January 2015 to December 2017 – Liz McDermott
- Eisteddfod Planning Group to December 2017 – Christine Trevett, Gethin Evans, Lynn Moseley.

These names being acceptable and the Friends willing to serve, they are appointed.

### **2014.46 Gerald Hewitson: Learning to Stand Fearlessly in Powerful Powerlessness – How we might regard Minute 36 and our Canterbury Commitment**

Gerald has spoken of the way we were before Quakerism; the way we were during early Quakerism; the way we were as American Quakers; and slavery. It took about one hundred years for American Quakers to realise that slavery was wrong.

The way we are now. We are struggling with Minute 36 and our Canterbury Commitment, but we do not have one hundred years. Is this our generation's 'thick night of 'darkness'. What do we need to do to implement Minute 36?

We need to arrive at a place where we all make changes. It is the spirit which lightens our darkness if we are open to it, and which inspires us to do things in a different way.

Gerald's talk will be forwarded with the minutes, and we hope that it will soon be put on the website.

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

We thank Gerald for his presentation.

Ros Morley (*clerk*)

Jenny Sen (*assistant clerk*)