



Minutes of Meeting of Friends in Wales, held at Aberystwyth 23rd February 2019

2019.01 Opening worship and welcome

During our opening worship number 5 of *Advices & Queries* has been read in Welsh by Rhian Parry and in English by Ruth Moore Williams

2019.02 Attendance:

We welcome 42 Friends here today as recorded on the attendance list.

Area Meeting representatives today are:

South Wales AM (SWAM): Christine Trevett

Southern Marches AM (SMAM): Jeff Beatty

Mid Wales AM (MWAM): Alan Clark

North Wales AM (NWAM): Frances Voelcker and Ruth Moore Williams

Our elders for today are: Julia Aspden and Frank Brown. Our translator today is Steffan Wiliam.

2019.03 Calon and *The Friend*

Alan Clark will write a report of this meeting for Calon and Huw Meredydd Owen will write for *the Friend*.

2019.04. Minutes of record of between meetings' decisions

a) Following minute MFW 2018.44, our search group brought forward the name of Jess Morgan of SWAM, who, in consultation between the clerks of MFW and the clerk of trustees, was appointed to the nominations group as that needs strengthening immediately. We welcome Jess to this role.

b) Jeff Beatty (SMAM) has agreed to be our representative for the Royal Welsh Show in July 2019, and Gwyneth Hewitson has agreed to be our representative at the Cytûn tent at the National Eisteddfod in August 2019 in Llanrwst.

c) BYM has agreed the grant to MFW which finances our administration and translation services.

d) Peter Hussey agreed to be our representative at the Woodbrooke conference: Answering that of God: diversity and inclusion in the Society of Friends.

e) Peter Hussey has agreed to attend the bi-annual Synod for the United Reform Church in Wales which will be meeting in Llandrindid Wells on a six monthly basis.

2019.05 Minutes received since the last meeting:

a) In response to MFW minute 2018.44.c):

i) Further to MFW minute 2018.44c, (and SWAM minute 18:11:12(i)) SWAM Nominations Committee forwards the name of Deborah Rowlands to be our link to MFW Nominations Committee until end of February 2021.

ii) Minute from NWAM

2019/17 In response to minute 2018/126, Judith Hedges will be the link person for North Wales Area Meeting to MFW.

b) In response to MFW minute 2018.48:

i) Part of SWAM's minute 18:11:12: (ii):

We have heard read to us minute 2018.48 regarding the request for funding of the translation of the 'Peace Week' pack for schools. We are informed that the Recording Clerk, Paul Parker, has stated that BYM are '...keen to see this happen.'

We agree to donate £500 immediately towards the funding for translation and typesetting of the pack. We encourage individual Friends to also consider financially supporting this.

We would consider donating further if needed, to enable this to go ahead.

We ask our Clerks to forward this minute to Catherine James, MFW Acting Clerk, for information and we ask our Treasurer Peter Davies to clarify with Catherine how the donation should be made. We ask our Clerks to forward this minute to Paul Parker for information.

ii) Minute from NWAM:

2019/14 We strongly support Meeting of Friends in Wales' project to translate the Peace Week for Schools pack into Welsh and to make it available on the teachers' website Hwb. We note that the total sum required is £3000 and agree to make a donation of £500; we ask our Treasurer to arrange this.

Individual donations are invited and should be made to the Treasurer, Martin Hughes e-mail: Treasurer.MFW@gmail.com

We thank SWAM and NWAM for their responses, which we forward to the Recording clerk at his request.

iii) Note: Mid Wales AM will be considering the matter in March

iv) Southern Marches AM have sent the matter to trustees for consideration.

Our treasurer has forwarded all monies received to date to BYM.

c) Minute from Bridgend local meeting:

Minute 19.08 Letter re EU and the Nobel Peace Prize. A letter drafted by Gill and Alistair Nelson about this was circulated in our meeting and sent to The Friend and to Paul Parker, Recording Clerk.

Paul Parker replied asking that the matter be raised with Bridgend meeting and/or South Wales Area Meeting to see if Friends unite behind the sentiment.

We unite with the issues raised in the letter and ask our clerk to send this minute to South Wales Area Meeting and Meeting of Friends in Wales together with Gill and Alistair's letter asking that the minute and letter be forwarded to Meeting for Sufferings for their consideration.

We will consider this under item 7 on the agenda (statement on Brexit).

2019.06 Nominations and appointments:

Our nominations committee brings forward the name of Jeff Beatty to act as a trustee with immediate effect and to 31.12.21. This Friend being willing, he is duly appointed.

Our nominations committee brings forward the name of Jane Harries to act as assistant clerk with immediate effect and to 31.12.21 This name being acceptable she is duly appointed.

2019.07 Trustees' report

Deborah Rowlands, clerk of trustees, has told us that trustees are considering employment issues and will be updating our policy documents to comply with changes in legislation. They have also considered the report of the task and finish group; we will consider their conclusions when we look at the task and finish group report this afternoon.

Trustees have asked us to consider the following recommendations: (trustees minute 2019.4, subsections iii to v)

iii. Cheque signatory mandates. We recommend that signatories for the MFW accounts should be Deborah Rowlands, Clerk of Trustees, Tricia Jones and Catherine James, MFW Co-Clerks and the treasurer, Martin Hughes. They should also be authorised to oversee the account on line, and to approve online payments. All payments need two signatories or two authorisations out of four.

iv. Area Meeting contributions for 2019. We recommend that MFW asks AMs to contribute £5.25 per head of membership, as last year.

v. Verification of accounts. We recommend that we ask Jeff Nagle to serve as independent verifier for the 2018 accounts. This arrangement complies with current charity legislation.

We agree to these recommendations and will send part iv of this minute to the four relevant area meetings.

2019.08 Reports

The following reports have been circulated by email and are available in print here today. They will be attached to these minutes.

a) Focus group reports:

i) The work of the committee

ii) A statement on Brexit: what should we do?

Focus Group has brought us a statement on Brexit: (Britain's withdrawal from the European Union)

Meeting of Friends in Wales and Brexit

Meeting of Friends in Wales represents all Quakers living or working in Wales. The core belief of Quakers is that there is something in all people which may be referred to as "that of God". Consequently we try to live in such a way that reflects our experience of the potential of all people. This is why, throughout our over 350 year history, we have spoken out for peace, equality, truth, simplicity and sustainability.

Welsh Quakers who voted in the referendum on membership of the European Union will have voted for both Leave and Remain. There will not be a consensus for how the country should act with regard to its trade arrangements in future.

However this discussion has made us aware of both the hostile nature of the discourse and of concerns which are shared by all about our society. There is a strong consensus among Friends of concern for many aspects of our present situation.

Alistair and Gill Nelson (Bridgend LQM) have reminded us that whatever may be right or wrong with the European Union its original purpose was defined by Robert Schuman, its founder in 1950 as "*to make war not only unthinkable but materially impossible*". It was created just a few years after the second of two world wars where many millions of people had perished, and where people dreaded that this would happen again. The whole reason for the existence of the EU was to keep the peace in Europe and the Nobel Prize was given to the EU in recognition that this had been achieved, some 62 years later. We must never under underestimate what peace means, and how little economics and tariffs matter if we do not have it.

The EU, with the UK as one of its leading members, has been instrumental in achieving that peace and also the standards of work practice and food safety that we enjoy today. It is essential that the UK finds ways of maintaining those standards and

working with our neighbours to continue to improve the conditions of life for all.

The United Kingdom has become an unequal society. We are distressed by the inequality of there being a few extremely wealthy people while huge numbers are finding it ever harder to manage and far too many are pushed over the brink into oppressive poverty, having to depend on food banks. We are proud of the progressive nature of the Welsh Government and the way in which they have prioritised the well-being of future generations, but many present policies of the UK Government give us cause for concern.

We are distressed when we see people who have lived here, and contributed generously to our communities for many years, possibly for most, or even all, of their lives, having to apply for permission to stay in the country that has become their home. People who have been living and working here for years should not have to apply for “settled status”.

We are appalled by the concept of the “hostile environment”, in particular in the way it has been applied to people who came to the UK on their parents’ passports and are now being hounded to produce proof of their British citizenship, proof which is often difficult to find because of previous actions by the Home Office. Many people will believe that this scandal came to an end with the publicity some months ago of the stories of people being deported, known as the scandal of the Windrush Generation, but this is still going on.

For the Wales Focus Group of MFW, Peter Hussey, Clerk

We are grateful to the group for their work and send this statement as amended to Meeting for Sufferings for their consideration.

b) Conference at Woodbrooke: answering that of God: diversity and inclusion in the Society of Friends (copy attached)

2019.09 Report of the task and finish group on future arrangements for MFW

Following MFW minute 2018.45, we have received the report of the Task and Finish group; it has been circulated via email, is available here today in print and is attached to these minutes. We have also considered the comments of the trustees on this paper.

We accept all the recommendations, including the laying down of arrangements committee, much of whose practical work has been taken on by our administrator.

2019.10 Workshop with Christine Trevett: What can we say – as Quakers in Wales?

Christine Trevett has led us in a stimulating workshop. The questions sent out by email in advance and available on paper today have focussed our attention on important aspects of the revision of our Book of Discipline. We have also heard short presentations to help us to

understand how the revision is being prepared, to consider the needs of the revision of the church government sections, and to lead us to consider seriously both the needs of Wales as both a bilingual and multi-cultural society and what we as a nation can contribute which will enhance the spiritual journeys of those in Wales and in the wider world.

We have discussed the questions (see below) and drawn up a list of reflections which will be collated and sent to local meetings.

Friends can also send material individually to:

- i) (Online) <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qfp> - ideally
- ii) (email) gfp@quaker.org.uk
- iii) (post) Revision Committee, Friends House, 173 Euston road, London NW1 2BJ

2019.11. Dates and venues for future meetings in 2019:

22 June 2019: Milford Haven Meeting House: Aled Eurig

26 October 2019: Newtown Methodist Church. (Jane Harries on Peace work in Wales)

Signed: by Co-clerks

Catherine James

Tricia Jones

QF&P Revision workshop: *What Can We Say?*

Workshop questions:

- (i) what positive and negative things about QFP need to be retained or addressed in the next one?
- (ii) what needs to be included, or included more fully, so far as we can to speak to generations who will read it until the next revision (around the year 2050?)
- (iii) what, if anything, needs to be done to ensure that Quakerism in and for Wales is reflected in it?