



Minutes of Meeting of Friends in Wales Saturday 27th June 2020

The meeting was held on Zoom (live virtual video conference)

Minute 2020.13 Opening

During our opening worship no. 27 of *Advices & Queries* has been read in Welsh and in English.

We welcome 73 Friends here today.

Area Meeting representatives today are:

- South Wales AM : Julia Lym
- Southern Marches AM: John York Skinner
- Mid Wales AM: Alun Clark
- North Wales AM: Catherine James, Gerald Hewitson, Helen Still, Judith Hedges, Frances Voelcker

Our elders today are Gerry Craddock (North Wales AM) and Jess Morgan (South Wales AM). Our translator today is Steffan William.

Minute of Record 2020.14 Calon and the Friend

Catherine James will write a report of this meeting for '*Calon*' and Peter Hussey will write for '*The Friend*'.

Minute of Record 2020.15 Black Lives Matter

Following the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MFW Clerks have sent a message of solidarity from Meeting of Friends in Wales to Yearly Meetings in the United States, expressing our grief and our solidarity. Whilst rejoicing in aspects of our own history and culture which have embraced diversity and extended a welcome to refugees and asylum seekers, we recognise our own brokenness and that there is still much work to be done to eradicate discrimination and inequality. We stand with all peoples of America in the Light, recognising the right of everyone everywhere to live in equality and to share opportunity.

The full text of the letter is appended to these minutes, together with any responses we have received.

Minute of Record 2020.16 Truth and Integrity in Public Life

We acknowledge the ongoing correspondence between staff at Friends House and Southern Marches Area Meeting regarding Truth and Integrity in Public Life. We look forward to hearing further updates on this in future MFW meetings.

We are aware of a groundswell of disquiet amongst Friends, including amongst Friends in Wales, about a loss of truth and integrity in public life. We acknowledge the ongoing correspondence between staff at Friends House and Southern Marches Area regarding this matter and are aware that the issue of the control and manipulation of information during the COVID-19 crisis has also exercised Friends in South Wales.

We recognise that there is a dilemma for Friends in considering what we can usefully do individually and corporately to stand up for our Testimony to Truth in the sphere of public life. We will return to this matter at a future meeting.

This concern will be included in our discussion groups today and in our submission to the Welsh Government.

Minute 2020.17 Nominations

The Nominations Committee brings forward the following names:

- Carolyn Sansom (SWAM and Cardiff Local Meeting) to serve as MFW Co-Clerk until December 2023.
- Catherine James (NWAM and Porthmadog Local Meeting) to extend her service on the MFW Nominations committee until December 2022
- Ruth Moore Williams to continue as co-assistant clerk of MFW until December 2021.

These Friends being willing, they are duly appointed.

Nominations sought:

We ask Nominations to search for:

- Name for a Focus Group member as soon as possible
- Name for assistant treasurer as soon as possible
- Name for a trustee from MWAM
- Name for a MFW representative on Quaker Life Representative Council (from Jan 2021)
- Name for CCIR – Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations
- Name for a MFW representative on Meeting for Sufferings
- Name for a trustee from MFW to serve on Cytun on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting

Minute 2020.18 Trustees Annual Report and Accounts

The MFW Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for 2019 have been circulated by email prior to this meeting, together with a brief summary which highlights developments during 2020 as well as activities of MFW during 2019.

The role of trustees is to ensure that the underlying framework for MFW's work, and its support through funding and administration is in place for now, and the future.

Deborah Rowlands, clerk to trustees, has spoken to the report and to finance and has been available to answer any questions and comments today.

We have also heard about trustees' plans for the future.

We are thankful for the service of all those involved in the work, and in trusteeship.

We receive and accept this report and forward it to the charity commission and other bodies as required.

Minute of Record: 2020.19 Local Development

Following Meeting of Friends in Wales' submission of an expression of interest to host further local development workers and / or a Hub in Wales, we have received a letter from Rachel Matthews, Head of Local Development for Britain Yearly Meeting, informing us that our application was unsuccessful this time.

Rachel has informed us that in all 6 expressions of interest were received from local and area meetings in Wales and the Southern Marches. Although none of these were successful, there were several ideas emerging from them which Rachel felt it would be helpful to discuss in order to meet the needs of Friends in Wales. The Clerks of MFW have offered to facilitate a discussion between all 6 meetings and are setting up an online meeting for Friends involved in all six applications in August on Rachel's behalf.

Minute 2020.20 Reports

We have received written reports from the Focus Group, the Quaker Life Representative Council, the Symud Ymlaen / Moving Forwards Group and the MFW Residential Committee.

We have also received verbal reports from Catherine James about the work of the Book of Discipline Revision Group, Lesley Richards from the Symud Ymlaen / Moving Forwards Group, Huw Meredith Owen about the work of the Website Group and Mike Clark about the developments with Young Friends in Wales called 'Young Quakers Connect'.

We thank all these Friends for their reports.

Minute 2020.21 The Wales We Want

Our Friend Peter Hussey (Southern Marches AM) has shared with us a growing concern about the need for change in society in Wales and beyond, and the need for the Quaker voice to be heard in moving towards a future which is more in line with our Testimonies.

In February Peter shared with us his regret that Wales is often invisible in public discourse in the UK, although the Senedd has been responsible for some forward-looking and ground-breaking legislation, such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Quakers, too, are largely invisible in public discourse.

COVID-19 changed all that. There is now a general recognition that things need to change following the pandemic, with ideas such as the New Green Deal and Build Back Better gaining traction. There is an urgent need to rebuild the economy, but also to address climate change, inequality and prejudice in our society, as expressed through campaigns including Black Lives Matter.

Quakers are well placed to call for and be involved in a movement for change. We have a shared history and culture of working for justice, peace, truth and equality based on our spiritual belief

that there is that of God in all people. However, we need to clearly identify and express what we wish to see.

In our darkest moments the vision of a world based on the Quaker Testimonies can seem utopian – a spiritual exercise that isn't achievable in the real world of politics, a waste of time. We have been heartened, however, by a request to input our views into an all-Wales consultation 'Our Future Wales' by the end of July. We are convinced that now is the time to speak out and be radical, setting out a clear set of priorities and proposals for the way forward.

We split into breakout rooms to discuss the following topics:

- Truth and Integrity in Public Life
- The Commons
- Research and Development
- Environment
- Living conditions
- Transport
- Black Lives Matter
- Peace

Friends have shared their thoughts and aspirations on the above topics. We agree that this is only the start of this conversation and that Zoom groups will carry these discussions forward in order to produce a paper from Welsh Quakers to be submitted to the Senedd by the end of July 2020. As part of this process we will link with Build Back Better and involve Grace Da Costa, Parliamentary Liaison Officer at Friends House and Gethin Rhys at Cytûn.

Friends wishing to be part of a Zoom group on a particular topic or topics should contact Peter Hussey at tyolaf@gmail.com.

Our longer-term aim is for Quakers in Wales and beyond to become recognised as a "go to" group for input into the agenda for a better world which is ethical and based on our spiritual beliefs embodied in our testimonies.

Minute of Record 2020: 22 Memorandum of Understanding between BYM and MFW

Initial feedback on the document has been sought and included. The MOU will now be finalised by the MFW Clerks and Trustees.

Minute 2020.23 MFW Meeting for Worship

It has been agreed that a twice-yearly meeting for worship online for Friends across Wales will be held on a Saturday morning. The MFW clerking team will agree dates for the first two meetings for worship and will notify Friends via the usual monthly mailing and mailings to Area Meetings and Local Meetings.

Signed: Clerks for this meeting Tricia Bridgewater, Jane Harries and Ruth Moore Williams.