

## MfS REPORT, 2nd December 2017

**PREAMBLE: Friends may be interested in all items but I would urge AM to discuss how CAQM may support our neighbour AMs in their concern 3) "For the Common Good" ? (- no horse or bike necessarily required!)**

1) **Welcome** - Members of the Young People's Participation Day joined us for opening worship, 40 young people, staff and volunteers, and were reminded in our worship that: 'Peace is not a distant goal that we seek, but the means by which we arrive at that goal' (Martin Luther King Jr. )

2) **Court and Prison Register** - Ian Bray of Brighouse West Yorkshire AM was arrested in London on 30th October, as part of an action undertaken by 'Rising Up' to highlight air pollution in London. He was remanded in custody at HMP Thameside for 8 days & fined. The case involving Barbara Penny of York Area Meeting came to Leeds Crown Court on 17 August 2017 and the driver of the vehicle was acquitted. Minute 4 of York AM - 9 September 2017 informs us further of Barbara's witness during the trial. We add these Friends to our register, and we hold them in the Light.

3) **For The Common Good** - Minute 17.09.07 of Kendal & Sedbergh AM 17 September 2017 about the group 'For the Common Good' - Chris Bullard, from that AM, has told of the plans for the "Ride of Witness 4 Equality and the Common Good" in 2018 summer, starting at Swarthmore, passing through twelve AMs to London. We hope Friends will support this where able- forwarded to QPSWCC [\[see below\]](#)

4) **Revision of the Book of Discipline** The time is right to start a revision of our book -

- 1) The revision should begin with, but not be limited to church government, namely the sections which focus on our procedures and corporate discipline.
- 1) The revision should divide material between that in the main body of the book, which lays out principles, and supplementary material, which gives details.
- 2) The revision should draw on the richness of theological thought in BYM, now and historically, seeing diversity as fundamental to our community, not as a flaw.
- 3) The Revision Committee..to be creative, while remaining in close contact with BYM.

If the Yearly Meeting agrees the recommendation, MfS will support the process. We rejoice that the work of the BODRPG has enriched BYM and enabled Friends to grow in their spiritual and theological understanding. We thank the group for all their work.

*The Review Preparation Group was very pleased with the responses to the reading project. Also if you have not been involved in this, it is not too late and there is a condensed version of the reading programme on the Being Friends Together website [\[see over\]](#).*

5) **The Sanctuary Everywhere manifesto** - was adopted with some amendments so please use the version from the minutes or as available as a separate document [\[see over\]](#)

The introduction to the revised manifesto places it firmly within the Quaker tradition of seeking that of God in everyone, speaking up for the oppressed and speaking out against 'all acts of Government which set people against one another and turn away those in need'. The manifesto is framed in the context of Quakers' longstanding work of welcoming newcomers to our shores.

6) **Quaker Recognised Bodies** - Seven groups for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies. Agree to register the following groups for five years, registration to be reviewed December 2022:

- The Association of Talking Friends
- Give Peace A Chance Trust/Glebe House (Friends Therapeutic Community Trust)
- Quaker Peace Studies Trust
- Quaker Service Memorial Trust
- Experiment with Light Network
- QARN (Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network)

**EXTRAS: overleaf for Friends seeking more detail**

**3) Ride 4 Equality & the Common Good Swarthmoor, Cumbria to London  
Summer 2018 Quaker Witness 4 Welfare Speaking Truth to Power**

Follow in the Footsteps of Margaret Fell - In Spring 1660 Margaret Fell rode to London with a declaration to appeal to Charles II to end the persecution and suffering of Quakers. She, as will we, declared: "We do ... inform the governors of this nation, high and low, that we are a people that desire the good of all people, and their peace" .....358 years later we call on Quakers and those who share our concern about the increasing inequality and resulting suffering, to ride in relay from Margaret Fell's home in Cumbria to London to petition our government to:.

- **end the dismantling of the welfare state and the suffering of those harmed by the cuts.**
- **renew the welfare state ensuring a safety net for us all.**
- **commit themselves to act 4 Equality and the Common Good.**

Our action is based on our beliefs in the right of all to dignity and affirms our testimonies on equality and social justice. We challenge the narrative that we cannot afford to care. Dates t.b.c.

We believe in speaking truth to power ~ LET OUR VOICES BE HEARD: PUT FAITH INTO ACTION.

[Click here for details of the proposed route \(PDF\)](#)

[Click here for a draft copy of our Declaration \(PDF\)](#)

[Click here for a draft copy of our Explanation and Evidence \(PDF\)](#)

For Support Contact: [Quakers4theCommonGood@gmail.com](mailto:Quakers4theCommonGood@gmail.com)

**4) Book of Discipline extras - 4 month programme**

**Previously** - We have written a **calendar** as a suggestion, a prompt, and an encouragement. We have asked Woodbrooke to provide supporting materials in line with this calendar through *Being Friends Together*, the online learning resource library ( <http://together.woodbrooke.org.uk/> ). We will be publishing columns in *the Friend* and maintaining an online presence in time with the calendar. We suggest you use the calendar to guide your private reading and/or study group. Though it will not suit everyone: we invite you to participate in whatever way suits you best, in the reading as appropriate for you, to adapt to your needs and your Meeting's needs, and trust that you will attend to what love requires of you.

**Update,:** Recognising that the calendar has run its course but that you may still want to participate, and that the full calendar was daunting for many, we are now offering a **four-month version** in which suggested passages offer tasters of many parts of *Quaker f & p* - called **Not Too Late** and it can be started at any time (Perhaps to have a new local reading group through the winter!)

**5) The Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto** was adopted with amendments, please use this version:

>As Quakers, we have long worked for peace and equality, because of our belief that there is that of God in everyone, everywhere, whoever they are.

>Through Quakers' longstanding work welcoming newcomers to our shores, we have seen up close that the government's creation of a 'hostile environment' is increasingly embedding policies of discrimination into the practices of the British state. Quakers in Britain are committed to working with others to change this, creating a culture of compassion and welcoming hospitality that answers that of God in every person.

>Our Meeting for Sufferings was born of a response to the government's systematic discrimination against Quakers in the past. Today we turn that experience into solidarity, and stand against all oppression and suffering. We declare our determination to work for sanctuary everywhere, including here in Britain, by agreeing this Manifesto for change.

>Human rights standards for all should be the foundation on which any national policy or international agreement on migration is founded, and these include the right to work, to learn, to housing, to medical care and to security in the event of adverse circumstances beyond personal control.

>We will campaign for change to the asylum process so that it is built on a culture of compassion and practical response, rather than starting from an assumption of disbelief.

- >Within the UK system of immigration detention is institutional violence and discrimination. We oppose indefinite detention, which we believe neither right nor necessary, and will work towards the closure of all detention centres. Other more humane policies are more effective and should be introduced.
- >Our belief in every human being's equality leads us to oppose unjust deportations and removals, whether to the EU or to the wider world.
- >The humanitarian risks of trafficking and unsafe passage lead us to work for new, peaceful, safer routes of migration including the introduction of humanitarian visas and improved rules for family reunion.
- >To ourselves and wider society, we reaffirm our determination to acknowledge and dismantle discrimination in all of its forms, wherever it is to be found.