

Minutes of West Somerset Area Meeting at Spiceland Meeting House on 21 July 2018

18/44 Reading

Advices and Queries 18 was read in our Meeting for Worship today.

18/45 Local Meeting Representatives

Bridgwater	Shirley Anthony
Burnham	Unable to appoint.
Ilminster	Huw Morgan
Minehead	Faith Cartwright, George Macpherson
Spiceland	Pat Ebdon, Sheila Whitlock
Taunton	Sheila Harvey, Fran Hicks
Wellington	Brian Collingridge, Marian Dawson
Elder for Meeting	Ali Dominy

18/46 Membership Matters

The ashes of Albert David Rolands were interred in Spiceland Burial Ground on 28 April 2018 and those of Angela Bazley (sister of Hugh Bazley) were scattered on 15 June, 2018.

The burial of Tom Willoughby took place on 16 June 2018 at Milverton Burial Ground where his father is also buried.

18/47 Follow-up to special Area Meeting on Sustainability

We note the report received from the Earth Action Group on the special area meeting on sustainability held at Wellington on 19 May which has been circulated together with some further suggestions for action from the Earth Action Group. We are reminded of the central place Britain Yearly Meeting gives to sustainability in all our work.

We considered how Area and/or Local Meetings can take forward some of these ideas as an integral part of our Quaker work, noting that the Earth Action Group are willing to support any actions.

Spiceland Meeting has recently been awarded a silver Eco Church award and hope to implement a sustainability plan based on the headings suggested by Eco-Church.

The following actions have been agreed:

- We ask Local meetings to bring forward a Sustainability Plan to a future AM in the Spring of 2019.
 - Clerks will circulate to LMs a memorandum of resources.
 - Spiceland LM has offered support and advice to other LMs in this endeavour.
- John Ainsworth has offered to coordinate a group interested in lobbying Rebecca Pow the Taunton MP.
- Sheila Harvey has offered to convene an 'Inner Exploration Group' (ref document - Report on Special Area Meeting 19 May 2018)

We thank the Earth Action Group and the facilitators from Devon Area Meeting for arranging the meeting on 19 May.

18/48 Citizens UK

At our AM in November 2017, we heard about Citizens UK, how its work and purposes aligned well with Quaker ones and that Friends in many areas were actively part of

it. Since then several Taunton Friends have been involved in it and commend it to us again with the attached report and Minute, which includes their hope “that Area Meeting adopts Citizens UK as a concern with a view to formal membership and financial support.”

Fran Hicks, one of those valuing working with Citizens UK, has spoken to this subject, stressing the opportunities it offers for furthering some of our testimonies and for outreach.

We have considered the matter with a wide range of contributions being made and noting that though the work is Taunton based at present the aim is to widen out.

We are positive about support for Citizens UK in general and for collaboration with it. We are not united, however, in wishing to take it forward as a concern of Area Meeting at this moment

We encourage Taunton Friends to continue their involvement and to let others in the AM know of ways in which they can also take part in or make use of Citizens UK expertise in our area.

We ask our Treasurer and Trustees to advise us on the financial and formal implications of membership of the local branch of Citizens UK at our next meeting when we will return to this matter.

18/49 Safeguarding and other policies

We have heard of the extensive detailed work which Trustees have been doing to ensure that we have proper policy papers in place for safeguarding and other matters. A set of these will shortly be given to each Local Meeting for Friends to read and note. At our next AM formal acceptance of the policies will be on the agenda; any comments on the papers should be sent to the Clerk of Trustees, Margaret Stocks, by the end of September.

18/50 Attendance at AM meetings for elders and overseers

Sheila Harvey as Co-Clerk of Area Meeting Elders and Overseers reminds us that it is important that all local meetings should be represented at the Area Meeting meetings for elders and overseers. The meetings are an important way of keeping in touch and supporting each other across the AM as well as considering fresh initiatives. The next one is on Saturday October 20 at Taunton at 10.00 for 10.30.

18/51 “Life of Meeting Report” from Spiceland

Spiceland Friends have been balancing outreach and inreach. Their mid-week meetings for worship in several places in the area continue and they held a special event in Cullompton, discovering earlier Quaker connections in the process. Their bi-monthly All-Age Worship meetings continue to be successful and the Hearts and Minds and other groups bring members of the Meeting together. The work of their “Central Group” continues to co-ordinate their activities and cover elders and overseers duties well.

The full report will appear in the Area Meeting Newsletter.

18/52 Quaker Life Representative Council Report

Carinne Allinson attended Quaker Life Representative Council on 27-29 April at Woodbrooke. The support of Quaker Life for local Meetings was the focus with mental health, outreach, simplifying our Meetings and dealing with difficulties amongst the matters considered. Carinne recommends the “Being Friends Together” materials, which are now free on the Woodbrooke website.

The full report will appear in the Area Meeting Newsletter.

18/53 Meeting for Sufferings and Yearly Meeting Reports

We have heard two reports from Kathy Gollin:

1. Yearly Meeting 4–7 May, Friends House, London. Fran Hicks, Kathy Gollin, Lizzie Aveline and John Ainsworth attended Yearly Meeting this year for all or some of the sessions.
 - a. YM agreed to revise the Book of Discipline.
 - b. Fran Hicks recommended the Salter lecturer that can be accessed online. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5cpQofRubU>
 - c. Also an event she attended on Godly Play as a resource for our Children's Meeting. <http://www.quaker.org.uk/children-and-young-people/work-quaker-setting/resources-all-age>
2. Meeting for Sufferings on 7 July Fran Hicks and Kathy Gollin both attended, the start of the new triennium. The main issues they highlight for AM's attention are:
 - a. The Concern of Devon AM regarding the treatment of Palestinian children by the Israeli military. Devon AM suggests other AMs might write to their MPs. Full information may be gathered from the BYM website on the Meeting for Sufferings page.
 - b. A notification from the Community Justice Group that government and local government support for Circles of Support and Accountability for sex offenders is being withdrawn from many local Circles groups. We may wish to contact Circles Southwest to query this.
 - c. The Book of Discipline Revision Committee is in the process of being formed. Meeting for Sufferings agreed the terms of reference at this meeting. Any Friend wishing to be involved is invited to fill in the form on the BYM website.
 - d. Quaker Stewardship Committee will be contacting AM Trustees offering support on sustainability issues.

18/54 Review of arrangements for Area Meeting

Chris Lawson as Co-Clerk today, has summarised the responses to the Business Team's request for views on the current arrangements for running our Area Meeting by telling us that minutes and comments have been received by most of our LMs. These give a range of views, positive and negative, with an overall sense that Friends have felt more a part of AM from the cross-meeting Sunday meetings for worship but less a part with the reduced number of business meetings of AM. Being involved in all levels of the Society, from the local meeting to yearly meeting, is part of what it means to be a member of the Society. The Business Team has been seen as an additional layer, even though it has given those involved closer experience of what it takes to run the AM. Although some improvements could be made in clarity of the structure and in communications, and four rather than three AMs for business each year could be better, there is a preference for having co-clerks as we had before.

We have considered this further:

- We hope that the AM Sunday meetings for worship will continue and will be called 'Worshipping Together'.
- We would like four rather than three Area Meetings for business each year and more frequent issues of the Newsletter.

- We ask our Nominations Committee to seek Co-Clerks who would attend the Business Team and be supported by them.
- We ask the Business Team to propose changes and clarifications to their present terms of reference in order to make such improvements as seem possible and bring these to our November AM.

18/55 Nomination

Ruth Wall, our recently appointed Advocate for Children and Young People would like to attend a conference for advocates in November at Woodbrooke. We are glad to appoint her as our AM representative and look forward to her report in due course.

18/56 Closing Minute

We thank Spiceland Friends for their hospitality; the Business Team will meet in Taunton at 7 p.m. on August 6 and October 1 and our Area Meeting for Business' will be on November 17 at Wellington at 10.15 a.m.

18/57 Notices

Aug 6 Hiroshima Day vigil in Taunton High Street 12.00 to 1.00

Aug 19 AM Meeting for Worship at Wellington

Sept 22 Special AM with neighbouring AMs on mental health with Alison Mitchell (national advisor for Friends) – advance information circulated to LMs

Sept 29 Bridgwater Meeting will be holding a Soup Saturday event at Aisholt and Merridge Village Hall, as part of Quaker Week., to raise money for Taunton Homeless Association (homemade soup, filled rolls and drinks), everyone welcome 11.30 - 1.30

Sept 30 2.30 p.m. Taunton, Journeyman Theatre Productions 'And The Beat Goes On...' - celebrating nonviolent action and peace protest over three hundred years

Sept 22 Special Area meeting Taunton MH – A Mental Health Day

Oct 21 10.30 a.m. Area Meeting for Worship at Bridgwater

Nov 17 10.15 a.m. Area Meeting at Wellington