

## Report to AM on meeting for Sufferings October 2020

This was to be the annual weekend residential meeting for MFS at Woodbrooke: a chance to get to know, and deepen relationships, both with local reps and those across the county, and also to speak further with members of Standing Committees about their reports and work.

A zoom meeting of reduced length but, no lesser number of important papers and issues to be addressed, was never going to replicate the richness of an in-person event, especially at a time of so much change, and challenge, both for individuals and the society.

The meeting was largely dominated by reports, on the key issues of Sustainability and the Climate Crisis, Power and Privilege, and how BYM continues to address the commitment to being a simple church supported by a simple charity, in order to be more flexible to meet the challenges and needs of our accelerating and ever changing world.

We also heard how the Revision of the Book of Discipline committee was developing.

Sustainability and the challenge of Climate Change covered both how we, as a society, are working to run our organisation with an ever increasingly lighter footprint, and how we are, through QPSW, working with others to witness to a more peaceful and loving relationship with each other and the earth. The main focus of the work of the Sustainability and Peace dept of QPSW is on peace building, and climate issues, so working with with other faiths through Quaker Committee on Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR), and internationally with Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) and Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC), especially around preparations for COP 26 in Glasgow next year, both on what we do and how we do it, and how we relate to the global south (I was delighted to hear the idea of creating pen pals with those in the global south: I hope we might feel inspired to follow up this idea.)

On both national level, (with other churches), but also locally, by supporting AMs and LMs , QPSW is working with the Build Back Better movement, to address both Climate and Social Justice issues. Working with Woodbrooke, it is promoting learning resources to help meetings in their activism.

We also re-visited the issues of power and privilege: our growing awareness of the debt we owe those who we, as a nation, have historically oppressed, through the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism, and the inherited wealth we still enjoy from this legacy, as well as the privilege which comes from whiteness. There was rich sharing around this subject in breakout groups and the notes taken have been collected for us to address at a further meeting, to inform future action. I was particularly interested in hearing how Friends House has discerned that the information on the door plate to the William Penn room should now reflect the information that he was a slave owner. There was also some discussion as to whether others, such as Abraham Derby, an industrialist, whose name is on one of the larger rooms, should swap places with Bayard Rustin, an American Quaker and right hand man to Martin Luther King, who, at the moment is the name on one of the basement rooms!

As always, there is the write up in the Friend, and you can access the Reports and papers if you follow this link, <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes> which, shortly will also have the minutes of the meeting.

Thank you again for this great opportunity to serve both BYM and the AM.

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