

Report from MfS 5 12 20 held on Zoom

Kathy Gollin attended this meeting as alternate representative. She reports:

It was interesting to join this meeting as it is intended that much of our MfS will be on Zoom even after life returns to “normal”, apart from at least one residential in the year. As at the last MfS 2-4 October 2020, a pre-meeting session was arranged, this time with Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) I learnt from this that QWRC differs from a number of organisations devoted to keeping world Quakers together by managing BYM’s contacts with Friends worldwide. For instance, they bring each year to Yearly Meeting Friends from other Yearly Meetings to meet and chat with us on a personal level. It was a useful session and I hope it is possible to organise similar ones each MfS.

This MfS was the one that recurs every Dec. for Young People (YP) to join us. Break out groups were arranged on a regional basis so that YP and us could all meet and talk for 20 mins. on suggested topics. It was lovely to be able to talk with them and much easier than the usual lunchtime scramble to contact them evident in most physical MfS.

The outstanding items from the Minutes I wish to highlight for WSAQM are:

1. A suggestion from South London AM that there should be an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Yearly Meeting Trustees and AM Trustees

2. Yearly Meeting 2021

3. A minute from Devon AM on divestment from fossil fuels

4. Action on racism within the RSoF

1. South London AM called for there to be greater transparency in relations between the central committees, BYM Trustees and Area Meeting Trustees. The Minute was referred to BYM Trustees for consideration. I think this would be helpful in communications in the structures on which the Religious Society of Friends (RSoF) depends.

2. Yearly Meeting 2021 will once again be held on line, sadly abandoning hopes of a Gathering postponed from August 2020. It will take place between 31 July to 8 August, with promise of some very innovative and exciting ways of meeting.

3. Devon AM is encouraging all of us to lobby our own pension providers to divest from companies engaged in fossil fuels production. We did not minute agreement or recommendation but there was unity with the concern.

4. The main part of the afternoon session was taken up with a presentation from Edwina Peart, BYM’s Diversity and Inclusion officer and subsequent discussion in break out groups (the Young People had their own parallel session through the day, joining us to present their final Minute with ours.) MfS with the rest of BYM has been grappling with the issue of racism among us Quakers for some three years now. Rather breathtakingly one representative expressed astonishment that there was racism among us. One wondered where he had been

the last few years. There is no doubt now that there is a racist bias among us, evidenced by the fact that there are so few People of Colour among us. The bias is largely unconscious and has no intention to hurt so perhaps we can understand our Friend's astonishment; all the more reason then to bring it into our conscious and reflective minds to see what might be done as individuals as well as a church. It is recommended that we engage with this as an AM. It could well be a focus for a Special Interest AM this year.

I recommend you look at the Minute of the YP meeting on page 4 of the full minutes, particularly with their inclusion of a You Tube video. You can go to the main BYM website, click on Our Organisation, click on Meeting for Sufferings and select the follow-up letter and Minutes for 2 December 2020.