

Minutes of WSAQM Area Meeting April 17th 2021 by Zoom

Clerks: Martin Wall Anna Mullett

15/21. Quaker Faith and Practice 23.62 was read in our worship today.

16/21 Local Meeting Representatives:

Bridgwater	Unable to appoint
Burnham on Sea	Unable to appoint
Ilminster	Margaret Stenhouse
Minehead	Lyn Barlow
Spiceland	Pat Ebdon, John Bell
Taunton	John Ainsworth, Sheila Harvey
Wellington	Avril Silk
Elder for the Meeting	Margaret Stenhouse

17/21 Membership

There were no membership matters to record

18/21 Nominations

There were no nomination matters to record

19/21 Reports

(a)Life of Taunton Meeting

We have received a report on the Life of Taunton meeting. This summary was appended:

This has been a scattered year with covid 19: it's sad losses, its rules and its uncertainty. It affected our local meeting with some of us isolated and lonely, while some of us were blessed with company at home. We all approached the challenge differently. Initially 'zoom' was less available but gradually more of us used it and found comfort in its companionship, while some of us preferred to be quiet, holding the silence in our own homes. We felt held by the Spirit, we believe. When able to use the Meeting house it was a delight to those of us who felt safe enough under the very careful social distancing arrangements. Our thanks are due to the Elders, our health and safety Friend and our Warden for their work in this respect.

We hope and pray that our next report will reflect easier circumstances.

We thank Taunton for their report which will appear in full on the website and in the newsletter.

(b)Life of Ilminster Meeting

We have received a report on the Life of Ilminster meeting. They have worked creatively within pandemic restrictions to hold meetings for Worship and care for each other. The Meeting has consulted with all its members with regard to the future purchase of a Meeting House and have set up a 'Meeting House Steering Committee', charged with searching for a property suitable for use as a Meeting House. They have actively supported community actions and events and more widely, Purple Field Productions continues as their Special Charity Concern. We thank Ilminster for their report which will

appear in full on the website and in the newsletter.

(c) Sufferings

Fran Hicks gave a verbal report on April's Meeting for Sufferings. The key issues for consideration were Assisted Dying and the work of Trustees. The issue of Assisted Dying was handled in a sensitive way. Representatives were invited to evening meetings in order to explore concerns and issues in depth. The subject is of great concern to many people and moving testimonies were heard. We also heard how Trustees are working towards creating simpler working methods and closer relationships with LM Trustees. We learned of the commitment of BYM to become an anti-racist church in all respects. A full report will follow.

(d) Earth Action Group

We have heard from John Ainsworth reporting on the Earth Action Group and the launch of a Newsletter Spring Edition. Of primary concern at present is preparation for the COP 26 Conference in Glasgow during November this year. Friends are encouraged to participate in the various actions prior to the conference and contribution to future newsletters will be very welcome. We thank John Ainsworth for all the time and work he has given to this – the greatest global challenge that we face.

(e) Citizens Somerset and Quakers

We have heard from Citizens of their work on new and existing campaigns. Citizens hope that AM will continue to support them and may feel inspired to join them. As a testimony of the effectiveness of Citizens we heard of a recent meeting between Citizens and Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government which was very well organised and addressed the issue of homelessness.

We agree that a contribution of £500 from WSAQM towards Citizens Somerset and Quakers should continue, this in conjunction with the donation of £500 from Taunton LM, to cover the period April 1st 2021-31st March 2022.

(f) Assisted Dying

Fran Hicks has reported from Meeting for Sufferings regarding the regulation of assisted dying. When considering criteria for deciding when to grant the choice the Oregon Model was given consideration, however there was a sense that a move towards assisted living was another option, this in relation to a need for a robust palliative care provision. We hope to further address this in our Local Meetings and await further discernment from MfS in July.

20/21 Taunton Meeting House Management Committee

The management committee has identified a need for a new website and social media presence for the Meeting House and Area Meeting, as the demand for public meetings may well decline post-Covid and online communications will be more important. It would also help with general enquiries and rentals at the Meeting House. A group called 'Quaker Meeting Network (QMN) is already helping other AMs with this issue. Devon and Cornwall are currently looking to improve their websites so it might be beneficial to pursue this jointly with them. Using Social Media should also be

considered to draw in younger people. A committed outreach or working group could be set up. Pip Harris offered to send round an email inviting Friends to a general forum which would give further information on what might be involved in setting up a new website drawing on the experience of the QMN.

21/21 Spiceland Burial Ground.

We thank Spiceland Friends for their extensive report on the Burial Ground. In particular we thank John Bell for the work and time he has given to this, (the full report can be found on the AM website).

Membership of the Association of Natural Burial Grounds has been paid for and approved as 'Provisional'.

22/21 Wedding Postponement

We have heard that the wedding of Joe Hague and Nicola Ashmore, due to have taken place at Spiceland on June 5th this year has been postponed until Friday June 3rd 2022 when they hope to be able to hold the celebration they planned.

23/21 How Are Our Meetings Faring?

Clerks have heard from Sue Hammond Lovatt of Burnham Meeting informing us that Friends continue to keep in contact by email and hold MFW collectively in their own homes.

Wellington Friends hope to come together on Zoom to consider a return to their Meeting House and Peace Garden.

Minehead Friends have met at their Meeting House when permitted between Lockdowns. In response to the pandemic restrictions Friends have noticed that the increased need for pastoral care has been generously provided in the meeting.

24/21 Any Other Business

AM Newsletter

We are very happy that Avril Silk has agreed to restart the AM Newsletter. She will look into the possibilities of getting it printed and distributed. Clerks will send out an email to LMs encouraging Friends to contribute to the Newsletter as creatively as possible.

25/21 Notices

(a) Blended Meeting – We agree (if pandemic restrictions allow) to hold our next AM in July at Spiceland Meeting House with facilities for a 'blended meeting' with Zoom access. We thank Spiceland for their offer of hospitality.

(b) Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering: 'For Your Comfort and Discomfort'
31st July – 8th August 2021.

26/21 Date of Next Meeting

The clerks thanked Friends for their attendance and support. We hope to meet again for Area Meeting on Saturday July 17th. The next Business Team meeting will be on June 8th at 7pm. (NB change from calendar).