

EMEYF Spring Gathering Minutes 2013

Present: Laurina Pfeiffer, Miranda Barty-Taylor, Chris Stapenhurst, Esther Köhring, Georg Adelmann, Rose Oliver, Annie Womack, Calista Williams, Eleanor Walker, Tobias Buchmann, Helen Close, Pascal Ansell, Roisin Brennan, Paul Sladen, Eva Nohe, Kathryn Harding, Natasha Harding, Jade Flahive-Gilbert, Leo Vincent, Kristin Skarsholt, Rose Almond, Helen Percy, Kirsten Ackermann, Jonathan Riddell

SG13/01 Opening Minute

EMEYF is fortunate to gather here together at Gearstones Lodge in North Yorkshire. It is a area steeped in Quaker history and we are grateful for the opportunity to explore our Quaker heritage and how it has evolved into present day Quakerism. We are spending this week exploring spirituality through creativity, and we hope this will include the way we are dealing with our business.

SG13/02 Greetings

We have received greetings from Vivian Barty-Taylor, Tamara Gorbenko, Jenny Howard, Ian Goggin, Jenny Mccarthy, Edward Shiukasvili, Kristina Paulkina, Sarah Dyble, Marisa Johnson, Marielke Nieuwerth-van-den-Akker, Aicha Niquen Maula, Bethany Squires, Thomas Dundas, Theo Wieldraaijer, and Haifa Rashed. We are sorry that they are not able to be with in person but hope they join us in Spirit. We send back our greetings to them.

SG13/03 Nomination of Elder to serve from the beginning to the end of Spring Gathering 2013.

We appoint Tobias Buchmann, to be an elder during our time at Spring Gathering this week. This is to be alongside EMEYF's other elders. We are grateful to Tobias for taking up this service.

SG13/04 Nomination of the Epistle Committee for Spring Gathering 2013

We appoint Pascal Ansell, Rose Oliver, Jade Flahive-Gilbert, Roisin Brennan, Katheryne Harding, Eleanor Walker and Rose Almond to be the Epistle Committee for Spring Gathering 2013. As a Gathering we will feed our ideas into the committee and uphold them in their work. We are grateful for their service.

SG13/05 Nomination of the Nominations Group

We appoint Helen Close, Natasha Harding and Eva Nohe, and Esther Kohring to be the Nominations Group for Spring Gathering 2013. As a Gathering we will feed our ideas into the committee and uphold them in their work

We ask the nominations group to bring forward the names of at least three people willing to serve for the SG2014, and names for the 30th Reunion committee, and any further roles which may come out of our business this week. We are grateful to Friends for this service.

SG13/06 - Reappointment for Gatherings Coordinator

In order to help EMEYF throughout it's upcoming period of transition we reappoint Kristin Skarsholt as Gatherings Coordinator until Spring Gathering 2014 which we will ensure includes a handover period. We are grateful for Kristin's service.

SG13/07 - Reappointment of Treasurer

In order to help EMEYF throughout it's upcoming period of transition we reappoint Paul Sladen as UK Treasurer and one half of the consolidating treasurers role until Annual Meeting 2013. The other half of this role is held by our EMEYF Secretary. We are grateful for Paul's service.

SG13/08 Spring Gathering Location for 2014

Spring Gathering 2014 will be held within the Macedonian region. We hope that by meeting in a region rather than a specific country might offer us a new light in our quest to understand physical and non-physical borders. We ask the planning committee to take the theme of "borders" into consideration in their work.

We also hope that this will enable us to reach out to Friends in Eastern Europe who may or may not share the same traditions as ourselves. We hope such a location will help ensure that EMEYF is as accessible as possible to the whole section. We hope to be able to arrange all the necessary paperwork and visas to allow travel to the region and we actively encourage Friends from Eastern Europe and the Middle East to apply for this Gathering. We have faith that having chosen a location the way forward will open and we will uphold the planning committee in their work.

SG13/09 Report from CC after Annual Meeting.

We have received the following minute from Communications Committee.

CC06/2013 - Moving forward from Annual Meeting

Our vision is of an active and vibrant community.

Our Quaker Community is not the possession of the older generation. George Fox was in his 20's when he began his journey of spiritual transformation that eventually grew into our Religious Society of Friends.

EMEYF needs to find it's voice and make it's life speak. We need to not get too comfortable in our own traditions of worship and be willing to explore our faith in other traditions. We may find new spirituality in a programmed meeting or with evangelical friends. We need to experiment with our faith. Faith is living; it is vital. If we stick too close to the way things have been then we might cut off the chance of hearing the small voice within us that causes us to Quake.

Our community is seeking to move outwards. We would like to embrace our Quaker brothers and sisters in other traditions; link up with our whole section and not allow EMEYF to become a mirror-image of some of the other Quaker meetings we have experienced. We need to be radical. And we are willing to do so.

We have remembered the voices raised at Annual Meeting and recognise that there is much more for our community to do. Much more. We need to go further; exploring the boundaries

and awakening ourselves to new Light. We must live adventoursly.

We plan to reignite EMEYF by making sure we are community that is breathing throughout the year and does not wake up in the Spring and Autumn. We will explore further options of gatherings, events and encourage inter-visitation.

We will remove the structure which has blocked our Spiritual creativity; replacing it with a focus on discernment and the guiding of the Spirit. We feel that as our community belongs to everyone then everyone has then right to follow their leading and take action within EMEYF.

We have further heard a little of the process that has taken place since Annual Meeting - the mixture of challenges and opportunities that underpin our optimistic outlook for the future.

SG13/09 Our Financial Situation

Our finances are much improved on two years ago which allows EMEYF to flourish. By the end of next year we will need to consider future grant applications as our JRCT grant will come to an end. Our current financial situation enables EMEYF to meet all it's obligations. We ask CC to ensure that the accounts are submitted to the Charity Commission and report back to Annual Meeting.

SG13/10 Charity Commission Registration

We have received the following minute from CC:

CC05/2013 UK Charitable Committee of EMEYF

We realise the benefits of being a charity however we are mindful that the structure that has been created around our charity status is confusing and drains our energy. Being a charity should offer us opportunities rather than become a focus for our time together.

We are led to the recommendation that EMEYF UK Charity Committee should remain autonomous. We do not wish to become a sub-section of another Quaker organisation as this is directly against the idea of EMEYF which is to offer a community for young adults exploring and living in a intentional Quaker community - no matter how dispersed it is.

We need to make no secret of some of the issues that have been experienced in the last few years of EMEYF. And we should all take equal responsibility for this. It is important to see the trustees as an integral part of EMEYF; making sure we uphold them in their role as they uphold EMEYF.

We are thankful for the work that the trustees have done which has provided us with a legal platform in the UK from which we have been able to raise funds that have allowed our community to flourish.

However the proximity of the trustees to EMEYF, the communication between committees and the complicated structure of our organisations are a source of tension and uncomfortableness. We are reminded in Quaker Faith and Practice (UK) to live our lives with simplicity. Our structures must reflect the testimony of simplicity which underpins our place in the world.

We need to come up with a structure that works for us; based in our spiritual lives rather than a tick-box exercise.

Any structure we chose will need to be managed if it is to grow sustainable. Our structure should be a skeleton which allows the body of EMEYF to move; and we should be prepared to look after that skeleton if we are not to fall.

Having researched at the Charity Commission in the UK we have discovered that trustees do not have to be based in the UK. This has been an issue for us; searching for UK based people to become trustees. We will need to revise our constitution to allow for this.

We are aware that Communications Committee act the role of trustees in the day to day management of EMEYF. CC make decisions around finance, employment of the secretary, structure and other business decisions. It leads then to the conclusions that the Communications Committee (minus the Secretary who is employed) could become the trustees of EMEYF.

Communications Committee recommends that the roles of Elders, Clerk(s), UK Treasurer, and Gatherings Coordinator also take on the role of trustees, where possible.

Annual Meeting could nominate further trustees if required; these extra trustees would also become part of Communications Committee.

We recommend changing the constitution to allow for this.

We are grateful for the discernment of the Communications Committee and accept their recommendations. We ask them to take the necessary actions and report back at Annual Meeting 2013.

SG13/11 Role of the Representative to QCEA

The following Minute was received from CC

CC17/2013 - representative to QCEA

We value the work of QCEA and enjoy a positive relationship. We separate out our working agreements for the secretary and the role of the representative to QCEA. The working agreements are between QCEA and CC whereas the representative role is one based on an inner leading to support the work of QCEA. A young Friends voice to help shape the work of QCEA helps EMEYF to realise it's vision of working for a better community and environment.

We would like to begin the process of nominating someone for this roles for the next three years - we ask that people interested speak to CC and that a nomination can be done at Annual Meeting 2013. We hope QCEA might also help us find a young Friend who is willing to serve.

We hope that QCEA and the new representative can work together to develop new ways for young Friends to be involved in the work.

We are pleased to receive this minute and are encouraged by the continuing relationship with QCEA. We hope that this role will continue to develop to make sure that young Friends are actively involved in this important organisation at a European level.

SG13/12 Role of the Representative to EMES

The following minute was received from CC:

CC16/2013 - Role of Representative to EMES

We have considered the role of an EMES representative and how this works between the two organisations of EMEYF and EMES.

It becomes clear to us that we need to reaffirm our relationship with EMES to make sure it is based on mutual understanding that is grounded in living within living in the same worshipping community. Our relationship needs to be real and dynamic rather than restricted by the constitutions of each organisation which can create a feeling of artificial ness.

EMEYF thinks more young Friends should be involved in EMES. It is the young Friends of

today who will lead EMES into the future. We feel that it is our responsibility to stand up and be counted. It would be awful for EMES to stagnate because young Friends were not enticed to be involved sooner.

It would also be awful for EMEYF to cut itself off from EMES all together. We need EMES to help us with our ministry and witness throughout the section. We would like to find new ways of working with EMES that offers benefits to both organisations.

We do not see the role of EMES representative, in its current form, as an integral part of our relationship and therefore whilst we will always support the young Friend that EMES nominates for their committee, as we will the whole committee, we would like to focus our attention on building relationships in other ways. we recommend that we do not nominate further for this role.

We ask the clerk and elders to discuss this with the Current representative in particular to look at how EMEYF can support her if she would like to continue the role for the duration of her term. We would be happy to continue supporting a representative whilst we undergo our process of restructuring.

We ask the Clerk of EMEYF to work with the clerk and secretary of EMES to look at a plan for how our two organisations can connect in the future - including a possible joint gathering for EMES executive committee and EMEYF CC.

We have also received the following information from Marisa Johnson

I am glad that EMEYF is working through what kind of structures will help it be a community within their network of Young Friends in Europe and the Middle East. I sincerely hope that this will always be alongside, and not as an alternative to, being part of other Quaker communities – their own local and Yearly Meetings, and the wider family of Friends gathered together in our Section through EMES, and more widely, through FWCC. It is a requirement of the EMES constitution that one member of the Executive Committee be appointed on the basis of nomination by EMEYF - Clause 8 says: The Executive Committee consists of the Clerk, the Treasurer, the Executive Secretary, three other members appointed for three years by FWCC-EMES, and one other member appointed for no more than three years by FWCC-EMES on the nomination of Europe and Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF). I imagine this was done to ensure that at least one Friend serving on the committee at any one time would be a Young Friend, rather than necessarily to provide a channel of communication between the two, and certainly not the only channel. If EMEYF will not provide such a nomination in future, EMES will have to amend its constitution. Moreover, I would hope that Nominations Committee would always want to consider names from among younger Friends when bringing forward new candidates to serve on the EMES Executive Committee. This will require, inevitably, liaison with EMEYF, as they are likely to have better knowledge of Friends' gifts and existing commitments. Therefore, I am not altogether sure of the benefits to either EMES or EMEYF of terminating this formal nominations' practice, though of course it is a matter for EMEYF to discern.

We are happy to accept this minute and the recommendations within. We ask CC to take the necessary action and report back to Annual Meeting 2013.

We have heard from our current representative and understand the wish to stop being the role holder after the EMES Annual Meeting in 2013. We thank her for her service.

SG13/14 CC Role holders

We have received the following minute from communications committee:

CC18/2013 - CC roles

Currently on CC there are the following roles. The clerk, elders, gatherings coordinator, secretary, and the consolidating treasurer.

We have looked at these roles and how CC works. We realise that we cannot always separate the role from the person and feel it is important to make sure that the role holder is able to influence how their role works and what they do in their role. We also need to consider what we, as role holders, need - do we need an assistant clerk or an extra elder?

There are job descriptions which provide a general framework for the role however we ask individuals to shape their role to become part of their spiritual journey. Through this each new role holder will enhance the life of our community in different ways by bringing a part of themselves and one clerk or treasurer might offer something completely different to the next. We think this is a good thing.

We ask each role holder to consider what their role requires of them - what can they offer, what talents and skills and interests will enhance the role?

For example the clerk has an interest in looking at the ways that young Friends voices are listened to in our section and the gatherings coordinator is lead to consider new ways of making our Annual Meeting more dynamic.

We ask each current role holder to consider what within them makes them Quake and what they would like to use their time in the role to do. CC will develop a support structure whereby leadings are tested and then a plan is developed for the role which sits alongside the job description. CC will also consider different ways of information sharing such as the website, a newsletter and using the email list.

Further to the role framework and individual leadings we have considered it is an integral part of our work as CC to find simple and accessible ways to support Young Friends in the section to follow their own leadings - our community is built on our enthusiasm to take action. EMEYF can be a vehicle for action, and CC would like to hear from everyone about what we can do to help you follow your own leadings.

We are grateful for the discernment of the Communications Committee and accept their minute. We hope role holders will be able to reflect and discern what is important to them and what they offer the community. We hope to be able to support role holders in their role and personal journey.

We must see each of us as people with roles in our community whether we are nominated to a named role or not. We should all seek to discern what we can offer our community.

We ask the CC to take the necessary actions and report back at Annual Meeting 2013.

SG13/14 Role of the Secretary

We have received the following minute from CC:

We have been extremely pleased with the arrangement with QCEA about our secretary. We are mindful, however, of what we ask our secretary to do - being a good employer means not asking the unreasonable and not changing your mind throughout the year. We realise that sometimes we ask too much. We think that the secretary should focus on the administrative tasks which underpin our work - however we do not want the job to be boring! We ask the CC Contact Person to work with the secretary to plan one project a year for the secretary to undertake which should be an area of enthusiasm and enjoyment.

We are grateful for the review being undertaken by the secretary and the CC contact person into work time and work loads of the secretary. We hope this will help us to accurately review the current contract with QCEA when the time is right to make sure this agreement is still a good agreement for both organisations.

We accept the recommendations within.

SG13/15 Nominations Return

We have received the following minute from nominations committee.

Planning Committee for EMEYF 30th Anniversary Reunion Family Event 2015

EMEYF welcomes the initiative of Marielke Nieuwerth-van-den-Akker and Hadewich Touwen to organize the EMEYF 30 years Reunion Family Event 2015 in Bonn, Germany and looks forward to this event. We are thankful for the initiative and the enthusiasm of these friends and their commitment to our community that has grown over 30 years. We would like to uphold the current organizers in their work and appoint them to the planning committee to undertake the work on behalf of EMEYF.

The planning committee will need more members, from different areas and different generations of EMEYFers, to make sure this event will reach out to all of them. EMEYF will actively encourage current EMEYF members to involve themselves in the gathering, both in the planning process and in the event itself. We ask EMEYFers who want to get involved in the planning process or want to bring forward names to contact the gatherings coordinator. EMEYF asks Marielke, Hadewich and the gatherings coordinator to collect further suggested names for planning committee and to bring these to annual meeting.

We ask the committee to report back to EMEYF AM 2013 and invite them to use EMEYF communication means (like the mailing list) and events (like AM) to advertise and share.

Planning Committee Spring Gathering 2014, in the macedonian region

Given the bigger workload and partially unknown tasks of a SG in a new area, we recommend to appoint not three, but four additional members to the planning committee. We encourage the committee to work out what their gifts, possibilities and limitations are and to make sure they share the work and allow themselves to rest and to enjoy the gathering.

We appoint Rose Oliver, Helen Close and Elisabeth Backhaus to the planning committee of SG 2014.

A fourth additional member, either from the region or from the wider section, will be appointed after SG 2013 and the gatherings coordinator will keep the planning committee and CC informed.

In addition we want to encourage the planning committee to contact Friends within the region and ask for their support. Our gatherings coordinator and the whole of EMEYF CC are willing to help both in making these contacts and to work out if an additional member of the committee or a different form of working together is appropriate.

We accept these nominations and thank those willing to serve. We also thank nominations committee for their service.

SG13/16 Open House for Young Quakers

We have heard from a group of Friends who would like to explore the possibility of running an event to promote outreach and community building entitled "open house - open

community” in the summer of 2013. Leo Vincent, Mieke Van Opheusden and Kristin Skarsholt will explore what is possible. This is hoped it will be an event over a period of time which allows people to choose freely which parts they attend. We hope such an event will be possible and include as many Friends - both Young Friends, Families and those Young at Heart from the section. We look forward to hearing further details.

SG13/17 Epistle

We have received the epistle from our Epistle Committee. It is attached to these minutes. We are grateful for their service and for capturing some of our creative and spiritual time together. We hope that this epistle can inspire others to explore the relationship between creativity and spirituality. We ask of ourselves to take the epistle away from our gathering and spread it's message - fuelling the fire which has bound our community this week.

SG13/18 Closing Minute

As we have gathered here this week, surrounded and held by the rolling landscape we have had the opportunity to reflect on our creativity and spirituality. Our Worship for Business has demonstrated how creative we can be in seeking solutions to help our community move forward. We are grateful to the local Friends, and all Friends who have supported and upheld this gathering, for their generosity. The Leavener's workshops and the workshop on Body Prayer challenged us to use our bodies and hearts, our skills and our gifts to create a space that is deep and Spirit led. Our creativity has been opened and our spirituality has been enriched. We have been reminded of how our creativity is a blessing to be explored and held high - we are fortunate to be able to have the opportunity to come together for such a theme when we are aware that in the past or in other areas of the world spirituality and creative as seen as diametrically opposed. As we leave the North Yorkshire countryside at the end of our week to begin our journeys home we will need to search for creative solutions to continue this sense of community. With the Spirit guiding us we are equal to the task.

Spring Gathering 2013 Epistle (The written form) for the Soundscape please visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHpWHVSAAnDY&feature=youtu.be>

EMEYF would like to present the epistle from the Spring Gathering 2013 held at Gearstones Lodge, Ribbleshead, North Yorkshire. Our week was inspired by the theme of 'The Body Electric: exploring spirituality through creativity'. We were able to realise these themes through workshops, discovering the local area (hills, caves and red squirrels included) and through both programmed and unprogrammed time together. Our Meetings for Worship for Business led to an understanding that each member of EMEYF has an active role to play within our community. Our spirituality and creativity can allow us to do this.

Landscape of rolling hills

Giving room for creativity in the many adventurous routes

*Being amongst caring, open, loving, kind people,
'I do not ask any more delight, I swim in it as in a sea'*

Not much matters more than making people feel

*Be Yourself,
that is how I created you*

*Explore Your limits and borders,
extend them where you can*

Space

*A poem, a song, a painting or design somehow feels truer, simpler, a reminder of a
bygone age. It is a product and extension of self.*

*My spirituality and creativity are closely connected and when
they have to be separate, my work and my worship feel incomplete*