

# York Area Meeting

## REPORT Meeting for Sufferings December 5th 2020

*(Full Minutes available for anyone to view on BYM Website)*

This was once again held on Zoom and again very well organised. Although many miss meeting in person, it has many advantages and the breakout rooms are a lovely opportunity to meet and talk together.

Particularly enjoyable was the Getting to Know You session early on, which included young Friends from the Young People's Participation Day, before they went off for their own discussions and later presentation on Racism.

### TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees' Report began by telling us they had spent a lot of their time discussing **Racism** and gave us their Minute "Racism exists within the Religious Society of Friends in Britain and we must tackle it". More will come from them.

Another major concern for them is the simplifying and clarifying of BYM's **central structures**, which are complex and particularly tricky when it comes to Safeguarding.

They have also spent much time looking at current and future **finances**. We need 33% more savings by beginning of 2023 and no one knows for certain when COVID restrictions will be over. QPSW's more focused strategy is almost ready. Planning ahead, there is no doubt we need Friends' long term giving to increase.

### YEARLY MEETING

We were addressed by Clare Scott Booth, Yearly Meeting Clerk, in the afternoon., telling us about the decision not to have YM Gathering in Bath in August. We would have had to be planning and committing finances to that now and we can't afford to do that. It will be, of necessity, online,- most of it taking place on the first and last weekends - 31 July to 3 August and 7 to 8 August., with the Young People's Programme events likely to be in the week in between.

A Programme will be announced nearer the time but the main topics are likely to be Racism, Sustainability and Climate Justice. There will also be related events in the weeks leading up to 31 July.

### SLAVERY AND RACISM

Following on in the afternoon we had a presentation from Edwina Piert, our Inclusion and Diversity Officer, who told us that Churches played an important role in the slave trade and that Quakers were

involved in that. Quaker settlers in Jamaica and Barbados, including some who arrived as convicts, were able to become Overseers and Slave Owners.

How shocking that 50 million people were forcibly transported from Africa to the Americas and 100 million of African descent live in the Americas today. Brazil has more people of African origin than any other country.

We need to ask why are the rich rich. Colonial slavery operated over 500 years and fuelled European industrial development.

Quakers are remembered for their part in the abolition of slavery but not for their part in the slave trade. Many freed Africans played a big part in abolition but mostly they are not acknowledged for that. The C of E apologised in 2006, the Baptists apologised in 2007, and Lloyds of London as Bankers have also apologised. Quakers have not yet apologised.

£20m was paid in compensation to slave owners but nothing to the slaves. We only just finished paying off the debt to fund this in 2015.

Edwina asked if we can make an active commitment to dismantle racism within Quakerism and society. Not all Quakers are convinced that there is racism in Quakers and we have to commit to dismantle the internal racism within ourselves. There is much work to be done and Trustees are taking a lead. We have much to learn from African Friends who represent over 50% of Quakers internationally.

We discussed Racism in Breakout Rooms as did the Young People and they gave us a lively presentation in words and images and song.

Barbara Penny,  
York AM MfS Rep