

# York Area Quaker Meeting

## Meeting for Sufferings Report – February the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

In the opening worship, a Friend reminded us of Jo Cox's words – 'there is more that unites us than divides us.' This was particularly apt given we were meeting on the first day post- Brexit.

### Prison and Court Register

Then it was business as usual with the Prison and Court register. We heard of Heather Restron, an attendee at Sheffield Central local meeting and John Lyons, member of Sussex East Area Meeting who had both been arrested and charged in the course of an Extinction Rebellion event.

### Europe

The Quaker Council for European Affairs triennial report was given and the point made that the need for peace in Europe did not lesson at 11 pm the previous evening. QCEA continues to do sterling work working with various peace initiatives and one initiative I learnt about was - #ChooseRespect which challenges negative narratives about migration and refugees on social media.

### Development of our Society

BYM Trustees have not met since the last meeting for Sufferings in December but Caroline Nursey got us thinking about some challenging questions such as what does it mean for Quakers to be a simple church and what should we do about declining numbers? She outlined the emerging strategy of *Local Development Workers* (LDWs) providing support and expertise to meetings.

The *Speaking Out* team asked us two specific questions to consider and to help them in their work.

- Is it more important to be Quaker or to voice all concerns?
- In addition, do we feel compelled to witness or compelled to achieve change?

Most of us found the former question easier to address in terms of a scale of 1 – 10 than the latter.

### Other Matters

- After lunch, we addressed how to be more inclusive and discussed some questions in small groups.
- We then considered whether the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust should become a Quaker Recognised Body? It was agreed of course.
- This was followed by some of the background to the discernment of the theme for the next Yearly Meeting to be held at Bath University from the 1 – 7<sup>th</sup> August. 'Listening, prophecy and Reconciliation: allyship in a climate emergency' is the theme. Everyone was encouraged to consider going to the event. See <https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym>
- The day ended with the draft report of Meeting for Sufferings and forwarded to British Yearly Meeting.

Sarah Allen ( Meeting for Sufferings alternate for York Area Meeting) , February 2020