

CC01/2013 Agreed by email prior to meeting.

We have received a request of financial help from two Young Adult Friends in Georgia to attend the 2013 Spring Gathering in the UK. We estimate this cost to be around 1250 euros to cover the costs of visa applications, flights and the Gathering fee. We would like to support these Friends to attend Spring Gathering. We support the Spring Gatherings Committee in their work to fundraise and CC will investigate whether previous Spring Gathering Surpluses can be used for this cause - however CC agree that ultimately EMEYF will underwrite the costs if no other funding is found.

Communications Committee Meeting 25 - 27 January 2013.

Present: Esther Koehring, Kristin Skarsholt, Paul Sladen, Mieke Van Opheusden, Leo Vincent and Bethany Squire.

CC02/2013 Opening minute

We welcome each other to Quaker House Brussels for our first Communications Committee meeting of 2013. We are pleased to have the opportunity to meet together in person rather than just by skype or email and look forward to a spirit-led and productive weekend. Our focus this weekend is both the structure and Spirit of EMEYF and we carry with us the ministry and prophetic voices of Young Adults Friends in our region who have supported us throughout the year and came to Annual Meeting.

CC03/2013 A review of 2012

We have spent some time reflecting on our past year. Our community has been a source of exploration, sharing, community and worship.

Friends have gathered as EMEYF twice; at our Spring Gathering in Wehlen near Dresden, and our Annual Meeting in Bad Pyrmont. Our focus in both gatherings was community; at Spring Gathering we looked at building and encouraging community and at Annual Meeting we looked at our own EMEYF community and how we would like that to exist.

Friends from the section also went to the World Conference of Friends in Kenya and met together with Quakers from around the globe offering a time for shared worship and

the building of friendships. It was good to see so many Young Friends who were very active in Quakerism. One Friend also attended a Kenyan Young Friends Conference after the event.

Outside of our two main events Young Friends has traveled around the section as representatives to other gatherings and we enjoy a close relationship with German Young Friends, Dutch “under 53’s” Young Friends and YFGM. We are aware of other Young Friends groups in the region and look forward to building closer relationships with them in the future.

Alongside our Quaker events and ministry we have continue to travel in a more informal sense of “Friendship” - building our community by connecting in each others lives.

CC04/2013 Accounts

We have looked at the accounts so far. Our accounts show a healthy situation for EMEYF.

We remind representatives and post holders to claim the relevant expenses. We ask those on Communications Committee to claim their expenses from Annual Meeting 2012 if they have not already done so.

We ask Spring Gatherings Committees to try to ensure we can use any surplus Spring Gathering funding raised one year to help enable Friends to attend events for the following year. We ask the Gatherings Coordinator to help word a standard fundraising letter for EMEYF Gatherings.

We ask the treasurers to move forward with consolidating the accounts and look forward to seeing the final accounts for 2012.

Our healthy financial position provides a good foundation for planning the future of EMEYF.

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 the 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.

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 intervisitation.

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.

CC07/2013 - A new website

We heard the call for an interactive website and feel this will offer a new dimension to EMEYF - allowing us to connect in new ways and without financial or time implications. We are so much a part of each other's lives that we want to find a way to enhance this.

We would like our new interactive website to include:

- The possible to have group interaction / virtual meetings
- Reports from role holders
- Blogs
- Annual Reports
- News
- Events/Calendar
- Forum

We would like the website to be flexible to Friends needs.

We need to consider how to attract people to the website and we may use social media to do this

We ask our secretary to explore what is needed to create this and what costs may be involved to commission this work.

CC08/2013 - Future Annual Meetings

We would like to find a way to make Annual Meeting to be more attractive as a event; blending business, spirituality and fun. We ask our Kristin and Mieke to begin some research into what would make Annual Meeting more welcoming to be ready to present at Spring Gathering 2013.

CC09/2013 - Paying for our weekend

We ask our treasurers to make sure that all of the costs for our weekend together are paid for out of our bank accounts.

CC10/2013 - Update from Spring Gathering

We received the following update from Spring Gathering. Spring Gathering committee are well on the way for organising the Spring Gathering for 2013. There is an extensive programme being planned around the theme "The Body Electric" which uses the arts as a tool for exploring our Spirituality.

Spring Gathering can host XX number of Friends. There are currently 5 applicants plus our 2 Friends from Georgia. Communications Committee also made a commitment at Annual Meeting to attend Spring Gathering if possible.. We will make sure we apply in the next few weeks. If members of CC need financial help we would hope to facilitate this without adding pressure to the Spring Gathering's finances.

The Planning Committee are planning to open a bank account for Spring Gathering and CC are willing to help with this. We ask Planning Committee to work with our treasurers to ensure the smooth running of finances relating to Spring Gathering. The PC will work with the GC and the Secretary to raise the needed funds for bursaries.

We thank the Planning Committee for their work.

CC11/2013 - 30th Anniversary Event

We thank Marielke Nieuwerth-Van Den Akker for her work towards this event. The event is planned to take place EMEYF fully supports the 30th anniversary event. We ask Marielke to continue to work on this event; along with Friends she has already been in contact with in the Netherlands, Germany and the UK.

EMEYF will nominate two to three Friends who are currently involved in EMEYF to work alongside this group at Spring Gathering 2013.

CC12/2013 EMES Annual Meeting

We are grateful to EMES for changing the date of their Annual Meeting in order to enable more Young Friends attend.

Whilst EMEYF and EMES are two separate organisations members of EMEYF are also members of EMES and should be able to fully participate in both groups.

We would like to encourage Young Friends to attend and would be able to help them raise the funds from appropriate sources such as the John Warder Fund. We will also explore what other support Friends might need to attend aside from financial.

We will ask for some more information from EMES such as the programme and the deadline for applications in order to help Friends make a plan to attend.

CC13/2013 - Next CC Meeting

We hope to meet again on the 22 - 24th March 2013 in the Netherlands to continue the work of this weekend.

CC14/2013 - Closing Minute

We are grateful for the opportunity to meet together this weekend at Quaker House Brussels. We thank our Secretary and the new Representatives for their hospitality this weekend and providing a calm space from which we have been able to work. It has been a busy weekend; we have managed to achieve a huge amount of work and able to have fun in the process.

Communications Committee Meeting 22 - 24 March 2012 - Groningen, Netherlands

Present: Esther Koehring, Kristin Skarsholt, Paul Sladen, Mieke Van Opheusden, Leo Vincent.

CC15/2013 - Opening Minute

This is our second CC meeting of the year and we are grateful for the opportunity to all be able to meet together again. We hope our discernment and action this weekend is continue from our previous meeting and annual meeting in 2012. We look forward to being able to finish the weekend with good plans and recommendations to take to Spring Gathering about the future structure and spirit of EMEYF.

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 artificialness.

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.

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.

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.

CC19/2013 - Role of the Secretary

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.

CC20/2013 - Closing Minute

We have enjoyed our weekend together. Staying at the home of our clerk, sharing family life and linking up our community with the context we live in helped us to grow closer together and learn about what inspires us. We have discussed a wide variety of issues and projects all of which has come out of our annual meeting. We hope we heard the voices of EMEYF well and have done justice to what is asked of us. We look forward to spring gathering in two weeks.

Action Points:

Esther - speak with Roisin about the EMES Representative Role, Prepare the session on Spirituality at Spring Gathering with Mieke.

Paul - bring the accounts to the Spring Gathering so we can complete them by the end of the Gathering

Kristin - plan a session on events (Leo to Clerk) - Spring Gathering 2014, Annual Meetings, EMEYF 30th Anniversary, other events?

Leo - contact with the trustees, contact with EMES, prepare business sessions on structure.

Mieke - prepare the session on Spirituality with Esther and the item - Annual Meetings with Kristin

Bethany - REST!!!

All - have a look at what we would like to do in our roles.