

EMEYF Communications Committee Minutes 2016

EMEYF Communications Committee, 20.04.2016, via Skype

Present: Annie Womack, David Mangels, Emmie Touwen, Esther Köhring, Laurina Pfeiffer. George Thurley technically prevented but in written contact. Renke Meuwese prevented, sending greetings from Calais.

CC 2016/01 EMEYF Bursaries for the All Age Gathering

CC had budgeted 1500 Euros for "EMEYF bursaries", which have been allocated to Young Friends during two CC Skypes in a worshipful manner.

CC 2016/02 Bursaries for the All Age Gathering from AAG budget

After having allocated bursaries to those who would otherwise not be able to attend, using the AAG bursary fund, which had been filled by donations, the AAG still reports a need for bursaries. We are hoping these bursaries will be covered from the budget of the AAG, as the budgeting is ongoing. Nonetheless, given the need for a decision about bursaries at this point in time, we underwrite an additional bursary fund for the AAG with up to 1000 Euros from EMEYF's core budget.

EMEYF Communications Committee, 29. April – 1. May 2016, Deventer/NL

Present: Annie Womack, Emmie Touwen, Esther Köhring, George Thurley, Laurina Pfeiffer, Rachael Booth, Renke Meuwese.

We have been joined via Skype for specific agenda items by David Mangels (CC 2016/10-12) and Sebastian Lönnlöf (CC 2016/06-07).

Apologies: David Mangels (apart from CC 2016/10-12, via Skype)

CC 2016/03 Opening Minute

EMEYF Communications Committee has come together, April 29th to Sunday 1st of May 2016, in Deventer, the Netherlands. We will look at the past year and discern a way forward. After Annual Meeting and with the All Age Gathering ahead, in the middle of projects and activities, it is good to be able to meet in a warm room and spend time together. We are grateful for the invitation to live the EMEYF community in the house of the Touwen family.

CC 2016/04 Annual Report 2015

Building on the experiences from last year, we have put together an Annual Report that reflects the lives and concerns of Young Friends in Europe and the Middle East. We enjoyed starting our 2016 CC Meeting by looking at the draft prepared by George Thurley, and look forward to share the report with the wider community of (Young) Friends as soon as it is finalised, including the 2015 consolidated accounts.

CC 2016/05 Report from the World Plenary Meeting (WPM) Peru; The Young Friends World Committee

Renke Meuwese reported on his experience attending the WPM in Peru, with friends from all over the world, including about 90 Young Adult Friends (YAF). YAF had their own sessions, starting by getting to know each other, but then taking on the suggestion of considering the possibility of a World Gathering of YF, extending the scope and the number of sessions extensively. It was an exceptional situation, big questions emerged from it and are now brought back into the sections.

The discernment process was difficult, especially because the YAF present were aware that the next opportunity to discern this question might be not earlier than in twelve years time.

Trying to discern whether a WGYF would be something that YF worldwide want and need at this point, it became clear, stronger than the leading to organise a WGYF is the concern to build networks and communities of Young Friends, within and in between the sections – also, but not exclusively, to be in a better position to discern questions like whether there should be a WGYF.

What does it mean to be a YF community in the World Family of Friends? How can we share and learn from each other? What can other sections learn from the way we do EMEYF – and what can EMEYF learn from YF from other sections?

An international steering committee (the Young Friends World Committee) was appointed, to work on these questions, build networks, link existing structures and YF groups, define needs, and prepare structures for future activities.

The way YF are organised within the EMES section, as EMEYF, is a different situation compared to the other sections. When the YAF present split into groups, according to their sections, to nominate Friends for the international steering committee, this led to appointing Renke Meuwese for this committee, as one of the EMEYF clerks. In the other sections, several friends have been appointed. While this nomination process was difficult, it ended with a gathered meeting, praying for the committee and their work – a work that includes discerning what the tasks of this committee are.

As EMEYF, we are asked in what way we want to participate in the work of the steering committee. How can we organise a consultation about these questions in EMEYF, and support the work of the steering committee?

We will need to discuss these questions at the All Age Gathering, and it gives us hope that there will already be living links: the Young Friends from other sections attending.

CC 2016/06 The Living Archive Project (LAP)

Following up AM 2015 (see EMEYF AM2015/03) we have developed the „EMEYF Living Archive Project“ (see EMEYF CC 2015/18). We applied for the SGF from EMES, and a grant for the project was awarded in March 2016 (running 2016-2018, totalling €17.400). The project scoping Exercise (see EMEYF AM2015/19) took place, and Sebastian Lönnlöv provided a report about his work (attached to these minutes).

To envision the three year project, we think about where we are now, where we might be in three years time, and what the next steps are.

Sebastian Lönnlöv joined us through Skype and reported on what he found in the archive in Brussels in scoping the archive. He told us that the archives are not really ordered, but that there is a lot of interesting materials in them (see report).

In order to publish the results we have collected so far, we will create a specific section of the EMEYF website for the Living Archive Project. This would also help to enable former EMEYFers to send in more materials to fill the gaps we seem to be finding in the Brussels archive. This would also help to bring the archive to life and become a dynamic part of the community.

At the All-AgeGathering, we will have both a plenary presentation of the project, as well as a special interest group to work further on developing it. We envision people gathering around boxes of material, recording interviews with EMEYFers of all ages and having a timeline or a pinboard on which people can add their memories. We aim to make sure that people who have worked with the archives (or will do so in the next months) will be present at the AAG. The Friends engaging with the archive are part of the project. Their interests, skills and questions affect what we do with the archives at the AAG. The story of how we as community and individual Friends engaged with the archives is an important part of the project and should be reflected by the end product. The discovery of the past and what it means to us today is an essential part of what makes this project important for us to build community.

CC 2016/07 Workplan for the Living Archive Project (LAP) until the All-Age-Gathering (AAG) 2016

In preparation of the AAG, we are going to take the following steps:

We ask George Thurley to prepare information about the LAP to send out to the mailinglist, including asking for additional material. Therefore, we need to set up a system to receive files from community members, and to organize and publish them digitally. We ask George Thurley, Georg Adelman, Sebastian Lönnlöf (and other CC members as needed) to work together in developing a system that is good enough for the next months.

We will invite more people to come to Brussels and investigate the archives. We will especially encourage people who are already intending to come to the AAG, as well as people who have earlier expressed interest to work on the LAP. Archive researchers may base their work on Sebastian's findings and suggestions, though Friends will have the freedom to follow their own research questions and interests. We ask those Friends engaging with the archive before the AAG, to prepare a presentation or activity at the AAG, showing their results or asking questions that emerged from it that they want to continue working on in the future. We encourage those who have been or will be part of the LAP to link up and share ideas and experiences.

Our fundraising treasurer will work on the the „Ex-EMEYFers support scheme“ and contact list, to present and launch at the AAG. We want to be transparent that this scheme is about support, be it financial, spiritual, providing information or expertise.

CC 2016/08 YFGM and EMEYF

We are glad that Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) decided to resume yearly donations to EMEYF of 500 GBP/year and thank YFGM for this support. While CC is meeting in the Netherlands, YFGM are meeting in Liverpool this weekend, which helps to feel connected. Though the numbers, situation and structures differ between Young Friends (groups) in continental Europe and Britain, Young Friends in Britain are part of EMEYF. There are always EMEYFers attending YFGM and the other way around, so that information is shared. We trust that this will help us to maintain a relationship. Both our communities are active and continually changing, but we want to keep building links between them.

CC 2016/09 Woodbrooke Young Adult Leadership Programme (YALP)

Following SG 2015/13:

EMEYF SG 2015/13 Woodbrooke YALP Woodbrooke Young Adult Leadership Programme (YALP) is explicitly inviting Young Quakers from the European mainland to attend.

EMEYFers report about their personal experiences to us. The year-long programme combines learning about Quakerism with spiritual and personal exploration. It consists of both residential periods in Woodbrooke and around the UK, as well as online communication within the year group of about 10 people. Participants also produce a piece of creative or reflective work. Some participants in YALP have been sponsored by Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) and other Quaker groups like Area Meetings. The participants then also bring their new skills and knowledge back into their communities. EMEYF will continue to make Young European Quakers aware of this programme and the possibilities of receiving funding for it. To encourage and support, EMEYF will start to sponsor participants from European mainland for part of the costs of the programme and support them in applying for other funding. Although we have been explicitly invited to encourage YAFs from the mainland, naturally, our spiritual support and the offer to support funding applications at different Quaker bodies applies to British and Irish EMEYFers as well. We hope the participants who we sponsor will continue to be actively involved in EMEYF, so that their experience also returns into the wider community. We will offer all EMEYFers participating in the YALP spiritual support, before, during and after the actual course. Given our current financial situation, we are not able to cover the full cost of a mainland European participant. We therefore allocate up to 250 Euros to financially support one participant of the 2015/16 course. We will reassess our possibilities at the 2016 gathering.

we note that no Young Friend applied to EMEYF for support for the 2015/16 course of YALP and agree to carry forward the allocation of 250 Euros to support a participant in the 2016/17 course to enable an application before the deadline of 31 May. We will send out an email, sharing information about the YALP, including a participant's report and the offer to support EMEYFers who want to apply. Apart from the financial support, EMEYF can serve as official supporting organisation, by backing the application and accompanying the YALPer during the course.

CC 2016/10 All-Age-Gathering 2016, financial implications

The AAG is at the moment budgeted with expected expenditure of about 47.000 Euros. This is covered well by income from fees and donations. We nonetheless underwrite the event with 12.000 Euros for the case of a deficit, as we do with any EMEYF event. This event has a bigger budget than usual EMEYF events. EMEYF's reserves, not counting income for the AAG, are not high enough to underwrite more than 12.000 Euros. We will therefore doublecheck that the income is covering for non-refundable expenses before signing the final contract with the venue, and look into insurance to cover the case of a cancellation after May 21st.

CC 2016/11 All-Age-Gathering 2016, Business Sessions

As there was no Spring Gathering this year, there are some topics to discern at the AAG during an EMEYF Meeting for Worship for Business. At this point in time, we are especially aware of the planning of a Spring Gathering 2017 and nominations for EMEYF roles. There are also topics that need exploration or consultation, followed by discernment, especially the Young Friends World Committee and the Living Archive Project.

Planning an EMEYF All Age Gathering poses unusual challenges: we want to be open and form a community with everyone present, but need to discern the way forward not for this AAG community, but for the EMEYF community, which hosts the AAG and will continue its way afterwards. It is important that EMEYF feels comfortable and safe when doing this. We have heard from German YM, where a business meeting of Young Friends was open to the wider community. This has been experienced as problematic, though there were also good sides of it. It needs care and preparation.

We suggest to invite for the „EMEYF business sessions“ in a way that makes clear that they are the place and time when EMEYF discerns its future – therefore, Friends who identify as Young Friends are forming the Meeting. EMEYF CC will organise Special Interest Groups or Consultations for topics that might be of wider interest, like the Living Archive Project, for everyone who is interested in them, and asks these groups to prepare reports or recommendations to the EMEYF business sessions. Business relevant for the AAG community, like the epistle or any topics arising, should be discerned in the plenary.

CC 2016/12 All-Age-Gathering, Elders

We are aware that at a gathering that is bigger than our usual gatherings and brings much more diversity, we will be in special need of spiritual care and pastoral support. We also note that part of the job of gathering's elders start before the gathering starts. Therefore, we aim at appointing one or two additional elders for the All-Age-Gathering, including its preparation.

For doing this, we ask Laurina Pfeiffer, Renke Meuwese and Rachael Booth to form a nominations committee and come back with nominations to CC.

At the AAG we want to appoint additional elders, reflecting the diversity of the community present. We ask our EMEYF elders and those AAG elders appointed beforehand to think about how this nomination at the gathering can be done in an inclusive and inviting way.

CC 2016/13 Treasurers Report and Consolidated Accounts 2015

Our Consolidating Treasurer Rachael Booth reported on the state of our accounts and presented the consolidated accounts 2015.

Income over expenditure shows a deficit of about 550 Euros, but taking into account some liabilities, the cost for the secretariat (which had not been invoiced in 2015) and that part of the income was early donations and grants for the All Age Gathering 2016, the deficit is bigger. We are still in need of securing new funds and sources of income. However, the expenditure was within the expected limits.

The Spring Gathering 2015 in Georgia did well in terms of finances, ending with a small surplus which will be used for organising gatherings in 2016.

We have received generous donations from meetings and individuals and thank them again. We also received a grant from the EMES SGF for the All Age Gathering 2016.

The 2015 accounts have been consolidated, with some finishing touches this weekend.

Therefore, we expect to be able to approve them within the next weeks via email. After being approved, the accounts will be published in the EMEYF Annual Report 2015 and sent to the UK Charitable Commission.

CC 2016/14 Roleholders Expenses Policy

EMEYF SG 2015/14 asked trustees to prepare a draft for a roleholders expenses policy and stated some suggestions, as well as naming EMEYFers to give input on this.

So far, this has not happened. As special events like the AAG 2016 will probably not be covered anyhow, Trustees are aiming to bring a draft to AAG 2016 or AM 2016, to be implemented for SG 2017. Trustees are encouraged to contact the EMEYFers who have been named for support, even before they have a first draft, if this is what is needed.

CC 2016/15 EMEYF Representative to QCEA Council report

Renke Meuwese, who is our EMEYF Representative to QCEA Council, attended the Council Meeting in April this year. He reported about the deep discernment undertaken

there, about the future, ways of working and structures of QCEA. Via our QCEA representative, we take part in QCEA's transition process, which is about how Quakers can engage with the world in a way that is both effective and spirit-led. While it becomes clearer how QCEA should work in general terms, decisions about the programme areas and the practicalities of the work structure remain to be made. We hear that QCEA is on its way to be effective, spirit-led and healthy, striving to become an organisation where there is no need to trade off one of these for the others.

CC 2016/16 QCEA and EMEYF relationship

At AM 2015 we looked at the EMEYF-QCEA relationship. We felt that we are connected not only by having an EMEYF representative to the QCEA council and a contractual relationship via the secretary, but by identifying both strongly as European and as a spiritual community. And we are communities of Friends working in the same areas, following the same concerns.

There has been extensive communication between EMEYF CC and QCEA EC in between EMEYF AM and the QCEA Council meeting, assuring each other that while we do not know how our relationship will change in the future, we want it to continue and to grow, for the benefit of both our organisations. We trust that this will help us through the transition process.

CC 2016/17 EMEYF Secretariat

Following QCEA Council minute 2016/16, we understand there may not be any QCEA Programme Assistants until at least January 2017, possibly longer. However, we hear that Council values the work of PAs and expects this role to continue. This means that the structural grounds for the continuation of the secretariat will be in place again, at one (still unknown) point in the future. We reaffirm the need for the secretariat, and see this role not only as a service for EMEYF, but hope that it also helps QCEA as an organisation to be grounded in a spiritual community. We have heard that this role is seen as a vital part of the way QCEA and EMEYF relate in communication before the Council, though the secretariat has not been discussed in detail at the Council meeting. We ask QCEA Executive Committee to keep us informed about their intentions about our contractual relationship, as well as their plans for staffing, so that we are in a position to discern the future of the secretariat as soon as possible.

The Project Officer contract of our current secretary George Thurley ends at the end of May 2016. We will enter a period of time in which the QCEA staff cannot supply a secretary for EMEYF. To bridge this gap is of importance, as the AAG and the begin of the Living Archive Project fall into this period.

We have heard George's offer to continue serving EMEYF on a voluntary basis. This offer would help us serve the community over the next months. We have also heard from QCEA EC that QCEA is willing to work out practicalities needed for this (see QCEA EC 2016/22): A Secretary as a voluntary position would not be covered by the service agreement anymore, but would still need access to the office, the archives and the bank accounts.

We are glad about George's offer, and feel strengthened and encouraged by it. As the Secretary is the only position within EMEYF that is not filled by an appointment following Quaker nominations process, but as part of a professional contract, it's (temporary) transition into a volunteer role is also a matter of finding the right process. We understand that as CC, we can and sometimes have to make decisions when matters are arising. We therefore happily accept George's offer until the All Age Gathering, when the wider community can discern the topic. We also hope that by then, we might know more about the staffing plans from QCEA's side.

We are aware that having a „volunteer Secretary“ will have consequences for the amount of work than can be done, and that we as a committee are responsible for making sure no volunteer is doing more than they can, and that tasks are picked up by other committee members if needed.

While we are accepting George's offer until the AAG this summer, we have the strong wish to return to the secretariat as specified in the Service Agreement between QCEA and EMEYF (though open to changes where needed) as soon as possible.

CC 2016/18 Contact Person to the Secretary

As a result of the changes in the secretariat (CC 2016/17), there is no need for a Contact Person to the Secretary, as defined in the Service Agreement between QCEA and EMEYF, from 28th of May 2016 until the appointment of a new secretary by QCEA. We therefore release Esther Köhring as Contact Person to the Secretary as of 28th of May 2016 and thank her for her service.

CC 2016/19 Website

The new website is in use as of November 2015. The transition has not been as smoothly as hoped for. We recognize both mistakes in communication and the commitment and work that went into this project, regardless.

A part of the content still needs to be transferred from the backup of the old site. The structure of the site for community interaction and the living archive also needs to be worked out in more detail (also see CC 2016/07).

We will send out a call for additional website administrators to join Georg Adelman as soon as possible. The responsibility of these admins will be keeping the website up to date technically, and developing the community and archive structures. We recommend a focus on developing the infrastructure for the LAP first, and budget will be available for, e.g., a face to face meeting to develop the archive infrastructure, bringing together LAPers and admins.

CC recognizes that we need to actively stay in contact with the admin team. For the time being, Laurina Pfeiffer will look after this and ensure this communication happens. The responsibility for updating minutes and other (governance) documents which are publicly available on the website, still lays with CC. Renke Meuwese and Laurina Pfeiffer will make sure this responsibility is fulfilled.

EMEYF Communications Committee, 5.6.2016, via Skype

Present: Annie Womack, David Mangels, Emmie Touwen, Esther Köhring (not for 2016/21), Laurina Pfeiffer. George Thurley and Emmie Touwen prevented, sending greetings.

CC 2016/20 Woodbrooke YALP support

Following up CC 2016/09, we have received an application for support (financial and spiritual) to attend the Woodbrooke Young Adult Leadership Program. Conversations to explore the needs and wishes and kind of support needed have happened. We are glad to be able to support Evan Welkin (Italy) to attend the YALP course 2016/17.

This includes financial support of 250 Euros towards the participants fees and travel costs.

We will stay in contact and see what Evan needs and how EMEYF as a community can support and uphold him, and to hear about the programme and Evan's experiences, as well. Annie will keep in contact with Evan over the year.

It is good to see that YALP has participants from different parts of the section. Our offer to all EMEYFers participating in YALP for spiritual support, before, during and after the actual course, is standing.

CC 2016/21 Living Archive Project – Second Round

Following up CC 2017/07 we are happy to have received applications for the Living Archives Project.

We ask Annie Janssen and Esther Köhring to prepare the LAP for the All Age Gathering.

We invite them to travel to Brussels before AAG and will cover these travel expenses.

We agree to support Esther's participation at the AAG with a partial bursary of 200 Euros towards her fee and we wish to let Annie know that this support is available from the LAP funds.

We ask them to keep in mind Catherine and Mikheil and the special skills they offer (also remotely).