

## **EMEYF Annual Meeting 2014 14-16 November Bad Pyrmont**

**Present:** Annie Womack, David Mangels, Esther Köhring, Georg Adelman, Gesa Jessen, Halimah Austin, Paul Sladen, Rachael Booth, Renke Meuwese, Saskia Kuhlmann, Wanda Dahme

### **EMEYF AM 2014/01 Opening Minute**

We, eleven Young Friends from various European countries, are gathered at the Quaker House in Bad Pyrmont to worship and spend time together. We heard greetings from Kirsten Ackermann, George Thurley, Miranda Barty-Taylor, Laurina Pfeiffer, Helen Close, and Rose Oliver. We heard about the Netherlands Youngish Friends meeting which is also gathering this weekend and has us in their thoughts. We return greetings to all Friends who are with us in their thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

### **EMEYF AM 2014/02 Nominations Committee**

We have heard about the nominations process and nominations required. We appoint Annie Womack, Wanda Dahme and Renke Meuwese to serve on the Nominations Committee for this weekend and will uphold and support them. Accepting the recommendations from SG 2014, we ask the Committee to bring forward names for the roles of Clerk (or two Co-Clerks), Elder and Consolidating Treasurer.

### **EMEYF AM 2014/03 Finances 2012 and 2013**

We heard the report by the EMEYF Trustees about the financial reporting for 2012 and 2013 and the difficulties in consolidating the finances. Consolidation is therefore still ongoing. The meeting is comfortable with the work done so far and asks the Communications Committee to accept the finalized reports, get them examined and distribute it.

### **EMEYF AM 2014/04 Finances 2014, Budget 2015**

The Treasurer presented the accounts to date for 2014 as well as an estimate of EMEYF's expected financial situation at the end of the year. The Trustees presented us with two historical budgets and three possible budgets for 2015 varying in expected income and planned expenditures resulting from different plans for fundraising.

### **EMEYF AM 2014/05 Fundraising**

The Trustees gave an overview of the current fundraising situation, reported concrete ideas for future fundraising and asked for additional ideas for fundraising and priorities. From the list provided by the Trustees, we discerned the following priorities (highest priorities first):

1. Gift-aid for fundraising for SG 2015 (short term)
2. ask former EMEYF members for long-term support
3. support by YFGM
4. support by EMES

---

1 Additional greetings were received from those handing in reports, see minutes EMEYF AM 2014/09-14

5. approach other Yearly Meetings about supporting EMEYF with delegates similar to the German yearly meeting; alternatively approach young Friends in other yearly meetings to propose this to their own Yearly Meetings
6. explore additional options

The meeting also identified the following additional ideas:

- outreach committee
- non-quaker donors/organisations, like the European Union

We invite other people in EMEYF to work together with the CC and the Trustees on fundraising options they are interested in. Fundraising tasks are the collective responsibility of all EMEYF members and require all our support.

### **EMEYF AM 2014/06 EMEYF Annual Reports (Minute of record)**

At the Saturday afternoon, we split into small groups to consider the form, content and tone of our Annual Report. The questions we considered were the following:

- What do you want to read and see in our Annual Report?
- How can the Annual Report represent us as the [...] community that we are?
- What do you want to contribute?

Here is what we returned:

The report should contain some general information about what EMEYF is and does, as well as information about plans for the future. But we feel that too many roleholders reports can become bureaucratic and even discourage people from taking up roles.

People should write because they have a concern, because they want to say and share something: We want to read more personal stories from EMEYFers, about how they have experienced EMEYF, who they are, etc. This can include personal stories and testimonies.

By using a (video)questionnaire, we can portrait individuals and get to know each other. Questions could be "What did you contribute to and learn from EMEYF, who is your best friend, what is favourite chocolate flavour, how young do you feel, etc.". This could also be sent out to Ex-EMEYFers.

To celebrate our history, we can also share funny finds from the EMEYF archives and connect to the "Early EMEYFers".

Also, other YF groups within the section could share and the Annual Report could help to connect them. For example, YF groups could share about their (past and upcoming) gatherings and about what is important for them, to encourage intervisitation (visitation between groups). Having an updated list of people to send the report to will also help us to stay in contact.

To represent us as the community we are, the Annual Report should include plenty of colours, and lively photos – that means pictures that "speak" and make people curious – probably more "action shots" than "group pictures". We can even include audiolinks for audioepistles – and videos!

Quotes from YF in different languages, that are not translated, can help to represent our diversity, and to represent the the way in which we explore our multilingualism as a strength in finding our voices.

EMEYF is a community where we are truthful with each other, and where it is just ok to struggle, as individual and as community. We hope that our Annual Report can represent this quality of openness and sharing about our way. We want to appreciate our in-articulateness without cutting ourselves off from the world.

### **EMEYF AM 2014/07 EMEYF Annual Report Procedures**

We separate out the needs for formal Annual Reports for the past 3 years, which are still outstanding, and the wish for an Annual Report about the past year that is how we envision it to be.

The formal Annual Reports 2012 and 2013 should be prepared by CC as soon as the consolidating accounts are accepted. These should include what is legally and formally required.

For our Annual Report 2014, we want to try to produce an Annual Report that suits our own needs. We ask our secretary, the contact person to the secretary and any EMEYFers who are interested to join the team to work on an Annual Report 2014 that is guided by the ideas we explored together (see EMEYF AM 2014/06) .

### **EMEYF AM 2014/08 European Quaker All Age Gathering 2016**

We heard a report on the current state of planning from the planning group of European Quaker All Age Gathering. We are glad & grateful that the group is willing and able to organise this event. EMEYF will be happy to assist in communications, using the known mix of media-outlets to let Friends know about the event.

Annual Meeting offers the following general feedback, as asked. We wonder if the family/young families concept will appeal to current Young Friends. We are aware that the planning committee has only one "currently young" Friend so far. We hope that more current Young Friends will be willing to join the planning committee soon to work on this question. Until that moment we offer that EMEYF's gatherings coordinator and elders could act as a liaison giving feedback and support to the planning group.

If we want this to be an all generation meeting, it should be available to current EMEYFers. The total cost might not be manageable for current Young Friends without extra funding.

### **EMEYF AM 2014/09 EMEYF Spring Gathering 2015**

We have heard a report of the Planning Committee for Spring Gathering 2015 and are happy to hear about the process of planning.

We have the strong wish to connect to Georgian Friends while in Georgia and ask the Planning Committee to make this possible.

The Planning Committee is meeting in Kiev in the weekend of 21 November, we wish them safe journeys and good planning weekend.

### **EMEYF AM 2014/10 Concern: Participation of a Kenyan Young Friend at SG 2015**

A concern about Spring Gathering 2015 came in via email from Laurina. The elders had a phone call with her to clarify details and presented the concern. During her travels, Laurina was working with a Young Friend from Kenya, Dennis, who was very interested in getting to know EMEYF and our Quaker culture. EMEYF is asked if we wanted to invite and financially support him for travels and fees to Spring Gathering 2015.

We have no worries that Dennis would be a very worthy contributor to our gathering, but our discernment process for bursaries so far has been focused on Young Friends within our section.

The discussion of this topic raised feelings within the group how to act and consequently raised questions about the position of EMEYF within the worldwide Quaker community. For this matter it would be good to have an transparent policy in the future. For now and the case of Dennis we trust the Planning Committee to take a wise decision if a concrete bursary is requested. Primarily we would like to encourage Dennis and Laurina to try fundraising within other (inter)national Quaker bodies, including Kenyan and African meetings/organisations, and offer our support to them.

### **EMEYF AM 2014/11 EMEYF Representative to QCEA report**

We heard the report of EMEYF's QCEA Representative Hannah Slater about the current situation at QCEA as it undergoes changes on its way to improving structures and working as effectively as it can. We would like to support this process and uphold Hannah in her role, which we value highly.

In response to the request for an alternate QCEA Representative, we ask that the new CC appoints a CC member to fulfil this role. It is important to us that EMEYF has representation at every meeting of QCEA Council.  
Report is attached.

#### **EMEYF AM 2014/12 EMEYF Representative to EMES EC report**

Paul Sladen reports about the experiences of his first 6 months as EMEYF to EMES Executive Committee Representative. Attending the EMES Annual Meeting 2014 at Strasbourg provided him with the opportunity to learn about the differences between EMEYF and EMES in the way we hold our gatherings and business meetings.

As EMEYF to EMES EC representative, Paul took also part in two Executive Committee meetings. Having someone appointed by EMEYF to this committee seems to be very valuable to him. The process of working out together with EMES how this role can serve both organisations was worth having been undertaken and starts to bear fruits.

#### **EMEYF AM 2014/13 EMEYF Delegate to CEG 2014 report**

We received a report from Julian Wood, EMEYF Delegate to Central European Gathering 2014, about the weekend he spent in Vienna.

We relate to the challenges of maintaining a community over a wide area. We are pleased that Julian was able to play a role in facilitating communication in this regard and hope that he will be able to continue to be a link connecting EMEYF to Young Friends who have not yet encountered it.

Report is attached.

#### **EMEYF AM 2014/14 Report to EMEYF on Evangelical Young Friends in Hungary**

We received a report from Andrew Lane, who had heard about the conferences of Evangelical Friends International (EFI) in Hungary from the EMEYF mailing list and decided to go there and report back to us. He reports about the evangelical communities, about Young Friends he met and the situation in Hungary. Andrew's report reminds us about the presence of Evangelical Friends in the geographical area of EMEYF, and that the question of whether and how to engage is an issue we should consider.

Report is attached.

#### **EMEYF AM 2014/15 World Gathering of Young Friends Charitable Committee**

We received an invitation to the Meeting to conclude the World Gathering of Young Friends charitable committee taking place on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2014 in Belfast (with the offer to probably reimburse travel costs for one to two EMEYFers). We will distribute this information via our mailing list and hope that someone will be able to attend on our behalf.

#### **EMEYF AM 2014/16 Woodbrooke Young Adult Leadership programme**

Mike Eccles from Woodbrooke has reminded us that there are bursaries available for continental Young Friends in the 18-30 age range who want to participate in the Young Adult Leadership Programme (YALP). The next in-take will be in mid-2015. In the meantime we will distribute the materials and will discuss this again at SG in order to encourage a Young Friend or Friends to take up this offer. We look forward to hearing updates about the progress of the programme.

### **EMEYF AM 2014/17 Nominations returns**

We appoint the following people: To serve as co-clerks: Renke Meuwese (3 years), and Esther Köhring (2 years); and to serve as elder: Laurina Pfeiffer (3 years).

We encourage Friends to consider names for our Consolidating Treasurer and ask the Trustees and CC to explore options of shaping this role in a way that is both beneficial to our community and interesting to the role holder.

We thank Esther Köhring for her work as Elder, and Paul Sladen for serving as UK Treasurer, and release them from these roles.

### **EMEYF AM 2014/18 Closing Minute**

We close this meeting, listening for birdsong and being grateful for our privileged time here together. We wish each other safe travels and pass on our greetings, especially to the very newest and youngest in the extended EMEYF family.

We thank for the hospitality of German Yearly Meeting for EMEYF's use of Bad Pyrmont Quäkerhaus and the opportunity to fetch and enjoy the refreshing Quellwasser from the natural spring opposite. We look forward to worshipping together as a community and meeting local Friends at our Spring Gathering in Georgia in April 2015.

## **APPENDIX**

### **EMEYF Representative to QCEA report (see EMEYF AM 2014/11)**

QCEA Council was held on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> October at Quaker House Brussels. It was an unusual Council in which we continued with the work begun at the previous Meeting in April visioning the future ahead for QCEA. QCEA faces multiple challenges over the next few years. Council are engaged in a process of discerning the way forward as an organisation that will empower QCEA in its calling to be strong Quaker voice in Europe. We seek to strengthen the organisation in order to better support all staff and Council, and to better take advantage of resources and opportunities as they come to light.

I shared with Council EMEYF's reflections on these important matters and I was strengthened in this by discussion beforehand with Esther and Paul. I sought to ensure that our priorities around maintaining a relationship with QCEA, and the wellbeing of the Programme Assistants, with whom we have always had strong ties, were heard, and I will continue to do so.

I spoke with Sevi Christoforou, who will soon be leaving QCEA and told me she had found her few months as a Communications and Programme Assistant very useful, and with new PAs Tim Harman and George Thurley, who will be our new Secretary. They both seem to be settling into life at Quaker House well.

This Meeting was a powerful and difficult journey which Council took together. It is clear that the road ahead to our vision for a positive, resilient future for QCEA will be a long and challenging one. We still believe it is a road worth taking. I ask EMEYF to uphold the whole of QCEA as a community in this task, and particularly our Friend Oliver Robertson in his new role as Clerk of Council, and Esther as EMEYF's contact person for the Secretary at QCEA, as she seeks to build a constructive future for the link between both organisations.

QCEA Council next year will take place over the weekend of 10 – 12<sup>th</sup> April, which clashes with the end of Spring Gathering. I will be at Council Meeting in Brussels but I hope to join you in Georgia for at least some of Spring Gathering.

I would like to ask EMEYF to consider nominating and appointing an alternate EMEYF Representative to QCEA. I plan to attend all Council Meetings and I am committed to doing so, however I struggled in travelling to Brussels recently due to a (recurring) injury. I reiterate that I am committed in attending all Council Meetings for the foreseeable future but I have realised that there may be occasions when I am simply not able to. Not only does QCEA constitutionally require a minimum attendance from Council Members, but I also firmly believe that this is simply too important a time for EMEYF not to have a presence at QCEA.

Sending Friends love, light and friendship from another long train journey to Scotland.  
Hannah Slater – EMEYF Representative to QCEA

### **EMEYF Delegate to CEG 2014 report (see EMEYF AM 2014/13)**

I attended Central European Gathering (CEG) in Vienna as the Delegate from European and Middle Eastern Young Friends, <http://emeyf.org/>, from 29th May to June 1st 2014. It was a very enjoyable weekend, and there were participants from twelve European countries – Belgium, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Scotland, Slovakia, Serbia, Ukraine, England and Austria. Most had not heard of EMEYF, and were glad to hear there is a group of Young Friends covering their geographical area. There were two young adults on the weekend, and another joined us on the Sunday morning.

Quakers are thinly spread in this area- there are a few meetings for worship (Vienna, Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, Moscow) and then there are isolated members in other areas and countries. In Belarus, a meeting is run in the home of two members who were present, but this must be carried out secretly.

I spent over five years living in the Czech Republic, and speak Russian and German well, so it was great to meet a range of lovely people from my 'Second Home'. Our representation there was felt to be really beneficial, as was Alexandra Bosbeer's of QCEA.

The main outcome of the weekend was that members wanted to communicate more with each other between their annual Gatherings, to deepen their community, and I set up a

Google Group to allow them to do this. I'll be part of this too, which will be a great way to continue to keep in relationship with these people and Quakerism in this area.

We are looking forward to welcome new EMEYFers from central Europe in the near future. All EMEYFers who are travelling in Central Europe are encouraged to get in touch with meetings, visit local Friends and continue to spread the word about EMEYF.

Thank you so much for letting me represent you here, it was a pleasure!

Julian Wood

### **Report to EMEYF on Evangelical Young Friends in Hungary (see EMEYF AM 2014/14)**

Friends,

Earlier this year I received an email via the EMEYF mailing list about two gatherings at the Evangelical Friends Church in Tolna, Hungary. I joined a weekend gathering in October. Marisa Johnson of FWCC Europe and Middle East Section also attended.

The gathering was attended by about 60 Friends, mostly from Hungary, but some from neighbouring countries. I found the group to be a lively, active and loving community. It reflected the ages in society and so included teenagers and young adults. The group has links with evangelical Friends in the US and their Christian identity is very important to them.

As is common with other evangelical worship I have experienced, the gathering included singing, Bible reading and individual testimonies. The community was very welcoming and incorporated some silent expectant waiting of the unprogrammed tradition into the gathering, so that we could share this with them.

I was asked to speak and was able to explain about my Yearly Meeting and I also took the opportunity to explain about EMEYF.

Like us, the young adults were either looking for work, working or studying. If you can forgive the generalisation, I would say they were on average less interested being politically active and more interested in music than the average EMEYF member. Young people took a leading role in worship, by being in the band or leading singing.

#### Opportunities for the future

I have not been involved in previous EMEYF discussions about what our relationship should be with Evangelical Young Friends in Europe. I think the issues of whether and how to engage, are very similar for us in Europe as they are for the different traditions of Quakers in the America or Africa Sections.

At the gathering an Assistant Pastor was elected who is 22 – and may be a useful point of contact, alongside the Pastor, Toni Frei. There will be a Youth Conference in August 2015, which will involve evangelical worship and sport.

#### Situation in Hungary

As Friends may be aware there is a very difficult situation in Hungary at the moment, having the most authoritarian government in the EU, and a very far right party (Jobbick) coming second in recent elections. About a third of Evangelical Friends in Hungary are of Roma heritage and much of the evangelism of the Friends in undertaken with Roma communities in Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Croatia. These are some of the most disadvantage people in Europe, and often the target of hate speech and hate crime.

I hope EMEYF members gathering in November might have the opportunity to hold Hungary in the Light.

In Friendship,  
Andrew Lane (Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting)