

EMEYF Spring Gathering, April 12-19, 2014, Ohrid/Macedonia

Meeting for Worship for Business – Minutes

Present:

Andrew Lane, Annie Womack, David Mangels, Dorina Shahaj, Elizabeth Backhouse, Esther Köhring, Halimah Austin, Jenny McCarthy, Johanna Buchmann, Kristin Skarsholt, Mariia Aigistova, Mieke van Opheusden, Paul Sladen, Renke Meuwese, Rose Oliver, Tamara Gorbenko (with Peter), Tim Rouse, Tobias Buchmann.

EMEYF SG 2014/01 Opening minute

On the shore of Lake Ohrid in Macedonia, we are gathered to meet new Friends, to explore our theme „Borders within and without“ - and to have a great time together.

We, that are 17 young Friends from around Europe and the middle East and one child.

We are living in a beautiful house south of the city of Ohrid and are looking forward to what the next days will bring.

EMEYF SG 2014/02 Greetings

We received greetings from many EMEYFers: Kirsten Ackermann, Wanda Dahme, Claire Stevenson and Helen Percy, including our secretary Becky Viney-Wood and our QCEA representative Hannah Slater. Greetings were also received from YFGM, FWCC-EMES (Marisa Johnson) and QCEA (Sasha Bosbeer).

We received greetings from two members of the Spring Gathering 2014 Planning Committee, Georg Adelman and Helen Close, who were unable to join us. We are missing them! We send loving greetings back to all who were with us in their thoughts.

EMEYF SG 2014/03 Appointment of additional Elders for Spring Gathering 2014

Mieke gives us an description of what the role of an elder for the duration of Spring Gathering could look like.

We thankfully appoint Halimah Austin and Jenny McCarthy for the roles of Elders for SG 14.

EMEYF SG 2014/04 Appointment of Nominations Committee for Spring Gathering 2014

Esther explains the way we appoint people to serve EMEYF.

We appoint Tim Rouse, Johanna Buchmann and Mariia Aigistova for being the Nominations Committee and ask Mieke van Opheusden to join them as an elder.

We ask the committee to bring forward names for the following positions:

- Clerk or Clerking-team
- Elder
- UK Treasurer
- Spring Gathering 2015 Planning Committee (3-5 members)
- EMEYF Representative to FWCC-EMES Executive Committee
- EMEYF Delegate to the Central European Gathering 2014

We remind ourselves that we as a meeting are committed to support the committee throughout the process.

EMEYF SG 2014/05 Appointment of Epistle Committee for Spring Gathering 2014

We appoint Renke Meuwese, David Mangels, Tobias Buchmann, Jenny McCarthy and Tamara Gorbenko to serve on the Epistle Committee for this gathering.

EMEYF SG 2014/06 Reflections from EMEYF Events 2013

We were blessed with having three EMEYF events in 2013: Spring Gathering in the Yorkshire Dales (England), Summer Open House in Congénies (France) and Annual Meeting in Quaker House Brussels (Belgium).

Different groups of people at these three events created a different dynamic and gave a sense of how EMEYF is growing as a wider community.

We are cherishing memories of Spring Gathering at Ribbleshead in Yorkshire. An unexpected journey through caves led to singing in the darkness and emerging into the light at a different place from where they started.

Experiences at Spring Gathering can be powerful. The theme of last years Spring Gathering, Spirituality and Creativity, was very meaningful for some of us at that time and has continued to provide inspiration throughout the year. It was difficult to discern where Spring Gathering 2014 was to be held. The openness to spiritual guidance and trying again gave new strength to our faith.

Open House at Conénies did not have a theme at the beginning, but by the end had become centred around the theme of openness. There were challenges in being open as a community to people of all ages and experiences. It was very rewarding that rather than dealing with these challenges, we lived with them in a positive way.

EMEYF SG 2014/07 EMEYF Events 2014

Annual Meeting this year will be held in Bad Pyrmont, Germany in November.

We are always open and supportive to proposals for events such as Open House or summer camps when people feel led to bring plans forward.

EMEYF SG 2014/08 Report from EMEYF Anniversary Event Planning Group

Kristin Skarsholt speaks to us about how the planning for the 30th Anniversary Event is progressing. Kristin Skarsholt, Martin Touwen and Marielke Nieuwerth-Van den Akker are currently the planning group, and they would welcome two more contributors.

The Anniversary Event will be an all age family event, to be held at Haus Venusberg in Bonn, Germany, in summer 2016.

A number of us have had very positive experiences of Quaker family events and we look forward to celebrating EMEYFs birthday with past, present and future EMEYFers.

EMEYF SG 2014/09 EMEYF Website

Tobias Buchmann speaks to us about the current situation with building a new website for EMEYF. He would welcome our support and help in organisation and motivation for this task. Renke Meuwese, Rose Oliver and Annie Womack volunteer to support Tobi in this work. We thank Tobi for volunteering to do this at a busy time in his life.

EMEYF SG 2014/10 Location of Spring Gathering 2015

Spring Gathering 2015 will be held in Georgia. We feel drawn towards meeting with small, isolated worship groups within our EMEYF community. Given the difficulty in previous years for our Georgian friends to participate in Spring Gathering, we long for the opportunity to finally meet them.

EMEYF SG 2014/11 Report from QCEA representative*

We have heard a report from our QCEA representative Hannah Slater (attached to this minutes), read by members of our meeting, about QCEA's work and visions.

We are asked to consider how EMEYF can play a role in the QCEA community and we are excited to hear of Hannah's project revolving around young friends' peace work.

We happily welcome our F/friend Oliver Robertson into his role as QCEA clerk.

EMEYF SG 2014/12 QCEA representative - Appointment*

We are delighted with the enthusiasm which Hannah Slater currently brings to the role on QCEA's council as a member of EMEYF. We are happy to appoint Hannah as our QCEA representative until Annual Meeting 2016.

We are aware that difficult and unexpected circumstances have led to this role being filled in an unconventional way. We wish to be open and truthful in our decisions as a community and we thank Communications Committee for their openness and love in their work. Having spent time in worshipful discernment, we support CC's previous discernment (CC2013/21; CC2014/01) that Hannah's name is the right one.

EMEYF SG 2014/13 Trustees and Treasurer's report

We received a report from the Trustess of EMEYF. At the moment the trustees of EMEYF are Paul Sladen, Esther Köhring, and Mieke van Opheusden.

We learnt that there was a feeling at Spring Gathering 2013 that the Trustees should be, where possible, members of the CC to avoid gaps in communication. This resulted in the appointment of Esther and Mieke at Annual Meeting 2013.

Since Annual Meeting 2013 the EMEYF trustees have been working on changes to the EMEYF constitution as asked by Spring Gathering 2013. These changes can be found attached to the minutes.

At the moment the finances of EMEYF are looking fairly healthy. However, as the funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) has run out there is a need to consider how this funding can be replaced or how EMEYF could survive without it.

Furthermore, the trustees made two suggestions to the meeting, these are as follows:

- It has been felt over the last year that there is a need for a hand-over period for the role of UK treasurer.
- EMEYF should consider reinstating the role of Consolidating Treasurer to look into fundraising.

**Andrew Lane was not present during these agenda items.*

EMEYF SG 2014/13 Nominations Return

We heard the following report from our Nominations Committee:

„We have met throughout the week to consider the names that have been brought forward by members of our community. We have been asked to make nominations for a number of important roles within EMEYF. We have had ups and downs in coming up with and considering names for the different roles. In the process of discerning we looked at what the role could bring to the person as much as what people could bring to the role. We are grateful that we found names that felt right to us for almost every position.

We nominate Paul Sladen to serve as EMEYF representative to EMES Executive Committee for a period of three years.

We nominate Tim Rouse, M.E.¹, Jesús Espinoza and Halimah Austin to serve as members of the Planning Committee for Spring Gathering 2015 that will be held in Georgia.

We nominate Annie Womack to serve as one of the two elders at EMEYF for a period of up to three years.

We nominate Julian Wood to serve as the EMEYF delegate to Central European Gathering (CEG) which will take place from 29th of May to 1st of June 2014 in Vienna.

We nominate Rachael Booth to serve as UK Treasurer of EMEYF for a period of up to three years. We ask CC as well as the former Treasurer to support Rachael in settling in in her work and our community.

We were not able to find a name for Clerk or two names for a clerking team of EMEYF. We ask Annual Meeting 2014 to consider names to find a Clerk or a clerking team.

We thank Spring Gathering as well as the wider community of EMEYF for the support and the hot drinks they have been given us during our work.“

We appoint Paul Sladen to the role of EMEYF Representative to EMES Executive Committee for a period of three years.

We appoint Halimah Austin, Tim Rouse, M. E.² and Jesús Espinoza to be members of the Spring Gathering 2015 planning committee, which will be held in Georgia.

We appoint Annie Womack to be one of EMEYF's Elders for a period of up to three years.

We thank Mieke van Opheusden for her service to EMEYF as an elder and release her at this point.

We appoint Rachael Booth to the position of UK Treasurer for a period of up to three years and ask Paul Sladen to support Rachael in a hand-over period before he is released from this role.

We appoint Julian Wood as EMEYF delegate to the Central European Gathering 2014.

We ask f/Friends that have been part of EMEYF Gatherings to contact him to share their experiences and offer support that could enable him to communicate a sense of what it is like to be part of EMEYF activities.

[NB Julian can be reached at julwood@gmail.com]

We hear and accept the Nominations Committee's request for Annual Meeting 2014 to consider names for a Clerk or Clerking team of EMEYF.

1 Published Minute amended by the wish of the named individual to protect their privacy. Full version hold on file in the EMEYF secretariat Brussels. (1.2.2015)

2 Published Minute amended by the wish of the named individual to protect their privacy. Full version hold on file in the EMEYF secretariat Brussels. (1.2.2015)

EMEYF SG 2014/14 Epistle Presentation

During the morning of 16th April, the last full day of Spring Gathering 2014, Friends came together to create artwork reflecting on their experience of the week.

In addition to that, we heard the following epistle:

“Go with the flow. There is a different sense of time in Macedonia.”

From the 12th of April to the 19th of April 2014 we came together in Lagadin, Macedonia, for our Spring Gathering. The decision to go to Macedonia was a bit scary and the organizing committee faced many challenges to make this gathering happen. We were not aware of any Quakers here and none of us had ever been to the country before. But we managed. Since we are all strangers in Macedonia, we were all put in the same position from where we then started to explore.

This gathering felt active, buzzing. We overcame our worries of going to an unknown country and not being able to plan every detail. Sometimes it was difficult to pinpoint what was happening, but we could sense that a lot was going on.

Some of us came to the gathering feeling we must overcome borders and tear them down. Then we worked on our theme „Borders within and without“ in workshops and discovered other aspects. Borders keep us together. We have them for structure, but must remember that they need to be permeable. Impassable borders tear and keep communities apart.

Misha from Georgia could not get a visa to come to Spring Gathering. This felt very significant to our gathering. It even was eyeopening for some of us, because many young Friends never experienced an impassable border.

After Annual Meeting in November, EMEYF was without a clerk. This was difficult, especially for the members of the Communications Committee. To our surprise, this situation led to a very different experience in meeting for worship for business and in the end resulted in a very high engagement of the whole group into the process. We have faith that what needs to be done will be done. Three Friends volunteered to record minutes during our business meetings and they were surprised they could actually do it.

Next Spring Gathering will be held in Georgia. Georgian Friends have been prevented from participating in our community for many years. We are glad to accept their invitation to get to know them and their country.

Our youngest participant was Peter, who turned one at our gathering. We appreciated sharing our time with him. We held him close and entertained him with music. This way we also got to experience this Spring Gathering through his eyes. We sincerely hope to meet Peter again next year to celebrate his second birthday with him!

We move forward in hope and live adventurously.

Attachments

A) Report by EMEYF Representative to QCEA, Hannah Slater (hlslater@yahoo.co.uk)

14 April 2014

From a cold and windy Scotland

Dear Friends at EMEYF

It has been while since I have been in touch with many of you, in fact since I finished my role as Programme Assistant at QCEA and as EMEYF Secretary in June 2012. After a little and perhaps necessary break, it feels good to return to both communities. Although I am unable to be with you at Spring Gathering in Macedonia I am holding you all in the light as I know that you are for me.

I travelled to Brussels for QCEA council which was held 4 – 6 April 2014. It was a strange experience for me to return to Quaker House, a place of many personal, professional and spiritual highs and lows for me over a very short period. I was supported beforehand in my visit and purpose by EMEYF elders Esther and Mieke and I thank them for this, and in particular for a long, honest and uplifting discussion a week earlier about EMEYF and QCEA.

For myself, returning to QCEA after almost two years, it felt like much was the same and at the same time much changed. I was good to meet met Sasha Bosbeer, Representative to the EU, and Gordon Matthews, who is now Office Manager. I also met new Deputy Representative to the EU Andrew Lane who started at QCEA in January 2014, and it was impressed by his professionalism, warmth and the integrity of his Quaker voice. Sasha and Andrew are working on peace issues particularly around trade, amongst other areas. I was also pleased to meet in person the Programme Assistants Becky Viney-Wood, who is working on criminal justice and EMEYF Secretary, and Chris Diskin who is working on economic justice. I had a lovely opportunity to chat with them at length, enjoying a couple of Belgian beers with them after their hard work for Council. EMEYF will be pleased to hear that Becky and Chris are finding life and work at Quaker House a little easier and making exciting plans for their future.

EMEYF and QCEA have a long relationship going back many years and I think it's fair to say that the QCEA-EMEYF relationship has had its own highs and lows. With the EMEYF Secretary traditionally being a QCEA Secretary, EMEYF has witnessed the sometimes positive and sometimes challenging experiences of Programme Assistants living and working at Quaker House.

As Quakers striving for the truth, I feel that it is important to acknowledge this. We none of us are perfect human beings or organisations and we must be open to the critical F/friend. I know that EMEYF has worked hard to support QCEA and Programme Assistants in particular over the years in many ways and QCEA in turn supports EMEYF. Now is the time to reaffirm this commitment to each other. Not only has QCEA had a full staff turnover in the past two years, but this Council saw the approval of a new clerk and a visioning workshop on the future of QCEA was held at the invitation of Sasha at the last Council meeting. I ask EMEYF to uphold QCEA in its work in affirming and strengthening its unique voice and to strive to be part of this positive process wherever possible.

The workshop on the future of QCEA was held at the initiative of Sasha and was run by Peter Reid, a member of the British Committee who carries out organisational development professionally. We split into groups and together considered the questions of what the future will look like in five years' time, what we want QCEA to look like, and how to get there. We felt that the world is going through a period of rapid change and we realised that we simply do not know what the EU and Europe will look like in 5 years time. We are living in an era of growing right-wing movements, anti-immigration rhetoric and the age of austerity. It is also a time of rapid technological advancement, which poses both challenges and opportunities to QCEA (and EMEYF).

We visioned QCEA as a strong and reputable voice in Europe, with strong links within and outside

the Quaker world – with other NGOs, with EMEYF, FWCC, and Yearly Meetings in Europe. We saw QCEA are harnessing the power of technology in the work that it does and in international communications. We saw QCEA as financially secure, quite possibly with a more diverse range of funders. And the holistic overview which QCEA takes in understanding how each of its programme strands link together would continue to serve us well.

In terms of how to get here we talked about building strong structures and partnerships at QCEA with the inside and outside world. Diverse funding streams were discussed, as well as using the 40th anniversary in 2019 as an opportunity to promote and celebrate QCEA. I asked Council to consider how young Friends can be an integral part of QCEA and I would ask EMEYF to consider the same. The joint study tour this year is a good example of how we can work together. I also suggest that EMEYF might wish at some point to carry out a similar process, acknowledging where we are as a community and discussing what our future looks like.

Having attended a couple of prior Council meetings previously this one stood out as extraordinary. Not only was the workshop, which lasted all of Saturday morning and part of the afternoon, a new item for Council but there was a further very important change. Oliver Robertson was accepted by Council as Clerk, stepping into the shoes of Richard Condon who has served as QCEA clerk for many years. Oliver previously worked at QUNO and I am sure that many Friends who know Oliver well will agree with me that he will make an excellent clerk. I am sure that EMEYF will join me in congratulating Oliver on this role and uphold him in his work.

When I saw Oliver at Council, I had the opportunity to ask him about an idea which I have shared with Mieke and Esther previously. I know that in the course of their professional lives many young Friends carry out fascinating and valuable work which promotes Quaker principles and I feel that it would be good to raise the profile of this. Oliver suggested that a useful pitch to The Friend may be a series of articles about young Friends working in peace work. I will work with Friends in doing this over the coming months and I hope that you will be able to support me in this. I am particularly looking for Friends in different countries who might be able to translate articles for publication in their own countries. I will send more information out on this using the mailing list in a few months time, but in the meantime please do contact me if you would like more information or to get involved.

The end of Council coincided with the beginning of the study tour where it was lovely to meet Mieke who is participating in the study tour. As I was at Quaker House, I was asked by Andrew to do a brief talk for the study tour on my previous work at QCEA and how this had led to some work that I am doing on human rights in Syria. I was pleased to do this and we had an interesting discussion with friends from the study tour and with Council on this important issue. A few years ago EMEYF Spring Gathering was held in Damascus, Syria, and although I wasn't there perhaps some of you were. Syria has been devastated by three brutal years of civil war. Human rights are violated on a daily basis and war crimes committed by both sides. I ask you to hold the people of Syria in your hearts throughout Spring Gathering and beyond.

I have asked you a few questions in this short report which I hope Friends will reflect on individually and as a community. I am always happy to discuss more. Finally, enjoy exploring Macedonia, and I hope that Spring Gathering is a wonderful, affirming experience for Friends.

In Peace and Light
Hannah Slater

B) Constitution Amendments

ChC2014/01 Constitutional Amendments

We received the following minute and task from EMEYF Communications Committee:

CC2013/25 Trustees and Constitution

"[...] We ask the new trustees to make any changes required to the constitution to bring it up to date with present charitable registration requirements and report about this at Spring Gathering. In particular, the minimum and maximum trustees to be appointed, and to remove the stated requirement for Trustees coming from the Communications Committee to be members of Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) in the United Kingdom. This section of the Constitution had already had to be amended previously to follow the name change of Young Friends Central Committee (YFCC) to YFGM."

Having discussed the proposed changes and options, we agree to leave the quorum unchanged. We propose the following two amendments to Section 3 (Membership) of the Constitution:

old:

3.1 The number of the members of the Committee ("the Members") shall not be less than five (5) nor more than twelve (12).

new:

3.1 The number of the members of the Committee ("the Members") shall not be less than three (3) nor more than twelve (12).

old:

3.3 Subsequent Members shall be chosen by the Committee from amongst Young Friends General Meeting [NB: read originally as Young Friends Central Committee] of Britain Yearly Meeting [NB: read originally as London Yearly Meeting] of the Religious Society of Friends who are interested in furthering the objects of the Committee.

new:

3.3 Subsequent Members shall be chosen by the Committee from amongst Young Friends within the European and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC–EMES) who are interested in furthering the objects of the Committee.

We will present these amendments to the Charity Commission in the United Kingdom.