

Joint Area Meeting of the seven London Area Meetings

Minutes of a Meeting for Worship for Business

Held at Westminster Friends Meeting House and online

Saturday 4 October 2025 at 10.30am

At the table:

Co-clerks this time:	Clare Scott Booth, Peter Jones, Nate Burnikell
Elders for this meeting:	Anne Charvet, Sue Newsom, Dugan Cummings
Elders online:	Sam Winder, Fred Ashmore

JLAM 2025/17 - Opening Worship

We have heard *Quaker Faith & Practice, parts of 29.02*, read in our opening worship.

Over 70 Friends are in attendance in the Meeting Room and 17 online. We are delighted to see so many Friends, aged from 0 to over 90, joining together for this meeting. We thank all Friends who have been involved in bringing us together, and to Westminster Friends for hosting us today.

We welcome Matt Rosen, a member of Stillwater Monthly Meeting, Ohio, travelling in the ministry, and we ask him to convey our loving greetings to Friends of Stillwater Monthly Meeting and Stillwater Quarterly Meeting.

We appoint Clare Scott Booth, Nate Burnikell, and Peter Jones as clerks for this meeting.

JLAM 2025/18 - Nominations

We have received a report from our nominations committee and Louise Rendle has spoken to it.

By minute 25.11 we asked our nominations committee to consider co-opting further Friends who would bring greater diversity to the committee. Our nominations committee tell us that they have co-opted Chris Evans of NETAM and Nicole Marr of London Young Adult Quaker Meeting accordingly. We now appoint these Friends to continue service on our nominations committee until December 2027.

Our nominations committee brings the following names of Friends to serve as an Eldership and Pastoral Care Committee from 1 January 2026 until 31 December 2026.

- Sue Newsom NLAM
- Terry Wilkes SLAM
- Dugan Cummings NWLAM
- Susanna Riviere KWAM
- Debbie Abel LWAM
- Tamara Stoll NETAM
- Ray Meurer SELAM

These names being acceptable, the Friends are appointed accordingly.

We ask Sue Newson to convene the first meeting and we ask the committee to inform us which of them will serve as Clerk.

Our Nominations Committee report that they have looked carefully at the Terms of Reference for the Eldership and Pastoral Care Committee and have concluded that it would be right ordering to search for a further member or members from the London Young Adult Quaker Meeting. We encourage them to do this.

They also report that they are making progress in finding the names of Friends to be nominated for service as clerks of the Joint London Area Meeting, but that they need time for further discernment before bringing names forward. They hope to be able to bring names to the next JLAM meeting.

We uphold our Nominations Committee in their continued work.

JLAM 2025/19 – Legal advice on forming a London Area Meeting.

We have received the summary of legal advice prepared by Bates Wells Solicitors and the London Development Group (LDG). We thank all Friends who have been involved.

We unite in support of the proposal to use the existing legal framework of London Quakers Property Trust (LQPT) to form the legal entity of the London Area Meeting, and to merge all existing London Area Meeting charities into this body. We see that this option is simpler, avoids unnecessary re-registration of property, and is no more costly than alternatives. Whilst not all of us are comfortable with the legal structure of a charitable company, by letting the Spirit move in the way that we know it can, we can create the entity that is good enough for now, to lessen our administrative burden and enable us to do our Quaker work in the world.

In particular, we support the pathway that:

- LQPT will act as the receiving entity, with the 7 Area Meetings and London Quakers transferring all assets and liabilities into it.
- At the point of merger, the LQPT charity will change its name.
- At least initially, the charity will have Charitable Company status but we could choose to change this to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) at a later date.
- We will use the existing charitable objects of LQPT, which are sufficiently broad, but may choose to change them in time.
- The legal members of the charity will be all Quakers in membership in London, in line with the principles of spiritual Quaker governance.

We agree that the name of our Area Meeting charity should be **Quakers in London**.

We ask that the LDG carries out a review of the articles of LQPT to look further at what else is needed to reflect our Quaker practice and values and to ensure all our current Local Meetings are included.

We are mindful of the identified risks and are satisfied that the LDG and the trustees can address these with the legal advice. We recognise the estimated legal costs of c. £75,000 and are grateful that funds have been set aside to cover these. We note that there are ways in which

these might be reduced and ask the LDG to continue to be prudent in the dispersal of these funds.

We note there is further due diligence work to do in due course. We entrust further technical and legal work to LDG, the new Quakers in London Clerks when appointed, and the trustees of LQPT and Area Meetings, asking them to continue to keep us informed. We give thanks for the service of all these Friends and uphold them as they move this work forwards, praying for persistence, openness and trust in each other and the Spirit as we move into the unknown.

JLAM 2025/20 – North London Away Day

We have heard an account of a recent North London residential gathering, comprising the three North London area meetings: *“Telling our Stories, and building communities of hope and resilience”*. We are delighted to hear of the joyful, collaborative process of organising and the deep spiritual experience of Friends who participated. We note there will soon be a similar gathering of the South London Area Meetings. We thank all Friends involved in organising.

JLAM 2025/21 – Staffing Proposal for Quakers in London.

We have received the paper from London Development Group (LDG) setting out a staffing proposal for Quakers in London from 2027 onwards, and the appointment of a part-time Transition Manager in 2026. We note the difficulty of discussing these issues in a forum such as an Area Meeting, and that not all information can be made available to Friends due to our legal and moral responsibilities to staff. We therefore trust and thank our Friends who have worked hard on this issue on our behalf, and the Spirit, to guide us through this work.

We acknowledge the need to manage our finances and resources prudently, and to fairly balance the contributions of Friends' time and money. We face a reality where demands are increasing whilst Friends time and ability to contribute is decreasing. We therefore face a choice: to change how we do things, so that we can continue in our important work; or to scale back our work in the world.

We note that these proposals would increase central staff by up to approximately 2 FTE - and that this is a modest share of the total budget. We support this direction, whilst noting that there is more work to do and that we should continue to be discerning and seek efficiencies where we can. We ask our Friends in the London Development Group to carry forward this work on our behalf.

We note that there remains uncertainty on the future needs of Quakers in London - but it is already clear there will need to be roles that do not currently exist given the broader remit of the organisation. Some new pressures will arise in the near-term and we recognise the existing pressures on volunteers, LQPT staff, and the increasing demands of compliance and property management.

We are clear that all staff will be consulted formally in 2026 and that TUPE and HR processes will be followed with care. We affirm the need to treat current staff and volunteers with respect and gratitude during the transition.

We support the proposal to appoint a part-time interim Transition Manager during 2026 and to commence consultation on a new structure for 2027. We entrust the details of consultation and implementation to relevant trustees working with HR advisers, under the continuing discernment of Quakers in London.

We record our thanks for the service of staff, volunteers, and Friends who give service who sustain the life of our meetings.

JLAM 2025/22 - Handover of responsibilities from current AMs to London AM

We have received the paper from the Development Group on how current Area Meetings might gradually hand over their responsibilities to Quakers in London throughout 2026.

We are clear that a staged, thematic handover of responsibilities across Area Meetings is preferable to transferring them Area Meeting by Area Meeting. We believe this approach will help London Friends to learn together, avoid “us and them” dynamics, and build a consistent way of doing business.

We note the proposed timetable for 2026, beginning with membership business and chaplaincy matters in January, followed by marriage business and national reports in March, financial planning in September, membership lists in October, and concluding with the full transfer of responsibilities by December 2026 (or earlier if the legal merger is complete). We support this approach, but note that we will need to respond flexibly, learning as we go, and that specific sequencing may change.

Throughout these processes, space should be made for Quakers in London to hear about the work, worship and witness of local meetings.

In preparation for the transfer of membership business, within this process, we ask the newly appointed Eldership and Pastoral Care committee to look at clarifying a London wide approach to membership, drawing on the best practice of our different area meetings.

We suggest to the arrangements group that we might ask Josh Selfe, the London Development worker, to speak to the January JLAM meeting about widening the status of future witness in the world within transition planning.

We understand that some responsibilities, particularly around property, finance, and trusteeship, will transfer at the point of legal merger, while others can move earlier. We are content with this sequencing.

We affirm the importance of supporting Friends in current AMs during the transition, recognising that a phased handover should reduce workloads and make the process more manageable.

We agree in principle to the proposed staged handover and ask incoming clerks to take this plan forward, keeping us informed and bringing back further detail as needed.

JLAM 2025/23 - Website

We have heard an update from Sam Winder on the Quakers in London website being considered by the communications subgroup of the LDG.

We intend to meet again, should nothing occur to prevent it, on Saturday 11th January at Friends House.

Signed in and on behalf of the Joint London Area Meeting,

Clare Scott Booth, Peter Jones, Nate Burnikell

Joint London Area Meeting Clerks, this time.