

QSAIG- ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Saturday October 14th at Westminster FMH, London

Present: Cora Gallagher, Jennifer Knox , Alick Munro, Rajan Naidu, Michael Radford, Penny Robbins, Abu Siddique (Bachchu), Pat Saunders, Stuart Morton (Clerk) , Anne Smith (Treasurer/Membership Secretary)

Prevented: Ruth Baker, Barbara Bowman, Gerald Conyngham , Birgit Felleisen, Robert Gallagher, , Tracey Martin, John McConnell, Stephen Petter, Stephanie and Ram Ramamurthy, Norman Smith, Liz and Martin Schweiger, Margaret Waterworth

We began with a period of worship in which we held our Friends, Liz and Martin Schweiger, in the light as Martin faces large health challenges.

2017/01 Minutes of the last meeting (AGM) held on 15 October 2016, were agreed to be an accurate and faithful record of the meeting.

2017/02 QSAIG recognised within Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) as a Quaker Recognised Body (QRB). QSAIG is now registered as a Quaker Recognised Body within BYM. Our convener, assisted by our treasurer and website manager, followed up QSAIG minute 2016/03 and applied to become a QRB. We have received Meeting for Sufferings minute MfS/17/10/14 of 7.10.2017 which registers QSAIG as a QRB. Our Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) staff link is Judith Baker and we will be in contact with her at least once a year. We are pleased to have this recognition and are grateful to those who have carried out this work on our behalf.

2017/03 QSAIG Convener's report. This written and verbal report (see appendix one below) has been discussed.

2017/04 QSAIG Accounts. The 2015-2016 accounts have been examined and approved. The QSAIG accounts for financial year ending Sept 30 2017 have been introduced by our treasurer, Anne Smith. We note a balance of £313.91. We encourage members to send their membership fee to the treasurer. (£10 waged, £5 unwaged).

Anne Smith's address is: 37 Hermitage Court, Woodford Road. London E18 2EW

We thank not only for her work as treasurer but also as membership secretary and for her willingness to be consulted by the convener when necessary. We encourage the treasurer to consider providing some assistance towards member's travel costs to QSAIG meetings. We accept the accounts in the knowledge that they have yet to be examined.

2017/5 Appointment of QSAIG officers. Our Nomination's Group of Pat Saunders and Cora Gallagher brought forward nominations for the QSAIG office holders. The following appointments have been agreed:

Co- Conveners: Stuart Morton and Cora Gallagher

Treasurer: Anne Smith

Membership Secretary: Anne Smith

Website Manager: Martin Schweiger (stc)

Newsletter editor: Robert Gallagher

Link person to Quaker World Relations Committee: Alick Munro

We thank the above for their willingness to carry out work on QSAIG's behalf.

2017/06 Reflection on today's QSAIG meeting (10.30- 15.00 approx) We appreciated the contribution of our speakers Abu Siddique (Bachchu), Martin Wright and Rajan Naidu, and for the opportunity to meet friends old and new. (see short notes in Appendix Two). The venue has worked well for those present. We will aim to ensure that the causes/concerns brought to us by our speakers will, with the website manager's agreement, be placed on the QSAIG website. WE were grateful to have Stephanie and Ram Ramamurthy with us for much of the day (but not the "Business part of our meeting"); during our time we celebrated their commitment to the people of South Asia and give thanks for being able to celebrate Ram's 90th birthday.

2017/07 Future action and aims: We will hope to set up a QSAIG table at the Group Fair in 2018 BYM. Recognising that Special Interest Groups at BYM do not necessarily gain a place on the timetable every year, the decision to apply for one will be left to the discretion of our convener. We hope to establish more organised links to the Quaker Network – the appointment of Alick Munro as our link, mutually agreed by Quaker World Relation's Committee of BYM and now by QSAIG, is one step in this direction. If capacities allow, we will hope to support individual concerns relating to QSAIG's aims (see Appendix One point 1). We are grateful for the work of Robert Gallagher as QSAIG as Newsletter editor and hope that this helps to inform and connect Friends, and others, in helpful ways. We also give thanks for the work of Martin Schweiger as QSAIG's website manager and we look forward to the time when he will be in better health to continue the task. On occasions when emergency needs arise in S Asia and with which we have a member or members working on that, we will seek to give appropriate support.

Date of next meeting: Saturday October 13th 2018 in Birmingham (probably at Selly Oak Quaker Meeting).

APPENDIX ONE: QSAIG – Convener's Report for Oct 2016-Oct 2017:

QSAIG activity in past year:

1.QSAIG becomes a "Quaker Recognised Group" within BYM. Agreement to apply in minute 2016/03 at last year's AGM. Application made May 2017 and accepted by Meeting for Sufferings Oct 2017. Our staff link in Quaker Peace & Social Witness is Judith Baker who is responsible for the international conciliation work. Minute: Mfs/17/10/14 Quaker Recognised Bodies: Further to minute Mfs/15/12/1, we receive paper Mfs 2017/10/14 recommending groups for registration as Quaker Recognised Bodies. We agree to register the following 11 groups for five years, with registration to be reviewed by September 2022: Free Standing (Group): Quaker South Asia Interest Group (QSAIG). (*end of minute*)

The information sent to BYM was as follows:

Constitution: No specific constitution known to present convener, Quaker Faith & Practice is our source of inspiration, information and discernment **Governance:** There is an annual general meeting, open to all members of the group. Both the convener and the treasurer report on the annual activities of the group at this meeting. **Type of Group:** Free-standing **Foundation:** unclear – already formed and active in 1996

Aims: to assist in the building of a peaceful, just and sustainable world inspired by our Quaker faith and focussing on the South Asian region by a) Sharing information to inform our action b) Supporting individuals and groups which act to progress QSAIG's main aim,

including QPSW's work c) Sustain relationships in South Asia that value support of Quakers in Britain

Publications and activities: 1) Annual newsletter – electronic and print 2) Website 3) AGM with sharing of concern and action. 4) Emergency financial support e.g. Nepal earthquake 2015. 5) Stall at BYM groups fair

Membership: 70+ on mailing list, 10-15 present at AGM

Finance: independently examined annual accounts, QSAIG account with Ecology Building Society. Subscriptions and donations approx. £25-£150 per annum. Balance approx. £300-£400.

Winding up: none yet specified **Archives:** notes of 2004-2013 meetings available electronically on website, paper copies sent to library at Friends House and Woodbrooke

Current contact details: Stuart Morton (Convener/Clerk), 1 Witherford Way, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 4AY **Website:** www.qsaig.co.uk

2. Newsletter – July 2017 (Rob Gallagher) – liaised with editor in his second full year as editor.

3. Communication with other bodies, Quakers and QSAIG members: Forwarded the information about a consultation by the UK Government on the issue of caste in British society drawn to my attention by a QSAIG member. Correspondence with FWCC Asia West Pacific Section and met with Meryll Titus who represented the Section at the YMG in August. Correspondence with Norman Smith who in March said he was in India writing the first draft of his book on Marjorie Sykes. Correspondence with Anne Bennett who is consulting former Quaker Peace & Service (QPS) staff in order to build a body of material to aid present and future research on “The History of Centrally Managed Quaker International Work 1950-2000”.

4. Consulted occasionally by BYM staff

5. QSAIG table and networking at Group Fair – BYM August 2017. Gerald Conyngham and I met a number of people interested in the region.

6. Workshops at Yearly Meeting Gathering in Warwick (August 2017) on Ekta Parishad's (Indian People's Movement for livelihood rights) plans for a Jai Jagat (Victory to the World) march in 2020 (Facilitators- Gerald Conyngham & Stuart Morton)
<http://www.ektaparishad.com/>

7. Website updated when needed with thanks to Martin Schweiger

8. Support to a long standing friend and staff member of Gono Unnayan Prochesta (GUP) in Bangladesh <http://www.gupbd.org/>

9. Organising AGM

Stuart Morton 14 October 2017

APPENDIX TWO: Notes of sessions held earlier in the day – October 14th 2017.

“Bhopal Gas disaster of 1984- ending the injustice” <https://bhopal.org/>

Martin Wright: Streatham & Brixton Friends Meeting provided a short history of the tragedy and its main causes. Martin responded to questions and tested some of his thinking regarding future action, with the group. We encouraged any QSAIG member to connect with Martin; there was a deep sense that Martin was “acting under concern” and agreed that if QSAIG could help Martin to widen support for the work of the Bhopal Medical Appeal we would do what we could. Email: Martin Wright: martinw@phoncoop.coop

Sharing insights, concerns and possible action on the Rohingya tragedy on the Myanmar-Bangladesh border – introduced by QSAIG member, Abu Siddique. We were grateful to have had the opportunity to learn more about the Rohingya people, situated on the Myanmar – Bangladesh border, at this time of unprecedented crisis. They are experiencing increased and massive trauma in recent months. WE are grateful to Bachchu and to the correspondence from one QSAIG member that helped inform us of the long history preceding the present crisis. Bachcu expressed a willingness to continue to research this situation. We hope he will share his findings with QSAIG. We noted the following websites: www.muslimcharity.org.uk/campaign/love-rohingya/
www.actionaid.org.uk/donate/rohingya-refugee-crisis

Scholarships & social development – “Reach for the Stars” is a project to finance higher education for very carefully selected young people from the villages surrounding Auroville, Tamil Nadu, South India <https://www.auroville.org/contents/1270>
Rajan Naidu, who worships at Hampstead Friends Meeting, spoke in an inspired way about this project with which he has a long personal connection.

APPENDIX THREE: Aims of Quaker South Asia Interest Group (QSAIG)

www.qsaig.co.uk

Aims: to assist in the building of a peaceful, just and sustainable world inspired by our Quaker faith and focussing on the South Asian region by a) Sharing information to inform our action b) Supporting individuals and groups which act to progress QSAIG’s main aim, including QPSW’s work c) Sustain relationships in South Asia that value support of Quakers in Britain