

FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION
Central Executive Committee
Videoconference Meeting
26 March 2022

CEC 22-07vc. Opening minute. We have gathered by videoconference on 26 March 2022 at 11:00 am UK time.

Present:

Elizabeth Cazden (New England YM)	Assistant Clerk FWCC
Michael Eccles (Britain YM)	Sec EMES
Jonathan Fletcher (Aotearoa/New Zealand YM)	Acting Clerk AWP Section
Timothy Gee (Britain YM)	General Secretary FWCC
Adrian Glamorgan (Australia YM)	Sec AWP Section
Myron Guachalla Montano (Bolivia Central YM)	Member at large
Simon C. Lamb (Ireland YM)	Clerk FWCC
Ethel Livermore (Britain YM)	Clerk EMES
Thule Mbete (Southern Africa YM)	Member at large
Robin Mohr (Philadelphia YM)	Sec Section of the Americas
Esther Mombo (Highlands YM)	Assistant Clerk FWCC
David Shiner (Illinois YM)	Clerk Section of the Americas
Peter Ullathorne (Britain YM)	Treasurer
Bainito Wamalwa (East Africa YM-North)	Clerk Africa Section

Invited:

Nancy Fee (Southern Africa YM)	Co-Clerk Internat. Planning Committee
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Prevented:

Hezron C. Masitsa (Nairobi YM)	Acting Sec Africa Section
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In our opening worship, we heard a passage from the 1965 Swarthmore Lecture by Scottish philosopher John Macmurray (Britain YM):

The task of the Church today, I believe, is what it always has been -- to co-operate with God under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ in establishing on earth the Kingdom of Heaven. The means for accomplishing this task is the means that Jesus taught to His first disciples. The Church must be a real community on earth which exhibits to the world, in its life and in the relations of its members, the image of the Kingdom of Heaven, and which acts, in relation to the world outside, in the spirit of that Kingdom, by the way of the Cross.

CEC 22-08vc. World Plenary Meeting. We have welcomed Nancy Fee (Southern Africa YM), Co-clerk of the International Planning Committee (IPC), who spoke to a detailed written report circulated in advance. The IPC met by videoconference on 13 March 2022. It has set up six Working Groups: Worship, Language Inclusion, Programme, World Conference of Young Friends, Technology and Communication. All four Sections and Southern Africa YM have submitted names for these working groups, and the IPC approved these lists. The IPC Clerks, working with the FWCC Clerk and General Secretary, will convene the working groups as soon as practicable, so that they can report to the next IPC meeting. The IPC has also outlined the work of two short term task groups on risk reduction

and a hybrid/blended WPM. The CEC notes the progress being made in establishing these working groups and task groups to cover key areas of planning.

The IPC has also done extensive work on site selection, identifying three possible venues, all different from ones we had previously considered. They are located in Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal Provinces rather than the Durban region previously under consideration. Nancy Fee described the features of these various venues. We are pleased to see this report and look forward to the IPC's further work to refine a site recommendation.

The task group on "Envisioning a truly hybrid/blended online/offline World Plenary" has met, and presented a paper outlining the issues this entails. The IPC recognises that 'hybrid/blended' may well be the future method of meetings for FWCC (and other organisations), grounded in our concern for creation and each other. The aim is to meet as equals, knowing we will all have our individual experience of the World Plenary Meeting. We are all learning about hybrid/blended meetings, and know that Friends' experience to date is mixed. The social aspect of the World Plenary Meeting is important, including thinking creatively about home groups. There are several practical issues, including the possibility reducing risk by Zoom hosting outside of South Africa. To have an inclusive WPM, we recognise that it will likely be necessary to invest in communications technology and skills training for Friends in many countries. The IPC Technology and Programme working groups will need to take these issues forward, with the later engagement of all the working groups. The IPC will keep the CEC informed of these developments.

The IPC has established a task group to draw up a risk register with mitigation strategies for the World Plenary Meeting, and has asked it to present a paper to the IPC in October 2022. The risk register would be approved by the CEC and then reviewed and updated at least every six months as a dynamic document. We approve this approach.

The IPC plans to meet next on 8 May 2022 (videoconferencing) and in person in Nairobi, Kenya, 29 September to 1 October 2022, immediately before the CEC meeting.

We thank the IPC for its work and for this extensive report.

CEC 22-09vc. General Secretary's Report. Tim Gee reported on his work so far in his new post. He has sent greetings to each yearly meeting session that he's been aware of, and has participated virtually in meetings of the Section of the Americas and the Africa Section. He has worked with EMES on worldwide prayer with Friends in Moscow and in Kyiv during the hostilities in Ukraine, and on possible ways the World Office can assist EMES with refugees in neighbouring countries. He is working with the Africa Section members of the CEC to plan World Quaker Day events in Kenya that the CEC can join in, as well as ways to connect Friends around the world. He is also coordinating brainstorming of ways to celebrate together the upcoming (2024) 400th birthday of George Fox. He attended the meeting of QUNC-NY in the United States, and was glad to meet the new director and to meet Robin Mohr, who was there as an observer. There has been progress on revising the Memorandum of Understanding between FWCC and AFSC for management of QUNO-NY.

Most staff are currently in the office on Wednesdays. Since Faith's departure, he has added one day per week to Susanna's position to cover communications. However, Susanna's funding only runs through May, so future staffing is uncertain. There are ongoing collegial conversations with Paul Parker and the staff of Britain YM about planned renovations to Friends House over the next several years, which may require FWCC to relocate its office. Esther Mombo noted that she stopped by the office recently when she was visiting London, and found the atmosphere positive and welcoming.

We thank Tim Gee for this report and appreciate how quickly he has engaged fully with the work on our behalf.

CEC 22-10vc. Reports of Subcommittees. The Clerk has asked for status updates from various subcommittees and working groups.

Michael Eccles reported from the Long-Term Discernment Working Group on the work of the CEC and the World Office, comprised of himself, Robin Mohr, Simon C. Lamb, Bainito Wamalwa, and Jonathan Fletcher. They have met three times, and expect to meet again in April, hoping to have a paper to share for discussion at our June meeting and a revised paper for the October meeting. The working group is looking broadly to envision what global Quakerism might look like in five to ten years; how FWCC can support a more equal global Quaker community, and share what is vibrant and growing; and what structures (Sections, World Office, or other) can best serve the changing Religious Society of Friends, including online communities and Friends who are not part of a yearly meeting. If we were inventing FWCC today, rather than carrying out historically developed structures, what would it look like? What would make the CEC best fit for purpose, and how can we induct and support new CEC members? We look forward to seeing the fruits of the working group's discernment.

Peter Ulathorne reported that there is ongoing work on staff policies, including an updated employment contract for the General Secretary. The Staff Advisory group is quite helpful.

The Clerk noted that there has been some delay in getting the International Nominations Committee functioning following a transition in its clerk; he is working to ensure that there is a clear list of current INC members, and that the committee is working as needed on nominations.

CEC 22-11vc. Budget Update. Treasurer Peter Ulathorne has circulated a summary of the 2021 outturn, which ended the year in a healthy condition, and of the balance sheet. These figures are still unaudited and before transfers between accounts. He noted that we saved considerably by doing an entirely virtual search and hiring process for the new General Secretary, and in the serendipity of hiring someone who did not need either relocation expenses or legal assistance to secure a UK visa. It was prudent to set aside a designated fund for this purpose, but helpful that we didn't need to draw on it. The large gain on investments during 2021 was quite helpful.

He also circulated a preliminary 2022 budget, which he and Tim have been working on since Tim came into the office. The major addition will be the cost of holding an in-person CEC meeting, which will effectively be drawn from reserves. We do not and cannot budget for investment gain/loss; at present our portfolio is down about 7% since 1 January, due in large part to the world situation that is out of our control. We approve this provisional draft budget understanding that it will continue to be refined. At the June meeting we will be asked to approve a revised budget, the text Trustees Report and accounts, and transfers between accounts.

CEC 22-12vc. Adjournment. We closed with a period of worship, intending to meet next by videoconference on 11 June 2022, God willing.

Simon C. Lamb, Clerk

Esther Mombo, Assistant Clerk

Elizabeth Cazden, Assistant/Recording Clerk