

Feedback on YM 2023 from PSCC

The content of this document is derived directly from all the feedback the YMPSCC gathered from others during and after the Yearly Meeting and from our own reflections.

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To: Yearly Meeting Clerks, this year's Local Arrangement Committee and next year's Local Arrangement Committee.

Overall Recommendations for Next Year's Local Arrangements Committee from PSCC

We feel that the hybrid meeting will be a constant moving forward. Therefore, we feel that it will be essential to create a Central Yearly Meeting Tech Support Committee. However, the actual process of *how* to set this up before next Yearly Meeting is something we are not sure about. We could say, though, that Local Arrangements Committee 2024 needs to know that they should create a group, rather than identifying two people to serve on tech support (essentially for technical setup and the other to monitor Zoom). Four would be a minimum and six would be a comfortable number. The CYM Tech Support Committee would be named in advance of the Yearly Meeting.

We suggest also appointing the Pastoral and Spiritual Care Committee (PSCC) in advance of the Yearly Meeting. Advantages:

- PSCC could then meet with tech support ahead of Yearly Meeting. This would allow for discussions over enabling hybrid meetings in ways that support connection between all Friends.
- If there will be an online semi-programmed Meeting for Worship next year, PSCC could liaise with the person responsible to work out details in advance of YM. This year there was one person organizing, but it probably needs at least two people to organize. The idea of a theme was great, but it would have been good to convey it. Another suggestion is to think through how to involve the children more explicitly. It would enhance connection and the depth of this Meeting if Children's Committees in the online groups are informed in good time about the content, activities, materials needed, and hoped for outcomes of the session.

Junior Young Friends have said that they enjoy having a parallel yearly meeting.

We also note how important it is for PSCC to be aware of first-time attenders. We could have done better here both online and face-to-face.

Reflections on The Blended Meeting

It is PSCC's responsibility to ensure that Business Meeting can be conducted in a worshipful manner. Of course, the Clerks and attendees have a responsibility for this too, but aiming to achieve inclusiveness across two different types of attenders through technological choices and some simple practices can make a big difference to bringing us together as a community. We therefore have some reflections:

For Onliners

In advance:

- It would be helpful to have an orientation time for on-liners - probably an hour on the Thursday night.
- We did send out an information sheet for the on-liners and Alistair and Anne said a little at the start about participating by Zoom but I think we were all not as prepared as we could have been.
- If online, choose a background colour that will *contrast* with the yellow of the raised hand reaction, otherwise it's difficult to see.
- Remind online Friends to use the reaction hands up button to speak. This puts the list of waiting Friends in the top left hand side of the screen so they can be easily seen by the clerks.
- Make sure people display their names.
- Make sure people say their names and Monthly Meeting in person before speaking.
- Encourage exaggerated body language online.
- Have an opportunity to learn about speaker view versus gallery view and how to control the proportion of the display side and speaker's side.
- Explain the role of PSCC.
- Provide contact information for PSCC if appointed beforehand, and tech support.
- Provide basic tech support for those who don't know how to use Zoom at all. Might a buddy system for Zoom newbies be arranged in advance of Yearly Meeting?

At the start:

- Demonstration for in person people showing how to use the microphone so onliners can hear.
- Welcome. Welcome on-liners regularly throughout the gathering – there may be Friends who are attending only occasionally, but especially at the beginning.
- Identify anyone online who is a first timer. Check in with them throughout.
- Have a person assigned for pastoral care who is online. That was very helpful this year. Two people, one older and one younger would be ideal.

- One individual was assigned to provide technical support for Zoom, but he was not contacted very much.
- Advise onliners how to contact pastoral care and tech support. Names, email addresses and phone numbers? Suggest doing this through email and other methods (in chat).

Throughout:

- On-liners could be invited to log in early and join a breakout room for people who want to chat. The main room would then be reserved for seasoning/upholding the meeting. Breakout rooms could be closed 5 minutes before the start of the session to help everyone to settle.
- To assist the clerks, there could be a watcher by their table who would scan for hands up on Zoom.
- Display any material that is being read in the Meeting to on-line Friends who can then read along and easily surmise words that they didn't hear properly.
- Prioritize the quality of the sound experience online. Regular check ins, maybe a few minutes into the start of the business?
- Check to see if on-liners are having a good experience as we go along? Zoom Survey?
- Break out rooms were offered in most breaks. Some on-liners appreciated this. Maybe give these a higher profile?
- A special breakout room was requested for anyone in distress or if someone has a personal matter to bring up. This could be designated clearly in advance and the online PSCC person alert to see if it's being used.
- Informal communication between in person and online attendees was very much appreciated and onliners wanted more of this. How to encourage this? Could in person folk join online on their phones to join breakout rooms? Could there be a way to chat informally as a mixed group? -- a computer set up in a quiet place that is logged in to the online session? Could several such computers be set up?
- A special breakout room was requested for online-in person chats.
- How best to communicate with onliners? Chat messages from the Zoom host were not seen. Is email or some other mechanism better?
- When should chat be on? This year it was off for business sessions, on for break times.
- We need to provide good information about how in person people can connect with online people. We could try to set this over Zoom, or we could also share phone numbers so that in person and online could connect.

At the end:

- Ensure that the onliners experience a feeling of closure and have a chance to say goodbye to one another.
- Ensure that the in person people can say goodbye too, and that the Clerks thank onliners for showing up.

For Tech Support

- The Local Arrangements Committee needs to pay more attention to tech support expertise in the future. See note above about a possible YM Tech Support Committee.
- We recognize that the tech support we experienced was very good and an improvement on the past.
- Michael Searle is now creating a document to disseminate the knowledge about the set-up which was rather ad hoc for the situation at the Settlement, but which has many elements that can be carried over to the next gathering too.
- It might be advisable to always have Yearly Meeting at Whanganui every year to have a built in (or quasi-built-in) system. The PA system in the room was used this year, which is not transportable to other venues.
- With regard to tech support, we aim for minimal intrusiveness.
- We agree that the quality of sound is paramount. A microphone at the centre of the room is not as good. Handheld microphones are something we have learned to live with when it is done respectfully.
- The big learning is that we needed a team of people to do what Michael and Ronis were doing. Each of them needed an alternate to provide some relief.
- Having a dedicated person (a co-host) to set up breakout rooms would be useful.
- A policy for addressing online people who show up without registering would be advisable. Perhaps a simple email showing how they could register, and the details of our payment policy would be useful.

Role of PSCC

Being on this Committee is a valuable service to the Yearly Meeting. It has several functions which contribute to the smooth running and overall success of the experience for all concerned.

Spiritual matters

- Ensure the right ordering of the Meetings for Worship. (See Handbook section 3)
- Uphold the Clerks, particularly when they are creating their minutes.

Pastoral matters

- Be on hand to support anyone having difficulty.
- As a group, check in regularly to feedback about the 'feel' of the meeting and any issues that may have arisen during the session and about anything that needs attention or could be improved with minor adjustments.
- Include the online PSCC person in these get-togethers.

Tech and Practical Matters

- Facilitate online and in person contact as required.

- Make sure that there is a doorkeeper for each session.
- Make sure that there are microphone runners, keeping an eye on the clerks, that are alert to where they may be required and able to move, respectful of the worship, to deliver and collect the equipment.

A suggested checklist for making sure both the door keeping and microphone running for the Meetings are covered is below and can be altered to fit the agenda nearer the time.

Checklist for YMPSCC

Task	Date	Time/Session	Name
Doorkeeper	Day 1 Tues 23 April	1	
		2	
		3	
		4	
Microphone		1	
		2	
		3	
		4	
Doorkeeper	Day 2 Weds 24 April	1	
		2	
		3	
		4	
Microphone		1	
		2	
		3	
		4	
Doorkeeper	Day 3 Thurs 25 April	1	
		2	
		3	
		4	
Microphone		1	
		2	
		3	
		4	
Doorkeeper	Day 4 Fri 26 April	1	
		2	
		3	
		4	
Microphone		1	
		2	
		3	
		4	