

**East Cheshire Area Meeting for Worship for Business
Sunday 12th November 2017, 1.45pm, Stockport Quaker Meeting House**

MINUTES

Minute 17.11.01 Appointment of Clerks for the Meeting

Frances Hill, Clerk, is prevented from attending Area meeting. We appoint Sally Mendham to serve as Clerk and Denise Renshaw as Assistant Clerk for this Meeting.

Minute 17.11.02: Friends present

All of our Meetings except Crewe and Nantwich are represented. Friends from Crewe and Nantwich are prevented as they are laying a wreath of red and white poppies at Crewe War Memorial. This is the first time white poppies have been laid there.

40 Friends are present.

The Trustee present is Joan Armstrong.

The Accompanying Elder is Margaret Moss

Minute 17.11.03: Reading

In our opening worship we have heard an excerpt from the 1895 Manchester Conference written by Frances Thompson.

The link for the reading is <http://www.quaker.org/liberal-history/manchester.html>

Minute 17.11.04: Caring for Friends

We have heard the names of Friends who are in our thoughts. Sally Mendham with the help of Liz Morris will write to them on our behalf.

Minute 17.11.05: Death of John Pleydell

We record with sadness the death of John Pleydell, of Frandley Meeting on Tuesday 19th September, aged 97. We have received the following minute from Frandley: "Minute 2: Burial of ashes of John Pleydell, 13th October 2017. The Ashes of John Pleydell, who died on 19th September, were buried in Frandley's burial ground, in the same grave as that of his wife Doreen. The burial was preceded by a well-attended memorial meeting and followed by refreshments provided by the meeting." It was a well attended meeting with attendees from as far away as Australia. The family have been supported by the Meeting."

Frances Hill, Area Meeting Clerk has signed and returned the Order for Burial to Frandley Meeting.

Minute 17.11.06: Application for membership: David Glover

Further to Minute 16.11.06 of November 2016 Area meeting, Andrew Backhouse and Joan Armstrong have reported that David Glover of Stockport Meeting does not wish to pursue his application for membership at this time.

Minute 17.11.07: Nominations

We have received the name of Tom Jackson to serve as Disley Meeting's representative on Nominations Committee from 1st January 2018 to 31st December 2020.

We are pleased to appoint him.

AM Nominations Committee has brought forward the following names to serve as Elders from Disley: Alan Kent from 01.01.2018 – 31.12. 2020

Ann Lewis for a further one year until 31st December 2018.
 Also as Overseer, Tricia Booth to serve from 01.01.2018 – 31.12.2020.
 We are pleased to appoint them.

Minute 17.11.08: Refugees/Asylum Seekers project

Anne Baker, an Attender at both Wilmslow and Lancaster Meetings, has talked to us of her links with Lancaster City of Sanctuary. She told us of her connection with Global Links, which helps Refugees/Asylum Seekers into voluntary and paid work, because of her professional skills as a career coach.

She showed us photographs by a Kuwaiti asylum seeker who worked in a mainstream Kuwaiti TV Channel, only by working through the black economy, before seeking asylum as an alternative to enforced conscription. His photographs of local asylum seekers/ refugees were used for an exhibition at Lancaster library and it is hoped they may become part of an exhibition of art by asylum seekers/ refugees to be held in London in 2018.

Discussion highlighted the value of communication between agencies and understanding other people's points of view.

Anne told us that other representative from Lancaster City of Sanctuary would be happy to share their experiences and could be contacted via her.

We thank Anne for her presentation and we encourage local meetings to look at the information about becoming Sanctuary Meetings which will be attached to the minutes.

Minute 17.11.09: YQ Facilitation and Leadership Course

We have received reports from Tand J B of the Young Quakers' Facilitation and Leadership Course at Woodbrooke on 20-22 October, which they attended. We have heard excerpts from their reports. They found it an excellent opportunity to learn new facilitation and leadership skills but also a chance to meet up with other young Friends and have fun.

We thank Jand T for their reports, copies of which is attached.

Minute 17.11.10: Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB)

Phoebe Spence has reported on the recent meeting and work of the NFPB . A copy of the report is attached. Phoebe drew our attention particularly to the International Campaign against Nuclear Weapons and the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize on December 10th.

She also highlighted the opportunities provided by the workshops offered by NFPB. We thank Phoebe for her report, a copy of which is attached to the minutes.

Minute 17.11.11: Peace Education Project Report

We have received a report from the Peace Education Project (PEP) Steering Group, Gill Alcock, Till Geiger, Ann Lewis, Rachel Lewis and Phoebe Spence, on the project's development since its inception at the beginning of 2017. A copy of the report is attached.

Most of its first year targets of; group members' skills development, work with schools and establishing wider networks have been achieved. £1000 of the £1500 allocated originally has been spent so far.

The Steering Group has been considering the future development of the Project and has noted the importance of Area Meeting and Local Meeting financial and structural support in ensuring the future of the current three main Quaker funded Peace Education Projects in the UK, Peacemakers, CRESST and Mid-Wales AM–

Peaceful Schools.

The questions brought to AM by the group are:

- 1) Should peace education be a major concern of the AM?
- 2) If so does how does AM envisage its continued support of the PEP? What support can AM give: financially, through more committed Friends on the Steering Group, from Trustees on administration and finance issues and deciding how to liaise with CRESST and/or Peacemakers?

We would like, as an Area Meeting, to give full commitment to this, and intend to have a meeting to discern further in the new year. The Clerks will liaise with the Steering Group on this.

We thank the PEP for their work and their report.

We have also heard of Celia Davies and P Bs attendance at the Take Action On Militarism (TAOM) All-day Conference at Friends House on Saturday 21st October 2017. They have written a report, which is attached to the minutes and which includes links through which Friends can obtain further information.

Minute 17.11.12: Quaker Life Representative Council Report

Sue Pounder has reported on Quaker Life Representative Council. The topic was "Are our structures fit for purpose?" The message was that we need to be open to new light and re-examine our procedures to ensure we are as inclusive as possible. We thank Sue for her report, a copy of which is attached to the minutes.

Minute 17.11.13: Minute from Trustees re: Examining Procedures

We have received the following Minute 10 from ECAM Trustees Meeting On 7th September 2017

"(1) Trustees reviewed the £1000 limit for repairs and maintenance and agreed to increase the threshold to £2000 without requiring approval. Trustees will continue to be informed of work done and any major expenditure incurred by Premises Committees. The latter are also reminded to send their reports to the Clerk of Trustees.

(2) Trustees request AM Clerks to consider appointing more Trustees. In the Quinquennial year it would be helpful to have someone appointed who was experienced in the requirements of the examining procedures."

As requested by Trustees we have considered the appointment of more Trustees. Local Meeting Nominations Committees are asked to bring forward the names of Friends, willing to serve, to Area Meeting Nominations Committee. It is agreed that the appointment of an attender with the required experience being appointed as a Supportive Friend to Trustees will be considered.

We ask that names be received by Area Meeting Nominations Committee in time for their next meeting on the 12th January 2018.

Minute 17.11.14: Meeting for Sufferings report

Andrew Backhouse's written report on Meeting for Sufferings has been circulated in advance, and is attached to the minutes. We thank Andrew for his report.

Minute 17.11.15: Booking for ECAM weekend 2019

Following Minute 17.07.9 from our July AM Peter Eccles has looked into possible dates and venues for ECAM .

He contacted Rydal Hall as requested. The facilities they described were the same

as last time ECAM were there, and there seemed little interest in, or prospect of, this changing.

Peter subsequently contacted Willerlsley Castle, who have provided a list of booking dates available for church group weekends. We thank Peter and ask him to book for 18-20th October 2019 for the ECAM weekend if still available.

Minute 17.11.16: Mental Health Development Worker

We have heard part of a letter of introduction from Alison Mitchell, the recently appointed Mental Health Development Officer. Alison has been employed by the Retreat Benevolent Fund to work across Quakers in Britain. She describes her role as raising awareness - "to give Friends the information and inspiration to discern our response to mental health issues in our community and across society.

We ask our Clerks to arrange a visit to an Area Meeting from Alison.

Minute 17.11.17: Quaker Forum for Mental Health

We have received information regarding the first Quaker Forum for Mental Health, supported by The Retreat Benevolent Fund, to be held at York Friargate Meeting House on Saturday 9th December 10.30 -4.00pm. The topic is "Dementia...Our Shared Journey". There is no charge for the day, just travel costs, and a £5 donation for lunch.

We appoint Sally Mendham to be our Representative.

Minute 17.11.18: Yealand

We have received the following minute from CYPC:

"1. Yealand Easter Camp. Rachel Lewis has informed us that the Yealand Easter young people's camp will be held at Yealand again in 2018. It will take place 3rd - 7th April 2018."

We agree to underwrite the costs on the usual basis.

We agree the names of Andrew Backhouse, Gill Alcock, Tim Gee, Marcela Teran and Till Geiger as helpers, for insurance purposes.

Minute 17.11.19: Pantomime trip

Minute from C&YPC

"2. The decision was made at the ECAM C&YP Committee meeting that Stockport Meeting would facilitate the annual visit to the pantomime at Stockport Plaza for adults, children and young people who are associated with ECAM. This will take place on Sunday 7th January 2018. We hope that ECAM will again cover the cost of the tickets for children and young people that go to the pantomime."

On the request of ECAM CYP Committee, we agree to pay the price of tickets for all children and young people who take part in the annual trip to the pantomime (Aladdin) at Stockport Plaza on Sunday 7th January 2018. This will follow an all age Meeting for Worship, shared party lunch and games. Friends attending are asked to bring contributions of food.

Minute 17.11.20: Meeting for Sufferings representative to YM 2018-21

Nominations to Meeting for Sufferings for the triennium Yearly Meeting 2018 – 2021 are needed by January 2018. We ask Area Meeting Nominations Committee to bring forward names for a Representative and an Alternate to the next AM on January 27th 2018

Minute 17.11.21: QPSW Annual Spring Conference 23–25 March 2018, The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire “Journeys of Witness”

Area meetings are invited to appoint Friends to attend this conference. It is aimed at those fairly new to Friends or to the work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness, and at QPSW Correspondents.

It will focus on the work that QPSW does in the world on behalf of Quakers, and how QPSW seeks to support Friends individually and in meetings to translate faith into action. Applications to be in for 28th January.

We ask Nominations Committee to identify a Friend to attend this, and our assistant Clerk to book a provisional place . We agree to pay costs plus travel.

Minute 17.11.22: Junior Yearly Meeting, 4th – 7th May 2018

We ask Local Meetings, C&YPC and/or parents to suggest names of 15-18 year olds (born between 1/9/99 and 31/8/02 inclusive) who might attend JYM (at time of YM) to Nominations Committee as soon as possible, in time for names to come to Area Meeting in January.

Minute 17.11.23: Outward Affairs

We remind Friends of their responsibility for the right ordering of their outward affairs. This involves personal consideration of the proper acquisition and use of income, the stewardship of money held for others, conduct in business, and the importance of making and from time to time reviewing their wills. If contemplating making legacies to the Society, its committees or associated bodies, Friends are advised to take advice from experienced Friends, and to consult the Quaker website or to contact Friends House. We ask Local Meeting Clerks to report to AM clerk in time for our January AM that they have brought this to the attention of their meetings. It may also be appropriate for friends to make known their funeral wishes in some suitable manner. Friends are also reminded that should any help be required towards the amicable settlement of disputes, the Clerk to Elders, Clerk to Overseers and Area Meeting Clerk have been asked to act together to find a suitable Friend or Friends to give their help.

Minute 17.11.24: Annual Duties

Local Meetings are asked to report to our February meeting on the completion of their annual duties. These include the regular and right holding of Meetings for Worship, making use of the Advices and Queries and the reading of the Epistle from BYM, the holding of regular meetings for church affairs and compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

Minute 17.11.25

We thank Stockport Friends for their hospitality.

Signed in and on behalf of the Area Meeting:

Sally Mendham
Acting Clerk

LM Clerks please note minutes : 17.11.08, 17.11.13, 17.11.19, 17.11.22, 17.11.23, 17.11.24

Nominations Committee please note minutes: 17.11.13, 17.11.20, 17.11.21, 17.11.22

NOTICES

Venue change for AM at Disley September 2018 in order to increase accessibility. Instead of the Ring O'Bells Meeting House it will be at:
Disley Methodist Church,
70, Buxton Road,
Disley, SK12 2EY

International Campaign to abolish nuclear weapons & Stockport for Peace
Further to Phoebe's NFPB report: The International campaign to abolish nuclear weapons will receive the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo on 10th December see <http://www.icanw.org/campaign-news/atomic-bomb-survivor-to-jointly-accept-nobel-peace-prize-on-icans-behalf/>

CND is asking people to mark this see <http://www.cnduk.org/get-involved/events/item/3564-day-of-action-in-support-of-nobel-peace-prize>
They have just announced the Citizen's Treaty, inviting supporters to help us collect thousands of signatures to show that British citizens support the global nuclear ban and want the government to sign up. Use the link to do this:
<http://www.cnduk.org/cnd-media/item/3568-citizens-treaty>

Stockport for Peace will be holding street stalls to raise this with the public on **Friday 15th December 12 - 1.30pm at the Warren St end of Merseyway**, Lancashire bridge. **Also in Marple 10.30 - 11.30am** - please contact Phoebe for further details. She hopes that Friends will join them.

Area Meeting weekend 16-18th February 2018 Glenthorne *Details and booking form attached.* Enquiries to Andrew Backhouse, Frances McCann, Peter Eccles.

Calendars for Sale:

Ben Evens of Disley Meeting is selling calendars for 2018 in aid of Disley Meeting funds. The photographs have been taken by Ben and are mostly UK landscape scenes. The cost is £7.50. They are A4 size with 13 colour photos. Ben is happy to take orders either by phone - 01298 71303, or by email benjevans@outlook.com
Delivery/posting/payment can be by negotiation.

New Britain Yearly Meeting blog

Britain Yearly Meeting has launched a new blog, which you can find online at www.quaker.org.uk/blog. It will provide a place to explore a wealth of perspectives relating to our centrally-managed work and act as a spark for reflection, discussion and action, both online and off.

Funding for small community cohesion projects available from The Restitution Fund

BYM have been contacted by 'The Restitution Fund', a small organisation one of whose Trustees is a Quaker. The fund was created in 2015 from money given by an individual who received compensation (restitution money) from the German government for losses caused by the National Socialists under Adolf Hitler. The fund's aim is to foster small local initiatives in community cohesion by making grants of usually no more than £1000.

Applications for funding, which can be for Quaker work, are considered twice a year and should be received by the beginning of January or August. To find out more and ask for an application form email Arthur Lockett (arthurlockett@btinternet.com)

REPORTS & ATTACHMENTS TO THE MINUTES

Sanctuary Meetings Leaflet (pdf document attached separately)

YQ Facilitation and Leadership Course Reports Pages 8-9

Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB) Report Pages 10-11

Peace Education Report Pages 12-14

Take Action on Militarism Report Pages 15-16

Quaker Life Representative Council Report Pages 17-18

Meeting for Sufferings report Pages 19-20

Report on the Facilitation and Leadership Course at Woodbrooke

20-22 October: JB

From the 20th to the 22nd of October, I attended an event on facilitation and leadership at Woodbrooke. It was a great weekend as it was both really fun and a great way to meet other young quakers, as well as allowing me to learn valuable skills.

Throughout the weekend, we went to lots of sessions on subjects such as understanding groups and how to take on leadership and facilitation roles. We learned skills through games and activities, and discussed the topics such as how to be inclusive and diversity within groups, and our thoughts with other people at the weekend. We also had the chance to practice what we'd learned through running games for the whole group in pairs, and running a short session to teach people about Quaker meeting for worship for business. We also had the chance to review what we'd learned and write notes at the end of each session, and we left the weekend with a folder of very helpful resources for use in the future.

I also really enjoyed talking and getting to know new people when we had activities such as a walk to the Cadbury factory, and a bonfire. I attended the weekend hoping to learn skills for in the future, when I would like to be on staff at young Quaker events such as Yealand and Summer School that I have really enjoyed as a young person. It was a really valuable weekend for helping me build my confidence to lead and facilitate at Quaker events and was a very enjoyable weekend. I would like to thank area meeting for allowing me to attend the event.

J B

Report on the Facilitation and Leadership Course at Woodbrooke

20-22 October: T

We spent a weekend exploring different ideas surrounding the best ways to facilitate activities in the context of young Quaker events. A large portion of our time was spent looking how groups develop and the different stages of development they go through. We looked at ideas such as starting an event with lively activities that get you speaking to lots of people then, as the event progresses, end with more reflective activities. This then led into splitting into smaller sub-groups and practising facilitating activities for the rest of the group, with each sub-group planning an activity suitable for a different part of an event.

From the weekend I feel I have learnt lots of valuable skills that will be transferable to helping run Young Quaker events, which I intend to do more of in the future. I would like to thank East Cheshire Area Meeting for giving me the opportunity to go to the event.

T B

Northern Friends Peace Board Meeting -Darlington, 14 October, 2017

This NFPB meeting shows the range of issues is addressed, how we promote 'peace in all its height and breadth' and the importance of being able to share and network about them.

At most of our meetings we link with local peace initiatives. On this occasion Peter and Carol Greenwood talked about the [White Rose Group in Darlington](#), which they set up as an alternative response to far right bigotry. Inspired by the words of Jo Cox – 'we have more in common than that which divides', the group is developing a range of activities to put those words into action in the town. After Carol and Peter's input, we explored in greater depth issues about how we engage in our different communities, from personal encounters to group-level activities. So I was pleased to share our Peace Education Project news and Stockport for Peace's engagement with We Stand Together, which they found encouraging.

From the local to the global... NFPB member Janet Fenton has been active in the [International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons](#) since it was set up. NFPB had supported Janet in getting to New York for the negotiations earlier this year that led to the agreement of the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) (known informally as the Nuclear Ban Treaty). She was there again the week before we met, exploring possibilities of specific work on nuclear disarmament in the Middle East. Janet is actively outlining the possibilities that the Treaty now presents for national and international action to put into place the components of a nuclear free world, and inspires us to do so too. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the campaign is particularly welcome, Janet emphasised, in helping raise the profile of a Treaty that so much of the established media did not report on. It will also give the campaign both encouragement and resources to take the campaign forward, turning the treaty into reality. Janet thanked NFPB for their support and gave advance notice of an international demonstration that is being planned place around Faslane next September. Scotland plays a crucial role in that it wants to prohibit nuclear weapons and sign the treaty, yet hosts the UK nuclear arsenal – an opportunity and much work for us to do in raising the issue to overcome the notion of nuclear deterrence.

NFPB members reported and reflected on a range of other peace activities over recent months, from witness at the DSEI arms fair, to putting on talks and performances, linking up with other Sanctuary Meetings, working with Citizens UK, supporting the witness at Sam Walton's trial at Burnley. Our Trustees reported on their work, including the decision to withdraw from the Pensions Trust, entailing cashing in all our investments with Castlefield, plus development of our workshops for Meetings – please consider these for your meeting.

NFPB has normally had four meetings a year. In 2017 we have had three, taking into account a particularly busy autumn of events, as well as our involvement in the Yearly Meeting Gathering. Members agreed to resume the pattern of four meetings for the next two years. I look forward to working with a new representative for ECAM on NFPB, taking us sometimes to far flung places throughout the north, meeting and being inspired by a variety of Friends committed to peace in different ways. This is such valuable work, thank you ECAM and Local Meetings for your support.

I should like to add that NFPB members have been approached to see if we could arrange for the display of the Art at the Arms Fair – Collateral Damage exhibition, http://www.quakerarts.net/pages/events/events_calendar.html arranged by Linda Murgatroyd (Sam Walton's mum). Stockport for Peace felt that Stockport Art Gallery would probably not be willing. But please let me know if you have any suggestions for this – Wilmslow Guild??

Phoebe Spence, Deputy representative for ECAM

Peace Education Project – Report to East Cheshire Quaker Area Meeting 12.11.17.

Introduction

The Peace Education Project has been developing since early 2017 with support from ECAM.

Our discernment has led us to adopt the following main aims:

- Developing and offering Peace education events such as ‘Peace Days’, primarily to schools
- Developing the capacity to provide training, primarily to schools, in building peaceful relationships and conflict handling skills
- Promoting packs eg from QPSW and other resources to schools to take up and run their own peace related activities

The main targets for the 12 months from February AM have been:

- To develop our own capacity and understanding by undergoing training and by shadowing experienced peace educators
- To develop and offer a Peace Day event to at least one High School
- By the end of 12 months to have identified at least one school that wishes to have a programme of peace education sessions delivered
- To develop contacts with other Quakers and non Quakers in the region and more widely who might support the project including those interested in being peace educators.

We are now reporting to Area Meeting on progress since the last report to February AM. The two sections below cover:

1. Activities so far & planned

2. Project Management and Development and Potential Partnerships

The Steering Group is currently discerning the way forward in relation to 2. In order for the Steering Group to proceed, AM will need to discern its continued support for the project.

1. ACTIVITIES SO FAR & PLANNED

a) Skills Development, Learning Good Practice & Training

Quite a lot has been achieved here. Main training and shadowing includes:

- 2 days training in Stockport in September, organised by us and delivered by Ellis Brooks from QPSW. The 5 Steering Group Members (Gill Alcock, Till Geiger, Ann Lewis, Rachel Lewis and Phoebe Spence) all took part together with 8 others
- 6 week on-line Introduction to Peace Education course run by Woodbrooke, put together by QPSW, - Gill, Rachel and Till
- 2 day Woodbrooke course ‘Peace Education in Schools’ run by Mid Wales AM Peaceful Schools Project and (West Midland Quakers) Peacemakers - Rachel and Gill
- ‘Fly Kites not Drones’ workshop shadowing of Ellis Brooks at Poynton High School - Till and Gill
- ‘Razor Wire and Olive Branch’ new workshops pack on Israel/Palestine & EAPPI training -Till

Roughly £1000 of the £1500 which February AM gave to the project has been spent, so far, essentially, on this capacity building. We have shared resources and training materials from these courses and are building up a resource bank. The training has helped us considerably in understanding what constitutes good quality peace education and practicalities of delivering it.

Peacemakers and also CRESST (Conflict Resolution Education in Sheffield Schools) have both offered in principle to let us come and shadow some of their trainers to gain more schools-based experience from established practitioners.

b) Work with Schools and others

- We delivered workshops on Dealing with Conflict at a schools conference in July at the Foundation for Peace (Warrington) to 21 pupils and teachers from 5 high schools and also ran a stall (Till, Phoebe, Gill and also P B).
- 60 Upper Sixth pupils took part in the 'Fly Kites not Drones' workshops run by Ellis at Poynton High School Peace Day with Till & Gill helping
- We are running a workshop at November TGM on Peace and Conflict in order to practice our own delivery and get feedback from our YP, as well as hopefully provide a good session for them – Rachel, Phoebe and Gill, together with two friends from Bolton Meeting
- Bridgewater High School (Warrington) has booked us to run a Peace Day event at the end of March 2018 for approximately 60 pupils. They also want to discuss potentially a more extended programme on conflict handling.
- We have identified a primary school for piloting peace education but are waiting for more experience before starting to talk to them about dates.

Overall, we feel that good progress is being made here, and that it is being developed in tandem with our capacity.

c) Networking and Building Contacts

We sent a letter in July/August about the project, inviting support, together with a flyer on the 2 Stockport training days to all the Quaker Meetings in our region, and all individuals from last year's Regional Gathering who indicated an interest.

We have had some response. About half a dozen Friends actively want to be kept in touch, and some have offered specific support e.g. in helping make contacts with schools. Around 40 are on a mailing list. 8 Friends besides the Steering Group attended the Stockport training days - 2 from ECAM, one each from Manchester & Warrington, Liverpool & Mann, Pendle Hill and Wirral & Chester AMs, one from Worcester & Shropshire AM and a local CND Peace Education volunteer, and a few others were interested but could not make those dates. A Bolton Friend now attends our Steering group meetings.

Broadly, it seems that there is some good will amongst Quakers and willingness to help a bit, though limited time. We have not yet tried to go much beyond Quakers, or developed a website for example, as we want to ensure that what will be offered is in keeping with good practice in peace education, as discerned and developed by other Quaker peace education projects over the last 30 years, and also because of our own time constraints. This is relevant to our next section on Project Development and Management.

2. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT, AND POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Setting up and sustaining a project like this is a big undertaking. Our own experience so far, together with advice and experience from Mid Wales and Peacemakers (West Midlands) at the recent Woodbrooke course, has brought up some very practical questions and issues to be considered:

Area Meeting Concern & Support

The three main current Quaker-founded Peace Education projects in the UK – Peacemakers, CRESSST and Mid Wales have all had solid and sustained local or Area Meeting support over several years – from Central England/Staffs AMs, Sheffield Central LM, and Mid Wales AM respectively. (A fourth project, LEAP Confronting Conflict, based in London was a Leavers project). This support has been partly financial, but just as important, has been by adopting the projects as concerns of the AM and therefore providing support structures such as steering group members (and trustees when the project becomes independent).

Although the 'big' vision of the project has been to support peace education in the North West region, the advice on the Woodbrooke course is to keep the project organisationally within one AM. This is partly to ensure quality control, and to be able to build up slowly, including building up relationships with local schools. But it is also because practical

working arrangements such as insurance, grant applications etc. can be more easily handled with a relationship to a single AM.

Certainly at the moment none of the other AMs in our region is working as actively as we are. The most active is North Wales who are hoping to develop peace education work in schools, but want to develop a Welsh language dimension to this, and are working within a Welsh education system.

Our certainty is that this is very much at the heart of Quaker testimony and witness. It has a long term vision and requires our steady work and commitment. We are aware of the forces of militarism in schools and that Peace needs teaching in a positive way – it won't just happen with anti-bullying policies or a school 'respect' policy.

The question for ECAM is whether the Area Meeting discerns it is right for peace education to be a major concern of the Area Meeting. If so whether it wants to support the further development of this project.

We see our future work as:

- 1) To consolidate the work on our present commitments, aiming to offer quality sessions in the schools we have contacts with; and keeping open to other opportunities in local schools.
- 2) We would welcome other ECAM Friends who feel inspired to join us on the Steering Group.
- 3) Talking to Trustees about admin. and finances.
- 4) Deciding how to liaise with CRESST &/or Peacemakers

**Take Action On Militarism (TAOM) All-day Conference Friends
House
Saturday 21st October 2017.
Attended by P B and Celia Davies**

There was a buzz about the launch of the TAOM Pack on the day as well as the forthcoming INSPIRE project to be rolled out in November next year.

Sam Walton from QPSW encouraged us, saying that our strength is at grass roots level (as illustrated by the speakers who followed). He recommended three publications: '*The Last Ambush*', Forces Watch; '*The First Ambush*', Veterans For Peace and '*The Recruitment of Children by the UK Armed Forces*', Medact.

We heard about so many wonderful grass roots actions, chipping away at the militarism narrative. In some cases it had just been one individual who inspired a few others and found that their idea was taking root and growing.

There were two workshop options with some really useful tips. The '*Taking Action on Social Media*' option was so immediate - tweeting and sending out messages 'real time' and getting responses. With '*Engaging Local and Mainstream Media*' the emphasis was on creating measured and well researched briefings, building up trust with important contacts who could spread our message.

We heard about "*Inspire - Peace by Peace*" that QPSW will be launching. "INSPIRE has two goals; first it will create the opportunity for young people across the UK and Ireland to remember all those who lost their lives as the result of the curse of war. Secondly, it will offer young people the chance to reflect on the significant lessons to learn from the conflicts of the past in order to affect change and deal with the challenges we face today.

On the morning of Friday 9th November 2018 a series of high profile, simultaneous INSPIRE events, designed for children and young people, will take place in Cathedrals and other public venues. INSPIRE want to

break down barriers, educate the next generation to celebrate difference, listen and be critical thinkers who are active peace makers and informed global citizens."

We felt inspired by the speakers and activities at the conference.

See www.forceswatch.net/blog/take-action-militarism-2017 for an account of the day. The pack itself can be downloaded at www.forceswatch.net/takeaction/ and is also being distributed free on request - already each Local Meeting has been sent a copy. For the Quaker take on challenging militarism see www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/challenging-militarism-1

Welcome the light! **Quaker Life Representative Council, 13 – 15 October 2017, Woodbrooke**

A wonderful weekend which challenged us to look creatively and critically at whether our Quaker structures and ways help or hinder us in being a dynamic, faith-led community in the 21st Century.

This is a theme Quakers need to return to regularly – we know there is a real risk of meetings becoming burdened and overwhelmed with systems and ways of working that drain energy rather than channel it to support our inward and outward growth.

Michael Long, our Clerk, reminded us of the pivotal changes that followed the 1895 Manchester Conference, where younger Quaker voices argued for a new energy and freedom in the Society, and also of the work of RECAST in 2005.

Our first speakers were Deborah Rowlands, currently Clerk to Britain Yearly Meeting and Paul Parker, Recording Clerk. They shared insights from their recent visit to Friends in the USA where they found meetings that were innovating and letting go – but holding fast to three key elements. The three, together, give stability – like a stool.

First: our inward life of worship and discernment

Explore different forms of worship – longer meetings, even untimed meetings, meeting for worship for gardening, outdoor meetings...

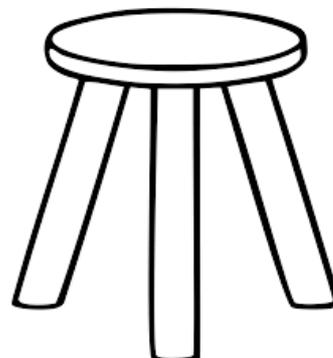
Learn and understand our tradition so we can teach and share it.

Use other Quaker tools such as Meetings for Clearness and Care Committees (these support individuals undertaking a particular task or service)

Is there real business to do?

Second: church community

- Nurture people in service and recognise gifts – if you see it, name it.
- Lay down committees that are no longer essential – try more focused sprints, threads and collaboratives
- Consider using paid support to free up people and energy
- Trust the people who undertake roles – and let them get on with it.
- Deadness happens when Friends wish they were somewhere else.



Third: social testimony.

What are meetings doing together?

A business meeting with no agenda item about working in the world is a missed opportunity. Working meaningfully together is what gives us life

No one wants a wobbly stool. Is there a leg that your meeting needs to pay attention to?

Julia Ryberg gave a fascinating account of the variety and richness of Quakerism in Europe where Friends are in small numbers, isolated but coming together in a range of creative ways,

For me, the weekend underlined just how much freedom we have as Quakers, but also the shared responsibility. I hope we can be bold and give ourselves permission to experiment – if it doesn't work, well we have learned something and can try again. Untimed worship anyone?

Friends "should hail with joy the thought that knowledge of all kinds is

*progressive, ... and that it is our inestimable privilege, as well as our duty, to **welcome the light** which may just be reaching us.” Frances Thompson
1895, Manchester Conference*

Sue Pounder, Deputy Quaker Life Rep.

ECAM Meeting for Sufferings Report from 7th October 2017 in Manchester

It was brilliant to go to Sufferings with Jacqui Moore, Frances McCann, Eleni Burgess, and Sally Mendham and to hear their perspectives at the end. I had not realized how different each person will experience Sufferings from their own Quaker background and personal interests. Papers for Sufferings are always on the web if you want to know the detail of what we will be discussing.

Items they picked up included:

- How much Quaker faith and practice gets continual updating
- How interesting some of them found the documents on the 500th anniversary of Luther and the reformation and the Conference of European Churches Open Letter on the future of Europe – whereas I had noted they were there and not got engrossed by them.
- How interesting too was the Quaker response s. I am encouraged to put the links in my report so that if you are interested, you can find out more to pass on to those who might be interested too. All the papers can be found at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-agenda--papers-oct-2017-revised003>
- We had not really noticed the booklets on the economy that have been put out for reading groups.
- QPSW had a lot of exciting work going on – and they needed to revise the wording of the Sanctuary manifesto which we could see did not link enough to our faith.
- How much we need to wrestle with diversity issues. More on this will be coming out to Meetings and there were suggestions that people could sometimes accept appointments for Sufferings or similar big jobs if it was only for 1 year. What are we aspiring too? What steps do we need to take – the opportunities and barriers. What a range of people we already have!
- There is a lot of material on how we communicate, and there are on line templates for communications and logos too. One item is a short paper called Speaking out as Quakers, Advice for Meetings.
- From April – June 2017 we were told that BYM media reached 13 million people.

How can we all be informed?– every Quaker is a communicator!

Other points that I note to tell you of:

QPSW gave its annual report and it was very inspiring, but also with questions about whether the work is really doing what we want to see

done. When is the work spirit led?

West Kent AM sent a minute expressing their unhappiness with the wording about Quaker faith on the BYM website and were told it was being revised anyway – when did we last look at this in the light of our understanding of our faith?

Andrew Backhouse