

East Cheshire Area Meeting
at Disley Meeting House, Saturday 8th July 2017

17.07.1 Friends Present

There are about 39 Friends present. All our Meetings are represented. The Elder present is Peter Eccles and Dave Swindells is present at nominated Trustees

17.07.2 Reading

Parts of #2.87 and #6.01 from Quaker Faith and Practice have been read in our opening worship.

17.07.3 Caring for Friends

We have heard of a number of Friends who are unwell and we are holding them in our thoughts. We ask our Assistant Clerk and Liz Morris to send our greetings.

17.07.4 Application for membership – Darren Booth – report on visit

Further to Minute 17.05.20, Peter Eccles and Annique Seddon have read Darren's letter of application and reported on their visit with Darren. We are pleased to accept Darren into membership, and ask Evelyn Ingram to welcome him on our behalf, asking him what book he would like to receive. Darren attends Cheadle Hulme Meeting.

17.07.5 Transfer of membership request – Madeleine Reeves

We have received a request from Madeleine Reeves to transfer her membership from Manchester and Warrington Area Meeting to ECAM. Our Assistant Clerk for Membership is working on this transfer. Madeleine attends Stockport Meeting.

17.07.6 Resignation of membership – Kate Roberts

We have received a letter of resignation from Kate Roberts of Crewe and Nantwich Meeting. We accept this resignation with sadness and wish Kate well.

We ask our clerk to write to Kate.

17.07.7 Report on Area Meeting weekend at Willersley Castle

Pam Lamb and Jill Maguire have reported on the weekend, which went well with contributions of a great variety of skills from many Friends. One memorable feature was the Lantern Festival on the Saturday for One Earth Day. Others included "Quakers have talent", knitting together, visiting interesting local mills and walks together.

We thank Hilary Brooks, Jill Maguire, Pam Lamb and Peter Eccles for their work in planning this successful weekend.

17.07.8 Planning group for Glenthorne Weekend 16-18 February 2018

Nominations Committee brings forward the names of Peter Eccles, Andrew Backhouse and Frances McCann to serve on the planning committee for AM Weekend at Glenthorne in 2018. We are pleased to accept these names, and these Friends are appointed accordingly. We encourage them to co-opt others as needed.

17.07.9 Venue for Area Meeting weekend in 2019

We have discussed a suggestion that the Area Meeting weekend should return to Rydal Hall from time to time, as this venue offers so much for the children and young people. Our consideration has included the difficulties experienced at Rydal Hall by those with mobility disabilities.

We ask Peter Eccles to explore accessibility issues further with Rydal Hall (and perhaps the Diocese of Carlisle) on our behalf, as well as availability for both Rydal Hall and Willersley Castle for spring 2019. We accept Andrew Backhouse's offer to bring our children and young people together to consider all aspects and tell us how they feel.

We remind Friends that the Area Meeting is able to offer financial support particularly recognising the needs of families and we also ask each planning group to reconsider the fee structure.

17.07.10 Dates and venues for 2018 AMs

Friends are advised of the following dates for Area Meeting in 2018, noting in particular the date of the first meeting of the year.

We encourage Meetings to consider arranging further events to bring Friends together, and in particular, an event for the afternoon of the July meeting.

P.T.O.

Area Meeting dates and venues for 2018

No meetings in February, April, June, August, October and December

January	Saturday 27 th	Stockport	10.00 – 12.30 S
March	Saturday 10 th	Wilmslow (with the assistance of Macclesfield)	11.00 then lunch followed by topic
May*	Sunday 13 th	Frاندley	Lunch then 13.45 start
July	Saturday 14 th	Marple	10.00 – 12.30 <i>Topic?</i>
September*	Saturday 8 th	Disley	Lunch then 13.45 start
November	Sunday 11 th	Cheadle Hulme	Lunch then 13.45 start

S Soup and sandwiches after Meeting for Business

* Some CYP input anticipated

It is anticipated that provision for children will be made where Meetings are given notice of attendance up to 1 week in advance

We ask our Assistant Clerk to book these dates with Local Meeting diaries.

17.07.11 Nominations

Nominations Committee has brought forward the following names:

- **Churches Together in Cheshire:** Michael Hennessey to serve as “Church Leader” for a further 3 year term, until 31st December 2020, alongside Peter Speirs of Wirral and Chester Area Meeting who will serve as Ecumenical Officer. We are pleased to appoint Michael accordingly.
- **Sanctuary Everywhere QPSW/QCEA Conference:** The names of S G and P B of Wilmslow and Till Geiger of Disley are brought forward to attend the Brussels QPSW/QCEA Conference, for which the costs are estimated at £165pp + travel. These Friends are appointed accordingly.

We ask Nominations Committee to seek names of Friends to attend conferences as follows:

- **1 or 2 15–21 year old YP to attend a weekend on Facilitation and Leadership** at Woodbrooke , 20-22 October

- **1 or 2 Friends to attend a weekend on Deepening Discernment** at Woodbrooke 6th-8th November
- **1 to 4 14–21 years old YP to attend a YP Participation Day** at Friends House Saturday 2nd December 2017
- **1 or 2 Friends to attend a weekend conference on Changing face of Faith in Britain** to be run by QCCIR at Woodbrooke March 16-18 2018
- **1 or 2 Friends to attend a weekend on Safeguarding** at Woodbrooke in January 2018

17.07.12 Five Minute Find-out: Dave Swindells

We thank Dave for sharing some of his life story with us and wish him and Marian well in their move to Leeds in the next month or two.

17.07.13 Meeting for Sufferings Report

Andrew Backhouse has reported on the Meeting for Sufferings held on 3rd June.

We ask Nominations Committee to seek the name of a Young Friend to be our representative to Young Friends General Meeting.

We note that few of our Meetings have used the document “Our Faith In the Future” which is seen to be rather nebulous, but that many Friends have been involved in the QF&P reading ready for the review.

We thank Andrew for his report.

17.07.14 Custodianship and record keeping

J H has been working as Custodian quietly and faithfully for some years. Till Geiger has recently been shadowing this role and learning more. He has told us of a Custodian Workshop he attended at Friends House, and outlined a series of issues which we as an Area Meeting should consider how we address.

QF&P 4.40 identifies a list of records that need to be kept and in our AM these are duly kept carefully, initially in the Wilmslow strongroom and moved onwards to the Chester Archives in due course.

With the encouragement of AM Trustees, Till has focussed our attention on the advantage of having our records retention policy agreed, known and understood by all those in relevant roles in the Area Meeting.

Issues to be considered may include:

- What records we generate, and what in the way of names, etc, these should, or should not, include. This may relate in particular, to meetings of Elders and Overseers, and all children's activities,
- Should we be keeping (retaining) records we consider as "notes" as well as "minutes"?
- Consideration of access to and availability of records and how we manage and control this both locally and once our records have been moved to Chester,
- How do we manage, keep or destroy electronic correspondence/records?
- The line of authority relating to the Custodian of Records.

We agree to hold a meeting on this subject with particular encouragement to all clerks and convenors to attend. It is proposed to hold this on the afternoon of Saturday 10th March 2018, following the morning Area Meeting.

17.07.15 Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Doris Grimsditch

Further to 17.05.18 we have received the following Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of our Friend Doris Grimsditch.

"Doris Mitchell-Grimsditch 1927-2017

Our Friend, Doris Mitchell-Grimsditch, died at the age of 89 on 25th April 2017. A Funeral and a Meeting for Worship was held at Crewe Crematorium on Friday 12th May 2017.

Doris was born 3rd November 1927 in Leigh Lancashire. She had an older sister Irene and a younger brother Peter. The family moved to Davyhulme, near Urmston Greater Manchester when Doris was 6 years old. As a young child, Doris experienced significant ill health resulting in a life-long hearing impairment. She was in hospital for many months and often shared memories of this time in her later years. The experience also had an impact on her education as she missed a year of school.

Doris left school at fifteen and worked as clerk with the Ministry of Works Manchester during the Second World War. She then became Clerical Officer for the Ministry of National Insurance in Blackpool. On returning to the family home, she started walking out with Donald, someone she had known for several years from the Methodist Church, Choir & Youth Club. In 1951, they got married. Married life took them from Flixton, Greater Manchester to Guiseley & Doncaster in Yorkshire & finally Crewe.

Doris and Don raised a family together having two children Geoff and Ruth. Education was important to both of them and Doris studied with the Open University and gained a Bachelor of Arts degree. She had a varied career. She trained & worked as a Domestic Science teacher. She worked as a Secretary for Marriage Guidance.

Both Doris and Don were very active members of the Methodist church for many years but gradually they became drawn to Quakerism. They became attenders at Chester meeting and subsequently members of the Religious Society of Friends through conviction when they were in their sixties. Doris served as clerk of Chester meeting. They also renewed their marriage vows to each other there in 1991.

They started a small local meeting in Crewe, which used to meet monthly until it was laid down in the late 1990s. They also hosted a link group for members and attenders of Chester meeting in the Crewe Area (CH5). When area meetings were reorganised they started to attend Frandley meeting. They felt welcome there. Don's ashes are interred in the grounds at Frandley meeting and Doris also wished her ashes to be buried there.

Doris subsequently resumed her attendance at Chester meeting and when the Crewe and Nantwich worship group was established, she attended. In due course attending Crewe and Nantwich local meeting. Throughout this time, she continued to host small meetings for worship in her home once a month.

She was an active member in other ways too. She was a regular friend in residence at Woodbrooke and for several years acted as a guide at the Quaker Tapestry. She also ran Circle Dancing at Glenthorne. She and Don contributed passage 22.44 of Quaker, Faith and Practice, which encapsulates how important Quakerism was, in their lives.

Doris spent the last two years of her life at a residential home in Crewe and remained an active Quaker as long as she was able.

She loved Classical Music. Sang in several choirs over the years & played the piano. She was a keen gardener, enjoyed reading, cooking & visiting the theatre.

She was a gentle, determined, quietly spoken and constant friend, who helped many people find a path to Quakerism.

Her brother Peter, son Geoff & daughter Ruth, granddaughter Helen & grandson Lloyd, & great-grandsons Kyte & Robin survive her.

Doris life was one of service. We give thanks for the Grace of God as seen in the life of Doris Mitchell-Grimsditch.”

We record our appreciation of the service of Doris and Don Grimsditch as Elder and Overseer of what was then Cheshire Monthly Meeting while hosting the Crewe and Nantwich worship group in the late 1980s and 1990s.

17.07.16 Report on working with two committees at BYM: PECAN Committee of QPSW and Library Committee

The attention of Friends is drawn to the written report circulated in advance. We thank Till Geiger for this report and draw Friends attention to the YM’s strategic plan “Our Faith in the Future” which may be a framework for action.

17.07.17 Proposed visit to Friends House Library

We encourage interested Friends to contact Hilary Brooks so that she may make arrangements for a group visit to Friends House Library.

17.07.18 Ackworth School AGM

Further to 17.02.21, Till Geiger has reported back to us on the responses he has had to correspondence with the School about application of the Living Wage at the School. Friends’ attention is drawn to the documents attached. We ask our clerk to write to support the concern on who may call a special meeting of the General Meeting. We thank Till for this report.

17.07.19 Northern Friends Peace Board report

Phoebe Spence has reported on the recent meeting of NFPB. We thank her for her oral report and Christopher Bagley for his written report (attached).

17.07.20 We thank John Booth of Sale Meeting for joining us to share some of his experience of Israel/Palestine as an Ecumenical Accompanier.

17.07.21 Hospitality

We thank Disley Friends for their hospitality.

Signed in and on behalf of East Cheshire Area Meeting,

Frances A Hill,

Clerk

LM Clerks please note Minutes 17.07.10 and 17.07.17

ECAM Nominations Committee please note minutes 17.07.11 and 17.07.13

NOTICES

Workshop on Migration Issues. Saturday 15th July 10am - 3pm at Stockport Quaker Meeting House.

Organised by Phoebe Spence and supported by Stockport LM, this workshop will be run by Hope not Hate and will be free of charge. Phoebe will put it on eventbrite to manage the bookings and will circulate a poster with some detail of the content soon.

To give an idea of what sort session it may be here some background to another session Hope not hate organised.

The reason we started running this training is because it's pretty clear that migration is one of, if not *the*, most sensitive issue in Britain today. I'm sure that you'd agree that debates on the subject can be uncomfortable, upsetting or angry, and often do little to change anyone's mind as people often try to "out fact" one another. At the same time, fighting for a progressive stance on migration is more important than ever, and we need to be able to persuade people who don't already completely agree with us.

To learn the tools to do this, the session (which is v interactive) focuses on how to listen and question effectively, how to use stories to effectively persuade people, and how to create spaces for more constructive communication around difficult issues.

ECAM Picnic at Disley, Sunday 16th July from 12.00 noon

Following All age worship in the morning the ECAM picnic will be held at Disley. Young Friends will be making food in the morning but bring and share is also encouraged. All are warmly invited.

There are roadworks on the A6 at Disley on the 16th resulting in closure of the A6 but there should be access to the Church and the Meeting House. Allowing extra time may be advisable.

"WWI Conscientious Objectors" Thursday 10th August, 7.30pm.

United Reformed Church Hall, on the corner of Robins Lane and Bramhall Lane South, Bramhall, SK7 2PE.

A talk by Celia Davies and P B at the invitation of The Bramhall Group of the Family History Society of Cheshire

The entry charge of £2, for members and visitors alike, includes tea or coffee and biscuits.

<http://macclesfieldreflects.org.uk/2017/08/10/10-august-2017-talk-wwi-conscientious-objectors/>

Quaker Living Wage Campaign Special Interest Meeting at Yearly

Meeting Gathering, Tuesday 1st August, 2.30pm, Humanities Room 3.56, Warwick University

The campaign group will be holding a session they hope that Area Meetings will find helpful in answering questions around accreditation and in providing a way forward for those who do not have employees but who wish to support the idea and witness for a real Living Wage to be paid.

The session will take the form of a brief presentation followed by a small panel of Friends explaining what they had to do to become accredited and why they felt it important to be accredited. The Group will then hold a question and answer session and support any action planning.

Contact: Ann Morgan, Convenor Quaker Living Wage Campaign Group

Further information from Dave Swindells, following John Booth's talk, on possible action around the Israel-Palestine situation.

- **Letter writing**

It was suggested that letter-writing was something that most Friends could do and a copy letter from Dave Swindells to his MP in February is attached as a possible format. Since some of the content may now be out of date he has also given us information about a principled, brave young Israeli woman who is refusing to serve in the Israeli military forces, who is currently in prison as a result of her commitment not to fight. See the link <https://www.amnesty.org/en/>

- **Information on the Quaker Voluntary Action programme regarding a Quaker Working Retreat to Ramallah on the West Bank this Autumn.**

See the link <http://qva.org.uk/New/wp-> This is an excellent short, first-hand introduction to what life is like in the West Bank and Israel, which provides a very 'hands on' approach for Friends. Dave highly recommends it!

Quaker Week 2017 speaker offer 30 September – 8 October. Info' from Friends' House

The theme for Quaker Week 2017 is 'In turbulent times: be a Quaker'. Quaker Week is our annual outreach event. We encourage meetings to use this week as an opportunity to hold events that will attract people from the local community; resources will be available in the coming months. If you would like to book a speaker please email us with suggested dates and a theme or topic you would like covered. speakers@quaker.org.uk

The Changing Face of Faith in Britain survey

As part of a research project commissioned by the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) on the changing face of faith in Britain, a new online survey has been produced aimed at those who have first come to Meeting in the last 3 years. Please complete the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/7NTL6KP> by July 24.

Letter to William Wragg MP (see above notice)

To:- Mr. William Wragg, M.P.,
2017

22nd February

C/O. Marple Constituency office

Dear Mr. Wragg,

I am writing as your constituent to ask you to act urgently to stop the imminent and unprecedented demolition of the entire village of Khan Al Ahmar in the occupied West Bank. Please regard this as an urgent request.

As reported widely, including in Israel newspapers, all 42 homes and businesses in the village of Khan Al Ahmar were served with demolition orders by the Israeli military on Saturday. The villagers were informed they had only five days to object to the demolitions. A court case has now been arranged for this Thursday, February 23rd, after which the demolitions could take place at any point.

The demolition of the entire village will leave hundreds of men, women and children homeless in grave contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention (4GC). Article 44 of 4GC prohibits the destruction of personal property by an Occupying Power unless it is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations. Article 49 prohibits all forcible transfers of civilian populations by an Occupying Power.

You will already be aware the UK recently condemned the 'demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians as a violation of international law' at the UN.

Please ask the UK International Development Secretary on International Development what plans are in place to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the hundreds of Palestinians who will be made homeless by the demolitions.

Please contact the UK Foreign Office urgently to ask that that diplomats visit Khan Al Ahmar with other Heads of Missions as a public sign of support to the community.

Please take urgent action to stop this imminent violation of international law. I look forward to hearing your response.

Yours sincerely,

David Swindells

REPORTS

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Meeting For Sufferings Report 3 June 2017

by Andrew Backhouse

Because it is a long time from the June Meeting for Sufferings till the next AM I have relied on people reading The Friend with only a few items below that we ought to consider:

- 1) Young Friends General Meeting reported on their activity. This was a first – and brilliant, report, with numbers increasing again towards 80 attending YFGM and lots of activities of all sorts. They really would like us to nominate reps – though I know our history on this is not good. Our Elizabeth was a rep – and only this next month will visit YFGM for the first time years later....I think it is worth asking T H or T B as having been our reps to the Young People's representation days recently.
- 2) The Framework 'Our Faith in the Future' has been used by YM to review its activity priorities and we were asked what was done in our meetings....Carlton Hill meeting in Leeds is having a major review of its use of its premises and we had an excellent report on how that has used the Framework. How are we using it if at all?
- 3) Quaker Faith and Practice review – we have all been doing a lot with this – what have you learnt? Feedback is welcome.
- 4) Kingston and Wandsworth AM are challenging Sufferings as to whether it is meeting its description in Quaker Faith and Practice. This drew some strong responses from an ex trustee, but it is helpful for AMs to throw such questions at us to help us keep the course....When was the last time we sent a concern minute to Meeting for Sufferings?

Report on Workshop for Custodians of Records held at Friends' House, 11 March 2017

Till Geiger – 4 July

4.39 Area and general meetings should appoint a Friend to act as a custodian of their records, or else appoint a committee for the purpose. Area meetings should take responsibility for the records of their constituent meetings, ensuring their timely transfer to the custodian of records. They are advised in particular to ensure that the records of any local meeting which has been laid down are collected together. The Library Committee of Quaker Life publishes guidance for clerks and custodians on the creation, care and custody of records (4.43), and see www.quaker.org.uk/qfp.

[Quaker Faith and Practice, 5th ed., 4.39]

Historically, Quakers have prided themselves for maintaining their own records (minutes of meetings, lists of members and attenders, marriages, and deaths). The wealth of surviving records have proved a rich source for historians, but also continue to enrich our spiritual lives as Quakers. The writings of early Quakers or the deliberations of Britain Yearly Meeting would not have survived if previous generations would not have taken care of our records through the centuries. At the same time, most Quakers regard the issues of record-keeping as rather mundane and unimportant; and best left to the custodian of records.

Unless you have been asked to serve as custodian of records, few will read the guidance on the creation, care and custody of records published by Friends House Library. Indeed, the guidance is rather dry and boring. Therefore, I found attending the workshop for Custodians of Records in Britain Yearly Meeting held in March extremely helpful. The Librarian Libby Adams and the Archivist Lisa McQuillen did a brilliant job in introducing key aspects of caring for our records. Their presentations sparked lively exchanges of views and sharing of practices among the 35 custodians of records present. The three workshop sessions focussed on data protection, the development of a retention policy for area meeting, and caring for our records. For me, the session on retention policies seemed particularly important. Libby and Lisa stressed that Area Meetings should develop and adopt a retention policy as best practice. Ideally, the adoption of a retention policy should involve the whole Area Meeting in a wider discussion of which records we create and how they may help us to live our lives as Quakers. The sense of the assembled custodians of record was that the adoption of a retention policy would help to clarify why certain records are being created and whether or not they should be retained for perpetuity or only for a shorter period of time to be eventually destroyed. By involving the whole area meeting in drawing up such a policy, all members would have sense of which records are being created. A retention policy would assist custodians of records to know which records are being collected and retained, but also help role holders to be aware of their responsibilities regarding the records they are creating.

After the workshop, I contacted the ECAM Clerks, Clerk of Trustees and the Custodian of Records about our policies relating to record keeping. While ECAM maintains its records in line with the general guidance of Britain Yearly Meeting (QF&P 4.40), the area meeting currently does not have a retention policy. ECAM Clerks have met with the Custodians of Records at the end of April to discuss current practices. The meeting recorded its discussions in the following minute:

We have learnt how, when and where ECAM archives are managed. We have considered how to improve practice among ECAM committees and local meetings [regarding records].

We agree that we should hold a meeting of clerks, convenors and custodians (and others) to review current procedures and plan for an appropriate retention schedule.

We suggest an annual AM minute asking whether all minutes have been deposited.

Trustees briefly discussed the issue at their last meeting and support the development of a retention policy.

Arising from these discussions, we propose that area meeting should ask the Clerks together with the Custodians of Records to hold a meeting of clerks, convenors and custodians to review current procedures and draw up a retention policy in the autumn or winter with a view to present the proposed policy as a special topic to the area meeting in March 2018.

Report on BYM Committee Meetings: PECAN and Library Committees

Till Geiger – 5 July

I have been grateful to Friends for upholding me as I have started to serve on two national BYM committees, QPSW's Peace Education, Campaigning and Networking (PECAN) sub-committee and the Library Committee. In the first six months, I have attended now two PECAN meetings and one Library Committee meeting. Both committees are rather different, but I have found both inspirational and have appreciated the opportunity to be part of the important work of BYM in a rather limited way. In this report, I hope to share some what I have learned and highlight some aspects of the work of BYM.

At the last PECAN meeting, we heard about Tim Wallis' efforts at the UN Nuclear Ban Treaty negotiations in New York. Some of you may have followed his work through the British Quakers Instagram and Facebook accounts. Tim represented not only Quakers but also delivered a statement on behalf of BYM and four other UK churches (Methodists, Baptist Union, United Reformed Church and Church of Scotland) opposing nuclear weapons. At the fringes of the negotiations, he spoke at several side events for diplomats and helped to organise inter-faith vigils. Tim engaged with British diplomats raising Quaker concerns about Britain's absence at the negotiations. Speaking to us via Skype, Tim sounded positively impressed by progress delegates are making in drafting a Nuclear Ban Treaty and hopes that the work on the treaty will be completed in the coming months. Tim hopes to be at Yearly Meeting Gathering before returning to the United States during the conclusion of the Nuclear Ban Treaty.

PECAN oversees the Quaker Peacemaker Programme. The reports of the Quaker Peacemakers reflect the range of peace work going on various organisation with Quaker support. Quaker Peacemakers are having a significant impact on the partner organisations in which they work. For example, one of the current Quaker Peacemakers is raising Quaker concerns about the funding of the partner organisations (ie an over-reliance on Prevent funding). Most of the partner organisations try to retain their Peacemakers after the end of their term. The scheme enables BYM to build strong links with other organisations while giving young people a unique opportunity to follow their leanings for a career in peace work.

In contrast to the work of PECAN, the Library Committee is primarily concerned with the day-to-day operations of Friends House Library. Under its new leadership, the Library seems to respond better to the needs of its readers and actively engaged with individual area meetings through organising visits to the Library. Among the weightier issue we are considering is the planned close cooperation with Woodbrooke Library and the potential implications of HS2 for the Library.

At the same time, I have been impressed how much staff achieve with limited resources both in terms in staffing and finance. Both committees are painfully aware that it is not always possible to achieve everything that would be desirable. For example, the Peacemaker scheme has only been appointed two Peacemakers this year because a post in fund raising has been unfilled and therefore QPSW was unable to raise additional funds to support additional appointments.

Committee members are asked to serve as one of the links between BYM and their local and area meetings. I would be happy to answer questions regarding the work my committees oversee and raise any concerns Friends might have.

Report on Ackworth General Meeting, 13 May 2017

Till Geiger – 5 July

I attended this year's Ackworth General Meeting on your behalf. The reports by the Head Teacher Anton Maree and the Clerk to School Committee David Bunney before the General Meeting provided a detailed overview of the School's current progress and general development. Their reports present the School as thriving academically and continuing its efforts to deepen its links with the local community. The Treasurer Carol Raynor struck a slightly more sanguine note about the School's financial situation in her report. She highlighted that the early adoption of the government's National Living Wage led to a major increase in overall costs. In addition, the high level of bad debt continues to cause some concern. However, Carol hopes that the measures taken by the School's management team will help to improve the situation over the next few years.

I am happy to answer any questions on the general progress of the School, but would like to report mainly on this year's special topic, the changes to the School's governance, and lastly the response to our letter regarding the Real Living Wage.

This year's special topic was Coram House Junior School. The attenders of General Meeting were shown around Coram House. The provision seems to be exemplary and child-centred. As most other members of General Meeting, I was particularly impressed with Coram House's Forest School. The Forest School uses the School's woodlands for den building, fire making, and study of wildlife. Students are encouraged to take risks in a controlled environment under adult supervision. These activities help students to develop resilience, self-confidence as well as communication skills.

As I indicated in my last report to AM in February, the School Committee brought to General Meeting proposals for major changes in the governance of the School. While adequate notice of these changes was given, I only received the proposed alterations to the Rules and Regulations for the Government of Ackworth School in the papers for General Meeting sent out in mid-April. This left no time to consult AM on these changes before General Meeting. The proposed changes remove all references to Britain Yearly Meeting from the governing document thereby ratifying the de facto relationship between Ackworth School and Britain Yearly Meeting. The proposed changes did not prove in themselves controversial except for two aspects. First, I raised whether the last sentence of the introductory paragraphs should be altered to delete the word Christian given where the Society is today: "The School continues to offer an education based on the Christian principles and practices the Religious Society of Friends thereby offering a sound and broadly based education suitable to prepare children for the challenges of the adult world." [please note elsewhere the text refers to "the principles of the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain".] Second, the proposed changes gave the power to call a special meeting of General Meeting solely to School Committee. Chris Skidmore (representative of Craven & Keighley AM) raised grave concerns about this provision and call for a process by which area meetings will be able to call a special meeting in future. General Meeting instructed School Committee to bring such proposals forward in due course. AM may want to consider whether your representative or clerks should write in support of these proposed changes or put them on the agenda for next year. These changes will allow the School to incorporate later this year (probably September). While incorporation as such is probably not controversial, I and other members continue to find it problematic that these changes were put to General Meeting (and have been approved) without the company's articles having been formally presented to General Meeting.

Lastly, I raised our concern regarding the Real National Wage under Any Other Business. In response to our letter, the New Bursar Susan Allen said that the School adopted the government's National Living Wage in September 2015. [The National Living Wage is set at £7.50 per hour; the Real Living Wage (as set down by the Real Living Wage Foundation) is £8.45 per hour. In addition, employers are required to make a statutory pension contribution of 1%. Therefore, person being paid the real living wage is £8.45 plus 1% pension contribution is in effect receiving £8.53.] Ackworth School pays a minimum of £7.88 plus 9.4% pension contribution which equates to an hourly rate of £8.62. AM may want to consider whether this pay regime meets our concerns for the Real Living Wage being paid by employers. Moreover, AM may want ask the School whether the planned outsourcing of catering services will lead to a worsening of employment conditions for current staff.

Northern Friends Peace Board Meeting, Dumfries, June 17, 2017

We have gathered in Dumfries, beginning our meeting with a period of worship. Friends have introduced themselves, and we are very pleased to be joined today by a number of local Friends and Attenders. Among the issues considered, and addressed were:

NFPB/2017/15 Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty

Philip has reported that our Friends Janet Fenton and Tim Wallis are in New York again as we meet, for the second stage of the negotiations by the United Nations towards a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty. Janet and Tim are working as part of the international civil society presence in New York, providing encouragement and challenge to governments in taking these important steps towards nuclear disarmament.

We also noted that there would be a Women's March to Ban the Bomb in New York and other cities later that day, with solidarity events taking place around the world. We uphold our Friends and all those working towards a nuclear free world and hope to embrace the opportunity that the new treaty will create for engaging with our own governments, of whatever political persuasion.

Philip noted that these efforts are unlikely to lead to the end of nuclear weaponry immediately but will increase the stigma attached to nuclear weapons, and all the activities involved will remind people round the world of the dangers of nuclear weaponry. We were reminded that the UK Government are boycotting the discussions.

Janet represents WILPF and there has been a focus on the gender implications of nuclear weapons.

NFPB/2017/16 Project activities

Our Coordinator has given a brief report of recent activities and included in this he mentioned

Members of the Sustainable Security group have met with Friends and others connected with the Ammerdown Group on Rethinking Security, including participating in a one-day workshop in London. Our group hopes to collaborate with Ammerdown in putting on workshops in the North and would be pleased to hear from Friends who might be interested in hosting such a workshop. The group will also be thinking about workshops designed for approaching the media about this issue.

Chris Butler has participated in meetings with a new Arms Conversion group, which includes arms trade campaigners, trade union activists and others.

Workshops on Building Peace Together have been facilitated in Kendal (for Westmorland Regional Gathering) and in Liverpool (for the Merseyside

Peace Network). Please contact the Coordinator if you would be hosting such a workshop. Publicity material for our workshops will be ready soon.

NFPB/2017/18

NFPB communications and links with Meetings

Some members of our Executive will be reviewing our communications and we have spent a short time reflecting and reporting back on our ideas as to how our communications and links with Meetings are working. Notes from these discussions will help inform the review group's work. Philip has informed us that an email report back will be sent out to local meetings; he has asked that we check that this information has been received and passed on. He has also assured us that hard copies are available if required.

NFPB/2017/19

Militarism and schools

We first heard from Castle Douglas Friends for whom this issue is a concern. A survey of schools provided the impetus for this concern. The secondary schools stated that they did not experience involvement by the military. Subsequently it became clear that low level moves by the military in the community were taking place, and the school heads had not been wholly truthful. The concern is quite disparate at present but is deeply felt and will continue. We have been reminded that the situation in Scotland is different from other parts of the UK: the Holyrood Government did not facilitate the share of the money for the cadet forces in schools. But the MOD replacement for Scotland, the Linked Army Cadet Units, may be just insidious, especially since the curriculum can include training for cadet forces. Petitioning against these moves is taking place requesting balance and the possibility of opting out.

Martin Mansell, who is a member of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group for Quakers in Scotland. Martin has told us that this group has four areas to examine, one of which was Trident [not a devolved issue], and the other Militarisation in Schools. He has said that the Group is seeking clarification of the situation through a petition requesting information about which schools are being visited by the military; that parents can withdraw their children from such visits and that the curriculum should provide balance ; for example conflict resolution without violence. Four hearings have been held by the relevant parliamentary committee. The Green Party has been supportive and tabled questions for the Group.

Martin has told us that the cadet forces were funded by fines on the banks after the Libor scandal ; this aspect of the concern has been passed on to QPSW. Ellis Brooks from QPSW has updated us on the work QPSW has undertaken relating to militarism and schools. He paid tribute to the work done by Mairi Campbell-Jack in paving the way for working on the Westminster Parliament. He has identified the cultural context of militarisation which has not had the attention it needs. He has reported that the successful petition in Wales as led to a request for guidance for action.

QPSW is seeking to clarify what is meant by militarisation, how to spot the moves made by government and what action to take. A toolkit for action in particular on human rights issues, is being developed together with Forces Watch. This will include indications of actions taken by individual Meetings. Collaboration with other organisations with slightly different perspectives is being sought. One initiative is

based in Oasis schools, a chain of academy schools whose head is a Christian pacifist, but is not limited to those schools. Balance, the possibility of opting out, and the safety of the young people recruited are central to the message being given to children and their parents. A Friend asked about the money provided for militarisation by the Government and suggested that given cuts in schools this question should be asked. Another Friend recommended approaching a sympathetic councillor.

Members' forum notes

Anti-fracking witness on Pendle Hill and protests in Lancashire (though these are dwindling) in which Quakers are taking part. (Paul Crossley)

Refugees will be arriving in Lancaster in July and houses are being prepared to accommodate them (Paul Crossley)

North Wales AM – Friends looking at peace education, promoting peaceful practice in schools and alternatives to Militarism (David Mellor)

Colwyn Bay – Economic Justice group looking equality as a core issue and wanting to build links with other Friends working on this concern. (David Mellor)

East Cheshire Friends developing peace education activities, with support from Ellis Brooks from QPSW (Phoebe Spence)

Friends from East Cheshire have participated in Hope not Hate training on difficult conversations regarding migration (Phoebe Spence)

Reading group in Sheffield using the QPSW booklets on Quakers and the New Economy (downloadable via <http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/economic-justice/new-economy>) (Sue Beardon)

Conscientious Objectors Day event at the Cenotaph in Sheffield (Sue Beardon)

George Lakey to give Huddersfield Quaker Peace Lecture on 5th October (<http://eventerbee.co.uk/event/huddersfield-quaker-peace-lecture-with-george-lakey.1865920143688652>) (Ann Bettys)

West Yorkshire Campaign Against Arms Trade group is organising transport for people to attend the witness before the DSEI arms fair in London in September, and Quakers will be participating in the No Faith in War day during that witness. <https://www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk/war-repression-and-injustice-start-here-lets-stop-them-here/> (Ann Bettys)

Summarised from the minutes of the Meeting by Christopher Bagley