

## **UN NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN TREATY – A CAUSE FOR LOCAL CELEBRATION**

On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January the new milestone UN Treaty making nuclear weapons illegal came into force. Members of Frandley Quaker Meeting in Antrobus are among many groups up and down the country and abroad, celebrating.

‘It’s great to have something so positive to celebrate in the world at the moment, a real step forward for humanity’ said Pam Lamb of Frandley Quakers.

The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has now become international law, and bans nuclear weapons in the same way as chemical and biological weapons have previously been banned.

The Treaty was negotiated by the United Nations in 2017 and agreed with the support of 122 states. Since that time 51 states have joined the Treaty including South Africa, New Zealand and Ireland. The UK has not yet joined.

The UK currently has around 300 nuclear warheads which are on submarines. The government is planning to upgrade this arsenal at an estimated cost of £205bn.

‘What’s significant about this Treaty’ said local Quaker Joe Godden, ‘is that it shows that decisions on nuclear weapons cannot just be left to a few nuclear-armed countries. The impact of nuclear weapons crosses national borders and their use would affect us all, with catastrophic humanitarian and environmental damage.

This Treaty is a way for the hopes and needs of so many people around the world to start to come into effect. There is a strong movement across UK society opposing nuclear weapons, shown by recent statements from many faith and other groups in support of the Treaty.’

‘We hope that the UK will move to at least observer status as the Treaty starts to be implemented,’ added Patrick Jones. The £205bn the UK Government is putting towards nuclear weapons could be so much better spent creating a more secure future for us all.

Frandley Quakers are planning to commemorate this historic Treaty in a more permanent way later in the year when covid restrictions have eased, through a local memorial. In the meantime, we have been taking part in on-line celebrations, including listening to the ringing of the bell at Coventry Cathedral at 12 noon on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January.’