

East Cheshire Area Meeting
at Frandley Meeting House, Sunday 13th May 1.45pm, 2018

18.05.1 Friends Present

There are about 46 Friends present, including a group of children and young people. All our Meetings are represented.

Elder – Hazel Todhunter

Trustee – Gill Allcock

18.05.2 Reading

A brief piece by Felix Charteris, a Young Friend from York, writing about outdoor worship while at Yealand, in Living our Beliefs, and #2.11 from Quaker Faith and Practice have been read in our opening worship.

18.05.3 Caring for Friends

We have been holding a number of Friends particularly in our thoughts. We ask our Assistant Clerk and Liz Morris to send them our greetings.

18.05.4 Yealand report

The Yealand “Camp” was held from 3rd to 7th April. 10 young Quakers aged 10-16 attended, supported by 5 adults including one teenage helper.

We have enjoyed a brief film showing assorted activities, some more lively, and some more peaceful.

Highlights included:

- Being a small enough group to eat around one table;
- Being with everyone – community and friendship – being around old friends and making new ones;
- Tie-dyeing T-shirts for asylum seekers;
- Felt-making
- Practising speaking German
- Bad puns and good conversation;
- Good walks including Firbank Fell and Brigflatts and an old flour mill;
- Conflict resolution exercises;
- Meeting for Worship for Business / decision making from which a Murder game was converted to “your time has come”

We thank the group for their report, and we thank all the helpers too.

18.05.5 Yearly Meeting held 4th to 7th May 2018

Friends have shared reflections on their experiences at Yearly Meeting last weekend. These include:

- Hospitality – excellent care

- Revision process – and the Quaker unity in decision making
- Godly Play workshop about listening
- Meet the Peacemakers
- Swarthmoor Lecture
- YM working well
- Minutes from all age groups – all actively included in the process

We thank all those Friends who represented us at YM.

18.05.6 Quaker Marriage at The Ridge Methodist Chapel, Marple

Appointment of Friends to attend the marriage of Caroline Platt and David Thickbroom (aka Buddhhashanti).

The following friends have indicated that they plan to be there.

Jan Vulliamy (as Elder)

Denise Renshaw (as Elder)

Sue Pounder (as Elder)

Kathleen Russell

Alan Russell

Julia Clements

Hilary Brooks

Till Geiger

Leonora Dobson

David Carter

Taylor Giacoma

Melvin Samuel

Lesley Blackshaw

Maggie Willett

Hilary Owen.

The Elders appointed have met with Caroline and Buddhhashanti.

18.05.7 Death of John Vaughan

We have been saddened to receive Minute 3 of Marple's May Business Meeting which tells us of the death of John Vaughan:

"We record with sadness the death of John Vaughan, Attender at Marple Meeting on 17th March aged 90. The funeral was held on Friday 13th April. We were pleased that the family honoured John's attendance at our Quaker Meeting by reading a passage by William Penn."

18.05.8 Membership Darrel Spence

Joan Armstrong and Gavin Mendham have reported on their visit with Darrel. We are pleased to receive Darrel into membership and ask Joan to welcome him on our behalf.

18.05.9 Membership Andy B

Annique Seddon and Margaret Moss have reported on their visit with Andy, from Stockport. We are pleased to receive Andy into membership and ask

Lynn Clark to welcome him on our behalf.

18.05.10 Membership Application Gillian Smith

We have received an application for membership from Gillian Smith of Crewe and Nantwich Meeting. We appoint Sarah Worth and Brenda Crothers to meet with Gillian.

18.05.11 Transfer of membership – in - Hilary Pinder

We have received a request for transfer of Membership to ECAM for Hilary Pinder from Chiltern Area Meeting. We welcome Hilary who attends Wilmslow Meeting.

18.05.12 Quaker Life Representative Council report

Sarah Worth has shared her reflections on the meeting of QLRC held at Woodbrooke in April in a written report attached to these Minutes. We thank Sarah for this report.

We ask Elders and Overseers to consider how the activity based learning could best be taken forward.

18.05.13 Quaker Peace and Social Witness Annual Conference report

Reports from Jenny Norris, Liz Honeybell, Dot Ainscough on the QPSW annual conference entitled journeys of Witness, held 23-25 March, are attached to these Minutes. We thank Jenny, Liz and Dot for these reports which we will forward to Friends House highlighting particular points noted on the need not to assume too much prior knowledge on specific topics. Friends' attention is drawn to the questions following these reports.

18.05.14 Five Minute Find-out: Andrew Backhouse

We thank Andrew for sharing some of his life story with us.

18.05.15 Nominations

Mental Health Forum

We ask Nominations Committee to seek a name (or two) to represent ECAM at the Mental Health Forum to be held on Saturday 3rd November in the Priory Rooms, Birmingham. The topic will be Mental Health and Young People.

We note that appointments for Deputy Archivist and a preparation group for the Willersley Castle weekend in March 2019 are outstanding.

18.05.16 Meeting for Sufferings Report

Jacqui Moore has reported on the Meeting for Sufferings held on 4th April.

We have been reminded of the request for us to consider issues of Inclusivity and Diversity in our Meetings, and to send any minutes arising from this consideration to the Recording Clerk's Office at Friends House by 3rd September. The questions for consideration are attached to Jacqui's report.

With regard to the question of conflict within our meetings, we remind Elders and Overseers of the need to know of our skills and resources in order to be ready to respond if necessary.

We have been reminded of the need to consider sustainability in all our decisions and activities.

Meetings are alerted to the request for discernment on the subject of Honesty in Public Affairs, details of which will be sent direct from Friends House. We have been reminded of the lack of transparency that may be related to contracting out services to commercial concerns.

We thank Jacqui for her written report, attached.

18.05.17 Peace Education Project

Gill Alcock has introduced the report of the PEP discernment process, attached.

We encourage Friends in their local meetings to give this project their support, by upholding it spiritually and by considering if they may be called to work with the project more practically, and to collect funds for this.

In order to support further training and events, we agree a budget for the next 5 years to bring the support for this up to £2000 pa as needed.

18.05.18 QCEA collection

The lunchtime collection for QCEA on Saturday 10th March raised £120.17.

18.05.19 Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy

We have received a letter (via Michael Hennessey, our representative on the Churches Together in Cheshire Church Leaders Group) appealing for financial support for the Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy. As an Area Meeting we are unable to give money to another charity, but we attach detail and commend the cause to individual Friends.

Details about donation can be found on their website <https://www.agchap.com>

from which a donation form can be downloaded.

18.05.20 Building the Peace, Macclesfield 3rd -10th November 2018

Celia Davies and P B have told us of the project 'Building the Peace', initiated by a group of Macclesfield Churches. It aims to celebrate many aspects of hope around remembrance of the Armistice in November 1918, involving art, poetry, and music, with a good variety of voices. So far this includes a performance of "Cowards" - Taylor Giacoma composition, working with a Macclesfield Youth Group; art work around Peace with Jill Maguire; Her WW1 textile hanging will be exhibited in the Parish Church; the Choices exhibition, (updated), in Macclesfield Library and a Peace Day run by the Peace Education Project in a local secondary school. Macclesfield Visitor Information Centre will be displaying (and possibly selling) white poppies.

ECAM's Peace Group meeting at 7.30 on Tuesday 19th June at Wilmslow QMH will include further planning for this.

We agree a budget of £100 pro tem.

18.05.23 Hospitality

We thank Frandley Friends for their hospitality.

Signed in and on behalf of East Cheshire Area Meeting
Frances A Hill, Clerk

LM Clerks please note: Minutes 18.05.13, 18.05.16, 18.05.17, 18.05.19

Nominations Committee please note: Minute 18.05.15

Elders and Overseers please note: Minutes 18.05.13, 18.05.16

NOTICES

Area Meeting July 14th Marple

Marple United Reformed Church, 19a Hibbert Lane, Marple SK9 5HD

(Please note different venue)

10.00 – 12.30 the lunch followed by an afternoon session 2.00 – 4.00 on

How and Why do we record what we do?

Saturday 26th May, Patterns and Examples: deep roots for strong

communities. The last of 3 national gatherings for Quaker Role Holders.

Liverpool Quaker Meeting House, 22 School Lane, Liverpool L1 3BT

Costs £20 per participant, including lunch and refreshments.

Everyone who holds a role within their Quaker meeting is invited to this day of inspiration, support, and refreshment. There will be opportunities to share ideas, compare experiences, and worship together. Optional sessions will cover topics such as pastoral care, mental health issues, looking after property, meeting for worship for business, and finding the right people for roles. There will also be a chance to experiment with a clearness process, practise mindful colouring, or explore a Bible story.

Frances and Andrew will be there and can offer a lift home to anyone able to get there by public transport.

To book a place: forms.quaker.org.uk/patterns-and-examples

Sunday 10 June, 12.30 pm Cheadle Hulme Meeting House.

Soup, bread and cheese lunch in aid of the Quaker Council for

European Affairs (homemade soup and bread, bought but classy cheese).

If planning to attend it might be helpful if you informed Peter Eccles beforehand but this is **not** essential.

"East Cheshire Area Meeting Peace Group"

Tuesday 19th June at Wilmslow Meeting House 7.30 p.m.

(Rescheduled from February)

An opportunity for everyone - Bring along your ideas / Hear what Friends are doing and planning.

This group will provide a platform from which we can support each other's initiatives, ideas, plans etc.

For example, locally - the "Building The Peace" project this November and

the Peace Education Project (PEP) in schools, as well as regional and national peace initiatives.

Contact: Celia at or just turn up

Summer School Sat 18th - Sat 25th August

Oswestry School, Oswestry

Summer School is for young people who are aged between 11 and 17 and 10 year olds who will either be 11 before 1st September 2018 or who have older siblings going too. Most young people are friends with Quakers.

As long as you want to be part of a 'Quaker Community' then you're welcome to come. If you have a friend who would like to come with you but is not a Quaker, they are also very welcome.

LMs should have leaflets and application forms. AM Clerks also do if required.

Quaker Peace and Service exhibition at Lichfield Cathedral

14th June -1st July

This will consist of the Quaker Service Exhibition (QSMT) of 12 banners, the Quaker Service Memorial Tapestry panel stitched by Staffordshire Friends and 2 outreach Staffordshire Area Meeting banners.

The exhibition overlaps part of the time with the following event which will be of particular public interest:

"Consequence of War" exhibition at Lichfield Cathedral 16th April - 24th

June This will include the Henry Moore sculpture "Mother and Child" and works by Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. It explores the themes of war and peace through art and history.

www.lichfield-cathedral.org/

Date for your diary: Regional Gathering, Bolton Saturday November

17th 2018 (Flyer in notices, previously circulated)

'ON BEING A QUAKER THROUGH LIFE'S JOURNEY'

Further details nearer the date.

REPORTS

1. Quaker Life Representative Council 9-10
2. QPSW Conference "*Journeys of Witness*" Reports 11-17
Added separately is an outline of the keynote speaker's address, "Breaking the Silence" by Elsie Whittington.
3. Meeting for Sufferings Report 18-19
4. Peace Education Project 20-24
5. Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy 25

Quaker Life Representative Council - April 2018

Woodbrooke

As a last minute substitute for Sue Pounder, who was prevented from attending, I found myself at Woodbrooke for the spring Rep Council, one of 17 new Reps. As always at this wonderful setting, there was a warm welcome, abundant support for all and particularly for new Reps, and a busy programme of Worship and discussion.

Friends who are experienced Reps recognised at once, from the programme, that a lot more time for Worship, Worship Sharing and reflection had been scheduled. This was a welcome change, it seemed, since programmes had tended to be tightly packed with – albeit very interesting – Key Note speakers. However, the discipline of Worship and reflection also, everyone was agreed, demands sustained focus and concentration, but it was generally agreed that these changes led to an immensely exhilarating and rewarding weekend.

Focus of the April 2018 Rep Council

The emphases, throughout the weekend were on:

how to simplify and make more accessible the structures and procedures of our Meetings, at all levels
outreach and the ways we seek to welcome and involve others in the life of our Meetings

There were eight workshops on offer to develop these themes and related issues, with time to return to our home groups (of around 10 – 12 Friends, each with a Coordinator, a Mentor and an Elder) to discuss our experiences and inspirations. The workshops covered types of communication (between ourselves and LMs, AMs and BYM), including social media; mental health and ways of nourishing ourselves and our Meetings, including the “stories” of our Meetings; resources and information to support these issues and develop our learning more widely.

Two workshops

I attended the workshops on mental health and on nourishing ourselves and our meetings. Both were led by Friends with huge experience in their professional lives and in the life of the RSoF. The activities they presented were fun, challenging and thought-provoking. I look forward to sharing these at LM and AM if and when this is thought useful.

I also came away with two publications which complemented the workshops, the titles of which were:-

Encounters with Mental Distress: Quaker Stories; developed by the Mental

Health in Meetings Cluster of the Quaker Life Network - £5.00
Deepening the Life of the Spirit: Resources for spiritual practice; developed by
Ginny Wall - £4.00

Jocelyn Burnell, Elder to the Council Central Committee ministered during
Meeting for Worship, reading us the following poem by Michel Quoist. Many of
us subsequently asked for copies of this, and I've decided it was worth
repeating, below:-

The Wire Fence

The wires are holding hands around the holes;
To avoid breaking the ring, they hold
 tight the neighbouring wrist,
And it's thus that with holes they
 make a fence.

Lord, there are lots of holes in my life.
There are some in the lives of my neighbours.
But if you wish we shall hold hands
We shall hold very tight
And together we shall make a fine roll of fence
 to adorn paradise.

Sarah Worth
May 2018

Report on the QPSW Annual Spring Conference 2018

Jenny Norris

Wow! What can I say? To start with I would just like to express my heartfelt thanks to the area meeting for enabling me to participate in the event. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet Quakers from all over the country, make new friends, and have my views challenged in ways I had never previously considered.

I would like to use this report therefore, to tell you a little about the conference and the way in which each session has both informed my opinions, but also demanded that I should question why I hold such views in the first place.

One case in point is the notion that just because I have particular convictions surrounding a topic, this does not mean that my views are necessarily right! This was going around in my head throughout the weekend, and I would invite you all to consider this as I continue.

Our first session was the keynote speech by Elsie Whittington. Elsie spoke about activism, and what it means to be an activist; her speech was certainly, in my mind, to be considered one of the highlights of the weekend. As I walked into the room, I admit I held preconceived notions about activism, how an activist would look (all dread locks and hippy clothes), and the type of action they would take i.e shock and awe tactics, using placards, graffiti, and abseiling down bridges to articulate their views. Listening to Elsie talk however, I realised that activism can be carried out in many different forms, and in certain situations it has come to be a necessary part of living and surviving. In a nutshell Elsie turned my views of activism on their head; she chose to discern our ability to engage with issues, through the actions we take and the conversations we follow every day. Activism can be a quiet process; a process of stealth, of critical thinking and discussion, of being able to not take for granted the privileges which we hold in our possession. It is in a sense about being true to yourself and the matters we wish to underline. Quiet activism is about leaving the fear of rejection behind. If we can be strong and call people out on their actions and decisions, challenge their thought processes in open dialogue, then as Elsie has said, the conversation is not over, it has only just begun.

The second session I attended, the first of my two chosen lectures, concerned the work of EAPPI and the conflict between Israel and Palestine. I selected this conference partly because it is classed as an ongoing/ recent conflict and is therefore not taught in current history lessons, and second, I wanted to be informed to a greater extent so that I could have a better understanding of the issues sometimes discussed in meeting. There are two main factors I have taken away from this session which have shaped my response in this report. Overall, I found it difficult to engage with the subject matter and subsequent activities in a profound sense, as I did not have enough background knowledge to form any substantial views. I felt the session would have benefited from spending an initial 10 – 15 minutes covering the key points which have consistently provoked the conflict. This in turn would have informed my contributions, when faced with questions which asked us to consider ways in which both the Palestinian and Israeli communities could help each other, and how information regarding the needs of each community could be articulated to the wider Western world.

That said, the conference made an enormous impact on my conscience as I listened to, and absorbed the facts which were presented to us. Three in particular have remained at the forefront of my thinking as I write this report:

Since 1967 – 60% of the West Bank has been under Israeli occupation. This means that for 50 years Israel has occupied more than 50% of the land detailed to the Palestinians. The war itself has been ongoing even longer, since 1948.

(The next fact was given as part of a talk by an EAPPI recruit). She witnessed the end result of a UN school demolition in Palestine. The school had been demolished for the 5th time, interrupting the education of 26 children. It was done at 5am in the morning, when there were no witnesses or journalists around to report the occurrence.

The school demolition occurred despite the fact that Israel is a signatory to the UN convention of the rights of the child. Article 28 specifically states that every child has the right to an education.

Whilst the session did not provide the core information I needed to assist my understanding of this topic, I feel it has worked in a different manner and in a sense more effectively, by providing a significant stimulus to encourage the development of my knowledge and the ways in which I can take action. To this end I am in the process of

conducting further research and I am in contact with local Quakers who have connections to peace groups relating to the conflict.

Following on from this in the afternoon, I attended a 'meet the staff' session which was particularly useful as I was able to ask questions about, and receive information on the other areas of work carried out by QPSW. Further to this, there was also an 'Outreach' session designed to enable participants to devise and discuss any questions which had occurred to them over the weekend. I found the Outreach programme hard to settle into, in part because there was already so much to think about I was no longer sure of what I thought about anything at all. It was also difficult because the questions were so diverse and expansive, that the subsequent conversations and my own views were in perpetual turmoil as we struggled to take in new ideas and adjust our ways of thinking. This, I now realise, was probably one of the aims of this session, in order to demonstrate to us that there is never any one right solution and that all views need to be considered if we are to come to any sort of accord. The Outreach session was also prime territory for making me consider if my views were any more 'right' than those expressed by the person sat next to me.

The final session I attended was concerned with Peace Education, its links to the Peace Testimony, and the continuing effort to pursue a 'long term theory of change'. As a person with strong convictions that the tangibility of the road towards peace can be greatly augmented through the way we educate future generations, I found this session particularly inspiring. The main emphasis of the session was to demonstrate through a series of activities the ways in which QPSW has worked with schools, to enable children to build up a bank of skills to deal with conflict resolution. We were also asked to consider an emotional cycle relating to the thoughts and actions which children often display when they are distressed. Whilst talking about this cycle within the group, internally I had to consider the number of times I have dismissed a child's behaviour as simply naughty or attention seeking. I believed that as an adult I was correct in my use of discipline when unruly behaviour came to the fore. Had I truly considered why the child was behaving in such a manner, their thoughts, feelings and intrinsic needs? The answer would be no, and this is a truly sobering thought. My own convictions impacted strongly on my actions, without taking recourse to try and address the other potential issues in existence. Through reflecting on this matter, and through participation in a game entitled 'The Blame Game', I

feel I have a clearer understanding of how easy it is to become entrenched in a particular mindset.

I now realise that I am right back at the start of my initial thought process, with the same notion going round in my head, only with additional features to consider. Just because I have strong convictions, does not mean I am right; if anything there is rarely a single right answer to any issue, unless you are looking at a mathematical equation. Attendance at the QPSW conference has helped to broaden my way of thinking and the ways in which I personally approach difficult conversations. I feel I have learnt more about myself and the journey I wish to take in the future.

Since Jenny wrote a fairly full report Dot and Liz added shorter versions below:

Dot Ainscough:

I enjoyed the conference and it was very enlightening to me as someone very new to Quakers

The keynote speaker (*copy of talk attached*) was excellent and seems to be tackling issues that are difficult for young people (issues around consent). She was clear and forthright urging us to challenge prejudice and discrimination.

It was a great pleasure to meet other Friends from all over the country and the young workers and students were inspirational.

I did struggle however because I am severely hearing impaired and only able to use Hearing aids for a limited period. I tend to communicate better one to one or in a small space as I am able to lip read. Although microphones were used in the big room not everyone is familiar with the technique for using them. The meetings in the big room were mostly lost on me even with hearing aids in.

I only heard ministry from John from Devon as he sang.

Overall I wouldn't have missed the conference and look forward to future learning.

Thank you.

Dot.

From Liz Honeybell:

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the QPSW conference at Swanwick, which I enjoyed. It was a good opportunity to meet and talk with Quakers of all ages from many parts of Britain. Being quite new (I attend Disley meeting) I was able to learn about various QPSW programmes as well as attend workshops and meet the staff sessions. I just wanted to pass on some of what was said in the discussion about activism, love, vulnerability and witness. Activism is about engaging with people, creating a relationship, listening to, trying to understand the person /group we are seeking to influence. Asking how they arrived at their views - have they had experiences that have led them to their point of view (my addition- maybe we should also ask ourselves this too?) Elsie suggested using this approach on social media as well when we encounter comments we think should be challenged. Having discussed differing views with people we may need to support them in working through the reasons for the views eg racist views. Activism is about channelling our passion for our beliefs and causes to a place of love. Quaker worship is very much part of this.

One person, an experienced nuclear disarmament activist, talked of the importance of acknowledging and leaving room for our doubts(he said he had become more aware of his doubts over recent years). That activism without doubt can be judgemental-we need to be humble and vulnerable. If we acknowledge our doubts we leave room to engage and develop relationships. In a discussion about peace work he said that the process of reaching out is the peace process.

We had a choice of workshops and I was pleased to be able to attend the one on Economic and Climate justice as I have a particular interest in this. As part of the workshop we read Quaker Faith and Practice 25:14 and also looked at the series of New Economy booklets produced by Friends House. There are/have been 50 reading groups throughout the country discussing these booklets. I have contacted Friends House to find out if there are any local groups.

At the same time as the conference there was a Sanctuary everywhere skill share retreat. It was good to hear what other Sanctuary meetings are doing in their areas to

support refugees and asylum seekers. At most of the sessions the programme staff offered to come to local or area meetings to do training sessions on relevant issues eg the sanctuary everywhere programme staff offered local training as well as 3 skill share retreats/year held nationally.

It was a very full weekend (both in terms of interesting sessions and the amount of cake on offer!) but there were also meetings for worship each day where it was good to share with friends from many different areas.

Liz also forwarded an e mail received by participants after the event, which we have reproduced below as it has a number of useful suggestions and links for us all to consider:

Thank you for coming to the Quaker Peace & Social Witness Spring Conference! As a staff team we were blown away by your commitment and enthusiasm for the many strands of witness that we discussed over the course of the weekend. One Friend wrote to us to say that they feel able to look at things from new angles as a result of what was shared - and we feel the same way. We hope that you were able to take some inspiration back to your meeting and into your experience of Quaker faith too.

“We thought you might want to follow up on a few loose ends and opportunities that came up over the weekend, so we've rounded them up here.

1. Read the text version of the speech by our keynote, Elsie Whittington

There was so much to reflect upon in Elsie's words. A printable PDF is attached to this email. Perhaps it could be something to share back to your meetings, if you wanted to offer a report of our time together.

2. See the slides that accompanied Clare Wood's presentation on the work of QPSW.

You are also welcome to use these either as a print out or projection, if they help with sharing back to your meeting. View or download [the introduction to QPSW online](#) at Qsync.

3. Read what other Quakers are doing as part of their witness - and share your own!

There are dozens of inspiring stories from Friends over on www.quaker.org.uk/our-stories - sukif@quaker.org if so.

4. Follow Quaker faith in action on Facebook for the latest staff blog posts and resources

There are also programme-specific Twitter accounts to follow for quick-fire news and actions.

For economics and sustainability updates: [@EarthEconQuaker](https://twitter.com/EarthEconQuaker)

For nuclear disarmament and peace updates: [@DisarmQuaker](https://twitter.com/DisarmQuaker)

For peace education updates: [@PeaceEduQuaker](https://twitter.com/PeaceEduQuaker)

For peacebuilding in East Africa updates: [@AfricaQPSW](https://twitter.com/AfricaQPSW)

5. Apply to be an Ecumenical Accompanier in Israel and Palestine for 2019

We are currently accepting applications for the 2019 intake of volunteers - and you are encouraged to apply! The deadline is Thursday 25 April. For Twitter updates, follow [@eappi_uki](https://twitter.com/eappi_uki). They are also on [Facebook](#).

6. Do something together as a meeting

You could sign up to become a [Sanctuary Meeting](#) (if you haven't already!), or set up a new economy reading group. There are booklets and session plans available to all who wish to explore the possibilities - find out more at www.quaker.org.uk/new-economy

7. Let us come to you

If you and your meeting would like to learn more about a particular area of work, invite a staff member to visit your meeting. We offer workshops, talks and trainings. Please email Helen Bradford at helenb@quaker.org.uk to arrange.

8. Join a QPSW committee

Roles come up within our 6 committees and subcommittees all the time, and we rely on Friends standing for nominations to fill those roles. If you are interested in serving a committee and overseeing our work, head to www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-service.

In friendship,

Suki, Clare, Kristin and the rest of the QPSW staff team

Report on Meeting for Sufferings 7th April 2018

There were three main items for consideration at this meeting – a review of our appeals procedures – consideration of the best way to forward our commitment to sustainability – and a testing of whether our Quaker witness to Truth and Integrity in Public Affairs warrants more specific work and action in response to current world developments.

We were also reminded of the need for AMs to consider diversity issues and respond before October,* and given information on those arrested at the Arms Fair (All acquitted, but subject to appeal)

Appeals

The final report of the Appeals Review Group was discussed, which focussed on our processes for resolving conflicts in Meetings.

They reported that Meetings are not immune to conflict, but often found it difficult to handle effectively. Sometimes this is due to a lack of familiarity with Quaker decision-making processes, or mental health issues. Also, current appeals processes were not working well.

The group identified 5 essential elements to conflict resolution

Worship and the expectation of being led, rooted in Quaker process and discipline

Listening and reflection

Careful use of communication (especially electronic) and clarity for all parties

Avoidance of unnecessary delay

Appropriate confidentiality by all concerned

We were reminded of the need for new members and applicants for membership to have opportunities for learning about Quaker processes. Also, the support available from Quaker Life on mediation and mental health issues. AMs were advised to have a ‘standing conciliation group’ and to seek advice early from Quaker Life if a dispute occurs. Quaker Life has been asked to do more work on ways of supporting conflict transformation.

Regarding Church Government, MfS agreed that para 4.25 Qf&P should be revised so a member can only appeal to MfS as a last resort if dissatisfied with a final decision of an AM on termination of their membership. Also, para 4.26 on conflict between AMs is to be revised, so advice in such an instance is sought from the Recording Clerk.

Sustainability

When YM 2011 made the Canterbury Commitment to sustainability a BYM Sustainability group was established to oversee and encourage progress on this. MfS set up a group in 2017 to review if this continued to be the best way to take the Commitment forward.

We heard that there had been problems because the Sustainability group’s relationship to BYM structures and the scope of its remit had not been clear. Progress had been made by Trustees and through the Conferences the Sustainability group had organised, but it was agreed there needed to be greater clarity as to where and how this important commitment is taken forward.

MfS agreed to the suggestion of the Review group that a meeting of Committee Clerks and key staff with the Sustainability group should be convened to determine exactly how all the different aspects of the work is taken forward. MfS will then consider the matter again.

MfS will retain oversight and report to YM each year on the progress of the sustainability commitment and are considering further how their process for doing this can best be done.

Truth and Integrity in Public Affairs (TIPA)

From 1990-2004 there was a specific strand of work on TIPA, particularly concerned with the

extent of secrecy in Government and how this led to a lack of accountability, especially in matters relating to the work of the secret services. In 2004 QPSW laid down this specific concern, whilst recognising the testimony to Truth and Integrity continued in work in areas such as economic issues, and parliamentary and QUNO work.

Southern Marches AM asked MfS to discern whether our present witness to TIPA was sufficient in the light of their concern at a lack of honesty in public affairs and the spreading of false information. MfS agreed that this concern needs further testing and AMs are to be asked to consider this so MfS can look at it again in November.

Jacqui Moore

Alternate ECAM Representative

24.04.18

*Diversity Questions referred to above:

Inclusion and Diversity – last year, following on from Yearly Meeting, all AMs, Quaker committees and groups were asked to consider three questions:

1. In what ways is your meeting (or committee or group) already diverse?
2. In what ways could it be more diverse?
3. What would help it become more diverse? What are the opportunities and barriers?

We are requested that responses reach Recording Clerks' Office by 3rd September. This might be in the form of a minute – but a note or email is just as helpful. It would even be helpful to know if we haven't been able to spend time on this – or if we've started, but think we have further to go. At this stage, they just need to know how we're doing – and any insights, if we have them.

A number of Local Meetings may have already considered these after the initial request last year. Any who have not forwarded their responses may forward them to Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk Julietp@quaker.org.uk

Peace Education Project – Report to East Cheshire Area Meeting 13.5.18

This report covers the Discernment Group meeting held on 24.3.18 to aid the PEP Steering Group in considering options forward for the project. It also reports on the Peace Day 'Understanding Conflicts and Conflict Resolution' which PEP organised and delivered at Bridgewater High School, Warrington on 28.3.18. We ask ECAM to consider the proposals for next steps outlined in section 3.

1. Discernment Group Meeting 24.3.18 on the Peace Education Project

- 6 East Cheshire Friends joined the PEP Steering group to review what is has done so far, the constraints and capacity issues facing the Steering group, whether the project should be laid down or continue , and options for how the project might move forward.
- Key points that emerged in the discernment were:
- The project should continue. Peace Education is core Quaker work and there is a history of small Quaker or voluntary projects piloting and influencing the state or larger organisations to then take on the delivery of such programmes.
- It is important to keep the big vision of delivering peace education locally as well as linking schools to ready-made resources, and to keep taking gradual, manageable steps.
- Teachers appreciate good resources linked to the curriculum, and support for their efforts to work on positive values and skills development in young people. School budgets are very tight and there may be more impact by working with teaching schools or schools with high pupil premiums for extra needs.
- The project is well grounded in a holistic approach that sees peace as starting with the individual child, home and school and then linking this to how peaceful relationships can be fostered at wider including international levels. It is drawing on best practice from long established Quaker-initiated peace education projects elsewhere in the UK.
- The project is currently at the stage of developing pilot and stand-alone initiatives. It will have tested out a high school Peace Day by the end of March, and a further stage would be to test out delivery of a Peace Education course to a primary school.
- The key resource constraints are people's time, and money. The Steering group cannot continue to both manage the project and develop and deliver all the main outputs over the longer term. The Discernment Group suggested that ECAM may be able to help with a modest amount of money, which could perhaps be guaranteed over five years to give

some stability. The project will perhaps have to look beyond ECAM for extra people. Quality control should continue to be important when bringing in extra people. Further funding may need to be sought.

- The preferred options are to explore the possibility of some kind of partnerships with CRESST and/or Peacemakers, which have strong shared values. (CRESST (cresst.org.uk) is a Sheffield based project, initiated by Quakers, which works in primary and secondary schools on conflict handling skills and especially peer mediation training. Peacemakers (peacemakers.org.uk) is a Quaker initiated and supported project based in Birmingham working on peace education and peer mediation in primary and secondary schools. Both are now charities. Both also charge schools for their courses, though also help them raise funds to pay). A more local partnership such as with Warrington Peace Centre may be worth exploring though there are more concerns about this.

2. 'UNDERSTANDING CONFLICTS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION' day at Bridgewater High School 28.3.18

- The day was devised and delivered by PEP, so achieved PEP's target of developing and running a Peace Day in a high school
- There was considerable discussion with the Head of Pastoral at the school in advance about how the day could be oriented to lead to further work within the school on peer mediation
- Approx. 40 11-15 year olds and 3 staff, chosen by the school because of their roles as school council reps etc, took part
- The timetable included plenaries and workshops on interpersonal conflicts, on peer mediation, particularly at school; on restorative justice and youth justice approaches, and on international conflicts, focussing on Israel- Palestine. As well as PEP Steering Group members, Michael Hennessey and Helen Close (an EAPPI observer) took part in workshops and Ellis Brooks from QPSW Peace Education came to observe.
- Feedback shows very positive reception by the YP, who had several ideas many of whom wish to help various suggestions be carried through. The head of Pastoral is following the day up with a day's course at CRESST on introducing peer mediation into secondary school settings. All participants had a booklet of key points to take away.
- The day stretched the capacity of PEP to the full. It has also been very valuable experience in building our own experience, confidence and skills as peace educators.

3. WHAT WE ASK ECAM TO CONSIDER SUPPORTING

The Steering Group has reflected on the Discernment Group morning and the experience of running the Bridgewater High School Day. A pilot set of peace education sessions has also now just been started in Rainow Primary School, which will soon add to our experience of delivery.

Based on all this the Steering Group considers that at the moment, what seems right is to ask ECAM to consider supporting a continuing step by step approach for the next year and more, as the work is still at quite a formative stage.

We have identified the following ambitions for moving forward. We hope that many of these can take place in the school year 2018-19, with a few on a longer timescale.

We ask for ECAM to support us in the following:

From now to the end of 2018-19

- To expand the Steering Group by 2 more people
- To expand the number of facilitators for delivering sessions with CYP by 2-4 people
- To devise a name for the project
- To pilot a peace education course in a primary school (as has just started)
- To deliver at least one further Peace Day in a High School (contacting the Macclesfield schools, including Poynton, with the aim to link to the 'Building the Peace' week in November 2018,)
- To explore, with CRESST and Peacemakers, opportunities for shadowing experience with them, and also possible partnership arrangements
- To try to develop some communication with the Warrington Foundation for Peace in order to determine whether there may be compatible ways of joint working
- To organise another training day for potential facilitators , open to non-Quakers as well as Quakers
- To produce at least one newsletter to go to Meetings and contacts around our NW region, and others, to raise awareness of the project

And on a longer time frame:

- To move closer to developing a model that may have long-term sustainability
- To research funding sources

What ECAM's support may mean in practical terms – spiritual, people,

budget

Spiritual Grounding and People Resources

In seeking to expand the number of people involved, and what can be delivered, the emphasis must still remain on ensuring quality of what we develop and deliver, which is best served by a grounded project drawing on the sense of Quaker testimony in action. We are not asking for nominations, (at this stage at least) but prayerful support and more awareness raising and discussion within LMs so that Friends may have more opportunity to consider whether they feel called to support the work in some way.

We are also deeply grateful to those who were able to attend the Discernment Group and for the offer that it might meet occasionally as a support group.

Budget

ECAM agreed to give the project £1500 in February 2017. Approximately £1300 of that has now been allocated or spent, mostly on training and capacity building, and also some on buying training resources, and delivery costs. We are also grateful for the support QPSW Peace Education has given us in staff time and travel, which we have not had to pay them for.

The Discernment Group suggested to us that it is reasonable for ECAM to consider agreeing a budget over say 5 years at a modest annual amount while it is still at this formative stage. The AM Treasurer may be able to suggest an amount for AM to consider. This would give the project some on-going security, and hopefully this might be agreed with the understanding that the project may come back to AM within that period if its development means that other budgetary arrangements should be considered.

PEP Steering group.7.5.18

CHESHIRE AGRICULTURAL CHAPLAINCY

The Cheshire Agricultural Chaplaincy Team covers the whole of Cheshire & Wirral offering 24:7 support to the farming community with a listening ear for as long as required, pastoral support and ability to bring in supporting agencies when required.

The Majority of people seen by the team are suffering from depression, mental health issues or financial difficulties. Team members apart from visiting individual farms, attend local livestock markets, local agricultural shows and preside at church services.

Farming as an occupation has one of the highest rate of suicide, many farmers are suffering with difficult issues like financial pressure, isolation, adverse weather conditions, family disputes, government regulations and inspections, administration, poor harvests & livestock disease all combined with long hours of work. All this contributes to serious levels of hopelessness and depression, some thinking of self-harm.

As farmers and Pastors, we are uniquely placed to deliver this support understanding the language of farming and the issues farmers face. We are available to farmers and all allied workers in the industry.

The Chaplaincy is an ecumenical project supported by the Churches Together in Cheshire and the church leaders of those churches are the trustees of the chaplaincy.

In the past, grants for this work have been provided by the NHS – but, given the pressures on the NHS, these are drying up. Churches which are members of Churches Together in Cheshire – which includes East Cheshire AM and Wirral and Chester AM - have been asked to try raise funds for this essential work.