

**STOCKPORT MEETING  
LOCAL MEETING 5 July 2020  
Redacted minutes**

**1. Reading**

I have been greatly exercised for some time by the image we like to present of ourselves (albeit with beating of breasts) as a white, middle-class, well-educated group of heterosexual people, preferably in stable marriages with children that behave in socially acceptable ways. I do feel that this is a myth. The danger of such myths is that we exclude many potential Quakers who feel they cannot/do not live up to the image or who feel that such a group is not one with which they wish to be associated. Sadly, many of us within the Society who do not fit in feel marginalised and second-class.

Another effect is that many problems faced by a large proportion of people are seen as separate: people who are poor, facing oppression, living in poor housing, experiencing prejudice are the 'others'. This enables us to be very caring but distant (and sometimes patronising) and also makes it difficult to be conscious of prejudice behind some of the normally accepted assumptions of our society/Society, such as that people who are unemployed are a different group from those who have employment; that poor people are poor ... because they are not as bright or as able as the rest of us or because their limited homes did not give them the opportunities that a good Quaker home would have done; that children living in single-parent families are automatically deprived by that very fact.

Until we as a Religious Society begin to question our assumptions, until we look at the prejudices, often very deeply hidden, within our own Society, how are we going to be able to confront the inequalities within the wider society? We are very good at feeling bad about injustice, we put a lot of energy into sticking-plaster activity (which obviously has to be done), but we are not having any effect in challenging the causes of inequality and oppression. I do sometimes wonder if this is because we are not able to do this within and among ourselves.

Susan Rooke-Matthews, 1993

Quaker faith and Practice 23:46 has been read.

**2. Area Meeting 11 July**

Disley meeting will host Area Meeting online on 11 July at 10.00. Tim C has indicated that he will take part and will circulate a report.

**3. Zoom meetings**

We have been holding Meetings for Worship and midweek Epilogue meetings via Zoom since April. We now have our own Zoom account which is due to expire shortly. Our Treasurer Phoebe S has asked if we wish take out an annual subscription at a cost of £119.90 plus tax. We agree to this and ask Phoebe to arrange it.<sup>1</sup>

Friends are reminded that any of us can host a Zoom meeting using the generic login and password for the meeting. The Clerk can supply these. We are encouraged to make more use of Zoom for such matters as business meetings, discussion groups or informal communication. Some Friends have already offered to act as host.

The midweek Epilogue currently takes place at 21.00 on Wednesdays. Friends value this but perhaps it could be retimed to start earlier. The Clerk will discuss this with Madeleine R, who set the original time.

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<sup>1</sup> Phoebe was subsequently able to take advantage of a special offer, so that the actual payment was £99.76.

#### **4. Risk assessment**

Premises Committee have prepared a risk assessment relating to the present Covid-19 pandemic. This has been circulated to Friends. We recognise that this is a work in progress and that some individuals might feel particularly disadvantaged. Several questions were raised and we have asked Premises Committee to address these. Once we agree to the revised assessment we can begin to hold Meeting for Worship in the Meeting House again.<sup>2</sup>

We thank the Premises Committee for preparing this document.

#### **5. Signatories for online payments**

Our Treasurer has pointed out that it would be good practice to have more online signatories for our accounts, as she is currently the only one. Existing written signatories are encouraged to become online signatories. Those present have agreed to this.

#### **6. Subscription to Quakers in Criminal Justice**

We are asked if we wish to renew our subscription to Quakers in Criminal Justice at a cost of £35 per year. We agree to this and ask our Treasurer to arrange it. It is hoped that we can support this in the long term.

#### **7. Post-pandemic – Looking forward**

What do we see as our future as a meeting when the current pandemic is over? Has the experience engendered a stronger desire to have a presence in our local community and to use our Quaker convictions to work for a more just and equal society? How do we move beyond talking to action? It is important that we begin by acknowledging our own levels of privilege, which might not always feel comfortable.

We ask Events Group to set up initial discussion on this, Geoff T and Julia H will formulate some questions which we need to answer. This will be a difficult and challenging journey but it will also be an exciting one. We need to let our lives speak.

#### **8. AOB**

Update from Hiring and Employment Committee 5 July 2020

- The warden will end his furlough on 31 July 2020
- The assistant warden restarted employment 1 July 2020. She will be doing 11 hours per week. Helen now holds the No.1 Meeting House mobile phone. Tim will be holding the No.2 mobile phone
- The cleaner will continue with 4 1/2 hours cleaning per week
- We are planning to open to hirers from 1 August 2020 (usually a quiet month anyway) with social distancing rules yet to be clarified. Have agreed to E... having two day bookings in July. We have had two cancellations so far and ML (who took over from ABL) have cancelled group sessions until 2021 but may have some one-off sessions in small room

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<sup>2</sup> A revised risk assessment incorporating issues raised at LM is attached for Friends' perusal.

- Decisions already taken
  1. Kitchen not in use
  2. Normally only one group in the building at a time
  3. Have half hour gap between bookings
  4. Require each group to complete a risk assessment for themselves
  5. Limit numbers per room (yet to be decided) Groups to take responsibility to keep attendance record and to keep to maximum number limits.
  6. Regarding AA group. We are going to have some discussion with them about their special 'charges' status in the New Year
  7. Existing bookings will have priority over new request and no one off bookings for the time being
  8. Not to increase charges for this year
  9. No group allowed to leave equipment at the MH (e.g. AA)