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# The Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting Charities



## Trustees Report for Year Ended 31st December 2018

Principal Address: The Clerk to the Trustees  
69 Bisley Road  
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The registration number of Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting Charities (GAQMC) is 1134212

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Frank Bonner  
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Sarah Eilbeck (ex officio)  
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Mary Penny  
Paul Barber (Link to Trustees)

Custodian Trustees: Friends Trusts Ltd

Registered charity no.  
237698

Examiner of Accounts: Mrs Bonnie Connolly

Arubus Accountants,  
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## CONTENTS

1	MEMBERS AND MEETINGS .....	Page 3
	Table 1: Local meeting names, membership and changes of membership	
2	TRUSTEES – SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY .....	Page 4
3	FINANCIAL POLICIES .....	Page 6
	Reserves Policy	
	Investment Policy	
	Table 2: Property – insured values (declared value)	
	Review of Risks	
	Grant Making Policy	
4	GLOUCESTERSHIRE QUAKERS – WHAT WE DO .....	Page 9
5	REPORTS FROM FIVE OF OUR LOCAL MEETINGS .....	Page 10
	Cheltenham Local Meeting - extract from ‘How does the truth prosper?’	
	Cirencester Local Meeting - written for this Annual Report	
	Forest of Dean Local Meeting - extract from ‘How does the truth prosper?’	
	Nailsworth Local Meeting - written for this Annual Report	
	Painswick Local Meeting - written for this Annual Report	
	Wotton Local Meeting - written for this Annual Report	
6	REPORTS OF SOME AREA MEETING ACTIVITIES .....	Page 16
	Children and Young People’s Work	
	Area Meeting Peace Group	
	Domestic Violence and Abuse Initiative	
	Sanctuary Meetings	
7	PROPERTY MANAGEMENT .....	Page 20
	Table 3: Meeting Houses and Burial Grounds	
	Summary of work to properties undertaken in 2018	
8	FINANCIAL REVIEW .....	Page 22
	Signatures .....	Page 25

## 1 MEMBERS AND MEETINGS

An area meeting is the primary meeting for church affairs in Britain Yearly Meeting. The objective of this area meeting is the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, in the area of Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting (GAQM) and beyond.

The guide to the conduct of business continues to be Quaker Faith & Practice and the governing document, as amended and adopted by Area Meeting on 19 September 2009, registered with the Charity Commission on 9 February 2010 and amended on 26 November 2012.

Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting consists of eight local meetings.

**Table 1. Local meeting names, membership, and changes of membership**

Cheltenham Quaker Meeting.....	52	decrease of 12
Cirencester Quaker Meeting.....	21	decrease of 1
Forest of Dean Quaker Meeting.....	18	no change
Gloucester Quaker Meeting.....	22	decrease of 1
Nailsworth Quaker Meeting.....	67	decrease of 4
Painswick Quaker Meeting.....	26	decrease of 4
Stroud Quaker Meeting.....	26	decrease of 1
Wotton Quaker Meeting.....	11	no change
Members not attached to a local meeting .....	6	no change

Total membership was 249 a decrease of 25.

The decrease in members since 2017 is largely because of a number of deaths. In addition, there were approximately 152 regular attenders, a decrease of 110 compared with the 2017 figure of 262. This is mostly because we have changed the way we record attenders, following recent advice from Friends House. We now only count those who have been regularly attending over the past 12 months. The Q list is now being used to keep membership records.

There were no marriages according to Friends' usage in 2018.

Where friends are more numerous, meetings for worship were held every Sunday and once midweek. Nailsworth Meeting holds an additional meeting at 6.00 pm on the fourth Sunday each month. At smaller meetings, worship is held on at least two Sundays each month. A worship group is now established in Stonehouse, between 2 and 7 Friends meet once a month for half an hour. Friends met as an Area Meeting for business eight times during 2018: meetings were monthly, except for January, May, August and November. This practice will continue in 2019. Our representatives to Meeting for Sufferings and other central meetings have made their reports, which have been received with interest and sometimes with concern.

Every three years each local meeting presents a report to Area Meeting in answer to the question "How does the Truth prosper amongst you?" In Quaker parlance, this is a way of asking ourselves about our relationship with the Spirit. This provides an opportunity for a local meeting to review its activities, strengths, weaknesses and proposals for the way forward. In 2018 the Area Meeting heard two reports, from Cheltenham Meeting in February and from Forest of Dean Meeting in October (see Section 5).

## 2 TRUSTEES – SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

The trustees are appointed by Area Meeting. They met seven times during 2018. Their business covered:

- managing the property and finances of the Area Meeting;
- carrying out their responsibilities as the employers of staff in our meetings, including wardens;
- ensuring compliance by area and local meetings with all our agreed policies, for example for the protection of children and vulnerable adults, health and safety and data protection; and
- upholding Area Meeting in carrying out its activities and meeting its objectives.

A new clerk. Val Kirby took over as Clerk to Trustees in January 2018, replacing Colin Gerard, who had served in that role for nine years.

Property management. From January 2018 Ash and Co took on the management of Gloucester Meeting House, taking bookings from hirers, and managing security and cleaning. From April 2018 Naylor Powell took on the management of The Lodge, securing a young family as tenants and managing the tenancy month by month. A fuller report on GAQM property management is included in Section 6.

Compliance with AM policies. Our area and local meetings are committed to complying with the agreed policies for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, premises, including health and safety, and data protection. All our eight meetings have completed and submitted Compliance Forms.

Data protection legislation. Trustees have overseen all necessary measures to ensure that our meetings are compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations. We have adapted the way in which we compile personal data and have issued and had completed new Data Consent Forms for Members, Attenders and Children and Young People.

Review of Area Meeting Finances. In May 2018 trustees decided to undertake a comprehensive review of all Area Meeting financial and other assets (including Meeting Houses). Area Meeting approved this review in July. All local meetings were asked to address six topics, and to report back their answers to Trustees by October. By the end of 2018 trustees had analysed Local Meeting responses to the topics and agreed a timetable for completing the review in time to report back to Area Meeting in June 2019. Section 7 contains more detail.

Safeguarding. The trustees were pleased to receive a revised Safeguarding Policy and Annual report from the Area Meeting Safeguarding Coordinators. Both were accepted at the trustees meeting of 3 September 2018 and passed to Area Meeting for acceptance at the AM on 14 October 2018. A special session on safeguarding was held for trustees in May. Two training sessions were held for Friends across Area Meeting, in June and August.

Employees' Pay. In December 2018 the trustees completed the annual review of the level of payment to our wardens and other employees. We agreed to increases in pay in line with the minimum wage increase. We agreed that the existing Wardens' Contracts of Employment and Occupancy Agreements should continue. Together they ensure that our wardens are paid above the living wage. Any employees not in our accommodation will be paid the living wage or above.

Warden's appraisal. The trustees received the Annual Wardenship Appraisal for Nailsworth in December 2018. This process is an opportunity for the warden and the local meeting to check that the warden is not overworked and is happy in her/his post; to clarify roles and responsibilities of the warden, if necessary, and to consider how the distinction between wardenship and being a Member of the meeting is working in practice.

Cirencester's warden. Wendy Lloyd-Sweet resigned and Patricia Stevens was appointed as warden on a 12 month contract, from October 2018. The question of whether to appoint a warden for the longer term will be included in the Financial Review.

We are grateful to our wardens for their service.

Landlord's inspections and quinquennial reviews. In 2018 neither the usual annual landlord's inspections of wardens' accommodation nor the scheduled quinquennial review for Gloucester took place. They will take place at the beginning of 2019.

The Memorandum of Understanding between Area Meeting, Local Meetings and the Trustees continued in operation and the list of office holders was been updated and approved by Area Meeting as a result of the triennium review in December 2017. The MoU was updated in January 2018 and updated as necessary during 2018.

### **3 FINANCIAL POLICIES**

Local meetings control their own funds. These are the only funds not under the full control of Area Meeting. Apart from the general fund there are three designated funds, one for property, one for bursaries, grants and other purposes, as decided by Area Meeting and one for Quaker camp.

There are no restricted or endowment funds.

The trustees, including the treasurer and assistant treasurer, are responsible for the financial running and oversight of Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting Charities (GAQMC) and the upkeep of the meeting houses and associated property. These are held in trust by Friends Trusts Limited. Our accounts and statements are prepared by separating from income and expenditure all transfers between local meetings and the Area Meeting. Gift aid tax refunds are recorded in the year of receipt except where such receipts are overdue by more than one year. Apart from this exception we include debtors and creditors on the balance sheet. We are aware that we must comply with the latest Charity Commission Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) especially as regards reporting. This calls for our adherence, as closely as possible, to the guidance contained in the Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers (ACAT) Handbook, whilst allowing comparison with figures from the previous years' annual financial reports. We apply consistent treatment of the accounts in each accounting period subject to the above statutory requirements. Britain Yearly Meeting Treasurers' Handbook has been phased out and we now use the online ACAT Treasurers Handbook from our membership of ACAT.

Each set of accounting records deals with a specific part of GAQMC activities, covering all financial transactions, facts and events relating to them. All of the local and area accounts are examined by an accountant, who also prepares the annual financial report for

consideration by the trustee body. In accordance with the governing document, the report is then presented to Area Meeting for acceptance.

The Trustees set a recommended contribution for each of the local meetings. This is to allow the transfer of funds, contributed by friends, to GAQMC. This is the major source of income for the Area Meeting.

Our wasting assets are depreciated with the object of writing off the cost (less residual value) over their useful life. No depreciation reserve is set aside.

### **RESERVES POLICY**

The General Fund bank account has £5,900, which is over the recommended 6 month's expenditure.

The Property Fund bank account holds approximately £38,200, with almost £8,200 in one of the reserve bank accounts. This allows the treasurer access to approximately 6 months' expenditure. The other account holds £26,000 as a contingency reserve, which is not under the treasurer's control. There is also £24,000 in these accounts belonging to one of the Local Meetings. Equities to the value of £89,600, say, at the year-end, might be regarded as further reserves should area meeting so decide. See next section.

The Bursary Fund's equity investments are valued at £89,600. The Bursary fund bank accounts hold just over £37,400. This sum includes £4,780 held on behalf of two local meetings.

Almost £22,200 of this has been re-invested in a One Year Bond to give us more interest income. Our investments have decreased in value this year.

### **INVESTMENT POLICY**

Equity investments have long been held. Nowadays, advice is that they should be held in ethical funds lodged with Friends Trusts Ltd in order to save trustees from making frequent investment decisions. Cirencester Meeting transferred its Investments in 2017.

**Table 2. Property - Insured Values (Declared Value)**

Date	Meeting Houses	Insurer's values (£)	
		2018	2017
1985	Cheltenham	713,202	672,832
1673	Cirencester, including 51 Thomas St. (Listed)	2,842,281	2,681,397
1834	Gloucester (Listed)	1,556,204	1,468,117
1680	Nailsworth (Listed)	706,542	666,549
1706	Painswick (Listed)	530,502	500,474
	Sub Total	6,348,731	5,989,369
	Other Properties		
	49 Thomas St., Cirencester	759,473	716,484
	The Lodge, Greyfriars, Gloucester	386,461	364,586
	Quaker Close, Nailsworth	983,014	927,372
	Sub Total	2,128,948	2,008,442
	Burial Grounds		
	Siddington near Cirencester	Nil	Nil
	Shortwood near Nailsworth	Nil	Nil
	The Dell near Painswick	Nil	Nil
	Total value of buildings	8,477,679	7,997,811
	Contents		
	Cheltenham (including solar panels)	53,060	50,443
	Cirencester	58,869	56,066
	Gloucester	54,336	51,749
	Nailsworth (including Heritage books)	42,122	40,116
	Painswick	24,903	23,717
	Total contents	233,290	222,091
	Total buildings & contents	8,710,969	8,219,902
	Forest library books	912	868
	Camp Equipment	18,503	17,622
	Total insured	8,730,384	8,238,392

## REVIEWS OF RISKS

Insurance of buildings has been reviewed (see Table 2). Valuations of contents continue to be under review.

The vulnerability of the meeting funds to embezzlement, fraud and error is kept under review. Over forty percent of current assets are currently beyond the treasurer's control in a TRIODOS account. Checks on the bank balances are carried out by the treasurer. The treasurer makes a financial report to trustees at each meeting (usually six weekly). Electronic copies of the current financial records are checked against the bank balances by the treasurer on a monthly basis.

## GRANT MAKING POLICY

Grants from the Bursary Fund have been decided in accordance with the established policy, by those appointed as Overseers/Pastoral Friends in consultation with the treasurer. This year 4 young friends were supported to attend the Southern Friends Summer Events. The general fund was able to support Friends attending training courses at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and elsewhere.

## 4 GLOUCESTERSHIRE QUAKERS – WHAT WE DO

As in previous years, many of our members and attenders are active in the community and involved in different kinds of outreach. Some activities are the result of personal concerns, some the result of area meeting and/or local meeting appointments and others result from our ability to make our meeting houses available to others.

During 2018 our meeting houses continued to be hired or made available on a regular basis for one to one counselling, Alcoholics Anonymous, Bipolar Support Group, Friendship Group (for older people), Parent Line Plus (support for families), Fair Trade, Tanzania Link, and many others. Gloucester Meeting House is becoming more widely used by hirers whose work we wish to support. The Independence Trust and Inclusion Gloucestershire are using the meeting house for much of the week.

Other faith groups also use our meeting houses including Unitarians, Buddhists, Sufis, Sathya Sai, Baha'i and Liberal Jewish women. These occasions help those using the meeting houses and enable quiet outreach of our Quaker values through personal contact and

published information. Four of our meeting houses, Cirencester, Gloucester and Nailsworth and Painswick, opened for Heritage Open Days in September - a national scheme to celebrate England's architecture and culture. These days offer the opportunity for the public to view the buildings without the prospect of commitment to a Quaker meeting, yet many welcome the opportunity to enquire. Some who visited have subsequently become regular attenders at our meetings for worship.

We are grateful to our wardens who are frequently the point of contact at our meeting houses.

## 5 REPORTS FROM SOME OF OUR LOCAL MEETINGS

### CHELTENHAM LOCAL MEETING - Extract from 'How does the truth prosper?'

As a Meeting we support individual Friends in their witness to our testimonies, such as:

- in restorative justice: working as facilitators with victims and offenders with the aim of reducing crime;
- Prison Chaplain at the high security prison, Long Lartin, near Evesham;
- green issues: the Footpaths initiative to reduce our carbon footprint;
- hospice and hospital visiting;
- The Little Footsteps Playgroup: a supportive playgroup for international families including refugees;
- peace activism;
- affordable housing;
- counselling and supervision of counselling.

Through our lettings we support religious groups and organisations which help addicts and those at suicide risk. In December we began a midweek meeting on Thursdays. We are seeking to use our recent legacies to allow more daylight into the Meeting Room, to improve access to the Meeting House and to create reliable car parking spaces.

We have reduced the number of nominated posts and we are exploring hubs in pastoral care, administration and communications as a way of sharing our responsibilities. Our main opportunity for outreach has been our white poppy commemoration. We have explored Quaker spirituality in a monthly group reading Quaker Faith and Practice. We have re-discovered a Quaker Burial Ground on Grove Street near Cheltenham Hugh Street and hope to commemorate it with a plaque.

## **CIRENCESTER LOCAL MEETING** - written for this Annual Report

The year started in the usual way with our Winter Party that was well attended and deemed a great success with magic tricks, poems, card tricks and songs to banish winter's chill and welcome new light. At our meetings on Sundays there are usually at least twenty members and regular attenders. We have seventeen members and twenty four regular attenders. We meet on Sundays and Thursdays at 10.30 and on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of every month for a breakfast meeting at 7.30. We have a children's meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays, Open Forum after Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays and Food for Thought on 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays, which is usually a 'bring and share' lunch in aid of the charity of the time. On 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays we often have a themed meeting. On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday evenings of the month, we have a Meeting for Learning which allows us the time to contemplate and discuss the role of Quakers, Christians and other religions in a complex world.

Eleven organizations use our premises for their meetings and two more are planning to start in 2019. During 2018 we collected £2,485.21 for Quaker and non-Quaker charities such as Christian Aid, Friends World Committee for Consultation, whose aim is to bring Quakers of varying traditions and cultural experiences together and the Hands Up Project that provides online storytelling and English Language learning with Palestinian and Syrian children in Gaza, the West Bank and Jordan.

We hosted a 'Woodbrooke on the Road' Meeting on the topic of Jesus – a Quaker Approach in October. It was led by Tim Ashworth and attended by representatives of nearly all AM Meetings. The Meeting was inspiring and much appreciated.

We have a number of Syrian refugee families in Cirencester. Some time ago Cirencester Churches Together (CTiC) set up a fund for them, which reached around £4,000, at the time. In consultation with Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS) and Cirencester Town Council, CTiC helped to set up a welcome team of skilled people to work alongside the refugee families as they arrived. The fund continues to help in many ways. Some Friends within Cirencester Meeting are engaged with the families in such ways as language learning skills, the provision of transport to medical and educational appointments and general pastoral care. So, we feel the criteria and aspirations of the sanctuary movement are already being met and kept under constant review by CTiC. Additionally, we would not

wish to act against the principle of Churches Together in England, that individual churches should not undertake ventures which can be done more effectively in co-operation with other faith communities.

So, whilst fully supportive of the aims of the sanctuary movement, we feel the application needs to be specific to each local situation and this is our continuing endeavour in Cirencester. For example, on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2019 we hosted a party at the Meeting House for all the Syrian families in Cirencester. Around 30 people came. It proved a wonderful opportunity for both the families and volunteers involved with them to socialise together over a 'bring and share' lunch.

#### **FOREST OF DEAN LOCAL MEETING** - Extract from 'How does the truth prosper?

How are Forest of Dean Quakers individually living out their faith? The 'Truth Prospers' not just in activities undertaken by the Meeting, but in how its members each live their lives under the leadings of the Spirit. Where corporate activity may not be strong, individual activity may be, and should be recognized. It is valid to ask how big a role the Meeting has in sustaining this.

Individuals have undertaken the following:

- two 3 month spells in Palestine with the EAPPI programme and continued advocacy and support;
- supporting an ex-offender and engaging in criminal justice, including prison visiting;
- mentoring a refugee;
- 'Nightstop' - hosting homeless young people;
- reading newspapers to the blind;
- being a founding member of a local Sustainability group: Quaker trustee of 'Forest Upcycling';
- worker's co-op - Dean Forest Food Hub;
- volunteering with CAB & local food banks;
- being Chair, Secretary/Treasurer and four committee members of local 'Breathe Easy' Support Group (British Lung Foundation);
- two people are involved in 'Mindsong' for people with dementia;
- treasurer and committee member of Gloucester and Forest MS Society;
- service on national Quaker committees (two members);
- for Area Meeting, maintenance of Quaker Library with discussion groups as outreach;

- holding monthly 'Experiment in Light' meetings, as a recognised Light Group, which draw in Friends from other meetings;
- joint Meetings for Worship with Gloucester Friends, monthly since 2006;
- active participation in Immediate Prayer Group (Friends Fellowship of Healing) for over thirty years.

### **NAILSWORTH LOCAL MEETING** – written for this Annual Report

The town of Nailsworth decided to have a series of events during 2018 to commemorate the end of WW1 called "Nailsworth Remembers 2018". The local meeting contributed 3 events. The first was a "contemplative (or mainly silent) walk" in June as part of the Nailsworth walking festival. It lasted about an hour and the leader – a member of the meeting - stopped at various points to read out suitable passages e.g. the Quaker peace testimony, the significance of white poppies, the formation of the Friends Ambulance Unit and the work of current peace workers. The walk also visited the Shortwood Quaker burial ground and finished at the meeting house where there was tea and cake. Transcripts of trials in Gloucester of people who were refusing to serve in WW1 in combatant roles on grounds of conscientious objection were read out.

These transcripts were acted out on the United Nations International Day of Peace in September 21<sup>st</sup> as part of the opening ceremony of the Peace Garden which is in front of the meeting house. The theme of the event was remembrance and the experience of war and also included poems from the period and songs by the community choir.

Thirdly, the meeting was inspired by Sir William Orpen an official war artist during WW1. In 1917 he visited the scene of the Battle of the Somme where, between July and November 1916, nearly 1 million soldiers (Allies and German) had died and many more were wounded.



Nailsworth Local Meeting's Remembrance Banner

He recorded the following words "I had left it mud, nothing but water, shell-holes and mud – the most gloomy, dreary abomination of desolation the mind could imagine; and now, in the summer of 1917, no words could express the beauty of it. The dreary, dismal mud was baked white and pure – dazzling white. White daisies, red poppies and a blue flower, great masses of them, stretched for miles and miles. The sky a pure dark blue, and the whole air, up to a height of about forty feet, thick with white butterflies..."

Nailsworth Quaker Meeting created a collage/banner for the wall of 1 and 2 Quaker Close of knitted poppies and felt butterflies on a blue and white background. Most of the butterflies were made by over 160 children from Bussage, Sheepscombe and Nailsworth. The children of the meeting made their own banner and white poppies which they "planted" in the peace garden in time for the formal opening of the garden.

#### **PAINSWICK LOCAL MEETING** - written for this Annual Report

Painswick Meeting continued to worship each Sunday with upwards of twenty at each meeting and once a month a smaller number meet on a Wednesday. We continued themed meetings and began a very occasional series of discussion groups on challenging topics. Having completed the main tasks to ensure proper maintenance and care of the Meeting House and improve its environmental performance, in 2017, following the

Quinquennial Review, we initiated a new programme of work. We undertook a significant project to put in hand the management of the Burial Ground at the Dell and enhance its value to wild species of plant, birds and mammals. We also started to plan how we might ensure the Meeting House becomes even more accessible to people experiencing sensory or ambulatory difficulties. The library, which had been moved to the upper floor of the Meeting House some years ago, we concluded was not being well used. We therefore moved the books back into the pine cupboard in the Meeting House and rearranged the collection with the result that it is now being better used by Friends.

#### **WOTTON LOCAL MEETING** – written for this Annual Report

We have continued to hold meeting for worship weekly in rented premises in Wotton. Our average attendance seems to have dropped a little this year, with numbers down to five or six over the summer and averaging about 10. We have also held sharing group meetings once a month, which are well supported. We have covered a variety of topics, including Harvey Gilman's book 'Words' and the lives of notable Quakers: Rufus Jones, Elizabeth Fry and William Penn. We appreciate the hospitality of the Friends who host these meetings.

We held our annual retreat day in September, which included enjoyment of the Pitt Court Manor garden in the sunshine, fellowship, poetry, making white poppies, a shared lunch and ending in our now traditional way with circle dancing. We were delighted that the two children of our meeting were able to take part this year for the first time.

We followed our previous pattern for Quaker Week, with a meeting for worship for enquirers, an exhibition in the window of the Ark coffee shop, and an evening of circle dancing at the Under the Edge Arts Centre. We did not have any enquirers at meeting for worship, but the circle dance attracted a number of visitors. We feel that the purpose of our Quaker Week activities is to make more people in the town aware of our presence.

We contributed to the exhibitions in St Mary's Wotton and St Mary's Kingswood to mark the Armistice Centenary celebrations, on the theme of peace, with displays of our white poppies, information on the work of the Friends Ambulance Unit and (in Kingswood) on work with refugees.

## 6 REPORTS OF SOME AREA MEETING ACTIVITIES

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES' WORK

**Children and Young Peoples Work Advocates** Liz Whiteside and Stephanie Robertson.

**Elder with responsibility for Children and Young People** – Mary Penny

**Lists of names, ages, and addresses** of Children and Young People were previously held privately by the Advocates. They were never made available publicly and were kept in agreement with the parents. Lists were kept to ensure that when children, who may only have appeared as babies or toddlers, reach secondary school age, Quaker opportunities within the Area Meeting and beyond were made available to them. Now with GDPR, Liz Whiteside is working with local meetings to compile a list of all families in the Area Meeting who have agreed for their children's details to be shared with the Advocates and who have filled in the appropriate data consent form. This list is still being updated.

Children and young people in the Area Meeting are: (numbers may need to be updated)

15 Children aged 0 to 10

12 Children and young people aged 11 to 16

3 Young people aged 16 to 18

**In the Area Meeting provision for children on Sundays is as follows.**

Cheltenham – Arrangements for children in place, but currently no children attend.

Cirencester – Children's meeting held once a month.

Forest of Dean – Check first for All age Worship on third Sunday.

Gloucester – Children always welcome, with provision if known in advance.

Nailsworth – Children's meeting every Sunday. The older children's group (9+), which was held once a month, is not currently taking place as there are no children of this age attending.

Painswick – The one family attending has now moved away: children are always welcome.

Stroud – Arrangements for children can be made if notified in advance.

Wotton-under-Edge – One family with two children attend periodically. Arrangements for children are in place if required.

**Link group – events for young people of Secondary School age**

Liz Whiteside has done a good job in keeping in touch with all young people and their parents, sending invitations and reminder follow-ups for all Link events.

Stephanie Robertson, with Alice and Aidan Fallon, have planned, prepared and run these very successful events:

Link Group Day: 10 February at Nailsworth;

Link Group Walk: 20 May at Painswick;

Link Group Day: 13 October at Cirencester;

Sock Sunday, Remembering the Homeless: 25 November at Gloucester, when invitations were extended to all families in the Area meeting.

**Junior Yearly Meeting** Two young people attended in 2018.

Area Meeting supported 5 Young People to attend Junior Gathering/Senior Conference in August.

Area Meeting supported Stephanie Robertson and Alice Fallon to attend the Youthwork day at Woodbrooke which dovetailed with the Advocates Conference.

**AREA MEETING PEACE GROUP**

The Area Meeting Peace Group met regularly during the year. The group's main focus was preparing for the September Meeting for Learning on Sanctuary Meetings, but in addition work continued on the following.

1. Encouraging and supporting local meeting peace building initiatives linked to Remembrance Day and the WW1 centenary. Some meetings were able to lay white poppy or white flowers wreaths, many meetings sold white poppies and one meeting involved the children's meeting and local schools in making a peace banner.
2. Raising awareness about arms fairs. This included writing individualised letters to a number of Gloucestershire companies urging them not to take part in future arms fairs.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE INITIATIVE

A Nailsworth Friend contemplated the potentially passive act of a collection for the Women's Refuge in Stroud and decided to explore further. A small group of Nailsworth Friends met with a member of Refuge staff and one of the founders of the Refuge. This energised them into action. They discovered Stroud has the only remaining refuge in Gloucestershire, has had its funding cut by successive governments and struggles to stay open despite the horrendous fact of two women each week being killed through domestic violence in the UK. Our Friend rallied a call to action by inviting interested people across AM to come and be informed and educated. The result was a new action Group focussing on Domestic Violence and Abuse and Stroud Women's Refuge. A threshing Meeting served to focus on the immediate actions that the group would pursue. Two members of the group voluntarily joined and are active in the fundraising committee of the Refuge. The group via AM commissioned Journeymen Theatre to research and write a play on domestic violence/abuse. AM funded the cost of commissioning through an appeal across all the Local Meetings. Rock and a Hard Place launched in Gloucestershire, has been booked for BYM 2019 and Journeymen Theatre moved from playing small venues to larger ones so by three performances 270 people had attended, in many cases contributed extra funds. The feedback has been exceptional about the play, the acting and the educational impact on audiences. Bookings for further performances in Gloucestershire and the rest of the UK are increasing.

These are some facts but the energy around the group's work is more about the feelings and inspiration to action to counteract this dreadful lack of support at so many levels from Government down.

One of the key factors in the group's actions has been to work for greater publicity directly and through the AM Media Team to educate Friends and the general public about the issues involved in domestic violence/abuse which these days go well beyond the old concept of 'battered wives'. Current law enshrines rights for women and men around all aspects of domestic abuse including coercive control, which has been a new concept for many. *'Domestic abuse isn't always physical. Coercive control is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This controlling behaviour is designed to make a person dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting them, depriving them of independence and regulating their everyday behaviour.'* Women's Aid

The Journeymen project is a very tangible, visible and hard-hitting demonstration one aspect of the group's work. As Quakers we stand for Peace and Equality and we cannot understand why the extent of domestic violence and abuse is not yet a national concern both to the public at large and in the more specific sense of the 'concern' to us as Quakers – we are working on that now.



## SANCTUARY MEETINGS

Four Friends attended the joint Quaker Council for European Affairs / Quaker Peace and Social Witness "Sanctuary Everywhere" conference in Brussels in December 2017. On their return they encouraged Local Meetings to consider becoming Sanctuary Meetings. A number of Local Meetings and individual Friends were already supporting agencies and initiatives working with refugees and asylum seekers such as Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS), Refugee Aid Stroud, Cheltenham Welcomes Refugee, Hill House Sanctuary Retreats and Syrian refugee families accommodated in the county. Meetings were not sure how becoming a Sanctuary Meeting would be of further value, so through the March Area Meeting asked the Peace Group to go ahead with arranging an information sharing event to learn more about the Sanctuary Everywhere programme and local organisations. This whole day programme, attended by some 30 Friends, took place in September, resulting in Nailsworth and Painswick Meetings joining Cheltenham Meeting in becoming Sanctuary

Meetings. Gloucestershire Area Meeting agreed to become a Sanctuary Meeting in December 2018 with the initial focus on liaising with GARAS and national organisations about areas of need and campaign priorities, organising training and providing information for all Local Meetings that wish to continue to work to help refugees and asylum seekers.

## 7 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

**Table 3. Meeting Houses and Burial Grounds**

Date	Meeting Houses
1985	Cheltenham
1673	Cirencester, including 51 Thomas St. (Listed grade 2*)
1834	Gloucester (Listed grade 2)
1680	Nailsworth (Listed grade 2)
1706	Painswick (Listed grade 2)
	<b>Other Properties</b>
	49 Thomas Street, Cirencester (Listed grade 2)
	The Lodge, Greyfriars, Gloucester (Listed grade 2)
	Quaker Close, Nailsworth (Listed grade 2)
	<b>Burial Grounds</b>
	Siddington near Cirencester
	Shortwood near Nailsworth
	The Dell near Painswick

The maintenance and improvement of the fabric and sustainability of our Meeting Houses continues to be a major concern of our Trustees and a call upon our funds. A review of our long-term policies for the management of all our properties is included in the Review of Finance which is described in more detail in Section 7.

We have five Meeting Houses, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Cirencester, Nailsworth and Painswick: all except Cheltenham are listed by Historic England. Nailsworth, Painswick and Gloucester are Grade 2 and Cirencester Meeting House is Grade 2\*. We are also responsible for wardens' houses at Cirencester and Nailsworth and four properties that are let, two in Cirencester, one in Nailsworth and one (The Lodge, that used to be the warden's house) in Gloucester. Another responsibility is the oversight and maintenance of three burial grounds that are not attached to our meeting houses. They are at Siddington (Cirencester), Dell Farm (Painswick) and Shortwood (Nailsworth). The Shortwood burial ground is the only one open for burials.

We have a programme of Quinquennial surveys that are carried out by a professional surveyor in order to identify replacement and maintenance requirements and provide a maintenance schedule. In 2018 Gloucester was scheduled for survey, but because of the major changes in hand in managing both the Meeting House and The Lodge, this was deferred until early 2019.

## **SUMMARY OF WORK TO PROPERTIES UNDERTAKEN IN 2018**

### **CHELTENHAM**

During 2018 Cheltenham Friends planned and then started, improvements to the Meeting House using funds from a recent legacy. The works include improving access from the street by increasing the number of steps from 4 to 5, work on parking spaces, adding roof lights to the Meeting Room to improve light and ventilation and adding acoustic baffles, installing suspended ceilings and fitted cupboards in the tea room and other rooms. A key pad was installed in side gate to allow disabled access. The main building works started in October and will be completed in 2019.

Cheltenham Friends revised their lettings policies and procedures. They decided to continue to do this in-house, and to employ a book-keeper.

It is possible that Grove Street burial ground could be redeveloped at a future date. Trustees agreed that, should it be necessary, human remains can be reinterred at Shortwood Burial Ground, Nailsworth.

### **CIRENCESTER.**

Repairs were done to the floor in the room hired by counsellors and the office.

The management of Flats 1 and 2 49 Thomas Street was taken over by Cirencester Housing.

After the warden left in September, repairs and redecoration of the warden's accommodation were undertaken.

### **GLOUCESTER**

Meeting House: Ash and Co took over the day to day management of the Meeting House in January 2018. The company manages hirings and organises cleaning, heating and security. There were some minor teething problems but in general the system works well. Gloucester Friends look after the garden. A new hot water heater was installed in the Meeting House kitchen. Towards the end of the year there were problems with the drains: these appeared to be sorted but were in fact symptoms of a collapsed drain: this will be reported in full in the 2019 report.

The Lodge: The ex-warden's wife & her son stayed in The Lodge until April. When they moved out, Trustees had the property completely redecorated ready for lettings to begin. Naylor Powell were appointed as managing agents in June 2018 a young family moved in in July. The tenants settled in well.

## **NAILSWORTH**

Repairs and maintenance to 1 Quaker Close that were identified in 2017 were completed in 2018. These works included treatment for localised damp and some decoration.

The new timber building in the Meeting House garden was completed and named the 'Beech Hut' by the meeting's young people.

Repairs were required to repair a water leak in the front garden.

After some replanting, and the installation of a new bench, a stone plaque and a stone bird bath, in September the front garden was launched as a Peace Garden, for Friends and community use.

## **PAINSWICK**

The repairs recommended in the most recent quinquennial review were completed. Painswick Friends decided to use more environmentally friendly cleaning materials and reducing waste, to help reduce their environmental footprint.

A new management strategy for Painswick Quaker Burial Ground was agreed.

Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service advised that the meeting has good warning systems and appropriate fire extinguishers.

## **8 FINANCIAL REVIEW**

In July 2018 Trustees decided to undertake a review of Area Meeting Finances. We did this because we wanted to be sure that our assets are used, and our financial affairs are managed, in ways that are both consistent with our Quaker charitable aims and objectives and are sustainable in the long term.

Over the summer of 2018 our Local Meetings considered and replied to six questions, that were designed to encourage discussion amongst Friends about the key issues facing our Area Meeting. The questions, and a summary of the answers, are given below.

## SIX QUESTIONS

- 1 We currently have five meeting houses, four historic and one 20<sup>th</sup> century. Should we continue to own them in perpetuity? Should we consider a policy of gradually divesting ourselves of our property, so that we can devote proportionately more resources to Quaker work? Should we treat all our meeting houses in the same way, at the same time, or should there be variation – they are all different? If we decide to keep our meeting houses, should we adopt a policy of doing more radical things with them? There was no support for a policy of sale, immediate or gradual. Instead there was a sense of needing to look carefully at the specific situation of each Meeting House.

*Summary of Local Meeting Responses.* The five Local Meetings that have Meeting Houses all value them highly. Meeting Houses are regarded as the heart of their communities, Quaker and non-Quaker. The other three Local Meetings broadly accept the existence of the Meeting Houses. Several Meetings stress the importance of making sure our buildings are affordable and well managed.

- 2 Three of our meeting houses currently have rental properties. Should we consider selling these, and invest the proceeds in Quaker work? Should we treat all these properties in the same way, at the same time, or should there be variation – they are all different?

*Summary of Local Meeting Responses.* Meetings have a range of views, from ‘no comment’, to a strong commitment to retaining rental properties, because of the positive profile that they can give to a Local Meeting. The legal and administrative complexities of being good landlords are acknowledged.

- 3 Two of our meeting houses currently have wardens who are contractually required to live in our property. They undertake day to day maintenance and liaise directly with hirers. Should we retain a commitment to having resident wardens? Or should we consider a policy of changing the way we manage our Meeting Houses? If we do consider changes, what should they be?

*Summary of Local Meeting Responses.* Meetings with Wardens value having a conscientious and effective resident warden, although they also appreciate the

challenges of ensuring that wardens are well managed. Most Meetings feel that decisions on reappointment should be taken on a case by case basis.

- 4 Area Meeting is responsible for all the property and funds of its constituent meetings. Trustees determine with each local meeting how the duties delegated to that meeting are to be financed. Do trustees and/or area meeting need to do more to explain this to local meetings?

*Summary of Local Meeting Responses.* Some meetings wanted more/better explanations, and some did not. Some replies merged into Question 5 - see below.

- 5 Should we change the way our finances are managed and reported? And if so, how? Here are some examples of what we might do:

- we could centralise our financial affairs at AM level, perhaps with paid assistance;
- we could adopt a common approach across the area for the way we ask Friends for financial contributions;
- it might help trustees better monitor our financial position if, as well as presenting consolidated accounts (which the Charity Commission requires) we separate out AM and LM reports;
- we could decide simply not to accept an annual budget that predicts a deficit.

*Summary of Local Meeting Responses.* There was a wide range of responses to this question. Some meetings have a predominantly local focus and would prefer this to remain. Some would prefer greater consistency of financial systems across all Local Meetings, coordinated by Area Meeting. Some support bringing in paid assistance, but most do not mention that. Some believe that deficit budgets should not be acceptable.

- 6 What considerations should guide us in discerning a more equitable way of seeking financial contributions from Friends to fund Quaker activity in Gloucestershire and beyond?

*Summary of Local Meeting Responses.* Several Meetings think that members and attenders should be targeted equally.

Trustees aim to complete the review by June 2019. A full report will be in the Annual Report for 2019.

APPROVED by the trustees on ..... 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019

SIGNED by .....  
Val Kirby, Clerk to the Trustees 

Sarah Eilbeck ..... S.A. Eilbeck  
Treasurer

John Geale. ....  
Assistant Treasurer 