

# The Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting Charities

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## Trustees Report for Year Ended 31st December 2019

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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Assistant Clerk: Elyn Mitchell  
Assistant Clerk: Dorothy Cardus  
(Membership)

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Treasurer: Sarah Eilbeck  
Assistant Treasurer: Marilyn Miles

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Trustees: Val Kirby, Clerk  
Frank Bonner  
Terence Robinson  
Jan Gronow  
Timothy Howarth  
Mary Penny  
Sarah Eilbeck (ex officio)  
Marilyn Miles (until July 2019)  
Marilyn Miles (ex officio from July 2019)  
Paul Barber (Link to Trustees until July 2019)  
Rosemary Andoh (Link to Trustees from July 2019)  
Dorothy Cardus (Link to Trustees)

Custodian Trustees: Friends Trusts Ltd

Registered charity no.  
237698

Examiner of Accounts: Mrs Bonnie Connolly

Arubus Accountants,  
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## 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.....	54 members, 14 adult attenders
Cirencester Quaker Meeting.....	18 members, 21 adult attenders, 3 children
Forest of Dean Quaker Meeting.....	15 members, 10 adult attenders, 2 children
Gloucester Quaker Meeting.....	17 members, 9 adult attenders, 2 children
Nailsworth Quaker Meeting.....	68 members, 32 adult attenders, 10 children
Painswick Quaker Meeting.....	23 members, 16 adult attenders
Stroud Quaker Meeting.....	23 members, 12 adult attenders
Wotton Quaker Meeting.....	10 members, 8 adult attenders, 2 children
Members not attached to a local meeting .....	8 members

Total membership was 236, a decrease of 13 since 2018.

The decrease in members since 2018 has several causes. 11 Friends have died and 6 moved out of Gloucestershire Area Meeting. There were 2 resignations and 4 terminations – 2 because of lack of interest and 2 because current addresses could not be found. We gained 3 new members 'by conviction' and 7 members transferred in from other Area Meetings.

We have 122 Attenders, down from 152 in 2018. This includes 19 children. The change is because we have followed the advice of Friends House to only include attenders who met the criteria defined in Quaker Faith and Practice as 'one who, not being a member,

frequently attends a specific meeting for worship'. They asked that only those 'who took an active part in the meeting over the past year' be counted in the tabular statement. All children, under the age of sixteen, not in membership but associated with the meeting, are included, whether they attend regularly or not.

All our local meetings hold meetings for worship weekly. Some meetings also hold meetings for worship midweek. Nailsworth Meeting holds an additional meeting at 6.00 pm on the fourth Sunday 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 2019: in February, March, April, June, July, September, October and December. This practice will continue in 2020. Our representatives to Meeting for Sufferings and other central meetings have made their reports, which have been received with interest and sometimes with concern.

In 2019 we decided not to ask any of our local meetings to report on the question "How does the Truth prosper amongst you?" The series will resume in 2020.

## 2 TRUSTEES – SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

The trustees are appointed by Area Meeting. They met eight times during 2019. 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.

Trustees: Val Kirby continued as clerk. At the end of 2019 Mary Penny laid down the role of trustee for Gloucester Local Meeting: she has not yet been replaced. John Geale laid down the role of Assistant Area Meeting Treasurer and Marilyn Miles was appointed to replace him. Her replacement trustee for Nailsworth was not appointed until April 2020. Paul Barber laid down the role of trustee link for Wotton and Rosemary Andoh was appointed to replace him in July.

Property management. Ash and Co continued to oversee the day to day management of Gloucester Meeting House, taking bookings from hirers and managing security and cleaning. Naylor Powell continued to manage The Lodge, which is let to the young family who moved

there in 2018. Cirencester Housing continued to manage the flats adjacent to Cirencester Meeting House. Nailsworth Local Meeting continued to manage the cottages in Quakers Close, adjacent to the meeting house. More detail is provided 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.

Review of Area Meeting Finances. The comprehensive review of area meeting financial and other assets (including meeting houses) was reported to area meeting in July 2019. The review was agreed in September and a month-by-month action plan was agreed in December. Section 7 contains more detail.

Safeguarding. Trustees received and accepted the annual revised Safeguarding Policy and Guidance on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and area meeting adopted them at their meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The annual report from the Area Meeting Safeguarding Coordinators was received on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 following a meeting between the safeguarding trustee and coordinators on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

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 National Living 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 National Living Wage. Any employees not in our accommodation will be paid the Real Living Wage or above.

Cirencester's warden. As part of the review of financial and other assets, trustees reviewed the appointment on a temporary contract of Patricia Stevens as Cirencester's warden. After the post was advertised we agreed to confirm her contract, and to continue to review the need for wardens at Cirencester and Nailsworth on a case by case basis as the need arises.

Nailsworth's Warden. Rebecca Stapleford resigned as warden for Nailsworth Meeting in September 2019. In December 2019, after a competitive appointment process, Oliver Müller was appointed as the new warden. Oliver was due to take up his post in January 2020.

We are grateful to our wardens for their service.

Landlord's inspections and quinquennial reviews. In 2019 Richard Basnett Associates carried out quinquennial reviews for Gloucester and Nailsworth. Nailsworth Finance and Premises Committee reviewed the recommendations, agreed a programme of works and started to carry it out. As Gloucester Local Meeting does not currently have a finance and premises

committee, Trustees appointed three Friends to review Basnett's recommendations and to produce a programme of works. These works will be undertaken in 2020.

All our rented properties were inspected either by trustees or by our managing agents.

The Memorandum of Understanding between area meeting, local meetings and the trustees continued in operation. The list of office holders has been regularly updated by area meeting and the MoU has been updated to reflect these changes.

### 3 FINANCIAL POLICIES

Local meetings control their own funds for day to day expenditure. 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. Capital expenditure on meeting houses using Local Meeting funds is agreed with trustees in advance.

There are no restricted or endowment funds.

In 2019, following our financial review, we agreed to set up a Property Reserve Fund and to estimate projections for property costs for up to 20 years ahead.

Area Meeting agreed to cover the costs of renting rooms for those local meetings that do not have their own meeting houses.

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 GAQM Charities' activities, covering all financial transactions, facts and events relating to them. All 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 three area meeting funds hold their money spread over several bank accounts. The CAF, Triodos and Principality One Year Bond are treated as our Reserves accounts, with varying lengths of time before access. Our long-term equity investments might be regarded as further reserves should area meeting so decide.

Having looked at our expenditure of several years, it was decided to set the recommended 6 month's expenditure at £40,000 as a reserve. At the end of 2019 there was £61,145 in these accounts. There was also £26,958 in these accounts belonging to two of the local meetings. On the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019, the value of our equity investments was £108,952. Our investments have increased in value this year.

£15,000 from the legacy of Cyril Govier was transferred from Nailsworth Quaker Meeting to Area Meeting funds. £10,000 will be placed in the Bursary Fund's equity investments and £5,000 will be placed in the Property Reserve Fund.

## 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 Local Meeting transferred its Investments in 2017.

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

Date	Meeting Houses	Insurer's values (£)	
		2019	2018
1985	Cheltenham	755,995	713,202
1673	Cirencester (Listed)	3,012,818	2,842,281
1834	Gloucester (Listed)	1,649,577	1,556,204
1680	Nailsworth (Listed)	748,935	706,542
1706	Painswick (Listed)	562,333	530,502
	Sub Total	6,729,658	6,348,731
	Other Properties		
	49 and 51 Thomas St. Cirencester	805,042	759,473
	The Lodge, Greyfriars, Gloucester	409,649	386,461
	1 and 2 Quaker Close, Nailsworth	1,041,995	983,014
	Sub Total	2,256,686	2,128,948
	Burial Grounds		
	Siddington near Cirencester	Nil	Nil
	Shortwood near Nailsworth	Nil	Nil
	The Dell near Painswick	Nil	Nil
	Total value of buildings	8,986,344	8,477,679
	Contents		
	Cheltenham (including solar panels)	55,814	53,060
	Cirencester	61,813	58,869
	Gloucester	57,053	54,336
	Nailsworth (including Heritage books)	44,229	42,122
	Painswick	26,149	24,903
	Total contents	245,058	233,290
	Total buildings & contents	9,231,402	8,710,969
	Forest library books	958	912
	Camp Equipment	Nil	18,503
	Total insured	9,232,360	8,730,384

## 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 and assistant treasurer. The treasurer makes a financial report to trustees at each meeting (usually six weekly) including the balances in each account as well and income and expenditure on the various headings against budget figures. Electronic copies of the current financial records are checked against the bank balances by the treasurer on a monthly basis. We now have two authorisations for internet banking transactions. The treasurer, assistant treasurer, clerk and trustee Jan Gronow, are the 4 authorised internet users.

## 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 five young friends were supported to attend the Southern Friends Summer Events. One Friend was given a bursary, jointly with Painswick Meeting to attend the QUNO Summer School. Two families were given bursaries to enable them to go to the area meeting camp. The General Fund was able to support Friends attending training courses and conferences 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 2019 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 used 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 (HOD) in September - a national scheme to celebrate England's architecture and culture. Nailsworth Town Council supported HOD for the first time and nearly an extra dozen properties were open. Over 100 visitors came to Nailsworth Meeting House – usually about 20 come. 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 at Cirencester and Nailsworth, who are frequently the point of contact at our meeting houses.

## **5 REPORTS OF SOME AREA MEETING ACTIVITIES**

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

Gloucestershire Friends are deeply committed to learning about sustainability and to working towards more sustainable ways of living. In July 2019 our area meeting was all age, focusing on sustainability. Here is the minute from that meeting.

#### **Minute 2019/48**

We are meeting today as an All Age Group and are glad that children and young people are here with us. We have no formal business but have come together around the theme of sustainability and our response to the challenge of climate change. We have worshipped together, shared our experiences, hopes and fears, and looked for new words to express them. We have played games, made peace banners and sorted rubbish. We have tried to engage with both the practical and the spiritual aspects of our theme, and to discern what we are now called upon to do.

The prospect of a continuing, sustained rise in global temperatures has immense implications, particularly for young people. It challenges us on how we live as individuals and

families; on how needed changes can be brought about; on our economy and politics; and on economic justice, and how to promote peace and co-operation in difficult circumstances.

We all have blind spots – in our relations with the natural world, and with each other, and about our own choices. We need to move beyond guilt and blame in a spirit of love, determination and goodwill (“soul force” in Gandhi’s term). We need to hope, but we need to come together to take action too. We all have a God-given energy, and we all have the potential to do something, however small.

Many Friends in Gloucestershire are already active in these matters, for example in Extinction Rebellion, school strikes, and initiatives to reduce the use of plastics, to promote public transport, and to forge links with other faith groups. As an area meeting, we want to support, sustain and celebrate this work.

*From Peter Carter (Stroud Local Meeting & AM Clerk) and Rosa Keene (Gloucester Local Meeting)*

Here is the way Wotton Local Meeting addressed sustainability in 2019.

At a retreat in the summer Wotton Meeting focussed on ‘Sustainability and Connection’ and we continued this focus into Quaker Week. At the retreat day everyone contributed in creating a banner, using all re-cycled materials, with the message: *Better than just a few people living sustainably really well would be millions of us doing the best we can.*

Creating the banner itself was a good example of cooperation, in that those who were unsure and inexperienced in craftwork paired up with others more confident – it became a Wotton Quakers creation.



We've had 1000 postcards made, which, during Quaker week, have been given out in the local community and beyond. The banner and its message became the focus for a window display in a community café in Wotton (The Ark) during this time.

On Sunday 6th October, at our meeting for worship for enquirers, we had 20 people, not new enquirers but we were able to warmly welcome attenders who come occasionally - this is getting on for double the number who regularly attend. In the evening we held an open evening for the community to come and experience meditative circle dance in the local arts centre.

Again about 20 people (different from the attenders that morning) came and many of the dances from around the world focussed on our connection in nature with one also including a chant which some joined in with:

*Earth and Sky, Sea and Stone, Hold this land in Sacredness.*

*From Grace Lindsay (Wotton Local Meeting)*

## **LINK GROUP (FOR YOUNG FRIENDS AGED 11-18)**

On Saturday 2nd of March GAQM Link Group met in Nailsworth Meeting House to explore 'Spirituality and Wellbeing'. Seven young people joined leaders Steph, Alice and Aidan to think about how spirituality plays a part in each of our lives. We crafted our own thoughtful collection of phrases to prompt us in the future and made smoothies to help nourish us. We played games in the sunshine and sang together to Jacob Page playing his harp. In the afternoon we reflected on deeper spiritual thoughts.

On June 8th the link group met at Cirencester Meeting House. Our theme was 'Creating Connections' and we focus on community. Five young people joined Steph, Alice and Aidan to play team work games and visually construct pseudo and strong communities. We had a birthday celebration with cake and enjoyed the garden space. The term 'Cake and Quake' was coined for our new shorter day events.

July 14th saw young people join in with area meeting. The theme was 'Living Sustainably', and all ages were invited to create and share. William and Fred Rutherford led activities and Rosa Keene co-clerked with Peter Carter.

For our first link event after summer we met for a walk in Cranham woods on September 14th. We were a small group (Alice, Aidan, Jasper the dog, Steph, Ella, Ruby and Jessie Rae Robbins) but found lots to appreciate on our way. We learnt about the amazing work that goes on, by nature and by those who tend to the conservation of it. We shared hot drinks and biscuits on arrival back to the car park.

Gloucester's annual 'Sock Sunday' was the last event of 2019 on November 24th. Our theme was 'Homelessness and Hope'. We shared a programmed all age meeting for worship with members and families of Gloucestershire area meeting and followed by packing socks for local homeless.

*From Stephanie Robertson (Gloucester Local Meeting & Link Group Co-ordinator)*

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – FAITH IN ACTION GROUP IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

Every year is a difficult year for domestically abused women, and 2019 was no exception. New legislation got stuck in Parliament. This spurred the Gloucestershire Quakers Domestic Violence group into even more action.

The group's main focus is about raising awareness and spreading the word not only in Gloucestershire but across the country. Andrea Rigby (Stroud LM) and Liz Willis (Nailsworth LM) continued to serve on the fundraising committee of Stroud Women's Refuge and bring immediate relevance to the group's actions.

### **Rock and a Hard Place**

Having commissioned the play from Journeymen Theatre, Gloucestershire Quakers turned their hand to innovative publicity action so that high numbers of people experienced the play. The group, across Area Meeting – now known as QADA – Quaker Action on Domestic Abuse, produced guidelines on publicising and extending the range and size of venues. The first three performances in Stroud, Dursley and Cirencester were supported by local Friends who made extraordinary efforts to fill the venues. All monies raised in Gloucestershire went to the county's last remaining women's refuge in Stroud.

Performances followed at British Yearly Meeting and across the country at Stourbridge, Barnstaple, Kingston, Cartmel, Derby, Cheltenham, Minsterworth (Forest), Warwick, Wolverhampton, Bradford upon Avon and Cullompton. A healthy booking sheet was also in place for 2020.

Meanwhile, every opportunity was taken to talk about domestic violence, link with other networks such as mothers union, WI and Quaker members of Stroud women's refuge fundraising committee also inspired and wrote new publicity material, banners exhibition panels, a vibrant newsletter and a range of leaflets about the refuge and fundraising for it. As a result of publicity in Quaker and other circles more funds were attracted to the refuge.

### **Park Street Mission**

In May, the trustees of the historic 'Park Street Mission' in Gloucester, made three substantial donations from the sale of the historic building in Park Street, Gloucester, following closure of the Mission. The building was a place of worship for over 340 years, with Edith Sessions, a Quaker. and the first woman magistrate in Gloucester, setting up the 'Park Street Mission' there in 1880. And so a large cheque was presented to Angela Lamond – founder of the Stroud Women's Refuge.



Group Photo: From left to right: Andrew Turrall (Trustee of Park Street Mission), Pat Turrall (Trustee of Park Street Mission) Nick Peters (Gloucester Quakers), Angela Lamond (Stroud Women's Refuge), the late Maggi Holiday (Gloucester Quakers) and Jenny Daisley (Gloucestershire Quakers Domestic Violence Group).

Building on the success of all this work QADA are working in 2020 to strengthen the Faith in Action, even in Lockdown, and formalise a national network of Quaker Action as well as energising local activities to keep the levels of awareness and fundraising high.

*From Jenny Daisley (Nailsworth Local Meeting and Gloucestershire Quakers Domestic Violence Group)*

The Area Meeting Peace Group was originally formed in 2003, during the protests over the Iraq war, to co-ordinate the meetings for worship outside the Fairford US Air base. For over 15 years the group acted as a catalyst for many forms of peace witness within our meetings, including hosting public meetings, facilitating peace exhibitions, running learning workshops for Friends and encouraging meetings and Friends to speak out on a wide range of peace related issues. One such example was encouraging Friends to participate in the 'Roots of Resistance' protests against the DSEI arms fair in London in September 2019.

However following a steady decline in attendance due to Friends' other commitments, area meeting took the decision in November 2019 to:

- lay down the Peace Group in its current form;
- plan two area meeting wide events a year with a 'Faith in Action' focus, interpreting peace in its broadest sense;
- seek to appoint two 'Faith in Action Day' co-ordinators.

To date Area Meeting Nominations Committee has not yet found Friends who are able to take up these appointments. However in the meantime other groups, such as the Nailsworth Sanctuary Meeting Group, are taking on some of the Peace Group mantle.

*From Liz Whiteside (Nailsworth Local Meeting)*



This photograph was taken shortly before Christian CND held a service, in contrast to the one being held just over the road in Westminster Abbey celebrating 50 years of Trident (or something to that effect). Our act of worship included

contributions by Paul Parker and by Bruce Kent (celebrating much more than 50 years of campaigning against our country's preparedness to threaten to use/use nuclear weapons).

*From John Geale (Nailsworth Local Meeting) and Elyn Mitchell (Forest Local Meeting)*

## QUAKER CAMP - CAMPERS COME TO UNITY IN THE STORM

Quaker Camp 2019 started in beautiful sunshine in a lovely open field within sight of the sea. The beach was enjoyed by all, swimming for the brave, watching the waves and collecting amazing stones for the less keen. By the middle of the week the weather was changing and our lovely site was catching the worst of the gales from the sea. Thursday night the rain arrived with gusts of up to 30 mph. We'd seen the forecast and tied everything down more than it had ever been before. We even had volunteers (thanks go to Richard and Toby!) who got up in the storm to check that everyone and everything was ok. And it was, we were all fine and so were all the tents.



But the forecast for Friday night was meant to be even worse with gusts of up to 50 mph and possible thunder and lightning too. Fortified by an amazing breakfast (how did they do it after a night like that?) we all approached morning meeting for worship with trepidation. What should we do? And how could we do what needed to be done?

I can't remember any ministry in the meeting that morning but afterwards it became clear that feelings were running high and lots of people had something to say about what we should do next.

So we began by passing a stone around the circle. Everyone took a turn, if they wanted to, to say how they felt which included the children saying their piece too. As the stone progressed around it soon became clear that we were coming to unity. It was clear that we needed to strike camp before the next downpour of rain arrived at lunchtime. It was also clear that the lorry couldn't come any earlier that Saturday to take away the equipment, including the marquee. We needed to take down all the communal tents and equipment that we could and pack it in the marquee where we felt it would be safest.

Within minutes of us coming to a decision we were taking down tents; the washing up tent was down, the kitchen tent was being emptied, the cooker was being moved into the

marquee, the stores tent food was being sorted, etc, etc. Older children were organised to deliver drinks of water to everyone, younger kids came round with packets of biscuits.

Meanwhile the work continued and everything was packed into the now brimming marquee. It was amazing to see the camp pull together in this way, after what had already been a full on week camping and then an exhausting night in the storm. The work continued as we took our personal tents down and, just as we were finishing it started to rain. Somehow a makeshift lunch was even arranged. Despite the circumstances we even finished off with a touching Givings Day sharing of presents that we'd made at camp. I drove home totally shattered, looking forward to a good night's sleep.

But what touched me most about this Camp was the way we pulled together that morning. It was amazing seeing everyone in action, coming to unity on a tricky decision and working to the common good. Even the kids!

Yes, it was exhausting, emotional and we wondered why we ever do this. But then it comes to you, that's why we do this - for the community that we build during that special week in the summer.

Please join us next year!

*From Nicola Müller (Nailsworth Local Meeting and Camp Co-ordinator)*

## **THE WORK OF OUR PRISON CHAPLAINS**

Area meeting in October heard a report from two of our members who are prison chaplains. Judy Roles (Cheltenham) is a chaplain at Long Lartin, a high security prison near Evesham; Sue Barrance (Stroud) is a chaplain at Leyhill, a category 'D' open prison near Wotton. Both work as members of multi-faith teams, including Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist and other faith groups. Both receive valuable support from Friends from their weekly meetings for worship or Quaker faith sessions in the prisons.

There are naturally huge differences in their working environments. In a high security prison, staff enter via biometric finger recognition, airport-style scanners and X-ray machines. They move around the prison along corridors marked off by locked doors and gates. Long Lartin

has experienced three riots in the last two years, the ripples from which affect the running and atmosphere of the prison for many months afterwards. In an open prison, there are no barriers between buildings and the wings are only locked at tally times when prisoners are counted, and overnight. There are people moving about the prison site throughout the working day. But there are also some important common features and problems. Prisons generally suffered heavy cutbacks about ten years ago, and this has affected both prison facilities and staffing levels. There is more “management”; co-ordinating chaplains have become Managing Chaplains and need to spend time in management meetings and in preparing reports. As for the prisoners themselves, longer sentences mean that there are more elderly prisoners, and prisoners with serious health problems or complex social care needs. This in turn may make it difficult to find suitable hostel or other accommodation for prisoners being released.

At Long Lartin, Judy is often involved in supporting prisoners who are at risk of self-harm or suicide, as well as others in the prison hospital and those who have been ‘segregated’. She is a member of the prison’s Rehabilitation Culture Committee, which encourages initiatives that motivate personal change and carry hope. She works with men who take part in Restorative Justice meetings and runs a weekly music group. About ten Long Lartin prisoners attend a Quaker-led multi-faith meeting “Silence Inside”, which has been running for about five years.

A particular recent sadness was the death in August of a long-term Quaker prisoner at Long Lartin. Judy supported him through preparing papers for parole and compassionate release, and in the face of several setbacks. He died before the parole board could take a final decision. Judy was then involved in funeral arrangements and in a memorial meeting for his friends in prison. Such situations are likely to increase as the population ages. At Leyhill, Sue is often involved in supporting individual prisoners, and in work to obtain temporary release for men with close relatives who are seriously ill or have died. A Quaker meeting for worship is held every Wednesday. A recent highlight at Leyhill was a performance by the Leyhill Musical Theatre Group of ‘The Valley’, a play written and performed by residents and staff on the themes of the impact of austerity on drugs use, and the potential to support users in turning round their lives. The result was convincing, well-acted and moving. Seven members of the area meeting attended.

Part of Advices and Queries 33 reads, “Bear witness to the humanity of all people, including those who break society’s conventions or its laws. Try to discern new growing points in social

and economic life. Seek to understand the causes of injustice, social unrest and fear.” Quaker work in prisons is an important response to this advice, and we appreciate greatly those who undertake it.

*From Peter Carter (Stroud Local Meeting & AM Clerk)*

## 6 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Houses</b>
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)
	1 and 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 was 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. Painswick and Gloucester are Grade 2 and Cirencester and Nailsworth Meeting Houses are Grade 2\*. Nailsworth's regrading from Grade 2 was confirmed by Historic England in 2019, as part of a reassessment programme jointly run by Britain Yearly Meeting and Historic England. 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 reviews that are carried out by a professional surveyor

in order to identify replacement and maintenance requirements and provide a maintenance schedule. Gloucester Meeting House and Lodge, and Nailsworth's Meeting Houses and other 2 properties in Quaker Close, were surveyed in 2019.

## **SUMMARY OF WORK TO PROPERTIES UNDERTAKEN IN 2019**

### **CHELTHENHAM**

We completed substantial improvements to the meeting house funded by 3 recent legacies. Works included improvements to the front entrance, adding windows to the central cupola in the main meeting room, LED lighting throughout, adding sound insulation, and a new handrail in the approach from the garden. In the autumn work started in redecorating the rain meeting Room.

### **CIRENCESTER**

The screens dividing the coffee room and the meeting room from the main passageway have been refurbished. It is lovely to have them working properly again.

The hearing loop in both rooms has been rewired and serviced.

The crowns of both the Holm Oak and the Cockspur Thorn in the meeting house garden have been reduced. The two chairs in the counselling room have been recovered. The benches in the garden have all been treated and repaired.

Paper towel dispensers were fitted in the kitchen and the two cloakrooms mainly because one of our friends had a compromised immune system.

A significant programme of repairs and maintenance has been carried out to keep the meeting house in good order and to catch up on the list of suggested repairs in the 2016 quinquennial review.

### **The Warden's Cottage**

A new boiler has been installed and the sink and taps in the kitchen have been replaced.

The kitchen and bedroom have been professionally decorated and other decorating and repairs have been carried out.

In the yard between the Warden's Cottage and no. 49 Thomas Street, the drains have been cleared so the yard no longer floods. The downpipes and back wall have been painted.

## **GLOUCESTER**

### Meeting House:

A quinquennial review, which had been due in 2018, was carried out by Richard Basnett RICS. This produced a long list of recommended work, both urgent and needed within 5 years. Trustees appointed a small group to review the recommendations and confirm a schedule of works, most of which were deferred until 2020. The biggest task of the year was repairing a collapsed drain, which was paid for by our insurers.

Ash and Co continued to manage the meeting house, including seeking additional hirers, and revising the hiring conditions. After a trial year the management agreement was agreed and signed.

### The Lodge:

The Lodge continued to be managed by Naylor & Co as a residential tenancy. The Lodge was included in the quinquennial review. Minor repairs during the year were organised by Naylor and Co.

## **NAILSWORTH (Meeting House and cottages)**

After the completion of the Beech Hut, we turned our attention to the adjacent garden: new timber steps and protective decking around the mature Beech tree were constructed, as a first stage to creating a children's garden.

A quinquennial review was carried out by Richard Basnett, RICS. Nailsworth Finance and Premises Committee, in consultation with Trustees, produced a schedule of works for implementation in 2020.

Historic England has upgraded the listing of the Meeting House from 2 to 2\*. This re-assessment is part of a national programme jointly involving HE and Friends House.

In the autumn a programme of decoration and repairs to 1 Quakers Close was undertaken, between wardens.

## **PAINSWICK**

Painswick Meeting House has not needed any special attention apart from regular maintenance. Friends at Painswick are exploring ways of making the garden and the Meeting House more accessible.

## 7 FINANCIAL REVIEW

As we reported last year, we started a review of area meeting finances and other assets in July 2018. This review was completed in 2019 and approved by Area Meeting in July. The review addressed six topics: our meeting houses, our rental properties, our wardens, area meeting and local meeting relationships, managing and reporting our financial affairs, and Friends' financial contributions.

Our conclusions are summarised below.

- 1 Meeting Houses: We agreed to retain all our meeting houses for the foreseeable future, reviewing regularly how they are being used to deliver our purposes. We hope all our local meetings, including those that do not have their own meeting houses, will identify with and take an active interest in how our meeting houses are used. Our future quinquennial reviews will take a 20 year forward look, so that we can start to plan – and finance - major repairs well in advance.
- 2 Rental Properties: We also agreed to retain our rental properties for the foreseeable future. With the exception of The Lodge at Gloucester, our rents will be no less than the maximum housing benefit available locally. We agree to look at ways in which our rental properties might be used to increase our liquidity, without necessarily selling them, should the need arise. We will take the same 20 year forward look at potential major repairs.
- 3 Wardens: We will retain wardens at Cirencester and Nailsworth for the foreseeable future. In future we will consider whether to reappoint wardens, and whether wardens should be resident or not, on a case by case basis.
- 4 Area and Local Meeting Relationships: We are committed to strengthening Gloucestershire Friends' identity with area meeting, whilst acknowledging the strong relationship Friends have with their local meetings. We will work to ensure that all who are part of our Quaker communities respect the joint & several needs of our eight local meetings.
- 5 Managing and Reporting on our Financial Affairs: We agree that AM will not run a deficit budget, unless this is planned for and is associated with a realistic strategy for the use of reserves. The same principle will apply to local meetings. We are committed to transparency and consistency in all our financial activities and to clarity

in the way we report to Friends. and will amend our reporting practices to improve these.

- 6 Friends' Financial Contributions: Our annual appeal letters will be sent to members of the Religious Society of Friends and attenders who are recorded as belonging to GAQM and who have been regular worshippers for at least 12 months. This is the approach adopted by Britain Yearly Meeting for inclusion in the tabular statement. We reaffirm our commitment to respecting the individual financial situation of all our members and regular attenders and agree that all correspondence concerning Friends' guide contributions should be clear on this point.

We have adopted an action plan to make sure that we embed these changes in the way we work in future.

APPROVED by the Trustees on: .....

SIGNED by

Val Kirby .....

Clerk to the Trustees

Sarah Eilbeck .....

Treasurer

Marilyn Miles .....

Assistant Treasurer