

Quaker Contacts



Newsletter of Thaxted Area Meeting March 17 Issue 136

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One special event coming up

April 22nd – Woodbrooke on the Road at SWMH. Theme: 'Being a Quaker Community', with Simon Best

The Healing Group

This group now meets on the second Monday of most months at 7.00 pm. For further information contact Joan & Martin Gibson, telephone 01799 521984

Area Meetings 2017

Sunday 12th June at Stansted

Sunday 10th September at Bardfield

Sunday 10th December at Saffron Walden, to include joining with Saffron Walden Friends for a Christmas lunch.

The hosting Area Meeting will present its Annual Report.

It is helpful if Friends who require lunch let the LQM Clerk know beforehand.

Thaxted Area Meeting held 12th March at Dunmow

Membership matters

We record the receipt of a request for the transfer of membership for **Denise Stanley** from Saffron Walden meeting to Kingston and Wandsworth Area Meeting. Our Membership clerk Mike Collins has sent the transfer certificate. The clerk will write to Denise to wish her well.

We record the receipt of the certificate of transfer for **Robert Heaven** from Gloucestershire AM to Thaxted AM. and ask our membership clerk to issue the certificate of acceptance. We ask Jackie Bartlett to welcome Robert.

Appointments - We note that Jackie Bartlett has agreed to be Clerk to our Trustees

Data/safety regulations compliancy

We note that we have filled in the annual forms for 2017 and they will be returned to the Recording Clerk's office at Friends House.

Report of Meeting for Sufferings

Angela Pivac has reported on the Meeting for Sufferings held on 6 Feb 2017.

Sustainability - We ask our members and attenders and our local Meeting communities to continue to consider ways for making our AM a low carbon, sustainable community.

Response to international situation - Angela reminded us of the minute from MfS as regards the international situation. The statement has been circulated and was well received by our Local Meetings and wider faith groups. We encourage MfS to be bold in making timely statements. We send this minute to MfS. We thank Angela Pivac for her report. The report is printed in full on pages 4 & 5.

Support for our representatives to Meeting for Sufferings - We ask our representatives to Meeting for Sufferings to liaise with AM elders in advance of their Meetings where possible. This would also address the concern in the report for support for our representatives.

Treasurers Report for 2016

Our Treasurer, John Capper, has presented the Area Meeting accounts for 2016. We note that the consolidated accounts of the Area Meeting and 2 Springhill Road, including the accounts of all our local meetings, have recently been completed, and have been approved by Trustees. We have received the Area Meeting and 2 Springhill Rd, (Margaret Stubbs Memorial Fund) accounts.

Budget for 2017 - Our Treasurer, John Capper, has presented the budget for 2017. We note the contributions required from each LM to the AM funds. We

remind Friends attending conferences and events for AM to ask that the fees be paid by our Treasurer and to claim their expenses from him.
A summary of the accounts and budget are printed on page 4.
We approve the budget and thank our Treasurer for his work.

Trustees' annual report

Sheila Brignall has reported on the Annual report of the Trustees.
We note that the report complies with the guidelines laid down in the Handbook for Trustees of Quaker Meetings.
We thank our Trustees for their work.
An edited version of the report is printed on pages 6, 7 & 8.

Report on the spiritual life of Dunmow Local Meeting

Loes Reeve has reported on the life of Dunmow Local Meeting.
The report is printed in full on page 12.

Report from Forced Migration Conference

Loes Reeve and Nasreen Saxton reported on this conference which was held at Woodbrooke from 1st to 3rd February 2017. The report is printed on page 8 - 9. The much longer QCEA- QARN report is online from the Quaker website and has been put out on the "ThaxtedMM Yahoo group".
Nasreen Saxton will obtain booklets from the Refugee Council to be distributed to the Local meetings.
We ask our clerk to investigate the possibility of the Journeyman Theatre bringing their play 'The Bundle' to our AM.
We thank Loes and Nasreen for their report.

Dates, venues and themes of forthcoming Regional Gatherings

The Theme for the Year is 'Our Faith in the Future' facing turbulent times we seek a future where we let our lives speak.

Saturday June 24th Chelmsford FMH. Commemoration of WWI. Janet Scott will share insights and research from this period of our Quaker past.

Saturday September 30th Saffron Walden FMH The World Facing Turbulent Times post Brexit, Trump etc. Speaker: Juliet Prager deputy Recording Clerk,

Workshop to develop phrases to underpin Outreach

Karl Gibbs and Clare Yerbury have led us in a workshop to develop phrases to underpin Outreach. We ask them to collate the ideas and bring them to a future AM. We thank Karl and Clare for their workshop and help.
We thank Dunmow Friends for their warm hospitality today. We expect to meet next on Sunday 12th June at Stansted, if nothing occur to prevent.

Gill Parker

Thaxted Area Meeting 2016

Expenditure against budget

	Expenditure	Budget for 2016
Committees & Conferences:	£1817	£1350
Officers' Expenses:	£0	£150
QICJ Subscription:	£0	£35
Child Protection Subs.:	£90	£95
Regional Gathering:	£0	£200
Catering/Materials:	£0	£50
Accounts examination	£480	£480
AM Equipment	£43	
Bardfield Meeting House	£1520	
Total:	£3950	£2360
	Income	
Contributions	£2290	
Interest and dividends	£411	
Total	£2701	

The shortfall of £1249 was met from a legacy of £2500 from Betty Cave of Bardfield Meeting.

Thaxted Area Meeting Proposed Budget 2017

Committees & Conferences:	£2000
Officers' Expenses:	£150
QICJ Subscription:	£70
Child Protection Subs.:	£95
Regional Gathering:	£200 (allows for arrears)
Catering/Misc.:	£50
Accounts Examination	£480
Total:	£3045

Bardfield LM has little in the way of reserves and is likely to need some support in 2017. However this is unlikely to exceed the amount left to the Area Meeting by Betty Cave so Trustees agreed that this need not be budgeted for. The trustees agreed that the shortfall from 2016 should be recouped in 2017.

Area Meeting has about £400 in income from interest so most of the amount needed has to be met by contributions from the Local Meetings. The trustees propose contributions of £4200 be split up as follows:

Bardfield: £200 Dunmow: £800 Stansted: £800 Saffron Walden: £2400

Area Meeting approved this budget.

John Capper
Area Meeting Treasurer

Report of Meeting for Sufferings

held on Saturday, 4 February 2017 at Friends House

Court & Prison Register

This was the first MfS with the new Clerk, Anne Ullathorne, who paced the proceedings carefully, creating a balance between worship, business and fellowship. One of the first items being the Court & Prison Register which resonated with me since we, in SWQLM, had heard of the arrest of Sam Walton, a Quaker Peace & Social Witness, staff member, though acting in a personal capacity. Sam had tried to disarm war planes bound for Saudi Arabia.

Britain Yearly Meeting Sustainability Group

A major theme in the morning was the consideration of the annual report of BYM Sustainability Group, set up in 2014, following YM 2011 in Canterbury Minute 36 which committed Friends “to become a low-carbon, sustainable community”.

Liz Burch, Clerk of the Group, spoke to the report. She highlighted the positive actions taken already, praising the Hospitality Company of Friends House, Woodbrooke, initiatives such as the Living Witness project and advocacy on divestment from fossil fuels by QPSW. We were reminded that action on sustainability should “flow not from guilt or blame but from love”. The Meeting agreed with the report’s proposal to establish a small review group to consider the way forward.

Fracking for shale gas

Following the minute received from Pendle Hill AM in which they called for a complete ban on fossil fuels extraction including fracking for shale gas, AMs are encouraged to make this position known locally. We are also invited to join the anti-fracking Worship for Witness at the top of Pendle Hill at 2pm on 6th May.

MfS: mid-triennium review

We spent time in home groups considering how MfS is working, namely these questions: “Are we doing the things that MfS is asked to do?” And “What would help us to do this better?”

Quaker Housing Trust

“Five households in Britain become homeless every hour in the UK”. This was the opening remark of Jenny Brierley, clerk of QHT who presented the triennial report of its work, 2014 - 2016. Jenny went on to say that the housing crisis is getting worse with those on the lowest incomes hardest hit and accommodation for asylum seekers often of “an appalling standard”. QHT

projects tackle the symptoms of the crisis, not the cause and in its fiftieth year, they find society more polarised. Some of these projects are feasibility grants, useful as a start-up. Reps were impressed by the scale and scope of the Trust's work, plugging the holes for those homeless or poorly housed. The plea from QHT is for more money from us to create secure, affordable homes - what should be a basic necessity for everyone.

Yearly Meeting Gathering “Living out our faith in the world”

To be held at Warwick University, between 29 July and 5 August

Deborah Rowlands, Clerk of YM and Clare Scott Booth, First Ass. Clerk, told us of the proposed agenda and programme which will focus on movement building: working with others to make a difference. There will be more space for informal conversations this year with no programmed events over lunch time. Spiritual preparation documents will be available around the end of March.

Response to the current international situation

A draft minute had been prepared for Reps to make alterations. This was the last item of business and the statement was posted on the website shortly afterwards for Friends and their meetings to use as they see fit. The statement made clear our testimonies in regard to racist, discriminatory government policies and sending our prayerful support to Friends in other YMs.

Angela Pivac

Trustees Report for the year ending 31st Dec 2016

Governance

The Trustees are appointed for a three-year period by the Area Meeting. This period can be extended for a further term by agreement. Meetings are conducted using Quaker Business Method, with reports sent to Area meeting.

Objectives and Activities

We are mindful of the furtherance of the religious and charitable purposes of Friends and as we are all active members of our meetings we hopefully contribute to the wider Society and to public benefit. Distribution of funds has been as “custom and practice”. Surplus income from the residential property at 2 Springhill Rd. in Saffron Walden is donated to the Bursary Fund at Friends School Saffron Walden now known as Walden School.

Achievements and Performance

The number of Members in the Area meeting in 2016 was 77 and the number of Attenders approximately 42.

There were no plans for changes to the structure of the Area Meeting. Concern continues to be expressed at consistently low attendance at Business Meetings and the difficulty of finding Friends to fill posts.

Discussions continued on property maintenance issues at 2 Springhill Rd. Saffron Walden. The costs of maintenance and the pastoral needs of the tenants who are both in poor health took up our attention in the early part of the year. It took time to reconcile the exact roles of the committees concerned.

Trustees agreed a minimum list of maintenance in June.

Stansted Meeting House suffered multiple water leaks which were initially hard to detect but which were satisfactorily repaired finally. Stansted Friends reported an increase in Attenders.

Key Plans for the Future

Spiritual matters will continue to be pursued by Elders. Details of speakers and events organised by Elders and other interested parties from all the Meetings will be contained in separate reports to local Meetings for Business.

Elders and the Nominations Committee will continue to give thought to the concerns raised with regard to low attendance at Business Meetings.

We will continue to give thought to the future of Bardfield Meeting which had falling numbers last year but a degree of optimism is justified and we are happy to report that numbers have increased to 8.

A refitting of the kitchen is planned and the Meeting has made an approach to The Bardfield Charities for a financial contribution.

We will begin to consider the Financial Reserves held by the Area Meeting.

We plan, in liaison with the Clerk to Resources Committee and the Warden at Saffron Walden Quaker Meeting, to develop a Policy on Health & Safety for our Meeting Houses. Such a policy, once developed will extend, with necessary amendments to the constituent Meetings in the Area meeting.

Public Benefit

All of the Meetings in the Area Meeting continue to offer public worship each Sunday. Times of Worship are posted outside each Meeting House.

Stansted: There is storage of donations for the local Food Bank in conjunction with local Churches Together. Groups using the Meeting House include NHS Cognitive Behaviour Therapists. Pilates, Yoga and French language classes.

The meeting has also hosted an open day on Criminal Justice, an illustrated talk by Friends from Saffron Walden on the Quaker Tapestry. These open events drew in both local Quakers and non-Quakers.

Dunmow: There is full five day per week use of the large Meeting Room by pre-school nursery which had a change of ownership in August necessitating a change of Licence to Occupy.

Bardfield: There is continued use by local groups including folk group, WEA Classes, Song group and rehearsal space for local theatre group.

Saffron Walden: There is continued use by local groups including yoga classes, counselling, Young Mums, Womens' groups Art class, drama group, Pilates, Art History, Mindfulness, Tiny Tempo dance group, Language class, Rock School, Historical Society, Fry Art Gallery, baby Yoga and Tai Ji

Sheila Brignall.

Clerk to Trustees 2016

Report of Forced Migration Conference

Instead of giving you all the details of the Woodbrooke Conference on forced migration, like there were 80 people present, 80!

I would like to show you the minutes we printed, and also you can go to the QARN website, if you are interested.

<http://www.qarn.org.uk/homepage/category/qarn-minutes/>

I would like to say something what it did for me.

Despite the fact that the subject was very grim, there was this buzz going on.

I think you could quite easily call it the Light.

So much love, compassion, and strength.

I for one was overwhelmed by it all.

People from abroad, people from the UK, it was fantastic.

All with the same question; what can we do to help?

And a lot of people were helping already

The other thing that struck me, was how well organized we Quakers are.

Despite the fact that all those Q's can be quite bewildering.

Then there was a play "The Bundle," an asylum seeker's story by The Journeymen Theatre

I wondered if we could ask them to perform at one of our Area Meetings

They were excellent, and their performing was very moving.

In short, it was a privilege to be there.

Loes Reeve

Editors note: The minute is quite long and available in full from the QARN website - see above. We have had to edit it for reasons of space.

Minute from the 'Forced Migration: how can Quakers respond' Conference held at Woodbrooke 3-5 February 2017;

We were reminded of Quakers of Advices & Queries 33 and 32. (*Quoted*)

We came as individuals in UK to focus our energy around forced migration and how Quakers can respond. We are all at different places on our journey, for some this is new, others bring years of commitment to supporting people seeking sanctuary and refugees, or of trying to change the system, and we share strong Quakerly commitment to peace, justice and equality that has guided us through the weekend together, and to healing the brokenness of our own societies.

The people who have brought us together have come from far away places where there is war, oppression of people on the basis of race, religion, nationality, gender, sexuality, belonging to a particular social group, or their political opinion, and others have fled war, famine, and poverty that has been created by climate change and politics. They have travelled by many often-dangerous means to reach sanctuary. They come looking for a safe place to live and for their children. Some of them are children, they travel alone, vulnerable, cold, hungry, frightened, brave and full of dreams.

We come from communities where some welcome those seeking safety and others do not. Others who have brought us together are decision-makers, MPs who create laws, Judges who interpret the laws, Home Office staff who put the law into action, private agencies that carry out work on behalf of the Government for example in providing accommodation, detention facilities, transport around the system and sometimes out of the country, and then there is the media.

If coming in an unsteady boat across the Mediterranean is anyone's safest route, we as humanity can do better. We need a different language for migration because the current situation and discourse is 'othering' people.

We feel a deep leading to act together on a political level in Britain and at the European level. In doing so we are acting upon our heritage, our way of being, and the leading of the spirit.

We respond to Tim Gee's invitation to put together a short publication to inform the basis of a spirit-led position of Quakers in Britain, and so to be sent for consideration by our Yearly Meeting. We invite the following people from the weekend to contribute a short 400-word draft on the following themes:

Reflections after Calais – Renke Meuwese,
A tested concern – Julia Bush,
Causes of forced migration – Alex Randal
and Andrew Lane,
The experience of destitution in the UK –
Chris Gwyntopher and Bridget Obi,

The hostile environment – Barbara and
David Forbes, and Gina Clayton,
Detention centres – Crystal Dickinson,
Brexit – Till Geiger,
Working for a safer world - Laurel
Townhead.

The unconditional love that flows from our gathered Conference this weekend flows into the inspired Minute from yesterday's Meeting for Sufferings that was read earlier.

We work towards the breaking down of all barriers that divide us and define us, whether between countries, in the NHS, between those who have faith and those who do not, or in our own minds.

Communiqué from Glebe House

A summary of Trustees' Minutes from November 2016

Staff pay increase deferred

On recommendation from the Finance & Property Group, Trustees agreed that a pay increase be deferred until the end of the financial year, March 2017. This is due to the facts that occupancy and referral levels are not sufficiently stable at the moment.

The first repayment of the **loan from TTOC** (Turn the Other Chic) has been received. Glebe House has received **an unsolicited donation** of £1000 towards transition work from one of the Joseph Rowntree Foundations.

Financial Report

The financial position is healthy, especially if the two current assessments convert to admissions.

Cost Benefit Analysis

Discussions are proceeding with a researcher recommended by Circles UK to take this forward. We are indebted to Janet Nicholls, Trustee, who has shared her expertise in research methods.

Final Report of Joining In - music research project.

The young people found this experience both positive and rewarding. The results demonstrated improved empathy, ie turn-taking when speaking.

School Governance

Karen Parish, named manager of the school and Michelle Hamilton-Dutoit, named head teacher, have demonstrated and submitted relevant policies and curriculum to the DfE which have been accepted.

Trustees are not required to be school Governors so have no responsibilities in this area, though thank Karen and Michelle for their thorough work.

Director's Report

Glebe House is confirmed with ongoing accreditation as a Therapeutic Community.

Eastwood Transitions Foundation

Work is progressing towards a 6th Circle by Easter. A new Circles project worker is in the process of being appointed.

Duty Trustee Reports

Trustees are using the CQC framework rather than standards from the Children's Home framework for their monthly duty visit.

An Independent Visitor is reporting monthly on the Regulation 44 requirements. Trustees recognise the quality of these reports from what is seen as a 'critical friend'.

Angela Pivac, Trustee

Leighton Park General Meeting - March 17 2017

There were almost forty present at the Meeting, including representatives from nineteen Area Meetings.

The advantage of being on a Friday was that it was a normal school day. After coffee there was then the opportunity to see classes being taught and to talk to a teacher who was free and in his classroom. The school uses Google Classroom which he demonstrated. Having joined the school in January he was very enthusiastic about the system which is used throughout the school. Homework is set on it so that students and parents can see what it is and view resources used in lessons. They can also submit assignments and receive feedback.

“School in a Park” showed how the park has been an invaluable resource since the founding of the school in 1890. This was illustrated with a number of slides, including ones from the early days of the school, and several books eg records of the Natural History Society. Apart from the excellent facilities for a variety of games there are many habitats for a variety of wildlife, birds having been of particular interest over many years.

The General Meeting included reports from the Head and Bursar. The main hall is being extended with a larger foyer and a new music and media centre added with classrooms, a custom built media centre and a “live lounge” for rehearsals etc plus seven practice rooms. Work is under way, due to be completed next year, the costs being met from funds saved for this purpose. A new car park is planned, hopefully to be completed this year, again paid for out of existing funds. The next major project is a sports hall, although this will require fund raising and borrowing. Numbers are healthy and the school made a surplus last year.

John Capper, March 2017

Annual Report of Dunmow Local Meeting

We haven't a great deal to report over the last twelve months.

Membership

We are still coming to terms with the loss of Honor and Ian Robertson and of Terry Mickle in the early part of last year. One other of our Friends (Joan Norman) has now moved from Dunmow to Chelmsford to be nearer her family. On a happier note we are delighted that the number of our attenders has risen from two to three.

Wrens Pre-school Nursery

The nursery changed hands at the end of the last academic year which required a re-negotiation of the lease. The new owner, Joanna Mardell, lives in Dunmow and also has another nursery in one of the nearby villages. We look forward to developing the same happy relationship with her as we had with her predecessor.

Quinquennial Inspection

This was completed in the autumn of 2016. The items flagged as needing attention are largely those you would expect in a building of this age. Two major items which we were intending to deal with this year in any case were:

- the trees all of which are getting rather large and will need the attention of a tree surgeon. The horse chestnut at the front is of particular concern and we wonder whether it will need to be taken down;
- the wiring which was last checked about 7 years ago.

Once these tasks have been completed, it may be necessary to attend to the front wall which is badly cracked. We have been monitoring this and it has been stable for a number of years. If, however, we have to remove the tree, it may be necessary to have the wall rebuilt.

Matters Spiritual

Although our meetings are generally quiet, they are deep and meaningful. As a meeting we are not greatly active in the world but we do, prayerfully, uphold the work of others and offer a space for quiet and F(f)riendly spiritual regeneration.

Deadline for material June 12th 2017 after AM

Please send a full version of items to us as soon as possible, bearing in mind that **we may then edit material** to suit the publication.

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