



Quaker Peace
& Social Witness

The new economy

Reading group programme guide

QPSW (Quaker Peace and Social Witness) are supporting Friends to set up reading groups to accompany the new economy series of seven booklets. The new economy reading groups will be set up by Friends in their meeting (or adopted by pre-existing groups), with session plans provided by QPSW.

The idea of the reading groups is to create a space where Friends can discuss and gain clarity on the ideas raised in the new economy booklet series. By the end of the course, Friends should understand more about our current economic system, feel more confident critiquing economic policies and have a clearer idea about what alternatives are needed.

"We need to continue to learn more about how we are influenced and constrained by the economic system. We need to ask the question whether this system is so broken that we must urgently work with others of faith and good will to put in its place a different system in which our testimonies can flourish.

As individuals, and in our Meetings, we must return to the place from which testimony comes, to open ourselves to the Spirit and to wait humbly in the light. Together, we can help one another to overcome our inertia."

Minute 23, Britain Yearly Meeting 2011

How will reading groups work?

- Friends set up reading groups in meeting, or agree to join the programme with a pre-existing group at their meeting (see guidance below).
- Groups can be 3 people or more. An ideal size is 6 – 12.
- One nominated person from the reading group accesses reading programme session plans and new economy booklets via the sign up on www.quaker.org.uk/new-economy
- Groups meet across 8 sessions. Session plans are released monthly between November 2016 and June 2017, although groups can access these session plans at any time after their release, and work through them more slowly.

Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

Telephone 020 7663 1035

Internet www.quaker.org.uk/neweconomy Email neweconomy@quaker.org.uk

QPSW - Part of Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

- The programme will involve reading the new economy booklets at home, followed by group discussion and activities in the sessions.
- Apart from an introductory session, each reading group session will be focused on the issues raised in each new economy booklet. The series of seven new economy booklets explore the following topics:
 - *Economic policy – what's it for and how should we measure economic success?*
 - *Good work and business structures that bring social benefit*
 - *Creating a just, sustainable energy system*
 - *How to reform banking and money creation*
 - *A fair way to share the earth's resources, such as land, air and water*
 - *The role of public services, markets and privatisation in the new economy*
 - *Democracy in our economy*
- Session plans will be flexible so that you can adapt them to the size of your group, the time you have available to meet and your group's particular interests.

How to set up a new economy reading group in your area

1. Find people in your local or area meeting to create a group

You may want to sign up to the reading programme with a pre-existing group, like your meeting's sustainability group.

If you want to create a new group, you can do this through word of mouth, by putting up posters to advertise that a group is forming, or by adding an item to newsletters and announcements in your meeting.

It can be useful to arrange a short initial meeting for anyone interested to explain or agree how the group will work and organise logistics like time, place and roles and responsibilities (see below).

2. Think about how to make your group welcoming for everyone

Consider how to make the group welcoming for people who don't feel confident reading (either because of their eyesight or literacy), haven't had much experience of discussing subjects like economics or have a disability. There will be more guidance about this in the session plans. Sometimes even emphasising at the first meeting that you want the group to be open to everyone and that you don't need any economic knowledge to take part, can be a good first step.

3. Agree a time and place for the group to meet regularly

Your meeting may have space you can use. A room not much bigger than the size of your group, with chairs you can put in a circle is ideal. It is also a good idea to have access to a kettle so you can make tea and coffee. Think about whether it will be accessible to any members of your group with disabilities.

In terms of how often to meet, you may wish to meet once a month or less frequently. Bear in mind that reading group session plans will be released once a month from November 2016 and that there will be eight session plans available in total.

4. Roles and responsibilities

It's useful to agree who will take responsibility for leading each session, and other tasks associated with running the programme. These include accessing session plans and new economy booklets and distributing these to other group members, organising the room bookings and providing tea and coffee if you want it. You don't have to decide all this straight away – it can be organised as sessions progress. There may be one or two people who lead on setting up the group initially, but at an introductory meeting or the first session you may wish to offer others a chance to get more involved. Sharing responsibility around helps everyone feel more ownership of the group.

With this in mind, it can be a good idea to change facilitators for each session, so that everyone has a chance to host a particular topic. You may also decide to have two facilitators for each meeting, who plan the session together, rather than just one. Session plans are designed so that facilitators don't need any specialist knowledge about the topic of discussion.

Having said all this, if your group decides to have one single, constant facilitator the whole way through – that is completely fine, as long as it's

something the group has decided on together and everybody involved feels happy with how things are organised.

5. Get the reading group session plans

These session plans will provide activities and questions for discussions to guide you through a meeting exploring different economic issues.

Session plans will be released from November 2016, and you can access them by signing up at www.quaker.org.uk/new-economy.

It is recommended that only ONE contact person from each reading group signs up. This contact person will then take responsibility for sending session plans and information to other group members. The reason that we recommend using a single contact person is so that information is not duplicated (e.g. we don't send double the required paper copies of new economy booklets to the same group because two people have requested them separately).

6. Order paper copies of the new economy booklets if you need them

When your contact person signs up to the reading group programme (see above), there is an option to order paper copies of the booklet that are available.

Please note that we have limited copies of the booklets, so please only order the amount you need. The booklets and postage are free.

7. Let your clerk know

You don't necessarily need agreement from your meeting (eg. at Meeting for Worship for Business) to set up a Reading Group. However, tell your clerk or others in the meeting about the group, so they can help let other Friends know about it (eg. during notices) or provide any other support you need.

8. If you need further support...

...on setting up a group, accessing session plans or facilitating the meetings, you can contact Cait Crosse, new economy project manager, on neweconomy@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1035.

FAQS

I'm not the group's 'contact person' but I'm going to facilitate a session and I'd like support with facilitation from QPSW. Is that possible?

That's completely fine. If you've read the session plan for the session you are going to facilitate and still have questions or want any other support you can email Cait at neueconomy@quaker.org.uk or call her on 020 7663 1035.

When are the next new economy booklets available, and how can we order copies?

Booklets 1 & 2 are already available (see above for sign up info). Booklets 3 and 4 will be out by Christmas 2016. Booklets 5, 6, and 7 will be out in early 2017. We will send emails to all reading group contact people, informing them when booklets 3 - 7 become available and asking if they'd like to order paper copies.

We've signed up to the reading group programme online but forgot to order copies of booklets 1 & 2. How can we order them?

Email neueconomy@quaker.org.uk to order copies of the booklets that are already available.

I'm not sure if a reading group programme has already started in my Meeting. How can I find out?

Ask your clerk – they should be able to tell you if a reading group has already been set up and who to contact for more information. If your clerk isn't sure, you can also email us (neueconomy@quaker.org.uk) and we'll let you know if a group has been set up in your area.

Can non Quakers join our reading group?

Of course! There will be some Quaker references and terms in the new economy booklets and session plans, so just make sure you explain these to any non-Quakers present.

How long are reading group sessions supposed to be?

We recommend that the groups meet for around 2 hours for each session. However, for some Meetings this will not be possible and we have designed the session plans so they can be adapted for sessions of different lengths.

I can't find anyone else in my area to start a reading group. Can I participate in the programme as an individual?

Reading group session plans are designed for groups of at least 3 people. However, you can still read the booklets on your own and consider the questions raised in the booklets (in the blue boxes) or in the session plans. You can also join in online discussions about the booklets with other people taking part in the new economy reading groups across the country: bit.ly/new-economy-discussion