

Quaker News



An update on Quaker work in the care of Britain Yearly Meeting



Tackling the bigger picture

No. 102 – Winter/spring 2019

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Cover image: Poster from Britain Yearly Meeting's Sanctuary Everywhere Programme.

Editorial

“Let your life speak.”

Advices & queries 27

I've always been challenged by this sentence from *Advices & queries*, the set of questions which Quakers in Britain use to hold ourselves to account for the way we live in light of our faith. Our lives will speak whatever we do; it's what they speak of that matters! So, how do our lives speak today?

Our actions speak volumes: the choices we make with our money say a lot about the values we hold. In the case of Britain Yearly Meeting's decision not to invest in companies which profit from the occupation of Palestine (page 3), we show we stand for equality and justice in that troubled region. In the simplicity we seek in our daily lives and in our engagement with politicians, we speak up for the planet at a time of climate breakdown (pages 4 and 5). The part Quaker meetings are playing in the growing sanctuary movement (page 14) speaks of our recognition of the common humanity we share with refugees and other migrants. Britain Yearly Meeting's support

for the Turning the Tide nonviolent social change programme in several nations of East Africa (page 10) speaks of our commitment to peace and social justice.

Closer to home, our Quaker meeting houses (pages 8 and 9) are often a way of having a visible presence in the community. How they are run, and what happens in them, can speak not just to the Quakers who use the building for worship, but also to other community members who come through our doors. They can also be a base for action and a place of welcome for worshippers and activists alike.

This work is only possible because Quakers around Britain support it – by getting involved (page 7), and by contributing financially through gifts and legacies (pages 14 and 15).

How does your life speak? What does it say?

Paul Parker
Recording Clerk

Quaker News

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Britain Yearly Meeting works on behalf of Quakers in Britain, supporting the Quaker faith and putting Quaker values to work in the world. It is a registered charity, number 1127633.

Quakers try to live simply and sustainably, promoting peace, equality and truth. Putting faith into action is central to their way of life and they gather weekly for quiet worship, usually on a Sunday, in around 480 locations across Britain.

You are welcome to any Quaker meeting for worship. Find your local meeting, and more information about us, at www.quaker.org.uk.

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Quakers will not profit from the occupation of Palestine

Decision on investments follows a long history of Quaker work for peace in Palestine and Israel.

Helen Drewery, Head of Witness and Worship

Britain Yearly Meeting has become the first church in the UK to announce that it will not invest any of its centrally held funds in companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine.

The move follows a long history of Quakers working for a just peace in Palestine and Israel. This involvement has, says Recording Clerk Paul Parker, “opened our eyes to the many injustices and violations of international law arising from the military occupation of Palestine by the Israeli government.”

“With the occupation now in its 51st year, and with no end in near sight, we believe we have a moral duty to state publicly that we will not invest in any company profiting from the occupation.”

A concern about investment in this area was first raised by Quakers in Devon. The concern reached Meeting for Sufferings, the national representative body of Quakers in Britain, and was considered in October 2018.

Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee and the Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations also contributed their views.

On advice from Meeting for Sufferings, trustees decided in November to adopt the new position, which builds on Meeting for Sufferings’ 2011 decision to boycott goods produced in illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine.

The commitment fits into a long Quaker history of pursuing ethical investments. It follows decisions not to invest funds in, among others, the fossil fuel industry, arms companies, apartheid South Africa, and – going even further back – the transatlantic slave trade.

“We know this decision will be hard for some to hear,” explains Paul Parker. “We hope they will understand that our beliefs compel us to speak out about injustices wherever we see them in the world, and not to shy away from difficult conversations.”

Ethical choices

Trustees and those managing our investments will be using several publicly available resources to identify and make decisions about companies to ensure they do not profit from the occupation of Palestine. These include the American Friends Service Committee’s Investigate database (www.investigate.afsc.org) and the EIRIS Foundation database (www.businessinoccupiedlands.org). Quakers may wish to use these when considering their meeting’s investments.

More information for Quakers on managing financial resources in a way that is consistent with their beliefs is available at www.quaker.org.uk/ethicalfinance.

“As Quakers, we seek to live out our faith through everyday actions, including the choices we make about where to put our money.”

While Britain Yearly Meeting does not currently hold any investments in companies profiting from the occupation, trustees have amended our investment policy to ensure this remains the case in future.

You can view the new investment policy online at <http://bit.ly/BYMinvestment>.

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A section of the Israeli Separation Barrier. Photo: Creative Commons

Joining the chorus for climate action

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With action on climate change needed more urgently than ever, we explore how Quakers are working with others to inspire a shift in government environmental policy.

The UN's latest scientific report on climate change, published in October, is a sobering read. It concludes that global warming needs to be kept to a maximum of 1.5 degrees Celsius to limit the risk of dangerous floods, heatwaves and drought.

Given that current emissions set us on course for over 3 degrees of warming, the need for urgent climate action is stark. But the report's other key conclusion is more encouraging: that with bold government leadership in the next few years and action by citizens and businesses, achieving this target is still possible.

Quaker News spoke to Chris Walker, Sustainability & Peace Programme Manager, to find out more about how Quakers both individually and as a faith group are working to influence the government to take action on climate change at this crucial time.

Q: Can you describe the Quaker background to this work?

A: In 2011 Quakers committed to become a low-carbon, sustainable community, and also pledged to speak out to encourage politicians to take action on climate change. This pledge comes from the long-held conviction that realising our Quaker testimonies means engaging with change on economic and political levels.

This has been true throughout our history, whether it's been working to end the slave trade, oppose war or support economic equality. While climate change will shape all our lives, it will mostly hit the world's poorest and least powerful people the hardest. Seen this way, it's a matter of justice.



A silent protest as part of the No Faith in Fracking movement. Photo: BYM

Q: How does protest and direct action fit in to this picture?

A: Quakers have always drawn attention to unjust government policy through nonviolent public action. In recent years the UK government's continued investment in fossil fuels and other high-carbon industries, and failure to stem the destruction of nature, has led Friends to join peaceful direct action and demonstrations – acts of resistance that bring a wider awareness of these causes.

Just one of many examples I could cite is Quaker involvement in the inspiring No Faith in Fracking vigils. Local Friends, and others of faith, are currently meeting monthly at Lancashire's Preston New Road fracking site to bear witness to the environmental destruction posed by the industry. They have been

Quiet diplomacy

Since 2013 Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) has been offering quiet diplomacy at the international climate change negotiations to help build communication and understanding between countries. Britain Yearly Meeting is currently funding its Human Impacts of Climate Change programme for three years from legacy funds.

QUNO's Lindsey Fielder Cook was at COP24 in Poland, the latest round of international climate talks:

"It is critical that a country like the UK, birthplace of the industrial revolution, shows leadership at this time," she says. "It needs to lead efforts to deliver the climate finance and greenhouse gas emission reductions promised to poorer countries prior to the adoption of the 2015 Paris Agreement. This is called 'pre-2020 action', and is critical to building trust in the negotiations and their purpose: to agree on effective and fair guidelines to implementing emissions cuts."

Read Lindsey's full report on the conference on our blog: <http://bit.ly/cop24quno>.

working with Britain Yearly Meeting to spread the word about what is happening and encourage Quakers from far and wide to participate.

Q: Does being a faith group affect our political advocacy?

A: Working with other faith groups can make our voice stronger.

In September, after hearing our concerns on climate change, Claire Perry, Minister for Energy and Clean Growth, invited Quakers in Britain to convene a group of faith leaders to meet with her.

At this meeting Recording Clerk Paul Parker and other faith representatives welcomed the government's consideration of deepening the UK's emissions target to achieve nearly 100 per cent cuts by 2050, as recommended by the UN. The faith leaders, who represented Anglicans, Catholics, Jews and Methodists, also spoke of the urgent need for concrete policy. We're ready, they said, to back bold leadership if the government will provide it.

Q: Are we only working with other faith groups?

A: Not necessarily. In November I joined campaigners, politicians and faith leaders to mark the tenth anniversary of the Climate Change Act. This piece of legislation was a global first. It not only committed the UK to cut carbon fast; it set out a series of carbon budgets providing regular and clear targets. Representatives from organisations ranging from the Women's Institute to the RSPB were present. We called on the government to act now to preserve the act's legacy.

Q: What else can we do to influence the government?

A: Quakers from over 40 meetings have written to or met with their

MPs to call on them to back urgent action on climate change in Parliament. They are reminding Parliament of the government's duties, under UK law and international agreements, to cut carbon fast.

Q: Have they got the message?

A: We still have much work to do. In December UK government ministers attended the UN climate change talks in Poland (see box, left) in the knowledge that the UK is on course to miss its current climate targets.

The latest government budget pledged more new money for road building than for green infrastructure. The recent Agriculture Bill, despite being a golden opportunity to back sustainable farming, includes no climate ambition. Clearly, considerable progress is needed in the UK's policies in this area.

Q: It sounds like working together is the way to change this?

A: These last few months have brought home to me just how much Quakers have to offer the movement for climate justice – and how much we're already doing.

The best part is, in all of this, we're not alone.

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Three ways to connect on climate policy

In December 20 Quakers met in Manchester to learn ways of working with politicians for climate action. Climate lobbying trainers Hope for the Future helped them find ways to connect with MPs and local councillors from all political shades to support good, urgent climate policy.

Here are three top tips from the event.

- **Keep it local.** Speak to your MP's local concerns. Green investment could offer every constituency jobs, cleaner air and better services for local people.
- **Show your constituency cares.** Why not join with others in your community – for example, different faith groups – to show that climate change is a widely held concern?
- **Have an offer.** MPs are busy people, so help them out. Provide clear information on climate issues, invite them to an event where they can meet lots of people, or coordinate local press coverage for them.



Quakers meet to explore ways of working with politicians on climate change. Photo: Hope for the Future

Speaking up for children and young people

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Children and young people play a key part in Quaker life. They participate in our meetings and have their say in the wider decisions we take as a faith body. One way of supporting them in this is to be an Advocate for Children & Young People's Work.

Many area meetings have such an advocate. They speak up for the need to include children and young people in the life of local and area meetings, and connect them with the central work of the Children & Young People's (CYP) team.

Late last year we decided to review the role to see how it was working. We also held a conference for advocates, where they explored the essentials, swapped stories of successes and challenges and took a look at the latest resources available to them.

Their reasons for being in the role were varied. One advocate

thought it helped bring about a more diverse Quaker community. Others wanted children and young people to be even more valued at their area meeting, saying that the whole community gains from their inclusion. Another thought that issues affecting young people should have a place in Quaker meetings, and that the role supported this happening.

The review concluded that CYP advocates play an integral part in making children and young people feel involved and visible in Quaker life, and that ideally every area meeting would have one. Since then Meeting for Sufferings, our national representative body, has agreed that the role should be added to the list of recommended roles in our central text *Quaker faith & practice*, and has passed this on to be approved by Quakers more widely at our annual decision

making gathering, Yearly Meeting.

If you are interested in being a CYP advocate, check in with your area meeting to find out if they have availability in this role.

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Advocates share their experiences.

Photo: Chris Holmquist

Exploring gender diversity through connection and collaboration

In the Children & Young People's team we are dedicated to the Quaker commitment to equality and belief that there is something of God in everyone. We start from the assumption that all young Quakers have an equal right to participate in Quaker events and experience belonging in their Quaker community, irrespective of how they choose to identify and present themselves.

In recent years at Quaker youth events we have witnessed increasing gender diversity among young Friends. Alongside this we have received requests from Quaker youth workers asking for help with understanding the questions and practicalities that gender diversity brings.

The Quaker Youth Work Conference in late 2018 provided us with a space to explore and respond to these concerns. It was aimed at people working with young Quakers aged 11 and over, and attendees ranged from summer event organisers and committee members to adult volunteers and people working with young Friends in meetings.

Many participants said the event had been a valuable way of engaging with the issue. "The conference raised my awareness of gender diversity," said one participant. "I now feel more confident to listen with love and understanding and feel able to signpost young people and their families to organisations that can

support them."

Our hope is that the connections and knowledge shared at the conference will help to ensure that adequate support and arrangements for young people can continue to be put in place, enabling us all to uphold our commitment to equality.

As one youth worker put it: "Coming together to explore gender diversity through education and collaboration was invaluable. We did not leave with a solution, but we did leave with a sense that progress was beginning."

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New opportunity for meetings curious about committee service

Regardless of your skills, experience and availability, there could be a central Quaker role that's perfect for you. Invite us to your meeting to find out more.

Zoe Prosser, Events & Committee Services Officer

Becoming more involved in the central structures that guide and shape the work of our Society may seem a daunting prospect, but it really doesn't need to be. That's why, in my capacity as secretary of Central Nominations Committee, I would like to come to your meeting to discuss the different ways to get involved, and how the nominations process works. Visits last around an hour, including time for questions, and I am happy to cater to different sizes of group.

I admit that before I came to work for Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), central service seemed like a distant thing. I lacked a proper understanding of what committees actually did, and I would have said that such roles were not for me. I doubted that I had the knowledge, time or experience to offer.

I was wrong. The work of BYM affects us all, and this relies largely on the work done by those serving on committees and volunteering in many varied roles. There are opportunities here for everyone, regardless of skill, experience or availability, and exciting areas to get involved in, from supporting overseas peacebuilding to strengthening spirituality and community in meetings.

What's more, our community is enhanced by having a diverse range of people on our committees. Their unique qualities are crucial to the success of our shared work.

To find out more, or invite me to your meeting, do get in touch.

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Four stories of Quaker service



Elizabeth Allen

"My committee work is part of how I live out my faith, sometimes the part where I step beyond the limits I put on myself and go the extra mile or more. In doing this, I've found that I'm not depleted. Instead I have been upheld and gained self-insight. This has been a profound spiritual experience. It is a gift and it is a joy that has drawn me into the heart of our Society."



Siobhan Haire

"I have enjoyed getting to know Friends from other parts of the country. Learning about them, their concerns and their ministries. I also love bumping into them at Quaker events, which makes me feel part of an interlinked community. I usually come away from committee planning weekends inspired by the variety and friendliness of the Society."



Silas Price (and Taffy)

"I thoroughly enjoyed my committee service. I have met many interesting Friends from around Britain and it has enriched my understanding of Quakerism and my spiritual journey. The only real challenge has been fitting the meetings around my working week but I have never regretted using my annual leave to allow me to attend. I still feel deeply appreciative of the entire experience."



Deborah Rowlands

"I have worked with a wonderful variety of other Quakers and found that the skills I had developed locally could be used to help the whole yearly meeting. My local meeting benefitted by feeling a closer relationship with what was going on in our corporate work. Cross-fertilisation of ideas with people from other parts of the country is another gift which this service has given me."

Building trust

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How Vibrancy staff and meetings in Britain are working together on the joys and difficulties of Quaker property.

Mairi Campbell-Jack, Communications Coordinator, Vibrancy in Meetings

Buildings are, at their most basic, four walls and a roof. Over the past year the Vibrancy in Meetings team has been discovering that for Quaker meetings they can often mean much more.

Since October 2016 the project's four Local Development Workers (LDWs) have been tasked with seeing what difference they can make by supporting local and area meetings in various ways.

For all four development workers, one primary issue they encountered from listening to and spending time with meetings is that of property. From the time and resources meetings need to spend on maintaining it properly, to what having a building enables Friends to do in the world, or the attachments that come with particular places, the team has found that looking at what we do with buildings is close to the heart of many meetings.

Here we look at four different ways the team and meetings have worked together in this area.

1. Allowing voices to be heard on a difficult decision

Part of a Local Development Worker's role can be to help a diversity of voices be heard when tackling an emotive subject. Wendy Hampton, LDW for North West England, found this out when she worked with Swarthmoor Area Meeting to help clarify how Rookhow Meeting House could be best used today.

Rookhow was built in 1725 as a central meeting place for a scattered group of rural local meetings, but changing behaviours in more recent years have made this kind of use less relevant. The building is also now in need of repair and upgrading.

However, the historic nature of Rookhow means it remains firmly rooted within the area meeting and its history. Many Friends felt attached and emotional about the building's future. Any decision needed to be taken carefully, with all voices being heard. As part of this process, a 'threshing meeting'

was held. As a known and trusted person, Wendy was able to make sure that this important meeting was convened and held in a way which allowed Friends' voices to be heard.

At the meeting a diverse group of Friends and other interested people were given the chance to express their views, concerns and interest in the future of Rookhow. The current use of the building was clarified and offers of help and support were made. Friends clearly expressed their hopes and fears about the building's future.

An additional unexpected outcome was the formation of a

About the Vibrancy in Meetings Programme

The Vibrancy in Meetings Pilot Programme is doing something new for Quakers in Britain: exploring whether having locally based staff can help meetings to thrive as communities, with a vital Quaker ministry, becoming stronger, more connected, more confident, more engaged, and more sustainable.

The three-year pilot, running until December 2019, has been funded by legacies to Britain Yearly Meeting, and is also supported by Woodbrooke's resources and facilities. The programme is being independently assessed, and options for its future are being considered by BYM and Woodbrooke Trustees in consultation with other groups including central committees and Meeting for Sufferings.



Rookhow Quaker Meeting House was built in 1725. Photo: John Hall on Flickr



The Vibrancy team meet in Llangasty, Wales (L to R): Helen Oldridge, Wendy Hampton, Carrie Comfort, Pip Harris, Rachel Matthews. Photo: BYM

steering group for the meeting house, consisting of interested and experienced Friends from across different area meetings.

As this example shows, building trust is a key part of what a LDW does, and this can only be achieved over time. "As each development worker has become better known in their area, they become more trusted, and Friends feel comfortable with them," said Rachel Matthews, Vibrancy Programme Coordinator. "They then become catalysts for change, helping people to share thoughts and feelings which they may previously have felt uncomfortable expressing."

2. Transforming how a meeting house is managed

Forming a group that could help share the responsibility of maintaining a meeting house was also one action taken by Cardiff Local Meeting, which has been working with Wales and Southern Marches LDW Helen Oldridge. Lack of time and resources were two major barriers hindering the local meeting's vision of a more welcoming space for Quakers, and others who might use the building, becoming a reality.

Helen could share what other meetings in similar positions had been doing to tackle these issues, and also connected the meeting up with Huw Davies, Project Manager for Britain Yearly Meeting's

Property Support Project.

Area meeting trustees, with support from Helen and Huw, decided to set up a project reference group focusing on Cardiff Meeting House and its use. Six people now do this vital piece of work. The group spreads workload, and enables them to have more time to support each other.

The steering group has been well received, with local Quaker Janet Barlow saying that it had been "truly transformative" of the way they managed the meeting house.

3. Developing a tool to aid discernment

Sometimes when tackling these issues, it can help not to have to reinvent the wheel each time. A new resource is currently being developed for inclusion on the Britain Yearly Meeting website that should help meetings with this.

It stems from the work of Pip Harris, who is based in West Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, where several meetings are considering issues relating to their premises. One Friend, aware that there had been discernment processes around property issues in the past, was keen to capture this thinking. She documented ideas and the Vibrancy team took things further to cover a range of property and discernment issues. The resource should be available from March this year at www.quaker.org.uk/property.

4. Pulling together common threads

Another way to collaborate on property is for several area meetings to form a trust to support multiple buildings. Carrie Comfort, a LDW based in Kent, Sussex and Surrey, found that area meeting trustee bodies in her locality were considering this idea. This is also the model used in London, where the London Quakers Property Trust (LQPT) manages property across seven area meetings (AMs).

Noting this common interest, Carrie organised a day where trustees from the different AMs came together to collaborate and find out more, including hearing from LQPT Manager John Dash.

This is just one of the ways that Vibrancy workers have been pulling together common threads across their regions and Britain more widely that might not be obvious to Friends working hard in their own meetings.

Building on the positives

While the team feel they learn and develop their skills with every new challenge they face, they have witnessed three main positives from their property work with meetings so far:

- The successful impact of Friends learning from Friends, with models used by one meeting being taken up elsewhere.
- Better links between area and local meetings, leading to shared responsibilities, mutual support and more confidence.
- Growing trust from members of local meetings. This leads to more willingness to get involved in smaller, more manageable ways without worrying that whole projects will land on the shoulders of one or two people.

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Seeking transformation, not retribution

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East African social change activists have come together to form a new regional network with nonviolence at its core.

Lisa Cumming, Programme Manager, Turning the Tide Britain

What can we learn from people who are using nonviolent methods to address and transform violence and injustice in East Africa? How can social activism grounded in peace make a difference in communities with lived experience of violence and genocide, and the lasting effects of colonialism?

These were just two of the questions going through my mind as I travelled from Yorkshire to Rwanda late last year for the first ever Turning the Tide East Africa Gathering, which took place in the capital city Kigali over five days.

Turning the Tide (TTT) originated in the UK in 1994 as a programme centrally managed by Britain Yearly Meeting. Its aim, inspired by the Quaker peace testimony, is to support nonviolent social change at the grassroots.

In 2010 TTT staff travelled to Kenya to share some of their approaches with activists in the region. Since then our Kenyan

colleagues have gone on to develop a flourishing programme that has resulted in similar programmes being formed in Rwanda and Burundi. Now, for the first time, staff and community supporters from across the three programmes were coming together as TTT East Africa to share ways of working and explore the possibility of forming a regional network.

As programme manager of TTT in Britain, I knew that colleagues in East Africa had adapted it to their unique context and made it their own. So I, along with TTT East Africa Programme Manager Tobias Wellner, accepted their generous invitation to visit, knowing it would be a unique opportunity to learn – both at the regional gathering and afterwards when visiting community campaigns in Rwanda.

One of the first things I noticed about the work of our African colleagues was the lack of an obvious distinction between the

activities of peacebuilding and nonviolent action. These are commonly seen as two separate disciplines – an academic distinction that is not reflected in reality, at least in my experience. In East Africa this division was virtually non-existent, and I heard about example after example where they have been integrated with incredible results.

I also noticed a real sophistication in our colleagues' understanding of the complexities of violence. This was in evidence when we met young people who had formed peace clubs in schools and communities. They have been inspired by TTT Rwanda to create courageous youth-led campaigns that challenge violence towards young people in schools and communities using diverse methods that range from theatre performances to public speaking.

I left Rwanda with a replenished hope for humanity and a reinvigorated belief in the power of nonviolence. The activists I met are actively demonstrating that these kinds of approaches can make a difference, even in really tricky contexts. They are seeking transformation, not retribution, and staying committed to the belief that the 'opponent' is capable of change.

I'm really excited to see what happens next as the new regional network develops – and what we can continue to learn from it.

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Participants at the first ever Turning the Tide East Africa Gathering. Photo: Tobias Wellner for BYM

Migrant rights are human rights

How Quakers can use a new UN agreement to push for a more welcoming and humane environment for migrants to Britain.

Cassidy McKenna, Programme Assistant, QUNO

From Chelmsford Quaker Meeting's help organising protests supporting anti-deportation activists the Stansted 15 to Britain Yearly Meeting's Sanctuary Everywhere Programme, Quakers are helping to create a culture of hospitality for those in Britain seeking sanctuary.

This work also goes on at an international level at the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO). It is part of our wider aim to achieve changes in international standards and practice that support the Quaker vision of a world in which peace and justice prevail.

Since 2016 QUNO Geneva has closely followed and supported discussions around an unprecedented new agreement: the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. In December 2018 the compact was adopted by UN member states.

Broad in scope, it covers all aspects of global migration. Embedded in it is the recognition that all nations are places of origin, transit and destination, and that an 'us and them' attitude contributes to a climate of dehumanisation of migrants.

With increasing persecution of those who have needed to leave their homes, as well as those who seek to protect them when they do, we are relieved that such an agreement has been achieved. This is a global policy that is often more progressive, more optimistic, and more humane than the national government positions of those who negotiated it.

The compact provides a new way to lobby our governments for a more progressive approach to our national migration policy. We can now remind our representatives

that they themselves have agreed to implement these policies for migrants, and that we will keep reminding them until they do.

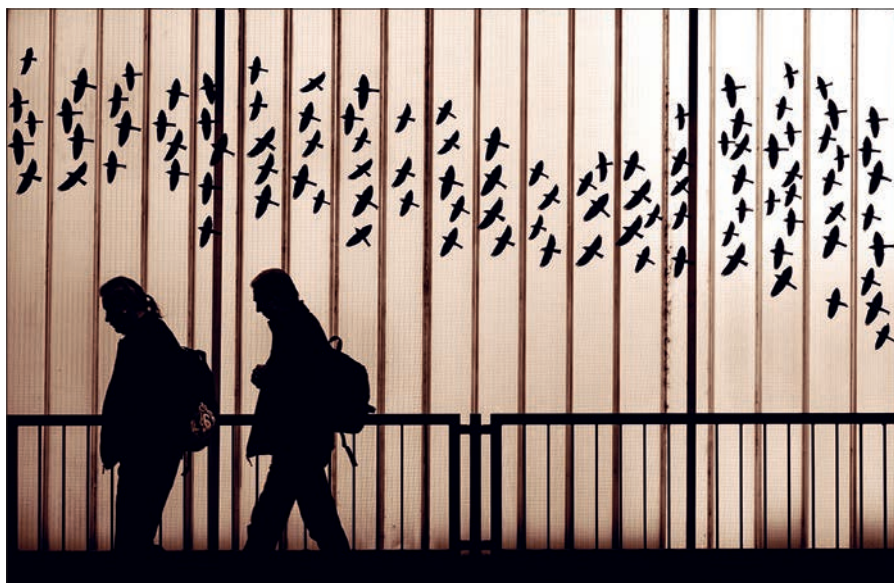
At QUNO Geneva (where staffing is largely funded by Britain Yearly Meeting) we would like to encourage Quakers to write to their elected representatives with messages that welcome the adoption of the Global Compact, highlight key recommendations from the text, and ask what work is now being done to meet these requirements.

For example, objective 15 looks at the need for access to basic services for migrants. It states that they should be able to access these services safely, and not have their right to privacy, liberty or security infringed when using them. This is a very different vision to the UK's professed 'hostile environment' for migrants, where a fear of detection, detention and deportation acts as a barrier to

them accessing essential services. MPs can be asked what is being done to reverse this policy.

Objective 13 states that immigration detention should only be used as a measure of "last resort" and should be "for the shortest period of time". However, the UK is the only country in Europe with indefinite immigration detention. MPs can be asked how they are working to change this, and encouraged to introduce a 28-day time limit in alignment with the Global Compact's explicit statement on this issue.

There has never been a better time to remind our decision-makers that migrant rights are human rights. If you'd like to find out more, we will be holding a workshop on advocacy and the Global Compact in September 2019 as part of the Quaker Asylum & Refugee Network Conference (www.qarn.org.uk). You can also contact me about migration at cmckenna@quno.ch.



A new UN agreement will support the rights of migrants across the world.
Photo: Alexander Mueller CC BY 2.0

Diversity: where are we now?

Quakers across Britain are taking part in a new survey that aims to map the diversity of the faith. Designed as a 'baseline audit', the survey will examine and quantify the ways in which the Quaker community is already diverse, and where its strengths and weaknesses in this area lie.

This is the first time all Quakers, both members and attenders, are being asked individually to provide this kind of information, which is all totally anonymous. The survey consists of just eight questions and allows participants to choose how they answer each question – there are no preordained categories or boxes to tick.

"I want to encourage all Quakers to engage with this initiative," said Diversity and Inclusion Project Coordinator Edwina Peart, who is now halfway through her one-year role. "To help build a more inclusive community – a long-held Quaker goal – we need to know where we currently stand. From this exercise, Quakers as a community can define themselves. Only through knowing who we are, can we map out our journey to where we want to be."

Please take part in the survey at <http://bit.ly/qdsurvey18> or contact edwinap@quaker.org.uk if you require a paper copy. Find out more at <http://bit.ly/diversityqblog>.



Working together to explore our diversity.
Photo: Creative Commons



The Pales Meeting House.
Photo: Quakers in Wales CC BY-NC 2.0

First awards from meeting house development fund

The first two grants towards meeting house development costs have been awarded from the Sawell Family Fund. The fund, which launched late last year, makes grants of up to £5,000 to assist meetings with paying for specialist advice and support when working on development projects for their buildings.

Southern Marches Area Quaker Meeting was awarded £3,500 towards architect's fees for the Pales Meeting House. The Pales is the oldest meeting house in Wales in continuous use. An architect's work is essential to obtain planning permission for work to make the buildings more energy-efficient and therefore attractive to future users.

Hertford & Hitchin Area Meeting received £5,000 towards planning application fees and legal costs for a project at the disused Hoddesdon meeting house and nearby hall in Hertfordshire. To raise sufficient money to refurbish the meeting house they have a plan to sell some land for affordable housing and use the income for the buildings. The grant will help with the cost of obtaining local authority approval for the housing element of the plan.

For more information about the Sawell Family Fund go to <http://bit.ly/sawellff> or email Malgosia Barczyk: malgosiab@quaker.org.uk.

Revision committee co-clerks appointed

The revision of *Quaker faith & practice*, the central text for Quakers in Britain, has begun. Two newly appointed co-clerks have met to begin planning the work.

The co-clerks, Rosie Carnall of Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting (AM) and Catherine Brewer of Northumbria AM, are eagerly awaiting the remaining 22 members of the committee. Central Nominations Committee will soon take their names to Meeting for Sufferings. More than 300 names are being considered.

Michael Booth, secretary to the revision committee, says the clerks want the revision to be an exercise for the whole of Britain Yearly Meeting. An early task for the committee will be to find ways to work with Quakers around Britain. Key to this process is grounding the revision in worship, so they will be holding a meeting for worship during Yearly Meeting at Friends House in London in May 2019.

Suggestions for new content to include in *Quaker faith & practice* are welcome. You can make them online at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qfp-idea>, by email to qfp@quaker.org.uk, or write to Revision Committee, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ.



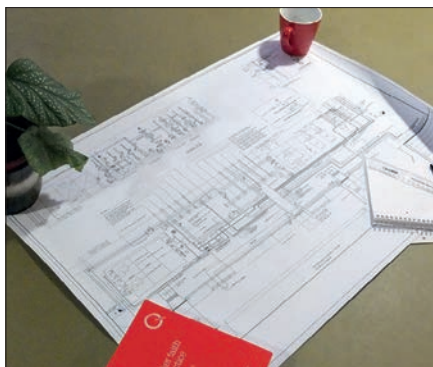
Michael Booth, Rosie Carnall, Catherine Brewer with *Quaker faith & practice*.
Photo: Anne van Staveren for BYM

Got problems? Find solutions

What does it take to get your meeting to move to a different property? How can you shift an interfaith activity into gear? How are you going to get rid of that terrible smell in the kitchen?

Find answers to these questions and more with *Patterns and examples*: a new section of the Britain Yearly Meeting website. It gives real-life examples of how Quakers have dealt with all sorts of problems. With references to Quaker processes and links to information, *Patterns and examples* will inform, inspire and enable you to take action.

See www.quaker.org.uk/patterns to find or share inspiration.



Making plans? Check *Patterns and examples* for advice. Photo: BYM

Adult Education Grants open

If you are a member or attender of a Quaker meeting, are planning to take a course in further or higher education with the aim of serving society and/or Quakers in Britain, and need financial help to do so, you might be interested in our Adult Education Grants.

Ben Jarman has been awarded one of these grants to study for a PhD investigating the environments and events that can create “shifts in ethical thinking” in long-term prisoners – how they experience the prison environments in which they live, and how that affects the kinds of changes they might make to their lives. Read about how his Quakerism led him to undertake research in this challenging field on our website: www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories.

For more information on our Adult Education Grants and to apply, see www.quaker.org.uk/adult-education-grants.

Register for Yearly Meeting

Registrations are open for Yearly Meeting 2019, the annual gathering of Quakers in Britain happening in London from 24 to 27 May.

This year's focus is on examining our privilege and how it impacts our ability to act on urgent Quaker concerns regarding climate justice, sustainability, inclusion and diversity. Register at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Quaker animations launch

Eight new animated videos have been launched by Britain Yearly Meeting to help share the Quaker message with a wider and more diverse audience.

Four of the animations are quick introductions to different aspects of who Quakers are, taking in stillness, values, community, and misconceptions. They are available on our social media channels.

For those who wish to go deeper there are also four animated ‘Quaker journeys’ based on interviews with four Quakers (also featured in our new leaflets) about their journey into and with the faith. Find them at www.quaker.org.uk/journeys and on our social media.

All videos are available on request to Friends as files on USB sticks. As well as being used online, the animations are great for presentations and for use in meeting house foyers. They can also be shared with new Quakers or family and friends who might want to find out more about Quakerism. For more information email outreach@quaker.org.uk.

Inspiring peace

Around half a million children came together the Friday before Remembrance Day 2018 as part of a series of UK-wide peace-focused events from the INSPIRE initiative.

Britain Yearly Meeting is a partner in the initiative, and the day saw 1,000 children fill the Large Meeting House at Friends House in London. They folded hundreds of origami peace cranes and poppies, reflected on the losses of war, and inspired each other through song and drama. Watch a video of the Friends House event online at <http://bit.ly/inspirefh18>.

On the blog...

The Britain Yearly Meeting blog (www.quaker.org.uk/blog) is a place for insight, analysis and action. On it staff explain more about their work, explore how it relates to current events, and take a look at Quakerism more widely. Here are a few of the blogs from recent weeks:

- Find out how nurturing our communities, and being open to the change and challenges this may bring, will support Quakers in Britain this year as we keep working to change the world.
- Read the first of our #QuakerFacts posts, a series devoted to exploring Quakers' influence on wider society and how Quakers have shaped the world. We begin with a look at Quakers in fiction.
- Learn how Chelmsford Quaker Meeting came to be involved with supporting anti-deportation activists the Stansted 15 while they were on trial, and the practical steps they took to assist.
- Explore how Quakers can push for a just UK immigration system by engaging with legislation and speaking to MPs and councillors.

To receive a monthly update of published blogs, plus other news, events and Quaker content, sign up to our monthly newsletter *Quake!* at www.quaker.org.uk/quake – you can unsubscribe at any time.



Look into Quakers in fiction on the blog. Photo: Taylor Barber

How legacies are making a difference where it really matters

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Quakers are supporting migrant rights with help from legacy funding. Photo: BYM

If you are thinking about leaving a gift to any charity in your will, you want to know that it will make a difference. Would a gift to Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) make a difference? Absolutely.

For one thing, it will help ensure that there *is* a BYM as we know it. In an average year, gifts left in wills make up about a quarter of our income (excluding trading income) – if it weren't for the generosity of Friends now passed away, we simply wouldn't be the organisation we are today, and our work towards Friends' vision of a more sustainable, peaceful and just world would be diminished.

But gifts made in wills also have a more immediate effect. Because legacy income can be quite unpredictable, we rely on only a portion of it for our core activities. The rest goes into a special fund that enables us to be responsive to Friends' leadings and explore new ways of working.

There are 15 pieces of work in our plan for 2019 that are legacy-funded. These include pilot projects exploring how regional workers can help Quaker meetings thrive, new ways to support meetings that own property, the benefits of local youth workers, and much more besides.

Take for example the Sanctuary Everywhere Programme, which

supports a network of committed Quaker meetings to create a culture of welcome in their communities for refugees and migrants. In 2016 our national representative body Meeting for Sufferings – aware that many meetings were already responding locally to the 'migrant crisis' – asked BYM to scope a centrally managed programme to support Friends in this work. Thanks to legacy funding the scoping stage was underway in early 2017, and by August we were able to launch the Sanctuary Everywhere Programme at Yearly Meeting Gathering. Similarly, Yearly Meeting in 2017 heard a call to examine diversity in the Quaker community – our legacy-funded Diversity and Inclusion Project was up and running by spring 2018.

Gifts left in wills have made it possible for us to respond, as Friends wish us to, to the pressing issues of today. They are also enabling us to explore new ways of helping our religious society to grow and thrive – so that we are still here to respond to the pressing issues of tomorrow.

To find out about leaving a legacy to Quaker work in your will, contact Vicky Torrance at vickytorrance@quaker.org.uk or call her in confidence on 020 7663 1117.

Contribute to Quaker work

Serve on a Quaker committee: phone 020 7663 1115, email nominations@quaker.org.uk or visit www.quaker.org.uk/givetime.

Join the Quaker Life Network: phone 020 7663 1007, email qlnetwork@quaker.org.uk or visit www.quaker.org.uk/qlnetwork.

Get more Quaker news

Sign up to *Quake!* our monthly email newsletter for news and views for all Quakers in Britain: www.quaker.org.uk/quake.

Access digital back issues of Quaker News at www.quaker.org.uk/qn. To make changes to your subscription or request paper back issues contact Bex Gerrard on 020 7663 1157 or at qn@quaker.org.uk.

Connect with Quakers in Britain

Phone us on 020 7663 1000, email enquiries@quaker.org.uk or write to Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ.

Enter your postcode at www.quaker.org.uk/meetings to search for a Quaker meeting near you.

Find us on Facebook and Twitter: click the icons at www.quaker.org.uk or search for 'Quakers in Britain'.



Your Faith Your Action



Your Contribution

Can you help raise £3m for Quaker work in 2019?

Britain Yearly Meeting is your central organisation. It supports Quaker communities, organises Yearly Meeting and carries out the national and international work that Quakers in Britain wish to see done. Without your generous contributions none of this would be possible. Of the £12.8m needed to fund Quaker work in 2019, we aim to raise £3m from Friends and meetings. Can you help?

You can give to Britain Yearly Meeting directly or through your local or area meeting. Speak to your treasurer, visit www.quaker.org.uk/give or phone Maisa Monteiro on 020 7663 1015 to find out more.



Quakers: committed to caring for peace and planet

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Their unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship, where they seek a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly, within themselves and in their relationships with others and the world around them. They meet together for worship in local meetings, which are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power.

The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal.

This leads Quakers to put their faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause injustice and violence.

Quakers try to live simply. They are concerned about the excesses and unfairness of our consumer society and the unsustainable use of natural resources.

To find out more about the Quaker way visit www.quaker.org.uk or request a free information pack using the form below.



Request a free information pack:

Name _____
Address _____

Postcode _____
Email _____

Please send completed form to:
Quaker Outreach (QN)
FREEPOST QUAKERS

FREEPHONE: 0808 109 1651
E: outreach@quaker.org.uk

Meet Elize Sakamoto



Elize Sakamoto is a member of North West London Area Meeting. She has recently started serving on QPSW Central Committee.

I first encountered Quakerism about a decade ago, during one of the darkest and most desperate periods of my life. Deaths in the family and serious hardships at work had plunged me into a severe depression. I realised the only way out of this awful place was to connect with something deep and mysterious, somehow existing both beyond imagination and within my everyday human experience.

This 'something' was intangible and elusive, yet at the same time definitely there – in fact, everywhere – somehow sustaining and connecting all life. But I was not looking for 'God', I realised. I had a problem with that word and could not use it for myself. I had grown up in traditional settings where God was portrayed invariably as a fearful, judgemental and divisive male figure in the clouds.

I have found Quakerism to be a communal way forward where I can bring such hang-ups and still feel that 'something' with others. Of course there are difficult days when I wonder why I don't simply stay in bed on a Sunday morning. But accessing the truth – the light within – together in meeting for worship is a part of my life now.

It is a time to listen quietly and deeply in stillness, affirm my gifts and unique place in the world, and maintain faith and hope.

I am the primary carer for my five-year-old child, and work for a faith-based charity. Alongside these commitments, I have felt called to serve in various Quaker roles. I love doing my bit and feeling part of the unique and valuable (and often quiet) difference Quakers are making. I am currently part of my local meeting's clerking team and coordinate its children's meeting. In the past I was also on its nominations committee and represented my area meeting at our national representative body Meeting for Sufferings.

Most recently I have started to serve on Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) Central Committee. In this role I hope to be an effective advocate for the renowned work of QPSW, which coordinates Quaker faith in action in Britain and abroad.

If you are interested in serving on a national Quaker committee, please phone 020 7663 1115, email nominations@quaker.org.uk or visit www.quaker.org.uk/service.