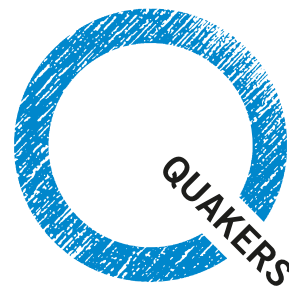


# Quaker News



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



Quakers for justice, equality and peace

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Cover photo: Rhiannon Redpath is one of the Quakers who feature in our new poster set for Quaker Week 2015 – see pages 4 and 5. Photo: © Mike Pinches 2015

## Editorial

*“We are all activists and we are all worshippers. Our worship and action spring from the same spiritual source. The light not only illumines us but pushes us to seek change... We are called to consider what we each can do and also make and build on connections in our communities and across the globe.”*

From minute 36,  
Yearly Meeting 2015

This issue of Quaker News comes to you full of stories of worship and action; community and connections.

Our Quaker Week posters (pages 4 and 5) tell the stories of Quakers pushed by the Inner Light to take their faith into the world with courage and conviction. This year, Quaker Week is again going global: Quakers around the world will mark World Quaker Day on 4 October.

Yearly Meeting 2015 had a strong focus on equality, a historic element of Quaker testimony, rooted in our recognition that there is that of God in everyone.

In an increasingly unequal society, Quakers in our meetings are among those not just calling for change, but taking action to bring about change in practical and creative ways. On pages 8 and 9 you can read about examples of this, at home and abroad.

Working for equality means working for peace (pages 3 and 11), sustainability (page 14) and food security (page 10) too. We see all these as connected, and feel called to work to create the Kingdom of Heaven together as a community: as Quakers, and with others.

New resources help us to strengthen our meetings as communities, and new tools help us to reach out, communicate about our worship and our work to other people and groups.

A programme to encourage us to study our book of discipline, *Quaker faith & practice* (page 6), will help us to reconnect today's actions to our Quaker past.

I hope you find the stories in this issue inspiring, affirming and challenging. In response to the call in minute 36 (above), what will you do?

Paul Parker  
Recording Clerk

## Quaker News

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A magazine about work supported by Britain Yearly Meeting.

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 more than 475 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](http://www.quaker.org.uk).

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# Commemorating the past, committing to the future

Quakers have hosted an interfaith service to mark the bombing of Hiroshima and affirm that nuclear weapons belong in the past.

**Marigold Bentley, Assistant General Secretary:  
Quaker Peace & Social Witness**

It is hard for us all to acknowledge that it is now 70 years since nuclear bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and yet nuclear weapons remain an active part of so-called national security. The challenge remains for us to ensure that the call for the end to the use, stockpiling and threatened use of these weapons continues. Who, in 2015, should be making that call?

On 6 August Friends House in London hosted a national event to mark the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. It was clear to those of us organising the event that it must not be dominated by one single faith tradition. It had to be inclusive and welcoming. It also had to include voices from Hiroshima itself, and have direct input from Japanese culture.

Acknowledging the role which art and particularly poetry has to play in our treasured life on earth, a suitable poem had to be found. Most of all, as well as commemorating the atrocity itself, the event had to challenge all who participated to make a commitment to a world without nuclear weapons.

The interfaith service of commemoration and commitment was the result of months of sensitive hard work, bringing in a number of faithful people who had not participated actively in the peace movement in this way before. Quaker Peace & Social Witness staff worked closely with Religions for Peace and identified suitable readings from Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism. Adherents of those faith traditions attended the service.

Ambassadors, MPs and members of the House of Lords were all invited. Many sent representatives and the social time that followed the service provided an opportunity for lively conversation and encounter. Participants also had a chance to visit the exhibition on the risks of nuclear power and weapons that was displayed for several days either side of the event.

The peace movement in Britain, actively assisted by Quakers, is working hard to be more inclusive and engage people from all faiths and none with the discourse about violence and nonviolence – and how we can create a world without war. It is sensitive and challenging work, particularly in the climate of the ‘War on Terror’ and the impact that more recent wars are having on interfaith relations.

The question for faith communities is both ancient and contemporary. How do we ensure safety and security for ourselves and for future generations? What have we learned from nuclear weapons in particular and do they make us safe? Quakers say they do not. Those conversations are normal and expected among us as Quakers, and we have much in our short history to point to in relation to peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Now is the time to widen those peace conversations and welcome all in our communities, particularly those from other faiths, to tackle those big questions about how peace is created and maintained.

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Top: Jehangir Sarosh of Religions for Peace; middle: Yuko Moriyama-Wiffen lights a candle sent from Hiroshima; bottom: participants join together to call for an end to nuclear weapons. Photos: Michael Preston

# Living faithfully, living adventurously

4

The people in this year's Quaker Week posters reveal how faith is central to the way they approach life.

Anne van Staveren, Media Relations Officer

*"Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community?"*

*Advices & queries 27*

Quaker Week 2015 will be marked in meetings around the country from 3–11 October. Quakers will find simple and imaginative ways to share and to deepen their faith.

The theme this year encourages Quakers to share how they've been challenged and inspired to live adventurously. Online and on a series of posters, five Quakers will tell their personal journeys of faith and reflect how, beginning with stillness, their faith becomes action.

Jenn Mui, of Wandsworth Local Meeting, looks for encounters with the Spirit in the midst of the messiness and murkiness of life: "My faith is inseparable from the experience of daily life," she says. "It is fed by living in the world."

She explains: "For me, being a Quaker is about being a Quaker out in the world, being amongst Quakers and non-Quakers. I feel the most challenged and the most aware of my inner self and my own journey when I must encounter the world that is different."

Fran Hicks, of Taunton Local Meeting, says that what inspires her daily is natural beauty: "It has no utility, it is pure joy."

Fran explains: "When I have contemplated taking decisions that not only challenged me but also those nearest me, I have known that I have the support, quiet listening and the discipline of seeking the truth: Quaker discernment."

"Being a Quaker reminds me that every choice I make either contributes to sustaining life on earth or adds to its destruction. This is an awesome responsibility and a joy."

For Rhiannon Redpath, of Street Local Meeting, Quakerism is where spirituality and politics meet: "My stillness is with me all the time, whether in a Quaker meeting or outside parliament. The Inner Light continues to support and guide me in what I do."

Rhiannon has been a Quaker peaceworker, placed with Gender Action for Peace and Security by Quaker Peace & Social Witness, and also a programme assistant on peace and disarmament for the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva. "Our amazing history of action, justice and equality allows me to be confident to speak truth to power," she says. "You have to start inside yourself in order to have positive influence on those around you and to work in the world. Caring for yourself is essential."

Jan Arriens, of Clun Valley Local Meeting, says that for him being adventurous is about going forward with faith: "Like a blind person tapping the edge of a cliff with a stick and finding that each tap extends the ledge on which they stand."

Thirty years ago, stepping into his first Quaker meeting was adventurous. He went because he was intrigued by worship without priests, hymns and sermons.

"When I was new to Quakers, being adventurous was to start corresponding with a prisoner on





Beginning with **stillness**  
my **faith** becomes **action.**



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Four of the posters produced for Quaker Week 2015, featuring (clockwise from top left) Fran Hicks, Jan Arriens, Jenn Mui and Martin Layton. Rhiannon Redpath can be seen on the front cover.  
Photos: © Mike Pinches 2015

death row and then to involve others. The elders in my meeting were instrumental in supporting me.”

“There’s something in humanity that makes us care. We have empathy with totally strange people and that can be deeply inspiring.”

His faith in action is centred on stillness, which Jan says is about growing awareness and being receptive. Most of us, he says, have a sense of inner stillness which we might find in music, nature, woodwork, arts and crafts.

“Being a Quaker has given me a frame of reference: a body of history, often marked by courageous and unorthodox choices, and other people I respect and love who provide discernment, guidance and inspiration.”

Martin Layton, of Bewdley Local Meeting, says that being a Quaker means committing to a reverence of all of life: “Tentatively, I am aware of being accompanied by the presence of God as spirit and this informs my response to the world.”

He says that Quakerism requires courage and resilience. “Early Friends used to speak of being called to build God’s kingdom on earth, and I think modern Friends are still ambassadors for this radical vision. The adventure for me is in the realisation that I am now a stranger in my own land, and that I am constantly being asked to appear foolish, or odd, or troublesome to the eyes of others.”

“I do not know who or what God is – even *if* God is – and I have learned to embrace doubt as an essential part of my unfolding faith. However, I have chosen to live out my daily life as if there is joy and hope and purpose to all of this. Living with a sense of ‘as-if-ness’ is a real challenge, and I constantly fail to live up to its expectations, but like many before me, I have

## World Quaker Day

We’ve been able to use our experience of running Quaker Week for the last nine years to help Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) plan World Quaker Day. In 2015 this annual event will take place for only the second time, falling on 4 October – the first Sunday of Quaker Week.

It is an opportunity to celebrate the variety of Quaker traditions found all over the world, from Europe to the Middle East, the Americas to Australasia, as well as India, Japan and many other countries. One of the largest concentrations of Quakers is in Africa, where there are almost 150,000 in Kenya alone.

FWCC is the organisation that maintains contact with, and encourages fellowship among, all the different branches of Quakerism worldwide.

To find out more, visit [www.worldquakerday.org](http://www.worldquakerday.org).

found that the more I live this way, the more I feel fully alive.”

We hope that these posters and the personal stories behind them will help you to reach out to others who might find their spiritual home with Quakers. However you choose to mark Quaker Week, please email [outreach@quaker.org.uk](mailto:outreach@quaker.org.uk) to tell us what you did and how it went.

This year there’s also a global invitation: Quakers around the world are encouraged to mark World Quaker Day (see box) by making a short film (no more than 90 seconds) about what ‘Live adventurously’ means to them as a meeting or as individuals. Adventures can be shared on [www.worldquakerday.org](http://www.worldquakerday.org) and stories posted on Facebook and Twitter using the hashtag #liveadventurously.

# Expressing the Quaker way

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How you can join in with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to explore the key written expression of our faith.

Craig Barnett, Sheffield & Balby Area Meeting

A new project aims to encourage Friends throughout Britain to read and discuss our book of discipline together. The 'Reading *Quaker faith & practice*' project has been launched by the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group, which was set up last year to help Quakers in Britain explore the issues we need to become clearer about before discerning whether to replace the current version of *Quaker faith & practice* with a new book of discipline.

In the past, our yearly meeting has fully revised its book of discipline every few decades; our current book is now more than 20 years old. The Revision Preparation Group has discerned that before Yearly Meeting returns to the question of whether we need a new book, it would be helpful for us all to reflect more deeply together on *Quaker faith & practice*.

To support a shared exploration of *Quaker faith & practice*, the group has produced a calendar of monthly readings, which runs from October 2015 to April 2017, and is available online at [qfp.quaker.org/reading](http://qfp.quaker.org/reading). The calendar covers the whole of *Quaker faith & practice*, including the church government sections as well as more personal and reflective material.

The calendar aims to provide an accessible framework for reflection that is suitable for individual reading as well as local or area meeting study and discussion groups. Individuals and meetings can also adapt the calendar, participating at their own pace and covering as much or as little of the reading as they wish.

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre is supporting the project

with a range of creative study materials for individual reflection and group sharing. This material is available free through Being Friends Together, the online learning resource library it runs in partnership with Quaker Life: [together.woodbrooke.org.uk](http://together.woodbrooke.org.uk).

There will be plenty of opportunities to share reflection and discussion about the readings. These will include regular articles in *The Friend* magazine, featuring a range of personal responses to the monthly readings, as well as online discussion on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/readingqfp](http://www.facebook.com/readingqfp)) and on Quaker blogs. Responses can also be shared directly with the Revision Preparation Group by emailing them at [qfp@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qfp@quaker.org.uk).

'Reading *Quaker faith & practice*' is a unique opportunity for British Quakers to take part in a shared exploration of the role and contents of our core text. By joining in this national conversation, meetings and individual Friends will enrich their understanding of key Quaker traditions and practices. They will

## Quaker faith & practice

*Quaker faith & practice* is the book of religious discipline of Quakers in Britain. Largely composed of extracts from Quaker writings, it is an anthology of experience and theology. It was first printed in 1783 and has been revised by successive generations. The current text is the tenth revision and dates from 1994.

also be contributing to our yearly meeting's continuing discernment of how the Spirit may be urging us towards new directions and new insights.

The Revision Preparation Group is encouraging all local and area meetings to take part, by creating opportunities for shared reading, reflection and discussion among local Friends, and sharing their insights with the wider Quaker community. Find out more at [qfp.quaker.org.uk/reading](http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/reading).





# Children of the Light

Working with children and young people in our meetings is not just a task – it is a religious endeavour.

Chris Nickolay, Children's Work Officer

*Advices & queries* 19 invites us to “Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring.”

Sometimes our well-loved Quaker sayings can come across as light and joyful: “live adventurously”; “walk cheerfully”; “rejoice in the presence of...”. However, the passages from which these sayings originate – when read in full – dare us to undertake processes and reach outcomes that, in themselves, can be discomfiting and formative.

*Advices & queries* 19 is challenging and provocative, offering ways to search oneself whilst accompanying children and young people on their personal and collective journeys. It says:

- Remember that the meeting as a whole shares a responsibility for every child in its care.
- Seek for them as for yourself a full development of God's gifts and the abundant life Jesus tells us can be ours.
- How do you share your deepest beliefs with them, while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them?
- Do you invite them to share their insights with you?
- Are you ready both to learn from them and to accept your responsibilities towards them?

The questions I get asked about working with children and young people have changed little over the past two decades; I see them as reflecting hard, practical struggles with the challenges of *Advices & queries* 19. Friends should praise themselves and each other for the

heartfelt spiritual practice they bring to this work. It is not just a task but a religious endeavour.

Here is an example. A meeting asked us for a Godly Play (exploring faith through storytelling) training workshop for adults and a consultation with the meeting's children about their perceptions of the meeting and what it gave them. The consultation outcomes surprised some adults. The children were overwhelmingly positive – an unexpected but clear reflection of the effort and care put in. The children also pointed out what else they needed – could the meeting help them understand and practise worship and explore what God is?

A year later the same meeting requested a one-day consultation with the children and young people to help them explore ministry. This became one of the richest encounters I have had. They grappled with questions like “Where and what is God?”, “What does worship feel like and where in your body do you feel it?”, “What is ministry and how do you know when it is real?”, and

“What do you want to change in the world?”. Their responses were honest, robust, shy, funny and very challenging. They recognised and felt their place amongst Quakers.

The meeting had clearly taken seriously and acted upon *Advices & queries* 19 – even if they didn't know it. I wish I'd filmed the day!

If your meeting is grappling with similar challenges, the Children & Young People's Team can help you. Visit [www.quaker.org.uk/cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp) to find out about requesting workshops and consultations. You can also access a range of written resources – including *Journeys in the Spirit*. This resource is free and published regularly in two editions: one focused on working with children and the other on working with young people.

Chris Nickolay retired in September after 19 years as Children's Work Officer for Quakers in Britain.

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020 7663 1013  
[www.quaker.org.uk/cyp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp)



Children and adults share an activity at a local meeting. Photo: © Mike Pinches

# How can we change the unequal, unjust world in which we live?

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Yearly Meeting has asked each and every one of us what we can do to challenge the systemic injustice and inequality that we see in today's society.

Juliet Prager, Deputy Recording Clerk

In May around a thousand Quakers gathered in London for Yearly Meeting 2015. In a series of key sessions, we explored how we live out our faith and asked ourselves if we are up to the challenge of doing so in such an unequal world. The outcome was a powerful call for equality – a minute that asks all Quakers in Britain to take action.

## Equality and injustice

The Spirit doesn't have favourites: we are all equal. This is a Quaker experience and a Quaker conviction.

Since the seventeenth century, Quakers have expressed our belief in the equality of all people by addressing injustice – often in ways that have been considered progressive, such as work to abolish slavery, reform prisons and pioneer humane treatment for people with mental health problems. We continue to express this belief today through our work for social and economic justice.

Our current political and economic systems only recognise and encourage part of the human condition – the selfish, competitive, greedy part.

Minute 36, YM 2015

## A growing concern

Equality may not be a new concern for Quakers, but it is a growing concern. Without losing interest in longstanding issues, we are facing new types of inequality.

Quakers are speaking out about how refugees and asylum seekers are treated. We question whether the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – a free trade agreement between the EU and the USA – will benefit multinational corporations or ordinary people. Around Britain, Quakers are working for a citizens' income, promoting ethical clothing,

marching for justice and challenging global debt.

Some of these concerns have been sent to Meeting for Sufferings – the national representative body for Quakers in Britain. For example, in 2013 Meeting for Sufferings heard from many Quaker meetings that had become concerned about welfare benefit cuts. Sufferings surveyed British Quaker meetings and learned a lot about what Quakers are doing about this issue locally – supporting food banks and credit unions, volunteering in advice agencies, creating low-cost housing and lobbying MPs.

We heard how some Quakers are facing poverty, especially those receiving disability benefits. This evidence gave us a strong basis to speak out about the way government policies are affecting the poorest people in Britain.

## A concern for housing

One of the Yearly Meeting sessions focused on housing, recognising the UK housing crisis as a highly visible and damaging symptom of injustice in our society. Quaker concern for housing has a long history, and has been carried since 1967 by Quaker Housing Trust (see box opposite).

Jenny Brierley of Quaker Housing Trust told the meeting: "We need to have faith that the housing crisis is solvable, just as those tackling slavery believed it could be overcome."

Yearly Meeting was strongly against the proposal to extend the 'right to buy' legislation to housing



Around a thousand Quakers attended Yearly Meeting 2015, exploring in a series of sessions how we live out our faith in the world. Photo: © Mike Pinches 2015

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associations, and the minute recording this was made into a news release.

### The call for equality

Yearly Meeting has now made a call for equality – and it wants Quakers in Britain to think, talk and act. The minute recording the call asks us what we can do to challenge the systemic injustice and inequality that we see in society. We need to think about this individually, discuss it together, and be open to responding faithfully.

Practically, Yearly Meeting has asked us to work not just on our own as Quakers but also together with other people who share our concerns – locally and globally. Yearly Meeting also asked us to uphold the work that Quakers across the country are already doing and to be generous when we help to fund the work being done centrally on our behalf.

### Making a start

A good place to start is in our local meetings – talking and learning together. **Being Friends Together** is an online learning toolkit for Quaker meetings. Its ‘economic justice pathway’ includes materials to help meetings reflect on the spiritual roots of our concern, learn more, and plan to take action – <http://bit.ly/BFT-ecojustice>.

The **testimonies toolkit** has a whole chapter on equality, along with exercises for groups and reading suggestions – [www.quaker.org.uk/ttkit](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ttkit).

**Your Faith, Your Finance** is an online resource designed to help Quakers and others make decisions about ethical and spiritual use of money – [www.yourfaithyourfinance.org](http://www.yourfaithyourfinance.org).

### Work in progress

There are already inspiring stories of what Quakers are doing locally. Quakers in Tunbridge Wells are converting part of their meeting house to provide accommodation for homeless people. In Leeds, Quaker meetings collect food,



Members of Stone Quaker Meeting braved a wet and cold day to hold a public vigil during Quaker Equality Week in March. Photo: Stone Quakers

We ask Friends and meetings to engage with the evil of social and economic injustice which creates a world in which the wrong things are valued.

Minute 36, YM 2015

clothes and money for refugees. And in March 2015 over 80 Quaker meetings took part in national Quaker Equality Week, which was an initiative of Manchester & Warrington Area Meeting.

Meetings can tell each other about local projects through the Quaker Life Network – [www.quaker.org.uk/qlnetwork](http://www.quaker.org.uk/qlnetwork). To find out what Quakers are doing nationally, visit [www.quaker.org.uk/economic-justice](http://www.quaker.org.uk/economic-justice) or contact Suzanne Ismail on 020 7663 1055 or at [suzannei@quaker.org.uk](mailto:suzannei@quaker.org.uk).

Although there is so much good work already going on, we must accept that we can't do everything. A very real challenge for Quakers in Britain is to discern where we might be called to focus our energy and resources. We have to meet this challenge spiritually as well as practically.

### Joining the dots

With representatives from all the area meetings, as well as national committees, one of the roles of Meeting for Sufferings is to be a communication hub.

Yearly Meeting asked it to “take the work on social and economic injustice forward, coordinating the work of local and area meetings who might wish to become more deeply involved, and encouraging the deep spiritual and intellectual searching that could underpin a ‘true social order’ for our age.”

Ethel Livermore, clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, says: “I hope all meetings are thinking about how they engage locally to take the work on social and economic injustice forward.”

You can read the full text of Yearly Meeting minute 36 at [www.quaker.org.uk/ym2015-minutes](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym2015-minutes).

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### Quaker Housing Trust

Quaker Housing Trust is the yearly meeting's own housing charity and is a channel through which social housing projects can get advice, support, loans or grants that would be difficult to find elsewhere. It can also help Quaker meetings to make use of their property or funds to meet housing need.

You can find out more at [www.qht.org.uk](http://www.qht.org.uk) or contact the secretary, Paula Harvey, at [involveme@qht.org.uk](mailto:involveme@qht.org.uk) or on 020 7663 1036.

# Starting small

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Quakers bring together experts from around the world to explore how innovation by small-scale farmers can improve global food security.

Susan Bragdon, Representative for Food and Sustainability, QUNO

In May 2015, Joram ‘Joe’ Ouko, a 69-year-old farmer from Kisumu, Kenya, boarded a plane bound for Geneva, his very first passport in hand. Joe is known in his local community for his innovative agricultural practices. He recently developed, as part of the Nyandago Farmers Group, a locally formulated meal for dairy goats called Lofoda-G. Goats fed on Lofoda-G produced between one and two litres of milk a day, doubling Joe’s profit margins.

The raw organic material for the meal is collected in the wet season, enabling continuous production of goat milk in the region during recurrent droughts. Joe didn’t need to import any expensive goods or technology to develop Lofoda-G – it was made with basic machinery and vegetation on his farm, using his knowledge of the local climate, soils, livestock and markets.

Joe made the trip to Geneva because the Quaker United

Nations Office (QUNO) invited him to participate in its first expert consultation on small-scale farmer innovation in biodiverse food systems. QUNO sought input on broad questions of agricultural innovation: what drives innovation among small-scale farmers? What impedes it? And what is the role of international institutions in ensuring that such innovation can flourish?

The two-day consultation brought together academics, farmers, civil society actors and UN officials from a total of 12 different countries, including Peru, China, Zimbabwe and Nepal. The participants discussed issues including market failure and the role of the public sector in plugging the gap; how to foster enhanced collaboration between farmer-innovators and researchers from scientific institutions; examples of good practices in supporting small-scale farmer innovation; and strategies for getting the issue on the international agenda.

Joe said that the meeting “was marvellous... and aroused my spirit to fast-track the registration and operationalisation of the Farmer-Led Innovators Association of Kenya (FALIA-K) to support small-scale farmers.”

Joe called for further bridge-building to ensure a meaningful flow of knowledge on agricultural innovation between researchers and farmer-innovators. He also highlighted the need for the international community to develop food security policies that recognise the contribution of small-scale farmer innovation globally. “If we really want sustainable food security,” he said, “researchers and small-scale farmers should not

## About QUNO

The Quaker United Nations Office works at the UN in Geneva and New York to address Quaker concerns at an international level. Staffing of QUNO Geneva is largely funded by Quakers in Britain.

The Food and Sustainability Programme promotes discussion about agricultural systems in light of the need to ensure long-term food security, protect fragile livelihoods and provide incentives to maintaining biological diversity.

work in their own cocoons but need to work together and complement one another.”

QUNO believes that it is crucial to ensure that small-scale farmers themselves are placed at the centre of the discussion on agricultural trade and innovation – as an issue of equity, but also because of the critical knowledge and information they have to share. As Joe put it, “I have no doubt that small-scale farmers can take the country far in improving food security.”

It was a privilege for QUNO to have Joe travel from Kenya to offer his knowledge and experience to the group. The consultation gave us several ideas for future activities, all with the end goal of further promoting and rewarding the rich contribution small-scale farmers like Joe make to local and global food security.

### Contact:

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Joe Ouko at the QUNO consultation on small-scale farmer innovation. Photo: Mihan Borhani/QUNO



# Eyewitness testimonies

How we are putting human stories from Israel and Palestine at the heart of our work to advocate peace in the region.

Helen Drewery, General Secretary: Quaker Peace & Social Witness

We are now speaking out more effectively on the situation in Israel and Palestine thanks to a new approach to advocacy and increased staff support.

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), which we run in the UK on behalf of churches and organisations in Britain and Ireland, works for a just and sustainable peace in Israel and Palestine. It is an initiative of the World Council of Churches.

Last year we appointed a new Advocacy Research Officer in response to calls from the EAPPI UK & Ireland Group for us to speak out with greater impact. It was clear from the reports of ecumenical accompaniers (EAs – human rights observers placed in Israel and the West Bank to record abuses and stand in solidarity with Israeli and Palestinian peacemakers) that the occupation was having an ever more damaging effect on Palestinian and Israeli society.

Funded by our ecumenical partners and some external grants, the Advocacy Research Officer spoke to individuals, church partners, officials and agencies about how we could make more of an impact. The response was a call for EAPPI to share more widely the human stories witnessed by EAs. The belief was that this could fuel the growing public insistence that peace is possible, to a point where public pressure meant politicians had to act more decisively.

To get these human stories out to the public and to decision-makers the team set about building a blog – [www.eyewitnessblogs.com](http://www.eyewitnessblogs.com) – bringing all EA writings into one place for everyone to read.

Since its launch in April 2015 the blog has been viewed over 13,000 times by people from 88 countries, and its audience continues to grow. Over 1,000 people have signed up to an email list to receive the latest stories each month and EAPPI UK & Ireland's new presence on Facebook and Twitter also helps to spread these writings widely.

**It was clear that the occupation was having an ever more damaging effect on Palestinian and Israeli society.**

In order to help EAs share these human stories with faith groups, the media and decision-makers, the team has built an online 'EA Hub'. It's a place where EAs can get together, renew their strength in hard times, encourage and inspire each other, keep up to date, and record their public speaking engagements, letter-writing and meetings with elected representatives. This

record-keeping matters because through it we can map and assess the effects we are having and see where we might best put our efforts. EAs are a great engine for change and we expect the hub to give the programme greater traction and momentum.

These new initiatives have helped EAPPI to speak out more effectively on a number of recent issues, including the 2014 conflict in Gaza, Palestinian statehood and the forced displacement of whole communities in the West Bank.

At Yearly Meeting 2003, right at the start of our journey with EAPPI, Quakers reflected on the situation in Israel and Palestine and explored the question "what does the Lord require of you?". More than a decade later, with the 57th team of EAs serving in occupied Palestine, the programme continues to hold this question at its heart.

Contact:  
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020 7663 1144  
[www.quaker.org.uk/eappi](http://www.quaker.org.uk/eappi)



Sara Alfaqr stands next to the ruins of her house, demolished for the third time in five months, making four adults and six children homeless. House demolitions by the Israeli army are common in areas of occupied Palestine. Photo: EAPPI

## Resource to strengthen Quaker meetings

Over 170 meetings and individuals have subscribed to Being Friends Together since it was launched in October last year. Being Friends Together is an easy-to-use online resource library, packed with activities and ideas to support and encourage meetings in their ongoing learning and development. It was developed by Quaker Life and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre to help meetings to grow together as communities and individuals to deepen their own sense of Quaker identity.

As a result of a successful application for legacy funding (see page 15), we are now able to offer visits to local and area meetings wanting to use the resource. These visits, by two experienced Friends, aim to help meetings to reflect on their journey together and explore how they can use Being Friends Together creatively and confidently. Alistair Fuller, Head of Outreach Development, is also available to come and speak to local, area and regional meetings, to introduce them to Being Friends Together and to talk to them about the ways in which it can nourish and strengthen their life together.

To find out more or to request a visit, go to <https://together.woodbrooke.org.uk>. If you would like Alistair to speak to your meeting, please contact him at [alistairf@quaker.org.uk](mailto:alistairf@quaker.org.uk) or on 020 7663 1016.



Photo: © Mike Pinches

## Opportunities to focus on conscientious objection

In March 1916 the Military Service Act allowed for conscientious objection to military service for the very first time. On Wednesday 2 March 2016 we invite meetings to hold a public meeting for worship at or near places where conscientious objectors were badly treated during World War I. We are also planning to mark the passage of the Military Service Act with a parliamentary event in January. For more information please contact Jessica Metheringham, Parliamentary Engagement Officer, at [jessicam@quaker.org.uk](mailto:jessicam@quaker.org.uk) or on 020 7663 1107.

Quaker Peace & Social Witness has put together a new group of speakers, who are available to run learning sessions in meetings focused on Quaker opposition to warfare and the realities of acting on conscience. To request a speaker, please contact Helen Bradford at [helenb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:helenb@quaker.org.uk) or on 020 7663 1071.

## Trustees now available to visit Quaker meetings

A group of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) Trustees and Friends House Hospitality Board members have offered to visit meetings to give a picture of their work on behalf of Quakers in Britain.

Trustees have overall responsibility for our centrally managed work. Hospitality Board members are responsible for the work of the hospitality company at Friends House, which is owned by BYM and generates income to help to pay for Quaker work.

These trustees and board members are a welcome addition to the pool of committee members and staff who already make visits to meetings. If you would like to find out about arranging a visit please contact Leslie Bell, Meeting Relationships Officer, at [leslieb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:leslieb@quaker.org.uk) or on 020 7663 1019.

## Calling all Quaker activists

For a second year, Quaker Peace & Social Witness is organising an activist gathering at Friends House in London. This will be an action-focused day for Friends who identify as activists, framed in worship. It will take place on 21 November and will provide activists with an opportunity to meet, connect, learn, plan and be energised and inspired.

The event is free to attend. Please book before 15 October and tell us what you would like from the day so we can use your input to help shape the agenda. You can register online at [www.quaker.org.uk/activist-event](http://www.quaker.org.uk/activist-event).



Photo: © Mike Pinches

## High hopes, good prospects

Quakers and attenders can apply to Britain Yearly Meeting for a variety of grants and bursaries. Two of these are currently underused and we would welcome more applications for them.

Hope Grants of up to £500 are available to improve the quality of life of unemployed Quakers and attenders. Prospect Grants of up to £3,000 aim to help Quakers or attenders in the move from unemployment to self-employment.

For more information on these or any of our other grants, please visit [www.quaker.org.uk/grant-making](http://www.quaker.org.uk/grant-making) or contact the Grants Officer at [grants@quaker.org.uk](mailto:grants@quaker.org.uk) or on 020 7663 1117.



## Changes to Zimbabwe School Bursary Scheme

The Zimbabwe Secondary School Bursary Scheme has helped over 700 young people to benefit from secondary schooling in a country where far too many students drop out after primary school due to the cost of secondary education.

British Quakers contribute generously to the scheme, and for many years Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) has handled these donations. From this autumn, Friends of Hlekweni is taking over administering the scheme in Britain.

Friends of Hlekweni has a strong relationship with Bulawayo Monthly Meeting, which manages the scheme in Zimbabwe; these days QPSW's work in Africa is focused on Kenya, Rwanda, and Burundi and does not have the capacity to keep in close touch with Zimbabwe.

All current donors are being contacted individually. To find out more, contact Lee Taylor (Friends of Hlekweni) at [info@friendsofhlekweni.org.uk](mailto:info@friendsofhlekweni.org.uk) or Helen Drewery (QPSW) on 020 7663 1060 or at [helend@quaker.org.uk](mailto:helend@quaker.org.uk).

## Encouraging young Quakers to 'be the change'

Living the peace testimony faithfully can be challenging when you are the only Quaker in your school or young person in your meeting. 'Be the change' is a new resource that encourages young Quakers to take action, exploring some of the issues we campaign on and why they are important. It features a set of cards looking at economics, sustainability and disarmament and links to [www.yqspace.org.uk](http://www.yqspace.org.uk), where there is more information and a toolkit of ideas to take action.

For copies please contact Thais De Oliveira at [cypadmin@quaker.org.uk](mailto:cypadmin@quaker.org.uk) or on 020 7663 1013.



## Quaker film watched more than 10,000 times in a month

Quaker Peace & Social Witness's short film *The Unseen March* has received over 10,000 views in the first month of its launch. The film, which questions the increased militarisation of schools, was released in the run-up to Armed Forces Day. It was discussed on national and local BBC radio, but social media was crucial to its spread because major media outlets tend to ignore criticism of everyday militarism.

The debate raised by *The Unseen March* is also being carried into communities by Quakers across Britain. Local and area meetings are screening the film, holding public discussions, and taking other actions as suggested at [www.unseenmarch.org.uk](http://www.unseenmarch.org.uk).

## Refugee crisis: call for action

Quakers in Britain have made a statement asserting that all human life is precious and urging the UK government and other European governments to create paths to safety and to secure legal protection for refugees.

The statement from our national representative body, Meeting for Sufferings, said: "Refugees are fleeing from fear. Further violent interventions in countries such as Syria will not provide a solution."

Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN), Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) and Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) are also taking forward these concerns.

## Keep up to date with *Earth and Economy*

*Earth and Economy* is the twice-yearly newsletter of the Economics, Sustainability & Peace team. It is a great way to stay in touch with what is happening across the yearly meeting on economics and sustainability issues.

If your meeting would like to receive *Earth and Economy*, please email Ellie Roberts at [ellie@quaker.org.uk](mailto:ellie@quaker.org.uk), including in your message the number of copies you would like and the address to send them to. The next issue will be out at the end of November.

## New café opens at Swarthmoor Hall

The Barn Café has opened at Swarthmoor Hall in Cumbria.

Having a café has been a long-term aim of manager Jane Pearson and has been made possible thanks to a generous donation of £20,000 by a member of the local community.

The country house is known as the cradle of Quakerism because of the protection and hospitality provided there for early Quakers by Judge Thomas Fell and his wife Margaret in the 17th century. George Fox – founder of Quakerism – lived at Swarthmoor for a while and it became a headquarters for the movement.

Now the hall is known for its peace and tranquillity, as well as being a place for meeting and learning. Find out more at [www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk](http://www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk).



## Outreach conference 2016

The 2016 national Quaker outreach conference will take place from 12–14 February at High Leigh Conference Centre in Hertfordshire.

Titled 'Catching Light', the conference will be an exciting opportunity to look at the links between our outreach and our witness in the world. There will be talks, workshops, discussion and reflection. All area meetings are encouraged to send representatives to share insights and experiences and learn from one another.

You can book onto the conference online at [www.quaker.org.uk/catching-light](http://www.quaker.org.uk/catching-light). For more information or for a paper booking form, please email [outreach@quaker.org.uk](mailto:outreach@quaker.org.uk) or phone 020 7663 1017. The cost is £210 per person and the deadline for bookings is 31 December 2015.

# Quakers call for climate justice

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Tackling climate change is not just about sustainability – we need equality and justice too.

Sunniva Taylor, Programme Manager: Sustainability & Peace

Almost a hundred Quakers from across Britain made the journey to Westminster in June to take part in a climate lobby. The lobby saw thousands of people gather to talk to newly elected MPs, showing them that action on climate change matters to a large and diverse part of the electorate. Raising climate change with MPs is vital in the run-up to the international climate negotiations in Paris this December, which should result in a new global emissions target.

The day was coordinated by the Climate Coalition, of which Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) is a member. As well as engaging with their MPs, Quakers were also able to meet each other. Many gathered in a nearby café to prepare themselves, with support from Jessica Metherringham, Britain Yearly Meeting's Parliamentary Engagement Officer, and staff from QPSW. Later on they reconvened to share their experiences.

The participants had particular messages for their MPs, and were supported by specially prepared

resources from QPSW. The focus was not just on climate change but on climate *justice*. The word justice is important – it puts the emphasis on the injustice and inequality that perpetuates and is perpetuated by climate change.

**We need to challenge policies that undermine the UK government's claim to be leaders on climate change action.**

Globally and nationally people have unequal access to energy; the impact of pollution falls on those who have done least to cause it; and wealth created by fossil fuel production is unequally spread.

Inequality is of spiritual concern to Quakers. Our belief that there is 'that of God' in everyone leads us to recognise that every person's life is sacred and of fundamentally equal worth. Our concern for equality means we are as interested in the question of how energy is owned, priced and

distributed as how it is produced.

Climate justice also stresses the need for fair recompense for those affected by human-induced climate change, and the need to build a new system that has equality, justice and sustainability at heart.

So Quakers asked their MPs about the coming international climate negotiations, but also about banning fracking, increasing support for community energy projects, tackling fuel poverty and reforming the monopoly of the 'big six' energy companies. In doing so they have initiated relationships with their MPs that many aim to continue, with follow-up meetings in their constituencies planned. "I started to feel part of a Quaker groundswell" commented one Friend who took part.

Ongoing engagement with MPs is important. We need to challenge policies that undermine the UK government's claim to be leaders on climate change action. Equally important is Quakers' involvement with grassroots initiatives and the climate justice movement, which show that – whatever deal is struck in Paris in December – the momentum to build a more just as well as more sustainable economy is growing.

There are lots of opportunities to get involved with climate justice this autumn, including a pilgrimage to Paris, regional marches and more. To find out more please visit [www.quaker.org.uk/climate-justice](http://www.quaker.org.uk/climate-justice).

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Quakers march on Parliament for climate justice. Photo: © Mike Pinches 2015



# Generous legacies fund new website



Many Quakers helped with the development of the new website by attending user testing sessions at Yearly Meeting in May. Photo: © Mike Pinches 2015

A new website for Quakers in Britain is now live, and over the next few months it will hold more and more of the information Quakers and others look for online.

If you visit [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk) you will see the new site, which now works well on mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones as well as desktop and laptop computers. The old site will still be available too, until we are sure the new site has everything on it that we need.

The site is designed to high standards of accessibility and much of the material from the old site is being rewritten to make it easier to read on a screen. It should also be much simpler to find what you are looking for. The structure draws on user feedback, and the search function will work better.

The site has many audiences – Quakers who want to know more about the work done in their name, clerks and treasurers needing technical advice, people who have just heard of Quakers and want to find out more, journalists, campaigners, children and young people – the list is a long one.

Each of these audiences has

particular needs and preferences, which are being thought about as the site takes shape.

This major investment in better communications is being paid for out of legacy funds – a way of making good use of the money provided by those who have generously included Quakers in Britain in their wills.

The amount we receive from legacies varies unpredictably from year to year, so we use this money for limited-term projects, allocating funds once we know how much we have received. This year legacy funds are also enabling us to expand our peacebuilding work in Kenya, and to produce a directory of the various services provided by Friends House for Quaker meetings, among other initiatives.

As *Quaker faith & practice* reminds us, legacies “form an important part of our income and Friends are urged to bear this in mind when making a will” (14.11).

To find out more about how to leave a legacy to Quaker work in your will, please contact Leslie Bell, Meeting Relationships Officer, at [leslieb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:leslieb@quaker.org.uk) or call her in confidence on 020 7663 1019.

## Contribute to Quaker work

Serve on a Quaker committee: phone 020 7663 1121, email [nominations@quaker.org.uk](mailto:nominations@quaker.org.uk) or visit [www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-service](http://www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-service).

Make a donation or leave a gift in your will: phone Leslie Bell on 020 7663 1019, email [leslieb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:leslieb@quaker.org.uk) or visit [www.quaker.org.uk/donate](http://www.quaker.org.uk/donate).

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Subscribe to Quaker News by post, make changes to your subscription or request paper back issues by contacting Leslie Bell on 020 7663 1019 or at [qn@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qn@quaker.org.uk).

## Connect with Quakers in Britain

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

Enter your postcode at [www.quaker.org.uk/meetings](http://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](http://www.quaker.org.uk) or search for ‘Quakers in Britain’.



## 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 violent conflict.

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

Visit [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk) to find out more about the Quaker way 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](mailto:outreach@quaker.org.uk)

## Meet Sarah Donaldson



Sarah Donaldson is a member of Manchester & Warrington Area Meeting, and is serving as a Britain Yearly Meeting Trustee. Trustees are responsible for the central work, assets and property of Quakers in Britain.

I have been around Quakers for some 25 years and a member for about 14. While I know that the silent meeting for worship is the bedrock of the Quaker way, I also know that it can be a difficult place for me to be. The discipline of pushing away my everyday worries still does not come easily and the lure of the Sunday morning lie-in is sometimes too hard to ignore.

On the other hand, I have always enjoyed being involved in the wider life of our Society – locally, at area meeting level, and nationally. Working alongside other Friends on a project or a policy has often brought me the greatest opportunities for spiritual growth and insight.

At Quaker Quest I learned about my meeting; as a member of the area meeting clerking team I learned about myself; as an adult volunteer at Junior Yearly Meeting I finally understood the Bible story of Martha and Mary.

While I have occasionally been glad to say goodbye to some Quaker jobs and committees, I have generally found that it is by 'doing' Quakerism that I have gained the most.

At the start of this year I became a Britain Yearly Meeting Trustee. The responsibilities involved are daunting, but it's a fantastic opportunity to work alongside some really interesting and engaged Quakers and to take part in the right running of the centrally managed work. And what work there is! Although I can take no credit at all for the refurbishment of the Large Meeting House, I have been thrilled to see the outcome of that curiously Quaker mixture of careful planning and visionary dynamism.

While the big projects are undoubtedly fantastic, for me it is the notions underlying the work that excite me the most. As we trustees work through our strategic plans and consider (for example) what it means to have a shared vision for a single organisation, I am delighted to be able to share in that exploration.

*If you would like to find out more about serving on a national Quaker committee, please phone 020 7663 1121, email [nominations@quaker.org.uk](mailto:nominations@quaker.org.uk) or visit [www.quaker.org.uk/service](http://www.quaker.org.uk/service).*