

Making an impact

Stories from our work

June 2025



Introduction

Quakers in Britain are making a real difference – within our own communities and across wider society.

The eighteen stories included in this report demonstrate the breadth of work carried out by Quakers in Britain across local, national and international contexts. You'll read about Quaker peacebuilders responding to racial violence in Britain, children exploring spirituality through Faith & Play, and people of faith coming together to campaign for climate justice. You'll see how our international partnerships help protect livelihoods in Palestine, support political reconciliation ahead of elections in Burundi, and train young entrepreneurs in Rwanda. Alongside this, we continue to nurture Quaker community life through projects like the Spiceland Summer Settlement and the creation of 'Welcome Boxes' for families with children.

Each of these stories reflects work that is rooted in worship and guided by the collective discernment of Friends at Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings. This is work we deliver with and on behalf of Friends, seeking to create a more peaceful, just, and sustainable world.

None of this work would be possible without the continued support of Quaker meetings and individual Friends. In 2024, Quakers in Britain spent approx. £2.2 million on our peace and social witness work and approx. £3.5 million on supporting Quaker communities. Through your time, energy, and financial contributions, you enable this shared work and witness to flourish.

Please share these stories with others in your meeting – on your noticeboard, in notices and when telling Friends about the need for contributions to support the work. We hope these stories encourage, inform, and inspire – showing what becomes possible when we act together in faith.

We love to hear from Friends so do email us at contributions@quaker.org.uk with your thoughts, comments or questions.

Responding to the police raid on Westminster Meeting House



Meeting for Worship outside Scotland Yard. Photo by Michael Preston. © Quakers in Britain

On 27 March 2025, more than 20 uniformed police officers forcibly entered Westminster Meeting House. Without warning or ringing the bell, they broke open the front door, searched the entire building, and arrested six women attending a meeting in a hired room.

Beyond the immediate distress caused to those present, the raid was deeply upsetting for many Quakers and other people of faith. The heavy-handed and disproportionate approach was widely seen as a violation of the sanctuary expected in a place of worship. The incident also brought renewed attention to long-standing concerns raised by Quakers in Britain: the increasing criminalisation of protest and the expansion of police powers under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023.

In the immediate aftermath, the Communications Team prepared a statement by the following morning, which was issued as a press release and shared across social media. Independent Catholic News picked it up, significantly extending its reach. A small team worked intensively over the weekend and following week to handle media enquiries, resulting in extensive media coverage and a massive increase in traffic to our social media.

The Climate Justice team created email templates to help Quakers contact their MPs and worked with the communications team to ensure wide circulation. We shared information across our professional networks about the raid and how to offer support. We collaborated closely with grassroots Quaker climate activists to support a vigil outside New Scotland Yard, providing staff support with stewarding, media liaison, photography, and videography. And we drafted an interfaith open letter of solidarity, securing signatures from over 20 different faith groups.

Thanks to this collective effort, a troubling incident became a catalyst for political action. Many Quakers shared responses from MPs after contacting them using our resources – providing valuable political insights and contacts. Our partners, both faith-based and secular, shared messages of solidarity. The vigil at New Scotland Yard brought together around 300 people in person and over 300 more online, creating a powerful moment of unity.

Our hope is that this action contributes to pressure on the government to reconsider recent repressive legislation. It has also raised awareness of the erosion of protest rights. By connecting with secular and faith partners, politicians, and grassroots Quakers, we have strengthened relationships that will our support ongoing work on this vital issue.

Strengthening role holders through peer support



©Mike Pinches for Quakers in Britain

Role holders in our Quaker meetings often need more support. Friends can be appointed to roles without a clear understanding of what that role entails. Few have had any formal training for the role and there is often no one in the meeting who can act as a role model or provide guidance.

Ruth, a local development worker, recognised this as a need in her local area. She decided to set up regular peer support sessions on Zoom, creating networks for Friends in eldership or pastoral care, local meeting clerks, and nominations roles. The drop-in sessions take place every six to eight weeks, both during the day and in the evening. Ruth offers a theme or topic for each session, but the conversation is more usually led by the participants, who bring up their challenges, questions or learning from the role. Feedback from Friends has included the following:

'As you know, I always value these meetings but somehow Monday's was special. I am not quite sure why but I think it was something about the generosity and depth of the sharing and the thoughtfulness of the responses and suggestions. This could not have happened without your creativity in setting them up in the first place...Thank you.'

'It is not only valuable to air one's own problems but

also to hear other people's and be delighted you aren't having to cope with them!'

Most local development workers are holding peer support groups. Across Britain, there are groups for Eldership, Pastoral Care, Nominations, Treasurers, and Trustees. Benefits include:

- helpful peer connections and shared conversations that continue beyond the sessions
- greater awareness of the training and resources available through organisations like Woodbrooke
- increased feelings of confidence in role holders
- the chance to meet Friends from other local and area meetings
- a strengthened sense of being part of a wider, connected Quaker community.

The impact of the peer support groups is profound. Friends become more 'Quaker confident', supporting Quaker discipline and process. They feel connected to and supported by a broader Quaker community and understand more clearly that the local meeting is just one part of being Quaker – and enjoy it more! This enriches Quaker experience and makes our meeting communities more viable and resilient.

Interfaith climate summit - Healing the Earth, Healing Ourselves



©Jon Chew for Faith for the Climate

With climate change already causing devastating impacts worldwide, the need for urgent and widespread collaboration is clear. Yet many people feel overwhelmed and uncertain about how to take action. Even dedicated climate activists often struggle with exhaustion and discouragement in the face of slow progress and systemic challenges.

Many religious traditions emphasise stewardship of the Earth and care for the vulnerable, and faith leaders hold influence in both local communities and wider society. Therefore, we know that faith communities have the potential to be powerful forces for change – but this potential is often underutilised. We saw a need to draw people of faith together to harness these strengths while offering activists renewed hope and resilience by sharing spiritual practices, fostering collaboration, and inspiring long-term commitment to environmental and social justice.

To meet this need, we partnered with Faith for the Climate and Christian Climate Action to organise the *Healing the Earth, Healing Ourselves* interfaith climate summit on 23 February 2025 at Friends House, London. The event brought together 150 participants from eight faith traditions, along with secular activists,

to foster collaboration, provide emotional renewal, and inspire faith communities with practical examples of local climate action. The programme featured faith stalls, a panel discussion, interactive breakout sessions, and a closing gathering with a presentation of the Sufi devotional practice of Sama.

Joyful, spacious and nurturing, the summit surpassed our hopes in many ways. It strengthened interfaith networks, with participants committing to joint eco-action projects and advocacy efforts. Attendees left with concrete ideas for action, such as organising local interfaith workshops, reaching out to contacts from other faiths to initiate dialogue, and coordinating groups to attend the Climate Coalition lobby of Parliament in July. Many participants described feeling reinvigorated and supported, with the event offering a much-needed space for hope and resilience.

We anticipate that the impact arising from this work will be stronger, long-term interfaith collaborations on climate justice, equipping faith communities to be more effective advocates for systemic change.

Empowering young people through Peer Mediation in Leeds



©Quakers in Britain

Schools across the UK are facing a sharp rise in pupil conflict and disruption. Recent data shows that 63% of school staff report more incidents of challenging behaviour, and suspensions hit a record high in the 2022/2023 spring term. At the same time, the National Children's Bureau report that over the last 15 years, young people's sense of belonging has reduced and respect between peers has declined.

To address this, we are promoting Peer Mediation – a child-led approach to resolving conflict and building healthier relationships. Noticing a gap in provision around Leeds, we partnered with a local organisation to host a train-the-trainer course in February. Fourteen participants – including teachers, youth workers, and mediation providers – joined us for three days of skills-building and reflection.

Feedback from the course was highly positive, with participants expressing enthusiasm for the practicality of the approach, the resources, and the delivery of the training. The cohort will reconvene in May to discuss progress, with termly peer support meetings to follow. We anticipate at least 8 new Peer Mediation schemes by Christmas, and a further 8 by next summer. Training quality among experienced providers is also expected to improve.

The anticipated benefits are profound. Research shows Peer Mediation can lead to:

- Reduced conflict and fewer behavioural incidents
- Less staff time spent on conflict resolution
- A more positive school climate
- Improved academic performance and self-esteem among mediators

One young mediator shared that, "I feel really confident in handling conflict in my own life, inside or outside of school." And in schools where the scheme is running, students note the change, with one saying, "It's made school a safer place and there aren't so many arguments because if an argument starts it's more likely to get sorted out quicker."

An Assistant Headteacher reported, "Peer Mediation has revolutionised how I think and deal with children's disputes in school. Allowing children to solve problems from a child's view rather than an adult's view has been so impactful."

By fostering the next generation of peacemakers, we are helping schools become safer, more inclusive spaces. This work is a testament to what's possible when young people are empowered to lead.

Simmons Grant trains young entrepreneur in Rwanda



courtesy of Friends Career Center

Grant giving to support individuals and projects is a key aspect of our work. Our Simmons Grants, for example, are given to overseas projects that help rural young people become self-sufficient.

In 2022, one of these grants went to the Friends Career Center (FCC) in Kigali for their vocational training and mentoring project. The FCC is a Quaker volunteer-run organization committed to connecting young Quakers and other youth in Africa and across the world to career opportunities. Through the project funded by the Simmons grant, FCC supported ten young Quakers from Rwanda through education, professional development, and network development.

One of the trainees was a young woman named Jacky Uwamariya. Jacky faced a challenging start after completing secondary school. Like many young people, she had struggled to find a job and felt uncertain about her future. Funded by this grant, Jacky enrolled in a six-month Culinary Arts program at the Friends Peace House Mwananshuti Vocational Training Center. She excelled in her studies, gaining both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Following graduation, she secured a two-month internship at Heaven Hotel in Kigali, where she refined



her abilities professionally and gained insights into the hospitality industry.

After completing her internship, Jacky founded BEZA55, a catering business. She started small, providing food for weddings, meetings, and smaller gatherings. BEZA55 quickly grew, from serving 20 guests to managing events for up to 800 people. Thanks to her success, Jacky was invited to speak as the student representative at her graduation ceremony at the end of 2024. Jacky's story is just one example of how impactful our grants can be, giving young people from rural areas crucial support at the right time to help them shine.

Applications for 2025 Simmons grants will open at the start of May 2025 and close at the end of July 2025. We look forward to having more stories like Jacky's to report. For more details about the project grants we have available see: www.quaker.org.uk/simmons

Welcome Box – being ready for families and children



©Quakers in Britain

Across many Quaker meetings, there's a shared desire to be welcoming to children – even in places where there isn't a regular children's meeting for worship. Yet without children currently attending, it can be difficult for meetings to know where to begin. That's the need this project set out to meet: helping Quaker communities feel ready and confident to welcome children, should they come.

To do this, we developed a clear and practical leaflet, alongside a short video, to show meetings how to prepare a "welcome box". The leaflet and video explain the thinking behind the welcome box approach and offer simple guidance on how to create one. Through demonstrations and reflections from experienced Friends, the resources encourage meetings to explore what it means to be child-ready – not just in practice, but in spirit.

The response to these resources has been warm and enthusiastic. In just two months, the video was viewed over 500 times, showing strong interest across the Yearly Meeting. Clevedon Meeting engaged with their youth development worker to develop their own box, sparking rich conversations about children and worship. Redland Meeting also drew inspiration from the project, refreshing their existing 'family

box' with new energy and ideas. Other Friends have discussed the welcome box approach in network meetings, adopting it in their own ways.

While the changes may seem small, their impact is meaningful. These resources are opening up conversations about inclusion, hospitality, and readiness. They are helping to shift culture gently, making it easier for Quaker meetings to embody their commitment to community – whether or not children are present on a given Sunday. Looking ahead, we hope this work leads to more meetings that are truly family-friendly, and more Friends who feel confident and inspired to welcome the youngest among us.

Peace Education course launched at The Open University



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Our teachers and students are under immense pressure from both internal and external factors. Students' communication skills have been impacted by Covid, increased screen time, and social media. Many young people are also overwhelmed by global issues like climate change and war, which they encounter instantly on their phones. Rising exclusion rates – especially in England and Wales – disproportionately affect marginalised students. And those who are permanently excluded are twice as likely to commit serious violence within a year, compared to similar students who remain in school. In 2024, 86% of teachers said their job negatively affected their mental health.

Peace Education offers a hopeful, practical response. It supports wellbeing, develops social skills, and helps children manage conflict constructively. It enables students to explore complex issues – like identity and war – while building empathy, inclusion, and agency. Yet, few training opportunities in Peace Education exist across Britain. We wanted to reach new audiences – particularly trainee teachers knowing this is a key moment to introduce Peace Education into their practice.

When Quaker academic Lucy Henning joined The Open University, she invited us to collaborate on a new course to appear on OpenLearn, the OU's free learning platform. Together, we developed Principles and Practices of Peace Education – a 12-hour self-guided course that helps educators explore peace from the personal to the global.

The course launched in February 2025 to enthusiastic response. At the launch, Professor Hilary Cremin delivered a keynote to a record-breaking audience, young peer mediators shared their experiences, and partners offered activities, workshops and reflections. Our practitioner webinar welcomed over 100 participants, including teachers and training leads.

Since then, over 800 people have enrolled in the Principles and Practices course. While some took the course for personal interest, 80% plan to apply it in teaching or training. Feedback describes the course as “thought-provoking” and “inspiring,” with 88% saying they're motivated to learn more. We are now working on a Welsh version in response to strong demand.

This course is a vital step toward equipping educators to foster peaceful classrooms and helping young people become the peacebuilders of tomorrow.

Elevating peace education in Scotland



Children perform 'Wangari's Trees' as part of our Peace Education Exhibition at Scottish Parliament. ©Quakers in Britain

In recent years, Quakers in Britain identified both the need and the opportunity to raise the profile of peace education in Scotland. Peace education offers a powerful means to nurture young people's emotional and social development. While many schools already benefit from peace education approaches that foster wellbeing, teach conflict resolution, and encourage global citizenship, uptake remains inconsistent and policy support patchy.

To address this, we launched a multi-faceted advocacy effort in partnership with Quakers in Scotland, the Scottish Quakers' Parliamentary Engagement Working Group, and a range of mediation and educational organisations. Our report, *Peace at the Heart* (2022), brought together compelling evidence of what already works in Scottish schools and called for stronger government support. Our coalition worked with Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) to table supportive motions. We also developed a mobile exhibition to showcase peace education in practice, which travelled to the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood and to communities across Scotland.

As a result of these efforts, peace education is now firmly on the radar of policymakers. Cross-party

support has grown in the Scottish Parliament, and the Scottish Government's review of the Curriculum for Excellence is increasingly shaped by peace education values, particularly through Learning for Sustainability. Government policy on behaviour and relationships in schools is also increasingly aligned with Quaker recommendations.

Another significant outcome is the adoption by the Educational Institute of Scotland (Scotland's largest teaching union) of an Education for Peace Policy, which directly draws on Quaker contributions. The union also commissioned Quakers in Britain to deliver fully-funded teacher training in conflict resolution across Inverness, Edinburgh and Glasgow – training is beginning to shape classroom practice.

Looking ahead, our vision is ambitious but grounded: to embed peace education in every school in Scotland. Like painting the Forth Bridge, the work is always ongoing, but Quakers in Britain have succeeded in making peace education a central part of educational policy conversations. We hope that these achievements in Scotland will serve as a model and catalyst for wider policy change across Britain.

Spiceland Summer Settlement - rebuilding community



©Quakers in Britain

When the pandemic pulled people into their own spaces, leaving them isolated and disconnected from their worshipping communities, many Quakers felt that loss acutely. While online meetings helped bridge the gap, the absence of in-person connection left a deep need unfulfilled. In response, the Spiceland Summer Settlement emerged – a gathering that has since become a vital space for renewal, connection, and community.

Now in its third year, the Settlement brings together Quakers from six West Country Area Meetings at Spiceland Meeting House in rural Devon. Each summer, Friends of all ages gather – some camping, others visiting for the day – to worship, share meals, learn together, and simply be in community. The shape of the gathering changes daily, as people come and go, but the spirit remains consistent: open, inclusive, and grounded in shared Quaker witness.

The original initiative for this event came from the Local Development Workers (LDWs) in the Somerset, Devon and Cornwall area, and they now work with West Somerset Area Meeting to organise and publicise the event. The LDWs provide links with Quakers in Britain, share resources, and facilitate activities and learning opportunities.

What began as an experiment in reconnection has become a model for inter-Meeting collaboration

and spiritual nourishment. By working together, Area Meetings have been able to create something none could sustain alone – an event that supports individual spiritual growth, strengthens communal bonds, and fosters resilience. The gathering welcomes newcomers, long-time Friends, young adults, families, and those from online-only communities. It provides space to encounter different perspectives, explore broader agendas, and test out new, more vibrant models of being a Quaker community.

The impact is clear. Around 60 people attend daily, with 30 or more camping overnight. Grandparents and grandchildren come together, children bring their parents, and friendships form across age groups. Participants lead their own workshops and activities, and a core organising team drawn from across the region now sustains the event year to year. Through this coproduction, Friends have developed a stronger sense of where energy, skills, and support exist across Area Meetings.

The Spiceland Summer Settlement has breathed new life into a rural meeting house while giving Friends a way to gather meaningfully in person. In a time when so much has pulled us apart, it offers a hopeful, practical example of what can happen when we come together.

Turning the Tide Burundi – civic education ahead of elections

Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world and experienced civil war (1993 to 2005) where an estimated 300,000 people were killed. Burundi also has a recent history of election violence (2020). Turning the Tide (TTT) Burundi identified a concern ahead of parliamentary elections taking place in June 2025 about the need for peaceful coexistence between young people from different political parties.

Working with community resource people trained in nonviolence and in collaboration with the local administration, TTT Burundi conducted three civic education workshops in Mushikamo and Rutegama with representatives of four political parties. As a result, 100 participants from diverse political parties have now been trained in civic education rooted in nonviolence.

A key focus of this work has been towards fostering peaceful coexistence of young people from different political parties. Prior to TTT project intervention in the area, members of different political parties were too divided to be able to come together and talk, especially about how to deal with elections. This has now changed.

After three meetings organised by TTT Burundi, members of these four political parties planned and conducted a shared campaign on elections. At this campaign event, members of these political parties presented a theatre role play they had devised together on peaceful coexistence.

After the campaign event, TTT Burundi received testimonies describing the shared activities now taking place together by members of these four political parties. Following the workshops, members of these four political parties who were previously deeply divided have now started to work in their localities to call for peaceful coexistence and an improved democratic space for the 2025 elections. TTT Burundi heard from one political party member that coming together in this way has never before been possible in his lifetime.

TTT Burundi is one of three country programmes in East Africa, alongside Kenya and Rwanda. TTT East Africa is a community-led nonviolence and peacebuilding programme which aims to address the root causes of injustice to build a sustainable peace from the ground up. Quakers in Britain has supported this work since 2010, which is designed and delivered by our partners in the region.



©AfriNov



Streamlining charity structures in the Southeast



©Quakers in Britain

In early 2022, Local Development Worker Ruth was approached by an Area Meeting (AM) clerk to trustees who expressed deep concern about the future of their AM. Within two years, they would face a leadership crisis, with no clear successors for their trustee roles. This wasn't an isolated case – several other AMs in Ruth's patch were facing similar circumstances. The potential for one or more AMs to be laid down due to governance fatigue was becoming a real and pressing concern.

Recognising the urgent need for a sustainable solution, Ruth organised an in-person meeting for AM clerks and trustees. Lesley Richards and Oliver Waterhouse were invited to speak about the emerging single charity model being explored in Wales and other regions. The meeting offered much-needed reassurance – one Friend commented that where there had been despair, she now felt hope.

Next, Ruth and Lesley Richards encouraged the formation of a working group to explore the single charity option for the southeast of England. Ruth helped identify a neutral convenor from outside the region, and each AM appointed a couple of Friends to the group.

While the initial meetings made slow progress, the third meeting – held a year after the first

presentation – was a turning point. Working closely with the convenor, Ruth helped design a day-long programme that led to the creation of focused subgroups who began developing proposals and gathering relevant data. However, the group struggled to appoint a clerk from within their number – a key step in moving the work forward.

Another crucial breakthrough took place at the next in-person plenary – with Ruth's support, the group succeeded in appointing a clerking team of four Friends. This marked a significant shift in energy and commitment. With the working group now established and clerks appointed, the way forward is much clearer.

Over 18 months, Ruth supported six AMs in coming together to explore shared solutions to their governance challenges. Her involvement helped build the necessary trust, create structure, and maintain momentum. Without this intervention, the work might have stalled – or not begun at all.

Looking ahead, this collaborative effort has the potential to reduce the administrative burden on Friends, ensure long-term sustainability, and free up energy for what matters most: worship, community, and faith in action.

Revitalising an area meeting



©Mike Pinches for Quakers in Britain

For Quaker meetings to be truly thriving and welcoming, it's essential to address the underlying challenges that can prevent growth and connection.

Hilary, one of our Local Development Workers, was approached by an area meeting facing significant difficulties. They were struggling to fill key roles – most notably, they had no clerk or clerking team – and were unsure how best to support their local meetings, some of which were also under strain.

Hilary suggested forming a working group made up of volunteers from local meetings to explore these issues together. The group identified two main areas to focus on:

- Understanding the challenges facing local meetings and the support they needed
- Exploring ways to help the area meeting thrive as a whole

The working group organised a day-long event to reflect on the future of the area meeting. Using the framework of Our Faith in the Future, they ran a series of facilitated activities, including a threshing meeting. The day exceeded expectations, attracting 40 Friends. A strong theme emerged: the central role

of Meeting for Worship in nurturing spiritual life and community.

This successful event sparked further activity. Two members of the working group led a follow-up session on George Fox and Worship. The group also encouraged visits between local meetings to build relationships and understanding. Two Zoom sessions – Supporting Trustees and Working with Other Area Meetings – provided opportunities to learn and share.

These activities have had an impact. More Friends are now actively involved at the area meeting level, and there's a renewed sense of connection and shared purpose across the AM. Local meeting clerks now meet regularly online, the nominations committee is discerning names for a new AM clerking team, and the working group is exploring how best to support trustees and local meetings in practical ways.

While it's still early days, there are already visible changes: Friends are feeling more energised and better supported, enabling them to turn their attention to outreach, welcoming families, community-building, and witness.

The Insure Our Future Campaign inspires action in Edinburgh



©David Somerwell

Many Quakers want to make change around the climate crisis, but acting in isolation can be dispiriting. The problem is so large, it's difficult to know where to start. As Janet Saunders from Central Edinburgh Quaker Meeting writes, "Climate disruption can be depressing. With [...] huge planned fossil fuel projects all over the world, my individual efforts felt like trying to bail out the Titanic with tea cups."

Insurance companies insure fossil fuel extraction and transportation projects like pipelines and oil drilling. These projects are inherently risky – without insurance, they cannot go forward. That is why the Insure Our Future campaign was set up - to pressure insurance companies to stop insuring these climate damaging projects. And that is why we started an education campaign within the Quaker community to raise awareness of this issue. We wanted to bring Quakers into the Insure Our Future campaign because we know that Quakers have a powerful voice when acting together and with others.

Janet got involved after she read about the Insure Our Future coalition in an update we placed in the



Quaker newsletter Quake! The approach made complete sense to her, and she immediately decided to get involved.

She then recruited a group of like-minded individuals with various skills and backgrounds to form a campaign team of Friends and allies in her area. With our support, they are now actively campaigning against the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), targeting insurer Tokio Marine.

They have already seen a measure of success: in March 2024, Tokio Marine updated their environmental policy. However, Janet's group, as well as the broader Insure Our Future coalition, feel the update is not sufficiently ambitious. Therefore, Janet and her team are continuing to find creative ways to encourage further action, including looking together at other ways to put pressure on climate finance.

This shows how our work is empowering Quakers to make positive change in bringing about a just transition away from fossil fuels.

Teaching children about Quakerism through Faith & play

How can we support children to learn what it means to be Quaker? Many adult Quakers are eager to reach out to the younger generation and share the spiritual practices that mean so much to them. But they may need support to do this in a way which resonates with children.

Faith & play is an approach to teaching children about Quaker faith and practice through a set of stories based on Quaker history and values. Using visual props and a specific method of story-telling and engaging children, *Faith & play* allows children to access their spiritual lives and gives them words and images to express what they experience of the Light, or the Divine. It enables the adult mentors to create and maintain an open, safe, and welcoming environment that nurtures wonder and loving community.

Friends from Lancaster Area Meeting reached out to the Youth, Children and Families team because they wanted to deepen their work with children through *Faith & play*. They were keen to develop confidence in this approach but needed support. We worked

with them in a number of ways including providing training opportunities, facilitating conversations with a practitioner, sharing props, and demonstrating the techniques to deliver *Faith & play* effectively.

As a result, the Friends have used *Faith & play* storytelling at the meeting's retreat weekend at Glenthorne and at their regular children's meeting. They found that children were more engaged and interested. Seeing first-hand the value of this approach, they are now working on producing more story sets of their own to use, as well as borrowing one of the larger story sets from our supply kept at Friends House.

We are delighted to see interest in the approach spread further – we have already loaned out two more *Faith & play* kits since the training took place! We hope that this approach becomes a staple of the children's meetings in the area, enriching the spiritual life of children and strengthening their connections with their Quaker communities.



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Helping a small local meeting revitalise



© Quakers in Britain

The impact of the Covid pandemic was particularly felt by smaller Quaker worshipping communities. Tweeddale Local Meeting in Scotland was one such community. With their numbers reduced after the pandemic, members of the meeting felt worried. Meeting for worship had been paused and hadn't restarted despite the easing of pandemic restrictions. It was a critical moment for them.

United by their clear desire to restart their meeting, they reached out to their Local Development Worker, Zoe Prosser, for help.

Zoe met with the Friends and helped them to evaluate their needs and wants. Together, they identified that they wanted:

- A powerful united meeting for worship that enriched them. They felt that this was possible with small numbers, but ideally they would love for more Friends to attend to ensure the sustainability of the meeting.
- A sense of community. They felt that this had been significantly damaged in the past few years, particularly over the pandemic, with the loss of several members of their meeting but they wanted to build this back.

Zoe offered some possible ways forward. The Friends decided to trial a model used by Young Adult Friends worshipping groups. They agreed to meet for worship one evening a month in one of their houses, followed by a shared meal. In the two years since this decision was made, the evening meeting has continued, though the shared meal has evolved into tea and cake, which was felt more accessible. They have changed in other ways to adjust to the needs of their community, adding an additional monthly Sunday meeting at another Friend's house.

Their commitment to meeting regularly, along with their flexibility and adaptability, have allowed the meeting to thrive. They continue building their community and strengthening their meeting for worship and are pleased to have welcomed new attenders. They report feeling optimistic, with their increased numbers showing that they are 'going in the right direction!'

Peacebuilding response to targeted violence in the summer of 2024

In July & August 2024, some of the worst racist, anti-migrant violence for decades broke out in 35 locations in England and Northern Ireland after the tragic deaths of three children in a stabbing in Southport. This violence targeted Muslims, asylum seekers and visible minorities. Peacebuilding in Britain were able to respond at this very challenging time. As always, the Quaker peacebuilding we do is sensitive and complex, often working in collaboration, through networks and behind the scenes.

We provided accompaniment, support and resources to organisations and networks engaged in relevant work, some in areas most affected by the violence. This allowed practitioners to express and share feelings, thoughts, and where appropriate, next steps. They heard about relevant but new to them concepts such as “the two hands of nonviolence”. Those working in areas where there was the potential for further violence received practical resources on civilian protection.

We also undertook substantial analysis of the factors that contributed the violence spreading, including the role of far-right organisations and disinformation. We shared this analysis with colleagues and external peacebuilders, allowing them to use and build on this work in their responses and use it to ensure a conflict sensitive approach.

We facilitated Quaker reflection and action, working with Northern Friends Peace Board to hold an online meeting in which 85 Quakers came together to share their immediate thoughts and feelings. We also brought forward the launch of the Quaker Peacebuilding Network.

Finally, we worked with three national organisations – Belong, British Futures and the Together Coalition – to host *After the riots: A Cohesion summit* at Friends House on 20 November 2024. This powerful event brought together experts, practitioners, and policy makers to reflect on what had happened, why, and what they’d like to see happen in response.

We hope the impact of this work is that the people and organisations we accompany have felt supported and bolstered in the diversity of their responses, whether they are working on the ground in communities or at a national, policy level. We also hope that the government will develop a considered and resourced cohesion strategy in partnership with civil society alongside other relevant measures. We hope connections made at the national cohesion event lead to ongoing conversations about the role of faith organisations in fostering good relations.

Paul Parker, Sunder Katwala (Director of British Future), Wajid Khan (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Faith, Communities and Resettlement). Photo: Michael Preston for Quakers in Britain.



Strengthening family participation in Quaker camps



© Quakers in Britain

Quaker Camp has been a cherished part of the life of Chilterns Area Meeting for over 65 years. Generations of families return year after year—many now bringing their children and grandchildren to experience the same rich community they enjoyed in their youth. Three area meetings—Herts & Hitchin, Chilterns, and Luton & Leighton—collaborate annually to rent a shared field, erecting communal structures such as latrines, a kitchen, and a large marquee for use across their three successive camps. The viability of this arrangement depends on all three area meetings continuing to participate. If even one were to withdraw, the burden on the others would increase significantly, threatening the sustainability of this much-loved tradition.

Broadening and strengthening participation in these camps has required collaboration across area meetings, with the concerted support of two local development workers: Moya, for Chilterns AM, and Aileen, for Herts & Hitchin AM.

Both Aileen and Moya spent time visiting the camps, gaining insight into the distinct cultures of each camp and how they might learn from one another. Wanting to attract new families to the camps, particularly Herts & Hitchin, which had experienced a concerning decline in numbers, they identified London as a

key area for outreach. Focusing on meetings with children's programmes and good transport links to the camps, they organised and promoted an open day at Herts & Hitchin Camp. This attracted some new visitors, including a young adult Friend from North London. Encouraged by their presence, the camp held a business meeting where Friends reached unity on simplifying their organisational structure—an important step toward making the camp more accessible and sustainable. Herts & Hitchin Camp is now on firmer ground and is slowly growing again.

Moya and Aileen's work has also opened the door to greater collaboration and learning between the three camps. Simple practices like Herts & Hitchin's communal jigsaw puzzle could be shared across camps as an easy and effective way to build connections. Jordans Camp offers another model that could inspire others – they keep teens engaged by providing communally supervised peer tents so that “tent-agers” don't have to camp with their parents.

The future of these camps now looks more assured. With continued support and shared learning, we hope they'll remain a vital source of community, spiritual nourishment and Quaker identity for generations to come.

EAPPI: Protecting the olive harvest

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) has long provided a protective presence for vulnerable Palestinian communities. Our trained volunteer human rights monitors, known as Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs), serve as witnesses and advocates during times of heightened vulnerability. This protection is especially vital during the annual olive harvest, when approximately 100,000 Palestinian families harvest the crop that sustains their livelihoods. These farmers often face harassment and violence from extremist Israeli settlers attempting to disrupt their work. The EAs' presence helps deter such incidents, allowing farmers to safely harvest their olives.

When the war in Gaza erupted, it created unprecedented challenges for Palestinian farmers. In some regions, up to 75% of olives remained unharvested, resulting in the loss of 1,200 metric tons of olive oil worth approximately US\$10 million (£8 million).

In 2024, Palestinians faced a critical situation. Heightened violence from extremist settlers and their increasing impunity created dangerous conditions, while few international organizations remained operating in the West Bank. We recognized that EAs alone could not safely provide the necessary protective presence. Therefore, we partnered with

Rabbis for Human Rights (RfHR), a Jewish Israeli organization also committed to protective presence work. RfHR conducted specialized training for both Israeli volunteers and EAs. Together, we developed a coordinated plan for vulnerable yet accessible areas around Bethlehem.

Rana, whose family participated in the harvest, explained its significance: "Harvesting the olives makes us strong and brings us back to the land and nature." She added, "They can't erase us. They may try but our roots to this land are strong, like the roots of the olive trees."

An EA said, "The olive picking went well. There was a group of volunteers working alongside Rana and her family and some of their children. It was hard work, but all was carried out in good spirits and a sense of joy."

This initiative enabled communities to harvest more olives safely. Farmers expressed gratitude for the support and felt reassured they had not been forgotten during this difficult time. It also strengthened our solidarity with Israeli peace groups—upholding EAPPI's long-standing commitment to supporting both Palestinian communities and Israeli activists working for peace and justice.



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