

## **BYM Treasurer's Report to Annual Conference of Treasurers 2018**

I hope that Friends have had a chance to get a copy of the Annual report and Financial Statements. I commend these to you. They contain a wealth of information on the work BYM has undertaken, and the myriad activities that are within the scope of the work, and I hope you find them useful. But as last year, we thought it would be useful for you to get some more live – and lively – presentation of this work, and I am pleased that Suzanne Ismail, Head of Networking is able to join me with some more detailed descriptions of some of the work done in our name – work that has been commissioned by Friends to be done centrally to have greater effect. This can only be part of the kaleidoscope of the activities that your contributions and our other income support, but I think you will find them interesting – Suzanne.....

Thanks. This work goes on week after week, some of it less glamorous than others, but all essential to the vigour of our Quaker movement.

2017 has been a good year in that we have spent over £9million on the work we are charged with – roughly £3m on Witness through action, £3m on supporting Friends and meetings, and £3m on promoting Quakerism and sustaining the church and faith. This includes work which has been enabled by legacies – once again we were able to allocate an additional half million to future projects, and the legacy income in 2017 at £3.3m should enable us to allocate further funds this year to innovative and necessary projects.

The balance of expenditure involved Yearly Meeting Gathering at Warwick last year. This meant additional work for the staff, and this was accomplished very successfully and within budget. The costs were offset to a large extent by the charges made to Friends, so that a residential Yearly Meeting as such costs around the same as a non-residential meeting.

Income from the Hospitality company hit a new high, and I hope you can get hold of the annual review of the company, which shows what good work it is doing in running an ethical and sustainable business; its contribution in both taking care of the running of Friends House and generating a significant profit to support our central work (nearly £1m) is invaluable.

Our investment portfolio had a good year, contributing some three-quarters of a million income, but also recording a valuation increase of some £3m. That of course is a snapshot as at 31 December and is held to sustain the real value of our various reserves. We have not reduced our portfolio during the year. You will note that we are currently reviewing our investment policy to ensure it remains up-to-date and consistent with our ethical values.

One area you might have noticed is the increase in value of our properties. While we think of Friends House as a place of worship and a base for action, in the secular world it has a business valuation based on market prices which have shot up remarkably. Together with Drayton House (which is leased out to University College to provide an income flow), the regular revaluation has thrown up a surplus over book value of some £19million, which has been taken into reserves. This represents a culmination of the work put in over the last ten years to make the buildings fit for the twenty-first century (including significant improvements in sustainable facilities) and to exercise prudent

stewardship of our resources, but of course does not represent monies we can spend without destroying the resource we have built up to support our work.

The overall result has meant that Trustees are looking at reserves more closely, and on pages 16 and 17 you will see a more detailed explanation of why we hold these reserves, where we think we should be reviewing the balances held, and where we think additional investment might be required. I know that there is a workshop on reserves later today, and I encourage you to carry out a review of your own policy. It does us no good to accumulate money while there is so much good work that can be done now. Spending money can be a great way of building up meetings as Friends work together on social witness projects and get involved with their local communities and their needs. Needless to say, if you find that you cannot spend these funds effectively, send them to BYM and we will put them to good use.

This brings me on to Friends contributions to the work. Once again in 2017, the figure is relatively static at just over £2million. I do hear the response that with all our reserves, there are other needier causes Friends want to support. But this is your church, and this is work that you want done, and the support that you give is important in giving validity and vigour to this work. You have heard something of this work from Suzanne, but there is much more that we can do. Can you find more money to expand our work? Because there are many projects that we find Friends clamouring for – especially legacy funded work that has shown the way we need to move, for instance

Youth workers – only two could be afforded but 15 AMs wanted

Young adults – pilot project to engage with 18 -35s, but we could do much more

Vibrancy – the pilot is half-way through but already we can see where the needs of local meetings for revival can be met

Property support – a subject close to Treasurers hearts. After a gap, we now have Huw Davies reaching out across the country to share experiences and recommended practice – can we really afford to let this lapse after the legacy funding runs out?

Then there is the revision of the Book of Discipline that Yearly Meeting has authorised – a great opportunity to work together for renewal and finding what Quakers of today have learnt from our past experience and what we can say to the world and future generations.

On a personal note, this is the sixth and final time that I will be presenting the accounts to this conference. Linda Batten of Sheffield and Balby AM has been appointed Treasurer from next January, and I look forward to working with her over the following months to ensure a smooth handover. I think I leave the finances reasonably straight, and with excellent support from staff, especially Lisa Kiew who is here today. I have enjoyed working with so many good people on such a worthwhile undertaking, and I have had a lot of fun as well as wonderful spiritual friendship from colleagues.

Peter Ullathorne  
13 June 2018