

BRISTOL AREA MEETING
NEWSLETTER

QUAKER NEWS

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Bristol Young Quakers Matthew, Loki and Malachy at Friends House, London – Page 3

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N.B. Copy for the Next Month issue (number 422) should be sent to HEATHER LISTER by email amnewsletter@bristolquakers.org.uk (or telephone/text 07887 647 433 if unable to email) to arrive by the first Friday in Month, i.e. 3 January 2020

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A message from your 2020 Area Meeting Clerk

As some of you will be aware the clerking team of Barney Smith and Angus Morrice is released from the end of this month to be replaced from January 2020 by Richard Drake (Redland) as clerk and Susan Rooke-Matthews (Bedminster) as assistant clerk.

There's usually a piece in the AM Newsletter from the clerk to Area Meeting calling your attention to the items of business coming before us in the months Area Meeting for Church Affairs.

As we don't have a meeting scheduled in December I thought I'd use this space just to introduce our names to you so you are not too surprised if you haven't kept abreast of all the comings and goings of Area Meeting appointments.

Quakers and the General Election

The general election, called for 12 December, is an opportunity to influence future decision-makers.

Quakers seek something of God in everyone and that leads them to work for justice for all. Their commitment to truth, peace, equality and simplicity leads to five priorities:

- Climate crisis
- Migration
- Criminal justice
- Peace and disarmament
- The nature of the debate

On climate crisis: Quakers are committed to equality and sustainability. They seek a world where all life thrives within a safe and stable climate. A transition to a net-zero carbon economy must put the most marginalised first.

On migration: at the heart of debates around Brexit are questions of sovereignty and migration. The UK has contributed to the poverty, climate breakdown and conflicts that cause people to seek sanctuary here. Quakers have long worked to offer sanctuary to people forced to flee their homes. More than 100 Quaker meetings are working to improve the lives of people whose immigration status is called in to question.

Quakers call on the future government to dismantle discriminatory practices.

On criminal justice: Quakers want a system of restorative justice that transforms individuals, communities and countries for the better.

They call on all any future government to invest in health, education and housing. This will help address the inequalities that lead people to commit crime.

On peace and disarmament: over hundreds of years, Quakers have practised and promoted nonviolent approaches to resolving conflict and promoted diplomacy and alternatives to violence.

Quakers work with others to ban nuclear weapons, end militarism and build a peaceful, just and sustainable global society.

Quakers call on the government to end the use of military force as an instrument of foreign policy and uphold international structures of dialogue and diplomacy instead.

On the nature of the debate: Quakers are concerned by the violent language being used in the political arena. They call on everyone involved in the General Election to listen to each other, seek the truth and seek common ground from which to move forward.

As the election campaign begins, Quakers' representative body says, "Humanity needs leaders of integrity and conscience, ready to be held to account by individuals and institutions, national and international."

Follow Quaker engagement with politicians on Twitter via [@PoliticalQuaker](#) and [@ScotPolQuaker](#).

Find advice on "How Quakers Do Politics" on the website.

From "Quaker Faith in Action" newsletter of QPSW

Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020 at Bath University

Our hope is that between now and August 2020, Friends in Britain can sit with the tough questions that have arisen from our consideration privilege at YM 2019, At Yearly Meeting Gathering 2020, we want to build, celebrate and develop an inclusive community.

We want to reflect on the impact of the climate emergency on all the inhabitants of our world, and prepare to take action in response to this emergency.

Key Information

There have been some changes made to Gathering for 2020 in an effort to simplify the organisation of a complex event and to reduce costs. These are:

- A reduction in the length of Gathering to 6 days.
- In consequence of this there will be no rest day on Wednesday. Instead we will have two free afternoons during which you can rest, engage with organised activities or make your own arrangements
- A simplified booking system. We have been trying very hard to keep the cost of YMG down. As a result we have simplified our bookings process and will reduce the number of groups that we accommodate together.
- If financial assistance is required, Friends can seek it by speaking to the AM Treasurer in confidence. If extra assistance is needed above the standard amount he will be able to put forward a request to Weekly Committee on their behalf.

Building the Gathering Community

Friends at Gathering often offer to share their skills and passions – such as singing, dancing, mandala making and these activities are an integral part of building the community. We would really like to hear from anyone who could contribute in this way now even though bookings have not opened.

We hope to publish a YMG programme in March 2020. In order to do this we need to gather information about proposed special interest meetings and activities offered by Friends by 31 December 2019. If you are willing to contribute in this way, please complete the form at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/ymg-2020-options-offers/>

Further information will be posted on the YM website www.quaker.org.uk/ym. If you have any queries, please contact staff at ym@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1040.

Briefing edited by Barney Smith, Area Meeting Clerk

Report from Meeting of Trustees – November 2019

As all rooms had been booked in Central Bristol Meeting House we met in an architect's office near Stokes Croft, where after a longer than usual period of silent worship we started on a daunting agenda.

We commenced by appointing an elder for the meeting, some members to report to AM, and me to write this report. We accepted appointments and releases of Trustees and committee members, and reports of those who had been on training courses, then got onto more substantial matters.

The first was to hear of the new long-term tenant at Bedminster Meeting House. Soundwell Music Therapy Trust is a charity with aims similar to those of Dance Voice, but using sound rather than dance to help people with disabilities. We also decided who is to maintain the container-like 'building' which is to be used as a store for the camping equipment used by ours and Gloucester AM's Camp Committees.

Property, Health and Safety (PHS) Committee reported that the Sustainability Group wished to lay itself down, as it had struggled to find members. This was accepted. (However, this gives me pause for thought. Do we support sustainability only in words?) But Trustees agreed that in future all Committees' and appointees' terms of reference shall include a requirement continually to consider sustainability.

Weekly Committee's report was that very few applications are being received. They intend to make more effort to publicise the benefits they can offer.

Finance Committee (FC) brought in for approval the draft Trustees Annual Report (TAR) and Accounts for 2018. These were accepted. Finance Committee also brought us a long, thorough paper on the legal status of the AM's many funds. This had been written by Kit Fotheringham, clerk of FC, who is professionally qualified in these matters. The paper presents the argument that Restricted funds rather than unrestricted general funds should be used wherever permissible. More surprisingly, it shows that some funds which we had thought of as permanent endowment can be disbursed, and that the Charity Commission encourages charities to do so. This paper and the TAR and Accounts were to be submitted to the next session of AM.

Another major issue was the report from the Design and Implementation Group (DIG) which had overseen the first, major phase of the extension to Central Bristol Meeting House better to serve the needs of homeless people. DIG reported that the project was now complete, except for "snagging" which will be overseen by a small panel of former DIG members, until responsibility can be handed over to the PHS Committee. The project cost had been a little over £200,000 plus VAT. We minuted that DIG be laid down, with thanks to Jeffrey Smith, Charles Gamble and Dean Smart.

Another group, "DIG2" had been set up to oversee new layouts of the forecourt and courtyard and the proposal to create a Garden Room, which would be for hiring out for counselling and small group meetings, including those of Young Friends. The payback period is expected to be about 7 years.

Kit asked to be released as clerk to the Project Strategy Group, and Cathy Nile agreed to replace him.

The question of whether CCTV should be installed at Central was brought up yet again. We were told a report by a Health and Safety consultant was overdue, and agreed to hold a short special meeting later in the month to decide the issue.



White poppies at Bristol Cenotaph

Last year Gaie Delap made a beautiful wreath of white poppies and placed it quietly at the Bristol City Centre Cenotaph after the formal Remembrance Day commemoration was over. Somewhat to her surprise, it remained in place for a full year. This encouraged her to repeat her symbolic peace statement in 2019 – this time hoping to achieve a more prominent place for our Quaker peace testimony in a civic ceremony with many possible meanings.

Our Local Meeting for Business gave its support to the placing of a white poppy wreath, so Gaie and I entered into correspondence with the Powers That Be in an attempt to achieve formal inclusion. We wrote to the British Legion and the Lord Mayor of Bristol, before receiving our final answer from the Army officer in charge of ceremonial. The friendly British Legion hoped our request would be accepted. The Lord Mayor's office raised several practical obstacles, but no objection in principle. The briskly polite Army officer gave us official permission to lay our wreath after the ceremony, and said we would be considered for fuller inclusion next year.

So on 10 November we made our way to the City Centre and watched the Remembrance ceremony with mixed emotions. The crowds were impressive, the procession of uniformed military, cadets and veterans was large and well-drilled, and the City's political and religious leaders followed in their best finery (and a historic selection of funny hats). The Lord Mayor arrived in a horse-drawn carriage, escorted by mounted police. As the sun shone, guns were fired to start and end the two-minute silence. Then speakers from different faith traditions gave inaudible speeches, a hymn was sung, and prayers were said. Three cadets had fainted by the time we got to the concluding National Anthem.

Gaie and I stepped up to deliver our Quaker wreath as soon as the crowd control barriers were removed. It felt worth doing. But we agreed afterwards that we always find Remembrance Day a trial. Perhaps it is a necessary education for us to engage with the military and to see the extensive support for the Armed Services which apparently still exists in Bristol. Perhaps grieving for the war dead and celebrating the military do not have to go hand in hand. Possibly other spectators had as many mixed feelings as we did ourselves.

Julia Bush (Redland)

Editor's note – after Gaie reported to Redland Local Meeting on laying this wreath, the Local Meeting discerned the following minute, to be forwarded to Area Meeting -

19/77 White poppies 2020

Gaie Delap has reported on the Remembrance Service at Bristol Cenotaph on 10 November 2019. She reminded us of the aims of the white poppy movement and also of the British Legion's inclusion of civilians in this year's Remembrance. The wreath which Gaie Delap and Julia Bush

QUAKER FILM CLUB

**AT REDLAND MEETING HOUSE
SATURDAY DECEMBER 21**

PADDINGTON 2 (PG)

Everyone is invited to this family friendly evening. Come to enjoy a meal and a great film together with friends and family.

As one critic wrote, "Paddington 2 should be prescribed as an antidote to anyone who finds the madness of the modern world a bit wearing. It's probably possible to not absolutely love it, but it's hard to see how"



Film club meets at the EARLIER TIME OF 5pm in the library at Redland Meeting House.

Please bring some food for a shared supper which we will eat BEFORE the screening on this occasion. If you are able to bring about £3 to help pay for the licence, that would be a help, but come anyway! Children, refugees and asylum seekers come free.

The evening will end by about 8 pm.

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