

REPORTS

Tabular Statement (attached separately)

Treasurer's Report: Budget for 2018 (attached separately)

Meeting for Sufferings

2nd December, 2017

Deepening Discernment Course,

Woodbrooke, November 2017

Sanctuary Everywhere QCEA Conference,

Brussels, December 2017 (to be attached separately)

Quaker Forum for Mental Health Day,

York, 9th December 2017

Prison Chaplain's Report

Trustees Report

Meeting for Sufferings Report Dec 1 2017

- 1) Whilst this was a young people's participation day, and many came to join us for the discernment about the Sanctuary Everywhere manifesto and revision of the Book of Discipline, one of the 3 from Cheshire was ill, one had a funeral, and one was training for a British rowing team....We did have a reasonable number of young people there, and one spoke in the main session.
- 2) Really interesting working further on the sanctuary everywhere manifesto to get the right wording.....Not sure what else to say....so ask at AM!
- 3) We agreed to recommend to YM that we should go ahead and revise Faith and Practice – particularly starting with church government, and probably modeling it on the new Chapter 16 on marriage, keeping the principles in the book, and the details on how, as supplementary information – so we are not constantly updating the main book as now.
- 4) Kendal and Sedbergh AM have moved forward from their walk of witness last year from Brigflatts to Barrow to raise awareness of equality and fairness for all. This next year they are inspired by Margaret Fell's ride to London to talk to Charles II about us being 'a people that desire the good of all people, and their peace' – and will cycle from Kendal to London via various Quaker meeting houses at the end of July to promote equality and the common good. See Kendal and Sedbergh AM website.
- 5) The trustees also reported, and the particularly interesting piece was that we are potentially talking about taking legal action against the government on the Transparency of Lobbying Act. I will talk about this at AM if appropriate as this is less public.....They are also looking at a fundraising strategy as this is crucial if we are to maintain income or better still, increase it.

Andrew Backhouse December 2017

Deepening Discernment – Woodbrook November 2017.

Frances McCann January 2018

In November 2017 I attended the course “Deepening Discernment” at Woodbrook. Earlier in 2017 I had applied for and been accepted into membership and this course, promoted as an opportunity to explore the meaning of “living a spirit led life”, felt like the next step on my path. My journey to Quakers has been a search for a community that would accept and nurture my aspirations to be a life-affirming, peace loving and independent thinking human being; and a community that would support me in developing attunement to The Source of Inner Knowing/ God/Divine Wisdom.

The course ran over three days and over that time I experienced it as being an opportunity for exploration and rediscovery together with the ten other participants and the two course leaders. We discussed and experimented with ideas, methods and resources that came from our own experiences and knowledge, from Quakerism and from wider practices and perspectives both spiritual and secular.

The course structure was developed around five initial questions or queries:

1. What does discernment mean to you?
2. What practices help you to develop skilful discernment?
3. How do you experience the “inner knowing” at the heart of discernment?
4. How do you discern its “voice”.
5. How do you test and act upon this?

We used as a foundation three different aspects of the practice of discernment within a Quaker context:

- a) Discernment as “*the individual practice of being discerning*” ... living in accordance with the making of choices in life for the best, informed by God/The Light/ Inner Wisdom.
- b) Discernment as “*a method of collective decision making*” ... reflecting the communal and corporate discernment practices within Quakerism.
- c) The “*discernment as a precise stage in decision making*” ... testing the validity of inner knowing which is recorded as a decision and validated through action – such as in a Quaker Business Meeting.

We reflected upon and explored various experiences and approaches to individual and collaborative discernment situations. This included holding a Meeting for Clearness and being introduced to a secular decision making process called “Theory U”. Theory U is a contemporary decision making process that is used both in the business world and within NGO’s such as Quaker United Nations Committee. In her book on discernment Joycelin Dawes (one of the course leaders) describes Theory U as:

“ a ... framework for change that draws on presencing – connecting to Source and inner knowing that allows individuals and groups to shift the inner place from

which they function and thus make decisions that embody a future possibility they sense might emerge”.

Pg 3 Dawes 2017

Theory U is a decision making process that can be used to enable people to develop innovative and sustainable solutions in diverse situations and is based in seeking the inner knowledge or inspiration that can inform planning for the best possible outcome in a given situation.

I have very much valued being supported by Area Meeting to attend this course and find that I continue to be inspired and nurtured by the experience.

Quaker Mental Health Forum
Friargate Meeting House, York.
10am – 4.15pm, December 9th 2017

This was the first meeting of the Quaker Mental Health Forum, set up with financial support from the York Retreat Benevolent Fund and facilitated by Alison Mitchell. Alison is employed by them as a Mental Health Development Officer with a brief to work across Quakers in Britain to raise awareness – to give Friends the information and the inspiration to discern our response to mental health issues in our community and across society. This first meeting was following that brief and focussed on dementia. Elizabeth Lees and I both attended.

In the morning we were reminded about the importance of confidentiality, before hearing from 4 Friends, whose lives had been touched by dementia. One who has Alzheimer's disease, one who cares for her husband who has dementia, one who has supported Friends with dementia in their local Meeting and one who works with people who have dementia.

Shelagh, who spoke about living with dementia, had "come out" through an article in *The Friend* (29.04.2010). She said her 3 pillars of support were her totally accepting, supportive family; the Alzheimer's Society; and her faith – the love and support of fellow Quakers and the Quaker way. Shelagh said the best way of living with dementia was striving for peace, equality, truth, justice and simplicity. Shelagh described negative feelings when a well-meaning Friend had told her that she was to be taken home by X although she didn't need or want a lift. However that she does always have a sense of being loved, respected, cared for and upheld which is so important. This enables her to do work locally and nationally educating people about living with dementia and how best they might help with support.

The second speaker had worked with people with dementia in various roles. As a staff nurse she had helped taking 4 residents of a unit for those whose behaviour others find challenging on a self-catering holiday. The residents "came alive" in an environment where they were included in day to day activities, had opportunity for lots of interaction, were valued, understood, respected and loved.

As a nurse lecturer she used Tom Kitwood's work on dementia. She described his flower image, where the five petals of Attachment, Identity, Comfort, Occupation and Inclusion surround the centre, which is Love. She suggested we ask how we can continue to include Friends with dementia in the Quaker Community. To preserve identity we have to know the person's story and life history and help them hold on to what is important to them. Comfort comes with warmth, closeness and strength. She quoted Isaac Pennington 'Our life is love, peace and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.'

As a carer for her father when he had Alzheimer's Disease, she said the Quaker community was supportive but that she found nothing that spoke to her in Quaker Faith and Practice. She strongly felt at this time that there was something deep inside which was more than his thoughts, feeling and physical body. Following this

she went on to become an Alzheimer's Society Dementia Support Worker working with people who had recently received a diagnosis of dementia. She recognised the importance of starting from where they were, listening, holding them in the light and of finding a way forward of to provide hope and support. She pointed out how guilt is a destructive emotion and best avoided. One cannot always anticipate situations that befall one. She noted information resources available from the Alzheimer's Society.

The comment about guilt being a destructive emotion linked in very well with the speaker who had been married 30 years, and is caring for her husband who has had Alzheimer's Disease over 10 years. She emphasised the individual nature of each couple's experience of dementia. Some talk of "being on a journey" with dementia but she thought that D.H Lawrence's "*Look, we've come through*" was more like it for them. They had previously each had their own interests, the pursuance of which had been curtailed, leading to feeling trapped. Her husband's loss of his ability to empathise had been really difficult. She said enjoyed helping him but that the relentlessness wore her down.

She described how people tended to concentrate on either his needs or hers, not both, and thought Meeting Communities could play a part here. There is a need for emotional support and for practical help. Amongst suggestions of possible areas to develop was day care, possibly Quaker day care with Meeting for Worship and quiet discussion. The Local Meeting shared lunches and Film Club were things they could do together. She highlighted the need for discussion around assisted dying for some people as her husband had been expressing a desire to die for 2 years. There was a suggestion from the floor that perhaps we should have supported holidays at Glenthorne for Friend with dementia and their carers.

A Friend spoke of her role supporting Friends with dementia in her Local Meeting, focussing particularly on the relationship between her and another Friend with dementia from diagnosis, through living in a residential home and then losing a lot of her verbal communication skills. The speaker highlighted the importance of maintaining contact and of others trying to overcome their own fears in order to do that, but having a role anyway in Holding in the Light. She kept feeding back news once the Friend moved to the care home and they arranged occasional MsfW at the home. She described how the relationship was very much one of equals, not of one caring for the other. The friendship between the two Friends was one of the spirit, of *knowing one another in the things which are eternal*. Forgetting names didn't matter, when it was clear that the visit was enjoyed by both. As time passed, there were fewer, and then almost no, words during visits but as the speaker said *Quakers are at home in silence ...and we know something about sharing it, encountering others in its depths and, above all, letting ourselves be used in it (Quaker Faith and Practice 17.06)*.

There were times when the visiting Friend left the home with a heavy heart as she was also coming to terms with changes but tried to lay aside her personal sorrow gaining strength from Isaac Pennington's words *Give over thine own willing...give over thine own desiring to know or be anything and sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and let that grow in thee (Quaker Faith and Practice 26.70)*.

All attending were so grateful for the 4 Friends speaking so openly about their experiences, giving some insight in to the multi-faceted aspect situations that result from dementia. We did have a short time for discussion before lunch, where of course, other discussions continued.

The afternoon continued with us breaking into smaller groups. I heard of the work of the Occupational Therapists at The Retreat, which was a good demonstration of person-focussed activity.

Elizabeth went to an open discussion group where assisted dying was again raised. A friend described being asked by an attender, who was ill with Huntingdon's Disease, to "Take me to Holland and let me be put down." He/she had been deeply troubled by the request and wished that there was guidance in place for other Friends at such a time. In relation to discussion around this topic it was also advised that we look at the Mental Capacity Act.

The group felt that dementia support is often needed in meetings. An example was given of a long-time member and pillar of the meeting who began aggressively disagreeing with other Friends' ministry, thus causing disruption of the meeting for worship. It was asked how should the Meeting react? Some of the comments on this were that

- the meeting needs to look inside itself, and individual Friends look at their own attitudes carefully
- be honest with afflicted people, explain what has upset you in their words or behaviour, but treat them as equals

At the end of the day it seemed we had had plenty of food for thought. Quakers can be well placed to support those with dementia within their Meetings and that it would be useful to promote more discussion within our Area and Local Meetings, and awareness of useful resources. We were given a list of books, sources of information and links that might be useful.

Sally Mendham

Report of Quaker Prison Chaplain to Area Meeting 27th Jan 2018

I continue to go into HMP Styal on average 2 days a week. This is my choice as strictly speaking as a volunteer/ sessional chaplain I am only required to go in when a prisoner is admitted to HMP Styal who registers as a Quaker. I soon realised that there are seldom women registered as Quakers in Styal and I chose to support the multifaith chaplaincy team in any way that I could. So on the days that I am in the prison I help with what is called the 'statutory' duties that chaplains throughout the prison estate have to do every day and the pastoral support of the women coming in to the Chapel.

Having said that one young woman who was an attender at a Quaker Meeting on the outside did serve a short sentence in Styal in 2016. All prisoners are entitled to 2 hours of faith observance a week, worship and education. So it was a pleasure to be able to spend this time with her. Once a month during her stay we had a small MfW with a couple of Friends from Wilmslow Meeting in the chapel at Styal.

One of my main interests remains helping with the Restorative Justice and Victim Awareness Courses that we run at Styal. The Sycamore Tree course that runs once a week for 6 weeks/ 4 times a year and the SORI (Supporting Offenders through Restoration Inside) course which is a full week 3 times a year. A great deal of my time is spent doing the admin for running these courses, The aim of these courses is to increase awareness of the huge impact of crime on peoples lives, the number of victims created and how to help those harmed. It also means that the offender has to look at what led them to offend and what they need to do if they are not just going to get into a cycle of re-offending. In addition to the courses I help women on an individual basis to complete a workbook on Victim Awareness if we can't get them on to a course when required.

In June 2017 there were nearly 85,000 people in our prisons and just under 4,000 of them were women, 84% of the women for non-violent crime. The majority are serving sentences of 6 months or less. Sadly the number of women in prison, in common with the general prison population, is rising. This is partly due to the reorganisation of the probation service meaning that anyone sentenced to less than 12 months on release is under the care of what are called Community Rehabilitation Companies on a 12 month supervision order. The theory is that people convicted of low risk offences would be supported for 12 months to help make sure that they don't re-offend, in practice the lack of resources has meant a huge increase in recalls to prison because of infringements of the supervision order.

I stayed in touch with one of the women who did the SORI course after release and through her came in to contact with a small charity in Macclesfield called ROAR – Reach out and Recover. This excellent charity provides rehabilitation and recovery for those who wish to recover from addiction and really turns lives around. It does great work and those in recovery support the new people who are coming in to rehab and also are encouraged to do voluntary work in the community. I cannot commend their work too highly and recently two of the people in recovery came to Wilmslow

Meeting to speak of their experience of addiction and the work of ROAR. If you are looking for a small local charity to support I recommend ROAR highly.

At the beginning of 2016 I was appointed to serve on the Quaker Life, Prison Chaplains Committee. There are just 8 of us on the committee plus a brilliant admin support officer, Marleen Schepers. We meet at Friends House 4 times a year with additional sub-group meetings when necessary. Its function is to set up training for new Quaker chaplains and to update those in post, to organise the annual conference and to generally support QPCs in their work. In order to do this better it was decided to set up Regional Groups and I have set up a North Wales and North of England group and we meet at Leeds Central MH twice a year plus again at the conference. The group offers opportunities to exchange information, for peer support sessions and discussion of matters of current concern in the prison service. Last April I attended a weekend retreat for QPCs at Woodbrooke and I was able to take some of the ideas from this back to the group in the summer.

I helped organise the 2017 conference and am on the sub-group again to organise the 2018 conference. Last year the main speaker was Kate Fraser, the Northern Services Manager for the charity 'Women in Prison'. The charity runs 3 women's centres and provides support services for women both in and out of prison. Kate had spoken to the women on the SORI course for us and I knew her to be an inspirational speaker and she didn't disappoint. She spoke about the work of the charity but also the particular problems of women in the prison system. She stayed on for the afternoon to take part in the marketplace session. Our second speaker introduced us to 'The Welcome Directory'. This plans to set up training for faith communities in supporting ex-offenders who attend their churches. Those who have undertaken the training will then go on a register that prison chaplains will be able to refer to if they have someone who wishes to continue attending church or in our case Meeting for Worship on their release. It is a promising idea but still seemed to be in the very early stages of its inception. We tried to make the whole weekend a bit more relaxed than usual and used some of the activities from the Quaker Chaplains Retreat Weekend. We had a brilliant epilogue on the Friday by the QPC from Berwyn (the new prison near Wrexham) who is also a professional story teller and musician and we hope she will do more this year at Conference. The entertainment on the Saturday evening was by musicians from 'Changing Tunes' – a charity that goes into prisons to teach music.

How can you help:

Good quality warm clothing is always required during the winter months.

Craft materials for the diversional activities that we organise for the women.

And of course Friends interested in volunteering to help with providing activities for the women please contact me.

It is my privilege to serve the Area Meeting in this work which is both challenging and very rewarding. Please do speak to me if it is something that interests you.

Denise Renshaw 27/1/18

Minutes of the meeting of ECAM Trustees held on 4th December 2017 at Wilmslow Meeting House

Present: Gill Armitage, Peter Eccles, Till Geiger, Howard Hilton, Jill Maguire, Gavin Mendham, Joan Armstrong

Apologies: Gill Alcock, Hilary Brooks

Report about ECAM Investments

We welcomed Nick Roe-Ely from Rathbone Greenbank who manages ECAM's funds. Despite the continuing uncertainty of the outcome of the Brexit negotiations Nick remains optimistic about a positive outcome. The tense political relationship between the N. Korean leader and the American president also needs to be taken into consideration. In the last few days the corporation tax in the US has been lowered which will stimulate their economy. The UK growth rate is low while the global rate is increasing.

On closer inspection of ECAMs portfolio it was noted that returns are at satisfactory levels with encouraging future prospects. UK Equities, particularly, are offering good yields though companies investing in the US health care system may be in a more precarious situation at present. All have been affected by the exchange rate and the implementation of the living wage. There are difficulties in the retail sector though niche markets e.g. Greggs do well. In the media advertising had switched from TV to phones but this has not been as successful as expected and is returning to TV. Dramas are successfully being exported globally. TalkTalk is the most successful of the telecommunications industries. Our sustainable energy investment is with John Laing.

Finally Nick informed Trustees that there will be a change in regulations from January 2018 when valuations will be quarterly.

Matters arising from the meeting held on 7th September

Update on employment and salary conditions

(a). Gavin Mendham presented a draft document outlining the pay rates for the warden and cleaner at Stockport MH. These will be in line with the Living Wage Foundation . The latter recommend a start date in November but ECAMs existing pattern of an April start date will be maintained following the employees' annual reviews early in the year. They will both receive a 3.5% increase which will include their annual increments. Friends House recommends that the employer and employee each pay 50% towards pension provision. As agreed at a previous meeting ECAM will continue to pay 2/3 and the warden 1/3.

(b). Gavin also reported on an ACAS conference he attended with Julia Horn a member of Stockport's employment committee. He thought it was useful, well structured and informative. He made a request to attend annually.

3. Update on Peace Education Project

An extensive report was given to November AM by Gill Alcock. Today Till Geiger reported that Ellis Brooks from Friends House has provided training for members of the steering group. They are now prepared to go into schools to facilitate peace days and training in peer mediation and also provide education materials. They have been liaising with groups from

other areas working on this issue and finding that a useful means for, not only, learning and development but also potential partnership for fund raising. 2/3 of the money given by AM has been spent. There are several models of funding with some provided by individual schools and charities. This is an issue which will require further consideration and discernment. The steering group will be meeting in January after which they hope to present a business plan to Trustees.

4. Training for Premises Committees.

This item was deferred till the next meeting

5. 2018 Quinquennial Inspections

This item was deferred till the next meeting

6. Additional car parking at Disley

This item was deferred till the next meeting.

7. For information

Cheadle Hulme LM intend to decorate the ground floor of the MH at a cost of £3000. This will be paid for from their property fund.

8 There was no A.O.B.

9. Trustee to attend AM

Joan Armstrong on Saturday 27th January 2018 at Stockport MH

10 Dates and venues for Trustees' meetings in 2018

- (1) Monday 26th February at Cheadle Hulme MH at 10.15am.
- (2) Monday 18th June at Frandley MH at 10.15am.
- (3) Monday 3rd September at Disley MH at 10.15am.
- (4) Monday 3rd December at Stockport MH at 10.15am.

Trustees are reminded of the meeting with Wilmslow Guild Trustees on Monday 15th January at 11am. We intend to gather first in Wilmslow MH at 10.30am. The next regular Trustees' meeting will be held on Monday 26th February at Cheadle Hulme MH at 10.15am.

Joan Armstrong (Clerk to Trustees)