



# Coronavirus

## *Quaker spiritual nurture and pastoral care*

01 December 2020

Britain is currently going through a shared social experience that is making us re-think the lives that we have become so used to. As a result of that we are being forced to significantly change our practices as communities. This is a developing collection of thoughts about how we connect with and support one another during these uncertain times.

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**For help or support contact: [supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk)**

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## Meeting for Worship (updated)

December 2020

Quaker communities in Britain continue to meet for worship in a variety of ways during the pandemic. These include:

- distance worship (at a designated time without technology)
- videoconferencing
- using WhatsApp or other messaging and email software
- blending online and in-person worship (when local restrictions allow)
- traditional Quaker in-person worship (when local restrictions allow)
- outdoor gathered or walking worship (when local restrictions allow)

Woodbrooke and FWCC Europe & Middle East Section (EMES) are offering online worship for anyone wishing to join at various times throughout the week. There is also a guide to worshipping online and to using Zoom, which is the software for which we are giving detailed guidance for use by meetings. This includes guidance on safeguarding and data safety when using Zoom. It can be found on the Woodbrooke website. See the links below:

- Online meeting for worship Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's): [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/worship/faqs](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/worship/faqs).
- Setting up online worship: [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/worship/setting-up-mfw](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/worship/setting-up-mfw).
- There is guidance for: running Quaker worship with children and young people, for holding business meetings online and for anyone who is new to Quaker worship.
- Seekers are finding Quakers online at this time and there is a brief introduction to Quaker worship for anyone new to meeting for worship, [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Online-worship-for-seekers-and-new-worshippers.pdf](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Online-worship-for-seekers-and-new-worshippers.pdf)

**An advantage of Zoom is that it can be joined using telephone as well as video.**

Friends and meetings can use any ways of connecting that work for them. If your meeting is worshipping by a method that we haven't mentioned we would be really pleased like if you would let us know, email [supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk).

## Blended worship (updated)

December 2020

Quaker Life and Woodbrooke have been thinking about the support that meetings might require in setting up blended (a mixture of online and in-person) worship. Look at our document offering [advice on blended worship](#).

Being a community of all ages is vital to our life as Quaker communities. It is important to be mindful of different people's needs and experiences and to think how to best include and support individuals of all ages. People may be feeling anxious, isolated or overwhelmed with a loss of routine and regular contact with F/friends. As Quaker communities we continue to explore and develop ways of connecting with and supporting children, young people and families and elderly Friends, including them in our worship and finding opportunities for connection and nurture.

### **Guidance**

If you're planning on running online children's meeting, youthwork or all age worship, you can find some helpful information at [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/worship/setting-up-mfw/](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/worship/setting-up-mfw/). If you're running any children's or youthwork sessions, we would love to hear about them. Please email, [qladmin@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qladmin@quaker.org.uk).

### **Children's meeting**

If there isn't a children's meeting locally, email [supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk) and we'll connect families with other online children's meetings. There are also some open children's meetings offered by the [Quaker Parenting Network](#). You can get support on planning children's meeting at our monthly online discussion meetings. Find out more and register at, <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/support-session-for-childrens-meeting/>.

### **Youth groups**

This seems to be a particularly challenging time for young people and connections with other young people and the wider community can offer support. BYM are offering weekly online meetings for 11-18s, for more info, see [www.yqspace.org.uk/online-youth-groups](http://www.yqspace.org.uk/online-youth-groups). There is also a monthly Zoom call for people running (or hoping to run) online youth sessions to share ideas and questions; for more info email [judea@quaker.org.uk](mailto:judea@quaker.org.uk) or register at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/quaker-youth-work-support/>

### **Parents**

Parents are juggling different needs and pressures. The Quaker Parenting Network offers opportunities to connect with other Quaker parents in Britain. They have a busy Facebook group connecting parents seeking advice and sharing encouragement. They are also running online video meet ups for parents. If you are interested visit [www.facebook.com/groups/2963307427023746/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2963307427023746/) or if you're not on Facebook, email [quakerparentingnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:quakerparentingnetwork@gmail.com).

### **Young adult Quakers**

There are new pages for young adults on the Quakers in Britain website where details of events and activities for young adults can be found. There is information

about local Quaker groups and how to connect with some of the online worship opportunities.

Visit [www.quaker.org.uk/youngadults](http://www.quaker.org.uk/youngadults) to read more. Please tell all young adults in your local or area meeting about these new webpages.

## **Inclusion**

Some people are not able to engage with online meetings (through lack of access to, or confidence with technology) and we should be mindful of how to include people. It is possible to join zoom meetings by telephone – for more info, see the [guide to online worship and meetings on Woodbrooke's setting up online worship webpage](#).

## **Spiritual nurture and learning (updated)                      December 2020**

Ensuring that Friends have opportunities to broaden and deepen their experience, knowledge and understanding is part of the role of elders ([Quaker faith & practice 12.12 a, h, k](#)).

A range of opportunities are possible at present, and some people would welcome things to do. Always consider how these could include friends of all ages; see information about keeping everyone safe elsewhere in this document.

- [Quakers in Britain Events Page](#) (add your event here too if you would like a wider audience!)
- In [Woodbrooke's learning guide](#) . There are online workshops for Quaker meetings, as well as the usual online learning on a wide range of topics.
- Be a Quaker tourist! [Visit the FWCC pages to see where Quakers are in the world](#) and see what is on offer. Remember the time differences!
- Be a spiritual tourist. See what other faiths and church denominations are doing. Start with the [Inter Faith Network](#) or [Churches Together in Britain and Ireland](#).
- Some groups are holding events and activities; encourage them to use the [Quakers in Britain Events Page](#).

Some things you could set up yourselves include:

- Hold online conversation groups on topics of interest
- Hold an open craft or activity session. One local meeting has an open zoom room one day a week from 10-4. Friends get on with their own craft activities, and chat informally. Some are present for most of the day, others pop in and out. Crafts could optionally be themed, such as on the NHS rainbow, or in preparation for social action.
- Set up an epilogue (have it at any time of day!) – 15 minutes of quiet with prepared ministry, and a short time to reflect and chat afterwards.
- Hold online study groups. Choose your own topic, or explore:
  - [Reading Quaker faith & practice series](#)

- [Being Friends Together](#) offers Quaker meetings an extensive library of learning resources to fuel their ongoing development as vibrant communities of faithful people
- [Journeys in the Spirit](#) offers resources and ideas to Quakers engaging with children and young people. The ideas, topics and activities are often great for friends of all ages!

Include Friends without technology by setting up a spiritual sharing by post. Write or create something and post it on round a circle of Friends.

## Pastoral care (updated)

December 2020

It is important to stay in touch with each other and share how we are feeling. Many Friends are looking at how they will remain a community during this time. How does spiritual nurture and pastoral care flourish in your meeting? How often are role-holders and others in the community in with each other? You may need to be in contact more often than you usually would be if face-to-face is not possible.

Is a 'telephone circle', where everyone is responsible for contacting one or more Friends daily or weekly, feasible? In times of stress, those in nominated roles may feel that the whole responsibility falls on a few people. We must remember, though, that we are a community of equals and we all share in all the responsibilities. Whether you have been appointed to a specific role or not, don't wear yourself out or feel it is all down to you – or that you are powerless or unable to help. We can all do our part and at the same time enable others to contribute.

It is important to hold in mind those Friends who may be excluded because of worshipping and communicating digitally instead of in person.

- How can we help these Friends remain included?
- How can we learn from this so that as the restrictions change we can continue to include and encourage those who might have found it easier to engage with us digitally?

See [Appendix II](#) to see how one meeting adapted their pastoral care as they became a virtual community.

## Grants

July 2020

This outbreak is having a serious effect on some household incomes. It may be that in your Quaker community there are people whose circumstances have changed. There are a range of grants and funding available through the yearly meeting that can be explored to help Friends in these challenging times.

Possible options are:

- Overseers relief grants: This is a national grant scheme that can be applied for by overseers locally. Ask your local overseer to contact [grants@quaker.org.uk](mailto:grants@quaker.org.uk) for an application form.
- Hope grants: These grants are for Quakers who are unemployed or unable to make a living wage [www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/grant-making/hope](http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/grant-making/hope)
- Young Adult Friend (YAF) financial relief grant: To improve the quality of life for young adult Friends (aged 18-35) who have impaired quality of life due to low income [www.quaker.org.uk/yaf-relief-grant](http://www.quaker.org.uk/yaf-relief-grant).

Information is available about all of these and the other grants we offer on the Quaker website [www.quaker.org.uk/grants](http://www.quaker.org.uk/grants). You can contact Ann Pfeiffer, BYM's Grants Officer, to ask for guidance: [grants@quaker.org.uk](mailto:grants@quaker.org.uk).

Local and area meetings may have funds available to help in hard times. Friends with pastoral responsibility might enquire with their meeting treasurer to find out what is available locally. Think carefully about how to let people know what is available and how to access it. Even in hard times it is difficult to ask for money and there may be ways to help those in need feel they can be supported in this way. Area meeting may be able to offer support if local Quaker communities do not have funds available. Continue to keep records of grants made in the way that you do at present.

## Safeguarding (updated)

December 2020

We need to be aware of our responsibilities to safeguarding members of our communities. It is important that Quaker relationships are safe and follow the guidelines within Area Meeting safeguarding policy and procedures. It may be useful to revisit policies and re-familiarise ourselves with their content, and consider how it applies to meeting online.

To ensure that safe practice is followed your meeting will need to consider:

- **Online safety:** using the technology that we are connecting with carefully.
- **Supervision:** ensuring that users under the age of 18 are adequately supervised and supported. See sections on safeguarding in [BYM and Woodbrooke's online worship guidance](#) for clear information.
- **Good practice:** adhering to safeguarding procedures during online activity.
- **Data management:** access to individuals' data is carefully managed and by responsible individuals.
- **Guidance:** clear guidance is provided, and is understood, in use of online tools to facilitate meetings and events. All users are reminded of the need to practice care during and disconnecting after using online facilities.
- **Observation/ duty of care:** continue to be vigilant to and respond to any concerns that arise. Although we are not physically present with each other,

abuse can still take place. Some relationships may start to be more on a one-to-one basis, which could open up to different kinds of abuse.

We have compiled new model safeguarding documents for AMs that will cover all these areas and more; this new framework is due to be published by the end of the year. In the meantime:

For safeguarding advice and guidance contact: [safe@quaker.org.uk](mailto:safe@quaker.org.uk), 020 7663 1103.

## Funerals and other gatherings (updated) December 2020

See [www.quaker.org.uk/funerals](http://www.quaker.org.uk/funerals) for more detailed information.

Funerals may be held in Quaker Meeting houses, with appropriate measures in place. Please check the local restrictions in your part of Britain. However, as Quakers, we have a tradition of holding memorial meetings at a later date, and this may be a better way forward at the moment.

Guidance about arrangements for funerals varies in different UK administrative areas. Links to the relevant guidance are on the [Quaker funerals webpage](#). Also check information from your local authority. It may have information which relates to local circumstances.

Please read the guidance carefully before planning. It may be sensible to consult with insurers, funeral directors or legal advisers.

The responsibility for allowing a funeral to take place lies with the group with legal responsibility for the building. This would normally be the trustees of area meeting or London Quaker Property Trust.

Guidance from the relevant government should be read in detail on issues. See links below:

- [Funerals in England](#)
- [Funerals in Scotland](#)
- [Funerals in Wales](#)

Funerals may also be held at a crematorium or at a graveside. Funerals may therefore be held at a graveside in a Quaker burial ground. A Quaker funeral could also be held at a graveside in another burial ground, such as a natural burial ground. All government guidance on attendance and social distancing must be followed.

Memorial meetings can be held at any time after a death. You could hold one online or wait until we are able to meet in person. A later date often allows the rawness of death to have passed allowing a celebration of an individual's life to take place at a memorial meeting.

It may be helpful to have online spaces before, during, or after a funeral to come together as community, and to support bereaved family and friends. These can be as formal or informal as you like. You can find some ideas on our [virtual funerals blog](#).

Practical guidance on arranging and holding funerals is available from the National Association of Funeral Directors, <https://nafd.org.uk/funeral-advice/>.

Thoughts about practicalities and support can be found as part of [Quaker Social Action's "Down to Earth" programme](#).

### **Caring for the bereaved**

At this time supporting bereaved Friends will be a real challenge and one that meetings will need to consider carefully. Bearing in mind that not everyone's needs are the same, think about the following:

- How can you make an opportunity to listen to what the needs of anyone bereaved are?
- Can your Quaker community offer care and support to a person or people who you will not be in contact with face-to-face? If there is more than one person in the affected household, can you offer them support which is tailored to their individual needs?
- Can you arrange a daily or regular call or conversation with someone in your eldership and oversight group?
- Can you arrange daily worship in a small group?
- In what way can you be alongside anyone bereaved?
- Is there someone who can offer some practical support such as liaising with the funeral director?
- Could someone prepare food and arrange for it to be left in a suitable place outside or near their home?

### **Helping your Quaker community to prepare for your funeral**

This is a time that we all need to help support those Friends who have responsibility for conducting funerals. It is important that Friends with eldership and oversight responsibility have conversations with Friends about their wishes. It is particularly important now in case arrangements need to be made by a person not known to an individual who has died or their family. We have a helpful form to help aid these conversations.

- Funeral wishes form: [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/funeral-wishes07-2018](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/funeral-wishes07-2018)

### **Weddings (updated)**

**December 2020**

You must check your local guidance to find out if a wedding can be held in your part of Britain. The guidance below links to a government website for each of the three main nations of Britain.

- [Weddings in England](#)
- [Weddings in Scotland](#)
- [Weddings in Wales](#)

## Membership visits (updated)

December 2020

When Quakers apply to become a member of the Religious Society of Friends they are often 'visited' by Friends from the area meeting that they are applying to. Physical visits may not be possible or advisable at present and some communities are holding membership visits online instead of face-to-face.

See Chapter 11 of Quaker faith & practice for guidance, <https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/11/>.

The following suggestions have been prepared to help area Quaker meetings consider how to approach membership visits which are not possible in person.

### **How well is the applicant known to the local or area meeting?**

If someone is well known to the meeting it may feel straightforward to go ahead with a membership visit, online or by telephone. The 'visitors' may feel able to ask questions that elicit responses that help them to discern whether the applicant can be welcomed into membership.

Might a longer period of discernment be needed for someone less known to the community? Might a period of accompaniment be suitable with one or two Friends during a visiting process allow for deeper discernment when limited by virtual presence?

*Membership does not require great moral or spiritual achievement, but it does require a sincerity of purpose and a commitment to Quaker values and practices. Membership is a spiritual discipline, a commitment to the well-being of one's spiritual home and not simply appearance on a membership roll. The simple process of becoming a member is part of the spiritual journey: part of the seeking that is so integral to our religious heritage. The process of becoming a member is not only about seeking but also about finding.*

[Qf&p 11.01 \(part\)](#)

If the applicant is only known to the area meeting through electronic communication such as social media or online worship it may be difficult to discern their suitability for membership. The applicant may be invited to join other activities such as online discussions, social gatherings or a Home Group to deepen their experience.

The area meeting in session will need to think about how it might handle the rejection or postponement of an application. And how that applicant can be supported if this were to happen. What feedback might be given to the applicant and

how? What support or oversight might they be offered to address the concerns that the area meeting has with their application?

## Support for Quaker chaplains (updated) December 2020

During Covid-19 many chaplains are involved much more intensively especially in prisons and hospitals, where they give this support face-to-face, online or via telephone. University chaplains continue to hold online spiritual and creative sessions for both staff and students.

Quaker chaplains, those known to us, have started sharing their experiences and ideas, encouraging one another, via an e-group. Friends interested in getting involved in chaplaincy should look at [www.quaker.org.uk/chaplaincy](http://www.quaker.org.uk/chaplaincy).

See also our blog, [what Quaker prison chaplains are doing during Covid-19](#). Training and conferences are moving online, further [details of courses and events will be posted via Quake!](#)

## Hospital visiting as a temporary chaplain (updated) December 2020

Meetings might be approached by hospital chaplaincy teams to provide a 'visiting chaplain' to a team where no Quaker chaplain is available. This is permitted within the hospital visiting guidance (usually set locally by each Trust) as visitors would be considered part of the hospital's chaplaincy team.

If your meeting is approached there are a few things that you may wish to consider the following:

- Whether as a local or area meeting you decide that you are willing to provide this service and feel confident that it is safe to do so.
- How the person carrying it out can be supported by the meeting spiritually and pastorally in the role they are taking on.
- Is there someone who can do it? Are they from a low-risk category? How will you appoint them to the role? Will volunteering be considered?
- The assumption is made that responsibility for the individual will lie with the hospital chaplaincy team. This should be checked in advance. If responsibility is not with the hospital the visit should not take place.
- How can you support the person carrying out the visit? What can/ can't they take with them? Find out whether there is a tablet or other device that [Quaker faith & practice](#) could be brought up on as you may not be able to take a copy in? How will a de-brief with someone take place afterwards? (chaplaincy on-site, Quaker afterwards, support through the Quaker chaplaincy network)? Are there people upholding before, during and afterwards?
- Checking the stay-at-home guidance from the relevant government authorities.

This advice is based upon being invited to join a chaplaincy team on a temporary basis and not just wishing to make a visit to a f/Friend in hospital. To find out about personal visiting you will need to look up the visiting restriction of the hospital you wish to visit.

## Mental and physical health

May 2020

Look at the mental health webpage, [www.quaker.org.uk/mentalhealth](http://www.quaker.org.uk/mentalhealth). It includes a section about mental health in Quaker faith & practice. In these difficult times Friends will find comfort in the passages that are linked within that section.

Mental Health First Aid England has advice and guidance for coping in its *Every Mind Matters* section:

- <https://mhfaengland.org/every-mind-matters/>

The charity Mind have put together some guidance about how to support yourself at this difficult time which can be found at the link below:

- [www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing)

It may be helpful to share all this information with Friends in your Quaker community.

See also *Appendix II*, caring for yourself.

*Quaker Life and Woodbrooke, 01 December 2020*

### Ideas for thinking about Zoom overload or screen fatigue

*A personal reflection from Helen Oldridge, Local Development Worker in Wales*

Much of life already happens online. As my children can demonstrate, they happily spend hours a day on a screen. This might be chatting to friends, passively watching entertainment, actively participating in games, and in recent months carrying out their schoolwork. The corona crisis has accelerated our journey as Quakers towards using Zoom and other similar methods for committee meetings, online learning and Meetings for Worship. What started as a desirable way to reduce our carbon footprint and the time and energy needed for travelling has started to feel like overload as we sit at home zooming for work, socialising, hobbies, and engaging in our spiritual practices. The experience of meeting online can feel draining and exhausting, but it doesn't have to be this way!

The day I spent 6½ hours on a webinar and became incredibly achy and stiff was when I decided to give myself permission to try doing it a bit differently.

### **Finding ways to keep moving**

- Switch position from time to time. If you are using a mobile device you can move to different rooms (it is best to switch off your camera while on the move). With a PC swap chairs, rearrange cushions.
- Take breaks and use the time to stretch and walk around.
- If there aren't any breaks, or they are too far apart, turn off your video and move around nearby while still listening. It is normally helpful for people to be able to see you, but just for part of the time is normally fine. Adding a photo to your profile means people can still see an image of you.
- If it is not necessary to be seen, could you make the call in the "old-fashioned" way on a phone instead so that you can walk around during more of the call? If using a landline, try the speaker phone facility if you have one so you don't have to stay sitting so close to the phone.
- Schedule a walk or exercise session before and/ or after the meeting.
- Spread video calls throughout the day with other activities in between rather than trying to get them all done in one go.

### **Reducing eye strain and headaches**

Learning any new skill can be difficult. One of the reasons for the extra strain is that we may have to concentrate harder than usual to pick up body language, work out when it's our turn to speak, and listen carefully if the sound quality isn't very good. And that's on top of using the technical functions available such as muting and unmuting your microphone. Some people find it hard to feel connected to others when it is via a small black window instead of face to face. Here are a few suggestions for how to feel more "present":

- Arrive early with plenty of time to check you have the right link, that your microphone and camera are working properly, and that you have your preferred view (gallery view to see lots of people at one, or speaker view to focus on the person who is speaking).
- Think about preparing the space. Think about your outer space – are you surrounded by a messy desk and piles of laundry or a clear space with perhaps a beautiful picture in the background? Are you wearing the clothes you might wear if you were meeting up in person? And think about your inner space – are you coming with heart and mind prepared? Did you do something calming beforehand? Can you set apart this time and not bring distractions with you?
- Physical objects might help to make the “virtual” experience more real. For example a copy of Quaker faith & practice and a real vase of flowers rather than just a picture on the screen. A prayer shawl, some pebbles or a candle. Although as Quakers we tend to avoid ritual – especially celebrating communion, special dates, and using candles, this is partly so that we don’t become attached to the ritual as if it was sacred in its own right. However, we might be inspired by other traditions on occasion. The underlying reason for shaking hands to mark the end of the meeting is also an opportunity to connect with each other. So when Meeting on line we might look for other ways of connecting, and sharing an object or a story might help.
- In order to be able to stay present, set a limit. If you have a lot of calls scheduled for the same day, could some go ahead without you? Could others be done another day? I find three is a sensible amount.

### **Practice and familiarity**

As you become more familiar with using zoom, you may find that the concentration you need eases and it becomes more natural. When the technology is working well, I often forget I have not been in the same room as the person I have been talking to. Sometimes it just won’t work, and this can be extremely frustrating. But when it’s beyond our control, we may as well make the most of the opportunity to go and do something else we enjoy instead and maybe try again later. Be patient and forgiving with yourself and each other as we step into the unknown and explore ways to use this technology together.

Meetings may already have arrangements in place for keeping in contact and you may find that these meet current needs. Meetings who are operating circles, loops, looplets and others may not need or choose to change the way they are working. Bear in mind that some people have extra or particular needs under the current circumstances.

*Are your current communications systems working? How might you find out other people's current needs?*

This is an example that one community is using to keep in touch and support each other during the coronavirus outbreak. It is framed as a pair of communications to Friends within the community and explains the use. It can be used in its entirety or adapted to suit your meeting's needs.

Download this document in Word DOCX format at:

- [www.quaker.org.uk/documents/tips-for-eldership-and-overisqht-ways-of-organising-pastoral-care](http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/tips-for-eldership-and-overisqht-ways-of-organising-pastoral-care).

Letter number 1

*Edit as appropriate*

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Dear Friends,

Our oversight and pastoral care group has been thinking about how best Friends in our community can support one another during the coronavirus outbreak. We intend to organise a set of temporary 'Pods' around our locality (local/area/other Quaker community) based on geographical areas. Each Pod will last for the duration of the outbreak. The purpose of the Pods will be to help one another in both practical, spiritual and social ways and we think this can best be done in local areas. The size of each Pod will be dependant on how many Friends live in a particular area.

### **What will the Pods do?**

Each Pod will organise itself and decide how it would like to run. Some suggestions are:

- Check on each other should circumstances change
- Do shopping for Friends who are self-isolating and leave it at their door
- Have a 'WhatsApp' or 'Facebook' group to share local information
- Have a 'Zoom' or 'Skype' coffee morning
- Send jokes, cartoons, helpful passages from [Quaker faith & practice](#) etc to one another

## Why the name 'Pods'?

The idea of a Pod is based on the behaviour of Dolphins and Porpoises. Dolphins in particular are very sociable and live in Pods of 5-20. These Pods are fluid, temporary groups with a common purpose e.g. nursing mothers, adolescents learning social skills etc. By co-operating and forming alliances, dolphins are able to influence their social environment.

The name is also appropriate because Dolphins communicate with whistles and 'clicking' sounds and we will be 'IT clicking' as a way of staying in touch.

## Opting In

We recognise that not all Friends will want to be part of a Pod. That said, we think there is some urgency to get these organised, so if you DO WANT to be in a Pod, please can you let us know within the next week and no later than **[INSERT DATE]**. To opt in, let **[INSERT NAME]** know by email **XXX** or call **[INSERT NAME]** on **XXX**. We will then send your email address to others in your allocated Pod.

We also recognise that there will be some Friends in your Pod whom you may never have met. Our community is made up of Friends from **[INSERT DETAILS OF WHEN WORSHIP IS HELD EACH WEEK IN YOUR COMMUNITY]**, as well as those unable to attend Meetings for Worship, and we would encourage Friends to be in contact with those they do not already know.

## Woodbrooke Online Worship

Woodbrooke has regular online opportunities to worship during the week.

- [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/about/online-mfw/](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/about/online-mfw/)

In Friendship,

**[INSERT NAMES OF FRIENDS WITH OVERSIGHT OR PASTORAL CARE RESPONSIBILITY]**

Letter number 2

Dear **[INSERT NAMES OF PEOPLE IN THE POD]**,

Welcome to your Pod. We're sending out names and emails of those F/friends who wanted to opt in near your geographical area. You may not recognise all the names as people may attend differently from you, e.g. Sunday or mid-week meeting for worship, Bible Book group. Now is the time to get to know each other and what you want to get from and give each other. We envisage that you will find your own ways of supporting each other practically, spiritually and socially at this unprecedented time.

We envisage these groups being warm, friendly, autonomous and self-organising in a fluid way. Each group will organise itself. Below are some suggestions for how you might wish to begin.

Introduce yourselves perhaps sharing how long you've been connected to **[INSERT NAME OF QUAKER COMMUNITY]** and in what ways, and what drew you to opt in to a Pod.

Share how your household is living and what needs/resources you might have and/or what offers of help you might wish to make. Are you primarily looking at practical help, or spiritual support or stimulus, or social communication?

Some suggestions are:

- Check on each other should circumstances change
- Do shopping for Friends who are self-isolating and leave it at their door
- Have a 'WhatsApp' or 'Facebook' group to share local information
- Have a 'Zoom' or 'Skype' coffee morning
- Send jokes, cartoons, helpful passages from [Quaker faith & practice](#) etc to one another

We're sure you'll find your own ways forward. We thought it useful to share with you all useful official websites for medical and governmental updated information

### **Medical updates**

- England: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)
- Scotland: [www.scot.nhs.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.scot.nhs.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/)
- Wales: <https://covid19-phwstatement.nhs.wales/>

### **Updated government guidelines**

- England: [www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response](http://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response)
- Scotland: [www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/)
- Wales: <https://gov.wales/topic/980/latest>

### **Safeguarding**

As a community, we always take safeguarding into account. The sharing of emails means we all need to be mindful and vigilant about contacts inadvertently going outside our Quaker community. For example, someone might share a lovely poem and you feel you want to send it onwards to an acquaintance outside the meeting. Please ensure that you don't accidentally copy in all the group addresses. Also at this time when other temporary agencies are popping up offering emergency assistance, please make sure you do not give your bank details to anyone new. Similarly there are lots of wonderful people out there beyond the meeting offering help. If they are genuine, they will be happy for you to check out their identity if and

when they get in touch. If you have young people in your group remember that there are very similar needs as there are when meeting face-to-face. Parents will need to give permission or be online with young people. Be aware of what can be seen in your camera behind you when online.

***More details about safeguarding are in the section below. You may wish to add or remove sections as needed for your community's needs.***

You may be interested to know that **XXX** Friends have joined one of our Pods and that there are **XXX** pods altogether. It is good that we have been able to form this temporary new type of community. Let each of us continue to uphold one another as individuals and as each Pod.

In Friendship

**[INSERT NAME]** Quaker oversight or pastoral care group

## Appendix III: Caring for yourself

March 2020

Looking after yourself is especially important at this time – here is an idea for an exercise you and other Friends could do at home. Reflect on the phrase ‘You can’t pour from an empty cup.’ We live in a society that values overwork and calls it dedication. We are part of a Religious Society that values sacrifice – and where pressure can be put on us all to serve. But we all need to look after ourselves. Spend some time reflecting about things that you do to look after your well-being. Write down the things that you really, truly, honestly actually do (rather than the things you mean to do). Reflect for a while on the things that are on that list. Now spend some time reflecting on things that you would like to do, things that you could do, things that might be healthy or wise. Write a list of those things. Reflect on what might need to change for things on your second list to shift to the first list. Finally reflect on one thing that you can commit to do that might help you to look after yourself better.

*There is a daily round for beauty as well as for goodness, a world of flowers and books and cinemas and clothes and manners as well as of mountains and masterpieces... God is in all beauty, not only in the natural beauty of earth and sky, but in all fitness of language and rhythm, whether it describe a heavenly vision or a street fight, a Hamlet or a Falstaff, a philosophy or a joke: in all fitness of line and colour and shade, whether seen in the Sistine Madonna or a child’s knitted frock: in all fitness of sound and beat and measure, whether the result be Bach’s Passion music or a nursery jingle. The quantity of God, so to speak, varies in the different examples, but His quality of beauty in fitness remains the same.*

[Qf&p 21.28](#), Caroline C Graveson, 1937

Meditation can be very helpful in keeping us calm and Jack Kornfield provides a number of audio meditation practices and one that is particularly helpful is the self-compassion practice which can be found at the following web address:

<https://jackkornfield.com/the-practice-of-compassion/>