



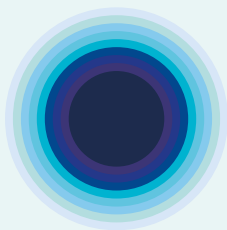
OUR FAITH OUR WORK

A review of the activities of Britain Yearly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in 2017



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Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Our faith, our work

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Letter from the Recording Clerk

What does love require of us? What are Quakers in Britain called to do in the world?

As a people of faith, Quakers across Britain seek to discern the answer

to these questions. We work in our own communities and the wider world, guided by the vision given to us in *Our faith in the future* by Meeting for Sufferings, the national representative body of Quakers in Britain. This annual review uses the outline of that document to give just a taste of the work we do.

In these turbulent times, our world yearns for peace and its people hunger for justice. As Quakers we share a commitment to treat each person equally as having that of God within them. That means working to reduce inequality, to challenge injustices for the vulnerable in our society, to find ways to build a shared security, and to change the narrative on war and arms. We have to find ways of living that protect and care for our planet, and create

communities that welcome people in, rather than shutting them out. We believe it is possible to build a better world, one in which our values can flourish.

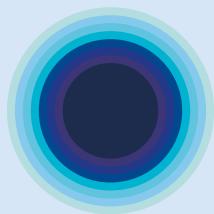
To be able to do this we have also to strengthen our own Quaker community, and to nurture the silent meeting for worship which is at its heart. Quaker meeting is for everyone and anyone who seeks solace in the stillness, who is open to being led by the Spirit we can encounter there, and who is willing to allow themselves to be transformed.

We need to be visible and accessible, we need to be welcoming, and we need to be worth finding. That too is part of our work here at Britain Yearly Meeting.

Our work is, I believe, inspired and inspiring. I hope you agree.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Paul Parker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" and last name "Parker" clearly distinguishable.

Paul Parker
Recording Clerk



Meeting for worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker

In worship we become one with the Spirit, with each other and with our true selves. The Spirit is the source of strength and guidance for all we are and do. Our way of worship is open to all, and we are making it more widely known.

Sanctuary everywhere

Britain can be a hostile place for people of migrant or refugee backgrounds. Quakers want to change this, creating a culture of compassion and hospitality that answers that of God in every person. On the next page we hear from those involved in this work, locally and nationally.

Engaging young adult Quakers
Events and resources for children and young people



Rhona French

I've always felt an affinity with Quaker values. They're broad sentiments but so radical. I suppose it was the commitment to equality that led me to study immigration law. I'd been involved in human rights activism as a teenager, but the extent of

the violations within the immigration system really shocked me, specifically on immigration detention. If your starting point is that there is that of God in everyone, then you cannot accept it.

I started doing some research for an NGO called Waging Peace. I was typing up notes at Friends House one day when I overheard a conversation involving Tim Gee, the manager of what was then the Forced Migration Programme. We met a few times afterwards and he suggested that I should sit on the programme's advisory group. I don't suppose it's much of a coincidence when two Quakers meet in a Quaker café but it felt like there was something magical about it. He really wanted to listen; it was so enabling. Throughout the project, Quakers who have worked in the field for years haven't just been receptive, they've actively responded.

For Refugee Week 2017 we were putting together a panel on immigration detention and Tim suggested I be on it. He made it clear that my voice was important. It's a scary prospect when someone takes you up on an offer to contribute, but it felt great to be trusted.

The advisory group met throughout the year and was very good at communicating online. We'd talk about the different aspects of the project, but the key task was the Sanctuary Manifesto. We each listed our priorities and it was clear that there was a lot of overlap. It was really heartfelt, which is perhaps why it feels more spiritual than political – it's more than a policy document.

It's been really moving to see the way that local Quakers have responded to the programme. It matters that it doesn't just exist in Friends House. And I'm amazed at how much Tatiana has been able to do, and how far this has spread. It's a big aim, creating a welcoming environment where a hostile one exists, and it'll mean spreading the message further than just among Quakers. But having seen what we've already achieved I think we should shoot for the moon. I believe we can fulfil the manifesto.

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Existing Quaker
Sanctuary Meetings.

3,117

People who
drowned in the
Mediterranean in
2017 while trying to
claim asylum.

794

Lone children
granted asylum in
Britain in 2017. They
are not allowed to
bring their parents or
siblings.



Become a Sanctuary Meeting. It means: joining local initiatives to build a culture of welcome; building alliances with groups opposing racism; and working with others to change the laws on destitution, detention, deportations and removals. Find out more at www.quaker.org.uk/sanctuary.



Donate online to important work like this: www.quaker.org.uk/give.

Tatiana Garavito **Sanctuary Everywhere** **Programme Manager**

I've been campaigning for racial justice and migrant rights issues since I came to Britain in 2005. The moment I arrived I felt labelled, made 'other', but I soon learned that being anti-racist means more than condemning hate crime. It means making the connections between immigration, war, poverty, exploitation, climate change and imperialism. It means fighting for a foreign policy based on justice, equity and peace.

I knew Tim Gee, my predecessor, through activist circles. He showed me a draft of the Quaker Sanctuary Manifesto and I was really impressed. Some organisations treat migration as if it's a single issue but BYM understood the connection to racial justice. It was radical and bold – against detention altogether rather than just limiting custody times – but it left lots of room for a programme manager to be creative. When the post came up at the end of 2017 I had to apply.

I'm not a Quaker but the values are my values. The Society wants to transform this inhumane and racist immigration system and so do I. And I share the approach: change happens when we

build social movements from the bottom up. That doesn't happen overnight. It takes good local organising, often over long periods. Tim's approach throughout 2017 was to visit local meetings in a listening exercise, to find out what they were already doing. That's led us to focus on the issue in three specific ways: challenging racism; changing the law on detention, deportation and destitution; and offering a culture of hospitality.

The advocacy work we do is also very important. Sometimes that means partnering with other organisations like Liberty and the Detention Forum. Sometimes it'll be making submissions to the Home Affairs Committee's inquiry into immigration and detention. But most essential is showing solidarity with people who suffer because of our unjust laws. We also have to educate ourselves on how some of us are more affected by those laws than others. Our backgrounds – our race, gender, religion, class, and our abilities and disabilities – these things matter. Only by acknowledging that can we restore community and create an alternative, inclusive and effective society that works for all.



Age-old story

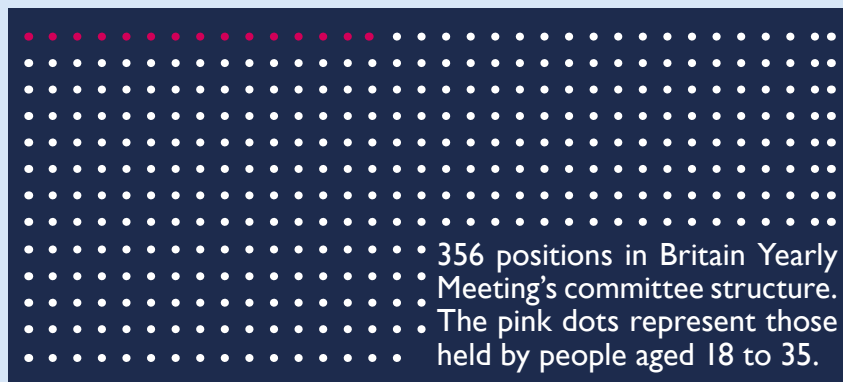
Quaker membership continues to age and decline. Young adults are less visible. In 2016 we asked Quaker-connected young adults in Britain what encourages and impedes their involvement in the Society. Many told us that our yearly meeting could be more inclusive and age-diverse. And they urged us to recognise and support the changing ways young adults relate to and engage with Quakerism. In short, they challenged us to become a more dynamic, all-age community.

So in June 2017 we launched the Engaging Young Adult Quakers Project, led by a full-time member of staff based at Friends House. A three-year, legacy-funded initiative, it will ensure that our yearly meeting is truly open and welcoming to young adults aged 18 to 35.

Representation is key to involvement. So the project has been looking at ways to open up our committees to young adult Quakers, enabling them to help shape their Society's future. It also offers grants and bursaries to young adults to enable them to attend courses and events, and join networks. Alongside that we've been developing the reach and relevance of BYM's communications channels. For example, funding from the project paid for audio equipment for a new Young Quaker Podcast, which is run by a small group of

young adult Quakers. Our social media team, and its strategy, has changed, creating more engaging and relevant digital content.

The project's steering group is inviting views and insights from across the Quaker community. So why not join the growing conversation about how to unleash the energy, vision and passion of young adults?

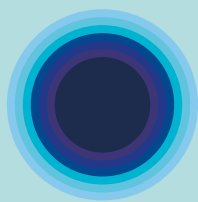


Seen and heard

The children and young people's staff team met the age challenge by offering a range of events and resources. In April young people aged 13 to 17 gathered for five days of sustainable living, worship and reflection. At Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG) the Fox Cubs, aged 3 to 5, chose to give out ribbons representing the homeless and hungry. YMG also saw the launch of *Let's explore the Quaker way*, an illustrated book for young children. A follow-up to *Quaker meeting and me*, it introduces readers to ways of living out the Quaker testimonies.



Talk to the Engaging Young Adult Quakers Project at youngadults@quaker.org.uk. Sign up to the 'Rising up' young people's e-newsletter at <https://tinyurl.com/EYAQnews>.



All Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline

Our discipline is actually 'Letting go and letting God': not 'Thou shalt' nor 'I will' but 'What does Love require of us?' It works when we understand it and practise it. Because we understand it, we can share it with others. Our testimony guides us, but we have to work on what it means for each of us personally.

God, words and us

Our differences are our richness, but also our problem... We have often wondered whether there is anything Quakers today can say as one. Overleaf we talk to some of the people who addressed this problem in 2017, from our theology think-tank to the printing presses.

Addressing diversity

17th-century collections on Instagram

Watch YMG online



Jude Acton

I am a lifelong Friend, and was at the Yearly Meeting that started talking about revising the books of discipline, in 1985. The decision we took pleased me as I felt they were not inclusive in language or theology. But I was surprised

to be asked to be part of the recent think-tank set up by the Revision Preparation Group. I'm not a theologian. But I am good at asking pertinent questions, and am experienced at facilitation.

We began with a series of online discussions and personal storytelling. I knew some other members of the group already, and some others by reputation, but some I didn't know at all. I could see it was a very carefully chosen group though. We spent a good amount of time reading each other's contributions, which meant we'd gotten to know each other a bit before we finally met, at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. That was an awe-inspiring weekend – it actually felt much longer than that. It was worshipful and real. Sometimes it was painful, but it was always heartfelt. We properly heard each other.

Thinking about theological language is really important right now because it feels like we've become more polarised as a Society. Less accepting of difference. In the 1980s I was one of those who didn't want so much Christocentric language, but now I see Friends who are uncomfortable about expressing their spiritual experiences in those terms. That's not OK. On the think-tank it became clear to us that nothing is either/or and I'm pleased that's made it into the book.

I absolutely love *God, words and us*. I'm on my third copy at least. My only worry is that not enough people have seen it! I'm glad BYM sent a copy to every meeting and I'd encourage everyone to read it. It has clear, meaningful chapters and it's very accessible: I've given copies to my mother and my daughter.

Whatever decisions we make about the book of discipline, it's important that we keep listening to each other. It's not just about academic language – I want any new books of discipline to be expressed in more than just language – it's about the importance of experience. After going through this process, and reading the book, I'm more optimistic about us figuring out, together, what the right approach is.

1656

The earliest statement of Quaker discipline, in an epistle from a meeting of elders at Balby.

1959

Christian faith and practice is published, still the current book of discipline of Canadian Yearly Meeting.

1985

The beginning of the last major revision of our book of discipline. It was agreed in 1994.

Michael Booth Church Government Adviser

My role is about helping Friends and meetings follow the church government regulations. So, for example, I help registering officers organise marriages correctly. I'm also secretary to the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group. Governmental consistency is important because we're a single yearly meeting. We don't have creeds but we do share an approach to church and faith. As a Society we're understanding of difference – we vary regionally and theologically – but we are one Society.

The *God, words and us* project came about because of a growing awareness that our theology is changing. We're not so obviously part of mainstream Christianity as when Quakerism began, and we're having to explore what that means in the 21st century. But we're not all that good at talking about theology with each other. Are our labels useful? We've moved without addressing why or where we've moved.

We used some legacy funds to develop this thinking, and set up the think-tank. The Revision Preparation Group began asking how it was possible at all for us to be a single yearly meeting if we don't

share a single theology. The think tank offered some answers to that question but ultimately it's for the yearly meeting to consider whether they agree. So we had to find a way to have that discussion more widely. A book was the obvious thing to do. Its message, I think, is that people don't need to agree on every issue to be in Friendship with each other.

All this has an International parallel, of course. Friends World Committee for Consultation brings together yearly meetings that don't share the exact same expression of faith. There's something beyond that expression that unites us. Not that this is easy! For LGBT Friends, going to some international meetings can be quite tough. But if you can find what's underneath you can have fascinating conversations.

At the very least we wanted the book to reveal something about the breadth of experience and expression within British Quakerism. It meant being very careful on small but important things – letting contributors decide what words they wanted to capitalise, say. And that's paid off. It's been a success – a bestseller for us.



Get the book at
[http://bookshop.
quaker.org.uk](http://bookshop.quaker.org.uk).

Yearly Meeting Gathering

Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017 was held at the University of Warwick. More than 1,700 people attended, making it one of the largest ever Gatherings.

2017 was the last in our three-year consideration of how we live out our faith in the world. We focused on movement-building and working with others to build a better world. George Lakey, the US activist and author, explored the ways in which Quaker activism can make a difference. "What I've found is that the size of the difference isn't necessarily mine to predict," he said. "Sometimes my role might be the supporting actor rather than the star of the show."

The annual Swarthmore Lecture was given by the Labour MP Catherine West (pictured right). In it she addressed unchecked poverty and urged Quakers to make a difference by championing equality in their own communities. In the George Gorman Lecture Tim Gee made the case for becoming a 'movement organisation', where Quaker structures support momentum for social change.

One of the most talked-about subjects was diversity and the richness it brings. The gathering was aware that our faith community isn't as inclusive as it could be. Many speakers addressed these concerns,

and as the week drew to a close we committed – corporately and individually – to working towards greater diversity:

We have heard the call to examine our own diversity... to look at how we can remove barriers and actively seek wider participation in the full life of our meetings, paying particular attention to race and age diversity.

Minute 38

You can watch YMG 2017 session introductions and lectures online at www.quaker.org.uk/ymg2017. Accessible text of the lectures and minutes is also available there.



Library loans

Founded in 1673, the Library at Friends House is home to one of the world's largest collections on Quakers and their work. Library staff have been exploring new ways of enabling visitors to engage with the material. They took over BYM's Instagram account for a couple of weeks in the summer and loaned eight items to the Imperial War Museum in London. 'People Power: Fighting for Peace', ran from March to August 2017. See www.quaker.org.uk/library for information about the collections.



Can you help with our work? See www.quaker.org.uk/give.



Quakers are well known and widely understood

We are active in our local communities, reaching out in friendship, making more use of our meeting houses for events and for renting or lending out. All members are ready and equipped to explain our Quaker way confidently and clearly to anyone who asks, as well as to speak publicly on issues of concern. We share our practices as appropriate and make full use of relevant media to reach out widely. In an increasingly divided world, we try to offer 'patterns and examples' of a caring community.

Festival outreach

It's important to us that we help people understand what Quakerism is. We can't do that if we're stuck in our meeting houses. Next, we hear from some people involved in our summer outreach.

Quaker Week

New Quaker podcast

Vibrancy in meetings project



Peter Hussey

Our presence at the Hay Literature Festival was not just a presence – it was a very successful contribution to the Hay programme. Three Quaker authors – Sheila Hancock, Philip Gross and Tracy Chevalier – took part in a conversation about

how their Quaker faith has informed their life and work. On the Quaker stall in the days after the event, it was the reason that most people gave for wanting to know more when they came to enquire. Other reasons for enquiry were interest in history, having attended Quaker school, and having friends or acquaintances who are Quakers and who are impressive people.

When I arrived there were some mundane tasks to complete under the guidance of the excellent staff presence. But almost before the official opening time I had my first 'customer' and I was straight into a deeply spiritual conversation, the first of many that day. I found an excellent approach was to ask 'Have you had any contact with Quakers?' This provided an immediate basis for conversations which, incredibly quickly, became intensely profound. The

intensity of these conversations may have misled me but I feel that, in two cases, individuals left intending to attend a meeting, while others have taken on board a further impetus to find out more.

The Quaker stall was sited in an excellent spot. It was within yards of the entrance to one of the food halls and immediately next door to a stall giving away delicious desserts! The queue for the free desserts provided a captive audience and increased hugely the awareness of the Friends in Wales display stand! The give-away bags and children's items, in particular balloons and chatterboxes, were very attractive and brought several people to the stand.

My day helping with the stall was one of my highlights of 2017. It was tremendously rewarding. I look forward to any possible future involvement.

On the Sunday following my visit to Hay we were absolutely delighted to be able to welcome a visitor to our meeting. It was a young lady who had visited the Quaker stall at Hay. A very good friend of hers is a Quaker, and so she wanted to know more. We think that she is very likely to become an attender.

2,415

Information packs
given away in 2017.

161

Quaker Week events
run in 2017.

133,720

Visits to the 'About
us' pages on the BYM
website.



Find our leaflets at www.quaker.org.uk/leaflets. Search the site for our digital 'Seven Quakers and God' project.



Support our work at www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/giving.



Contact us by email (outreach@quaker.org.uk) or follow us on Twitter [@knowmorequakers](https://twitter.com/knowmorequakers).

Gill Sewell Ministry & Outreach Officer

I came to Quakerism after seeing an ad in *The Guardian*. It offered a free book – *Introducing Quakers* by George Gorman, which totally gripped me – and a conversation with a local Quaker. I went unaccompanied to a stranger's house. Imagine doing that now! One of the things you quickly realise in this job is that a lot of Quakers think we need to still be doing the same things that attracted them. But the world has changed. It's important that our leaflets are fresh and contemporary, but also that we think harder about what we do digitally.

I don't think of the job as making more Quakers. To be honest, it doesn't much matter to me where people find a spiritual home. But I am passionate about Quakerism being well known and widely understood. Essentially, that means making the Society seem more normal. We might be countercultural but there's nothing especially weird about what we do. I believe we have lots to offer to spiritual seekers in the 21st century.

Being visible is a key part of all this. That means more than a poster outside a meeting house. We decided to take a stall at the Hay Festival of Literature & the

Arts because it offered us an opportunity to get out and talk to people. I also knew some Friends who could appear at an event there. We ran a panel of Quaker speakers, all of whom spent more time talking about their faith than trying to sell their books. At the end we had a brief meeting for worship. Tickets were popular and we got bumped up to a larger venue, so we gave 720 people a personal experience of Quaker practice.

Ultimately though, it's more important that we support local Quakers to do their own outreach. It's not just about having a well-stocked leaflet cabinet, it's about putting those leaflets in people's hands. But that also happened at Hay. We briefed local volunteers on how to share their faith and you could see them grow in confidence throughout the festival. I like to think that we staff offered a model of Quaker storytelling, too.

The decline in our numbers definitely motivates the outreach team to keep working hard. But in the end, most people come to Quakerism because they make a personal contact. That's a challenge to all of us to be our best selves.



Making a week of it

In early October thousands of Quakers in Britain marked the 11th annual Quaker Week. Each year Quakers hold events in their local meetings and invite people to find out about the Quaker way and how our faith shapes the way we live. We prepared a postcard pack full of ideas for meetings and, in 2017, 111 of them got involved.

The theme of Quaker Week 2017 was 'In turbulent times... be a Quaker'. Our history shows that Quakers have always tried to respond to turbulent times with compassion and courage. Today we are again called to speak out with love.

Among the outreach materials we produced was an interactive timeline to represent this theme. A graphic showed a meandering river of equality, sustainability and peace, stillness, simplicity and truth. The river flows calmly along until it cascades down a waterfall, through a timeline of historic Quaker responses to turbulent times. These range from Quakers' work to abolish slavery in the 18th century to BYM's divestment from fossil fuels in 2014.

The 2018 theme will be 'Room for more'. It will concentrate on ensuring that we are offering a good welcome to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Peace in a pod

Audiences are now hearing about witness work through the Q:Witness podcast. Around 1,300 people per episode are now listening to Quaker guests speaking on topics such as nonviolent direct action, the Ethical Landlords Association, and developing a culture of sanctuary for refugees in Europe. Download it at www.quaker.org.uk/podcast.



**We received 2,189 'likes'.
We engaged 315 users per day.
Our average daily reach was 4,618 users.**



8,254 followers and 144,053 profile visits.



The 'About Quakers' section of BYM's website attracted 133,720 page views.

A vibrant performance

Our 'Vibrancy in meetings' project was set up to explore whether having locally based staff can help meetings to thrive as communities. The project is now well established and is offering regional support in four pilot areas. Learning is starting to emerge about this model and the NCVO Charities Evaluation Service will submit an assessment in 2018. Its early findings report noted that the vibrancy workers are already beginning to feed useful suggestions back from meetings.



Follow us on social media
[@BritishQuakers](https://twitter.com/BritishQuakers) and support our work at www.quaker.org.uk/give.



Quaker values are active in the world

Our lives speak peace, equality, respect for the earth and all its inhabitants. We offer friendship to all and solidarity to the marginalised. We speak truth to power with love. We hold those in power in the Light. We find creative and nonviolent ways to get our message across. We are in this for the long haul; we're not afraid to take risks. We are called to live in the place where our 'deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet'.

Fuel to the fire

Quakers in Britain were the first church in Britain to divest our centrally held money from fossil fuels. Now we're helping local meetings do likewise. See the story overleaf.

Stopping the arms fair

Voting with confidence in Kenya

Dropping the bomb



Angela Walker

I've been a Quaker for almost 25 years, and with that comes a concern for our planet. I'm worried that we're not going to leave it in a viable condition for our children and grandchildren. If we don't find a sustainable way to live there's going to

be more strife, more war. So sustainability is also part of our witness on equality and peace – a fundamental concern.

I can't remember a time when we didn't recycle at home but I'm not a paragon of virtue. I like new things too much! But I'm trying to learn to make do with what we've got. That applies to me as a treasurer of my area meeting, too. Divestment from fossil fuels wasn't really talked about when I brought it up with our trustees. They were worried about the value of our investments. We did have an ethical investment policy but it meant we avoided things like alcohol, weapons and tobacco. We weren't really using our funds to make social change.

The Canterbury Commitment [made at Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2011] made everyone more aware of climate justice as an issue. When BYM took a lead and

divested, people were more willing to discuss it. Articles in QPSW's *Earth and economy* journal were useful and I got a lot of copies of BYM's *Divestment from fossil fuels* briefing to pass on to local Friends. There was a lot of ground work but eventually the discernment was clear that we should go ahead. It was definitely worth doing.

The next tricky bit was the process of divesting. I'm not an expert on investment. But Sunniva (right) put me in touch with other meetings that had divested. That helped us decide to get an investment manager. We looked at three different companies and picked the one that we believed was the most proactive. It's the one BYM uses. It puts pressure on the companies we invest in to become more ethical. Representatives go to board meetings and raise subjects like deforestation and other climate concerns. We get regular updates from them, too.

It is a daunting prospect when you start thinking about divesting as a meeting. But help is there. I found the BYM finance team a good source of information and we also worked with Quaker Life. Sunniva was always encouraging. My advice is: just get on with it!

23

Area meetings have actively divested from fossil fuel extraction – lots more had no investments in the first place.

3/10/17

The day the Scottish Parliament banned fracking, after vital submissions from Quakers and our partners.



Find out more about BYM work on sustainability, and how you can support it, at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability.



Challenge: ask your politicians if they agree that the UK has a duty to lead on tackling climate change.



Contact us by email at sustainability@quaker.org.uk.

Sunniva Taylor Sustainability & Peace Programme Manager

It's my job to serve the yearly meeting's concern for climate justice. To support Friends to witness on those issues locally, and to advocate for that commitment nationally. The work is overseen by a committee that also looks after our work on economic issues. That's important, because our discernment is that climate injustice is a symptom of a wider injustice – economic inequality.

This is a relatively new area of work for BYM, but it's a witness to our commitments to peace and simplicity. Human behaviour – in particular that of the affluent and powerful – is having detrimental effects on the world's people and its ecosystems. For me, though I am part of that problem, that's a grave injustice and we have a responsibility to do something about it. "Doing something about it" in part means being aware of our own role in this, but in particular using whatever power or assets we have to try to change a system that perpetuates injustice. As a church – an institution, a collective of people with money and buildings, and more power than we might think we have – we have a duty to use whatever assets we have in this struggle.

It's important that we continue to develop our expertise centrally. It means that when we visit local meetings to discuss these issues, we can work together on local actions that match our national discernment – ones that we can support from Friends House.

It's easy to be overwhelmed by the challenge, especially since we're not just talking about cutting carbon but changing the whole economic system. But there's a real blossoming of political activity out there. Fracking protests are just part of it. First you despair and then you take action. It's all part of the process. It's why it's important for us to help local Quakers with things they can do practically to make change happen.

In the last few years we've concentrated on encouraging area meetings to divest from companies involved in fossil fuel extraction. Just a few years ago divestment was a very new concept, but nowadays people are keen to get on with it. Treasurers have it on their ethical checklist – it's become a finance issue as well as a political one. Now it's our job at BYM to tell this story.



No fair

The world's largest arms fair is held in London's Docklands every two years. Since 2011 we have hosted the Stop the Arms Fair coalition at Friends House to help build resistance to the fair.

In September 2017 Quakers joined faith groups and others to stage seven days of nonviolent, prayerful action that succeeded in disrupting preparations at the ExCel centre. As truckloads of equipment arrived, Quakers from across Britain were among those peacefully protesting against war profiteering.

Eight Quakers were arrested during Tuesday's 'No faith in war' day. They were charged with obstructing the highway but found not guilty.

Votes of confidence

Turning the Tide (TTT) East Africa is a peacebuilding and social justice programme run by BYM and African peace activists. We help communities and groups tackle the root causes of violence and injustice.

In the run-up to the general election in August 2017 our Kenyan partner (Alternatives to Violence Kenya Trust) launched a civic engagement campaign to promote peaceful elections and offer voting rights education. Activists ran civic education forums to help communities

understand their electoral rights, electoral malpractice and the new Kenyan constitution. These regularly attracted several hundred people and focused on engaging youth groups and young voters.

TTT activists also facilitated public vetting forums – safe spaces in which citizens could engage with political candidates.



Dropping the bomb

In 2017 we marked the 70th anniversary of our Nobel Peace Prize award. In October we congratulated the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) on receiving the 2017 Prize. ICAN is a global coalition of organisations that includes Quaker Peace & Social Witness.

In July, BYM staff member Tim Wallis visited the UN to help win the case for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Fifty countries were needed for it to pass. In the end 122 (in blue, above) of 193 agreed.



Challenge: the UK did not vote for the nuclear ban treaty. Find out how to lobby the government at www.quaker.org.uk/disarm.



Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all-age

All are heard, valued and supported both in our needs and our leadings. Everyone's contribution is accepted according to their gifts and resources. All are welcomed and included. There are clear and effective ways of working together on shared concerns. Fellowship and fun strengthen the bonds between us, enhancing a loving community.

Saying our peace

Quakers recognise that there is 'that of God in everyone', and this leads us to renounce violence and to work actively for peace. Education is a key part of the work and on the next pages we talk to Quakers on the front line.

Mental health in our meetings

Engaging families



Lucy Henning

I first got interested in peace education at QPSW Spring Conference. Izzy (right) did a presentation on working with 5- to 6-year-olds. I was a new Quaker attender, studying for a PhD in young children and literacy in school, but I hadn't thought

much about how the Quaker testimony to peace could fit into my working life. Izzy's talk was really inspiring. I had been learning that the structure of education could work negatively on children as well as positively, and this seemed like it could be a great antidote.

As a teacher, lots of things are out of your control – you don't have any say on testing, for example – but this was something I could use. Schools can cause division without meaning to. When you put children into groups they can start treating those outside the group differently. Peace education is one way of thinking about alternatives.

A bit later on I saw the schools publication BYM did on World War I, *Conviction*. It was a really useful piece of work. I ended up working with Izzy on the follow-up, *Conscience*. Then, when I

got a job lecturing in primary education at Roehampton University, I worked with some colleagues to set up a module called 'Investigating peace'. Izzy and her team came in and ran a workshop that really helped pull it together. They spent a lot of time advising me and a colleague; it wouldn't have been the same without their contribution.

As part of the module the students have to do some peace education in a school. One ran a session that included some guided meditation that went really well. She ran it for her fellow students too and it was very powerful to be a part of – such a sense of calm. It meant that the group could really see the practical applications.

I sometimes feel we don't spend enough time thinking about these things in schools. Conflict resolution is such an important tool, especially when the way we teach can cause that conflict in the first place. That's why it matters that Quakers in Britain are contributing – not just with great resources but with subject knowledge and enthusiasm. In 2018 we'll be running longer peace education modules at Roehampton, with more students. The support for it is growing.

29

Article of the Geneva Convention which says "the education of the child shall be directed to ... the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples."

13

Age of the child who wrote this on the UNICEF website for children: "In Greece, the best slogan against the war is 'I was apathetic, and a war happened.'"

Isabel Cartwright Peace Education Manager

Our peace education team at BYM covers four key areas:

- supporting Quakers and educators in delivering peace projects
- creating resources
- growing the peace education movement
- challenging the militarisation of our schools.

Children grow up in a world of enormous conflict and violence. You'd think that schools would be helping them develop strategies to live with this – to help them learn how to live peacefully – but in fact they're more likely to be visited by the military. We're trying to provide alternatives.

A lot of our work is collaborative. We're a strategic team so we work with national and local providers to develop peace education in their schools. But we do test out our resources directly. Sometimes it's astonishing how little students have been told about their own country's involvement in conflict. When we visited one secondary school in 2017 we found that a group of 11- to 16-year-olds weren't aware that we are a nuclear country –

that we possess weapons of mass destruction. How are they supposed to explore the ethics of all this if they don't know the important information?

Sometimes schools face great pressure to conform to the political mainstream. But we get great feedback when we run a Peace Week. One head teacher told us that it was the best thing they'd ever run as a whole-school activity. And the kids love it too. One told us it had been the best week of their life!

We try to stay innovative. We're now running peace education courses online, which makes us an international provider. And we've been working with some smart partners. The Inspire project is a collaboration with Corrymeela, Coventry Cathedral, Oasis Trust, and Wales for Peace. It means we'll be able to reach up to 6,000 schools at a key point in our history – the centenary of the end of World War I. We'll be asking the schools to sign up to a peace charter, and there'll be a national award for young people working for peace, supported by BBC Radio. The leading narratives are often of violence, but there is peaceful resistance.



Get our new Peace Week pack for schools at <http://bookshop.quaker.org.uk>.

A mental note

Around one in four people in the UK experience a mental health problem each year. Over the past five years BYM has been gathering information from individual Quakers, meetings and carers about their experience of living with – or supporting other people who are living with – instances of mental distress.

In 2017 we published an accompaniment to our book *Encounters with mental distress: Quaker stories*. This should help Quakers use the book in their meetings. To continue the conversation we've also been working on more initiatives that will launch in 2018. 'Opening the door to talking about mental health' is a workshop that will be facilitated by trained members of the Mental Health in Meetings Cluster of the Quaker Life Network. We've also put together a leaflet, *Mental health in our meetings*, with detailed advice and guidance for meetings. A copy will be sent to every Quaker meeting and they will be freely available to order from the Quaker Centre at Friends House. We're also working on creating a three-year post for a Mental Health Development Worker, who will be a voice for Quaker mental health and work with Quaker groups and individuals to develop a Quaker witness around mental health. This is being funded and run by The Retreat York Benevolent Fund, which also offers Quakers funds for mental health care.

Conversation piece

During Yearly Meeting Gathering Quaker Life asked for Quakers to share their stories of dying, death and end-of-life issues. Members of the working group that looks at end-of-life issues facilitated the conversations, which were audio recorded. The material will be used in a variety of ways to develop support for meetings.



There are 32 fewer children in our meetings than in 2016. That might not sound like much but it's a whole classroom.

More than welcome

Welcoming children and young people isn't just about having specific resources for them. We also have to make sure we help meetings become communities in which all ages can work together. Our *All are welcome* pack follows nine new advices and queries to explore what is happening in meetings, and for meetings to consider how they can develop as an all-age worshipping community. We launched it with two 'Engaging with families' days at Friends House and Lancaster in November and December.



Sign up to *Journeys in the Spirit: Children's work edition* by emailing cypadmin@quaker.org.uk. Find out what you can do to support the work at www.quaker.org.uk/give.



Quakers work collaboratively

We are well aware that we can't put the world to rights all by ourselves. We value the important work of others. By engaging with them we are already changing the world. We want to break down barriers; we refuse to prejudge who is or is not an ally.

Right in the middle

A vision of justice and peace in Palestine and Israel takes international human rights monitors to witness life under occupation. Overleaf we find out how our Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) works – and why we should promote change from home.

Great hospitality
Working for a living wage
Building a new economy



Attallah, community leader in Jabal al-Baba

We have been working with EAPPI for five or six years. It's really very good to work together because people in the community feel safe when EAs are with them.

People from EAPPI take our stories from the mountain here to people in their own countries... All this helps to push the Israeli government to stop the development in our area.

We're very happy to work together and hope we can continue to do more in the future.



Alice Crawford, Ecumenical Accompanier (EA)

My work was very varied. But a typical week would involve monitoring Palestinian access to work and worship. That means being present as workers go through military checkpoints,

or accompanying children to school. The aim is to make children feel safer, and sometimes it de-escalates the tensions between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers.

EAs move between worlds. Palestinians and Israelis have few opportunities to meet, but we talk to people on all sides. It's important that we don't *take* sides. We're not pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli, we're pro-human rights.

We also spent time with Bedouin communities. We visited Jabal al-Baba every week, which is where I first got to meet Attallah. His community is under a full demolition order from the Israeli authorities, so all its families are at risk of losing their homes at any moment, even though the buildings are on Palestinian land. (Just one week after I returned to the UK, a house – home to 13 people – was destroyed.)

Attallah is an incredibly impressive person. He's working in the face of terrible adversity, setting up jobs, always staying positive. He uses the Arabic word 'sumud', which means 'steadfastness', and he personifies it. EAs are not aid workers but we do get to stand with people as they work towards peace. It's a huge privilege.

4,800

Palestinian-owned structures demolished or seized between 2009 and 2016.

3%

The average rate of approval of applications for building permits for Palestinians in Israel-controlled Area C.

83%

Children in East Jerusalem living below the Israel-defined poverty line.



EAPPI Programme Coordinator at BYM

I deal with the nuts and bolts of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, which Britain Yearly Meeting manages in the UK and Ireland. Internationally, the programme is coordinated by the World Council of Churches.

EAPPI sends human rights monitors – Ecumenical Accompaniers – to the West Bank and East Jerusalem. I help with recruitment and training, and support EAs in the field. It's programme policy that we don't publicise our names or faces – it's easier to maintain access to Palestine that way.

I first met Alice when she came in for her training. EAs spend a week at Friends House and a week at Woodbrooke, preparing practically and emotionally. After the office in Jerusalem placed her, with other EAs, in the east of the city, we were in touch every few weeks. EAs need to know about practical things like expenses, but there's quite a lot of emotional support involved, too. It can be quite hard living closely with a team of people you've never met, and that's before you account for the stress of living with occupation. I

keep track of what the EAs are up to day-to-day, and when things get tense there we're on hand to talk things through. When they get back we have a long debrief for them to offload. We then stay in touch for as long as EAs keep up their advocacy work – it can be years.

I really like my job. I like my relationship with EAs, and hearing about what they do – the work. Quaker values, as far as I understand them, mean having respect for every person. Our principled impartiality is part of that, looking for that of God in everyone. But it's intrinsically a stressful role. Hearing about what goes on in the West Bank can be hard, even if you're not in the field. Thinking about what happens to the locals that EAs are working with, like Attallah, can be pretty grim.

But although EAs are unlikely to be able to stop any houses being demolished, being there does mean, for example, that soldiers sometimes behave differently. And having people come back home with eyewitness stories is crucial. That advocacy really brings the issues home, too.



Find out more, including how to donate, at www.quaker.org.uk/eappi.



Support Israeli peace groups like Yesh Din and Rabbis for Human Rights.



Contact your elected representatives and raise the issue of the occupation.

Take for granted

Grant-making continues to be a key way for us to turn our faith into action. We support individuals as well as organisations that uphold our values.

QPSW Relief Grants are given to alleviate suffering from war, conflict, natural disasters and climate change. One of the recipients in 2017 was the John Aves Education Project, which is supported by Norwich Quaker Meeting. The project helps young people from the Dheisheh Palestinian Refugee Camp in the West Bank who want to study for a university degree.

We also award Adult Education Grants to members and attenders who wish to gain a qualification in further or higher education. In 2017 one beneficiary did a part-time PhD in restorative justice while she worked part-time for a restorative justice organisation. She was able to deliver workshops to other students, help organise a criminal justice conference and get involved in a community cohesion initiative targeting hate crime.

Other BYM grants have gone to Quaker projects that help build sustainable communities and a fairer economic system. We supported Quaker-backed overseas projects that help rural young people live self-sufficiently, as well as British Quakers in long-term unemployment.

Earning our stripes

Since 2014 Quakers have been campaigning on the Living Wage as part of our testimony to equality. By the end of 2017 13 Quaker organisations had become accredited Living Wage Employers, including Luton & Leighton, Notts & Derby, South East Scotland, and Thaxted. Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre also achieved accreditation.

The Living Wage campaign has won over £500 million of additional wages, lifting more than 150,000 people out of working poverty. That's enough to fill Glasgow's Ibrox stadium, Villa Park in Birmingham and Arsenal Emirates.



Pay and display

In January, Britain Yearly Meeting became the first major religious organisation to be awarded the Pay Compare Mark. This is given to employers that publicly disclose the gap between their highest- and lowest-paid workers. BYM has two pay scales, for inside and outside London. Both have a ratio of 1:4, which results in an overall ratio of 1:4.7. This policy, whereby no member of staff earns more than four times more than any other, has been a longstanding principle, even though the award is new.



Find out more about our grants, and how to contribute to them, at www.quaker.org.uk/grant-making.

Food for thought

The Friends House Hospitality Company enjoyed an incredibly successful year in 2017. In February the company received an AIM Higher Silver accreditation from the Meetings Industry Association, which recognises event and conference venues. It serves as an assurance of excellence for customers and event buyers. The following month, as it celebrated its tenth



anniversary, the company revealed that it had reduced the carbon footprint of Friends House by 29 per cent since 2009.

In April the company was 'highly commended' by the Camden Sustainability Awards, which celebrate outstanding local examples of business growth, sustainability, urban design, and social responsibility. June saw the launch of a 'suspended soup' scheme. This enables customers to buy a soup for someone in need. For every soup bought, the company matches it.

In September the company welcomed its first ever fashion show to Friends House. And in October it won two more awards: the Support the Community award at the SRA's Food Made Good Awards and Bronze in the Best New or Refurbished Venue category at the London Venue Awards 2017.

The company was also immensely proud to see its first Douglas House Project apprentice pass his apprenticeship in November. He has now taken up a role at Friends House.

On the market

Our 'New economy' series of booklets was completed in 2017, becoming perhaps our most popular publications. The new economy project supports Quakers to articulate a vision of a practical, ethical economic system in line with Quaker values. We also support Quakers who are taking action to move our economy in this direction.

The final instalment looks at 'Building the new economy'. Full of questions to aid reflection and discussion, it asks readers to imagine what a different type of economic system could look like, and how we could help create it. Local Quakers have been considering these questions in workshops offered by our economics, sustainability and peace team.



Letter from the Clerk of Trustees

To all Friends everywhere:

The annual review is an opportunity to celebrate the huge amount of work carried out by our staff.

Our gratitude also goes to the Friends who support

and guide them in their work, whether serving on committees or as volunteers. Without our staff we could not achieve nearly so much in the world, and without Friends' support we could not afford the work.

It is also an opportunity to thank you, dear Friends, for all you do. Collectively, Quakers in Britain do some amazing work, locally, nationally and internationally.

Our work on Sanctuary Everywhere has led 67 meetings to become Sanctuary Meetings. The Engaging Young Adult Quakers project has given a voice to our dynamic younger Friends – they want to play their part and revitalise our passion for changing a system that perpetuates injustice. Our commitment to peace and peace education is as strong as ever.

Friends House is an exemplar of our commitment to sustainability and also to inclusivity, offering work placements to ex-offenders. One recently wrote: "Here was a place I could feel the surrounding peace and feel the endless caring and that has never ceased."

Of course, the review is only a snapshot of some areas of our work. But I hope it will inspire you and encourage you to continue to give your support. We need your time and your money to help us to be the change we want to see in an increasingly uncertain and troubled world.

One thing is certain: Quaker work is needed more than ever. The challenge for us is how to resource this ever-expanding need.

I hope you will take the opportunity to discuss this review in your local and area meetings, and consider how we might all support this work.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Ingrid Greenhow". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ingrid Greenhow
Clerk of Trustees



Get involved

Keep in touch

Connect to the work done in your name

Quake! is the monthly e-newsletter for all Quakers in Britain. It covers Quaker life, worship and activism as well as the latest news, events and resources. Sign up at www.quaker.org.uk/quake.

Give money

Increase Quakers' impact in the world

From empowering Friends to take their own action to coordinating national or international work, our central organisation gives us the means and the profile to make a real impact. Visit www.quaker.org.uk/givemoney or phone 020 7663 1015 to support this work with a gift.

Give time

Meet people and make a difference

All the work featured in this review is discerned and governed by ordinary Friends who generously give their time in service. You too can join with others from across Britain to make positive change happen. Visit www.quaker.org.uk/givetime or phone 020 7663 1115 to find out more.

Leave a legacy

Give Quaker work a bright future

In 2017 gifts left in wills funded 11 innovative projects, including work on engaging young adult Friends, responding to forced migration and promoting sustainability in the global Quaker community. Your gift will help Quakers take action on the key issues of tomorrow. Visit www.quaker.org.uk/legacy for more information or phone 020 7663 1019.

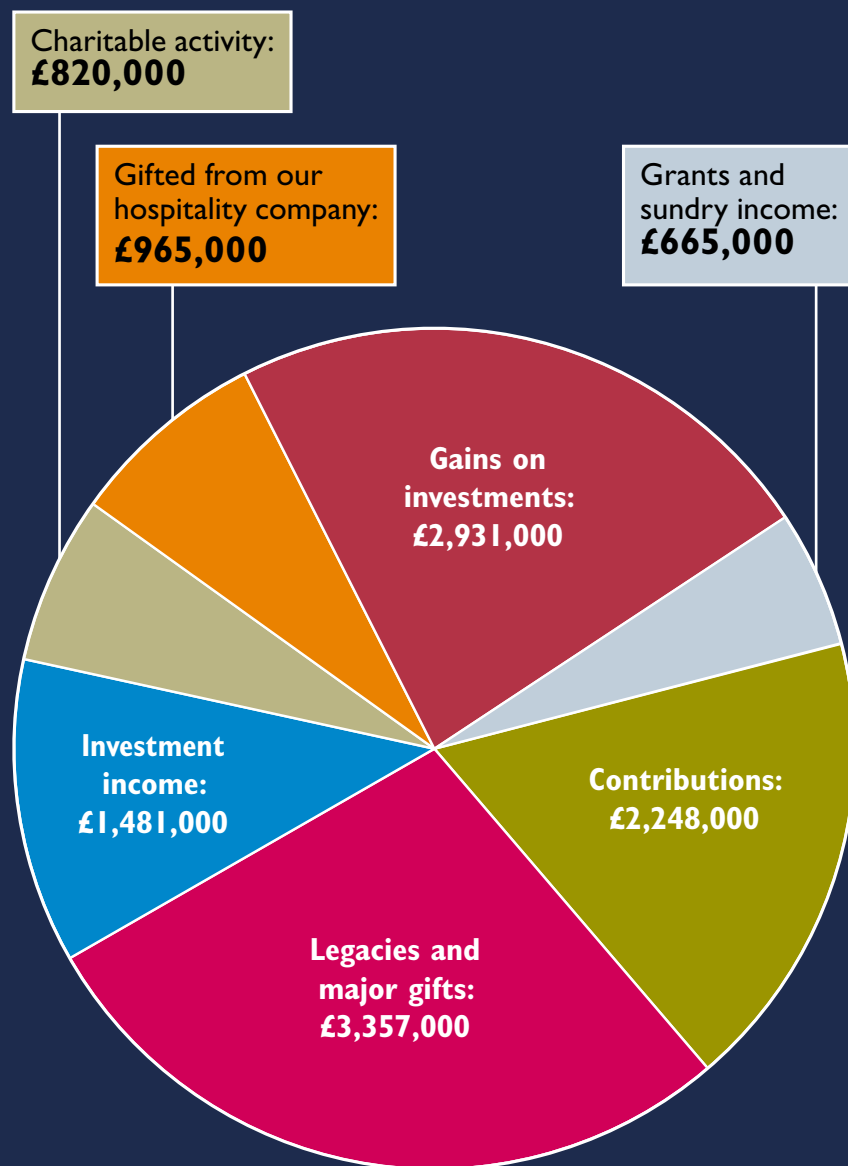
2017 financials at a glance

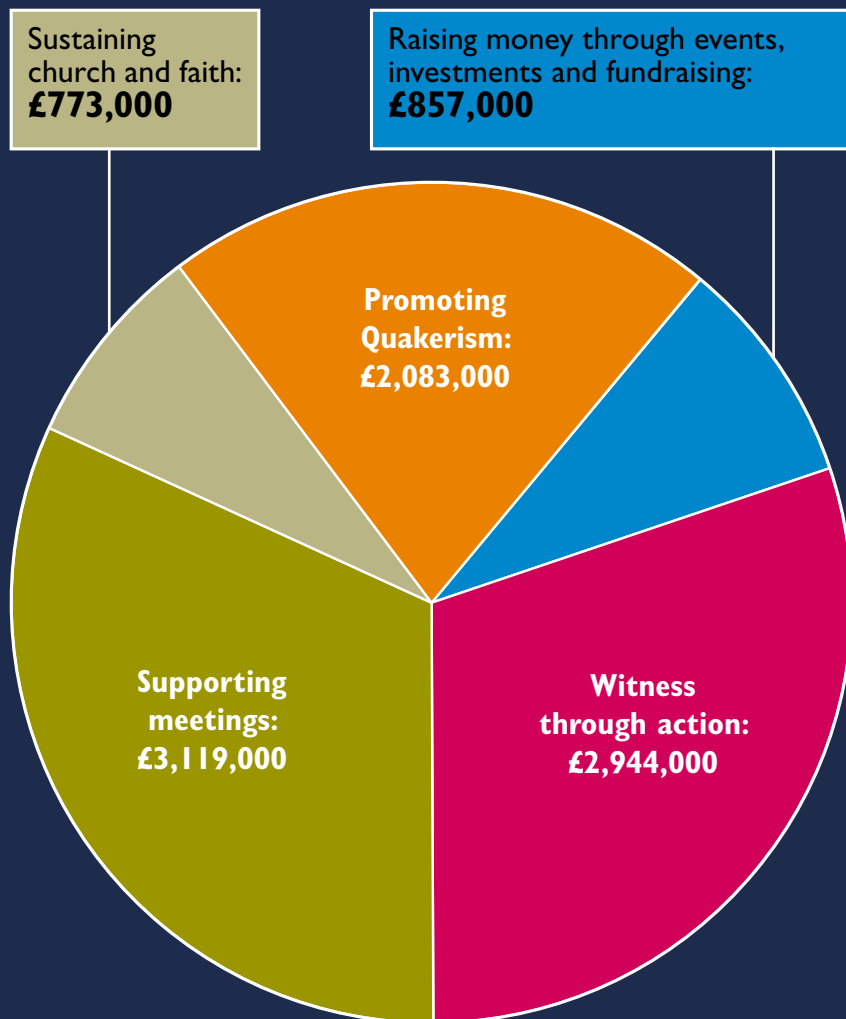
Financially, 2017 was a good year – thanks mainly to the performance of our hospitality business and investments, and to the generosity of Friends leaving gifts in their wills.

In 2017 the hospitality company gifted a record £965,000 to Quaker work: a fitting way to celebrate its tenth year as our trading subsidiary. This gift is in addition to covering the majority of the running costs of Friends House.

A number of companies in which we hold shares performed well thanks to the weak pound. However, to realise this gain we would need to sell off some of these investments and in doing so forego the income they would generate in future years. We did not sell any shares in 2017.

Legacy income is hugely important for us but is also hard to predict. For this reason we set part of it aside each year for time-limited projects, which





often enable us to explore exciting new directions. The generous gifts received in 2017 from Friends who have passed away will fund many such projects in years to come, helping to keep Quaker work relevant and responsive to our times.

As costs rise in line with inflation and new work is discerned, the Yearly Meeting Treasurer has called on Friends to increase their giving, which not only supports Quaker work financially but demonstrates that our corporate church life is valued by us all.

Friends have set out a vision of Quakers in Britain as a bold, diverse, vibrant and growing community – living adventurously and working for a more peaceful, just and sustainable world. Over the next few years, we plan to use some of our reserves to invest in making this vision a reality. But spending our reserves is not sustainable in the longer term: we will need to raise more money to fund the work that we have been called to do.

**excluding property revaluation*

Expenditure:
£9,776,000

In black and white

12,934 members

7,955 attenders

1,506 children not in membership

22,395 total Quakers in Britain

58% adult women **35%** adult men **7%** children

The gender category of 'other' has so far only been used by a few meetings and so is too small to be recorded accurately. Meetings may wish to make members and attenders aware of the opportunity to be recorded in this way.

13% decline in membership over the last ten years

9% total decline over the last ten years

42 marriages: six same-sex, 36 opposite-sex

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Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Their unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship, where they seek a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly, within themselves and in their relationships with others and the world around them. They meet together for worship in local meetings, which are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power. The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal.

This leads Quakers to put their faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause injustice and violent conflict.

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