



Faringdon Quaker Meeting

NEWSLETTER 138 June to July 25

Meeting Affairs

Shared Lunch Sunday 1st of June

Meeting for Business for Worship Sunday 6th of July

Area/Regional Meeting for Church Affairs

British Yearly Meeting 23rd to 26th May 2025

Area Meeting Burford will be held on Saturday 12th July 2025 at Burford Quaker Meeting House. The AGM of the OSAM Charity will take place at 10.30am, followed by our meeting for church affairs. After lunch, the spiritual nurture session, starting at 2pm, will be led by Rhonda Riachi on 'Quakers and the Afterlife'.

Study Group

We thank Cilla for study session on the 13th of April 2025 in which she gave an informative and inspirational talk on her grounding breaking, transformative work for peace through her Mighty Heart programme.

20th July A Quaker Prayer Life – Simon

Prayer for Peace

Eight Friends including a Friend from Simon Swindon attended the Prayer for Peace in May. Spiritual and Pastoral Group have decided to extend the last Saturday of the month until July. Next Prayer for Peace is Saturdays June 28th and July 26th, 10 to 12.

Reading dates.

June 1 Emma
 8 Val
 15 Ruth
 22 Simon
 29 Gill and Trish

July 6 Chris
 13 Jenny
 20 Janie
 27 Geoff

Charlbury Meeting picnic at Charney Manor Sunday 22nd of June after meeting – Faringdon and Burford Quakers are invited.

Collections

Please speak to our treasurer with your suggestions for collections, who will collate them and bring them back to the meeting to decide.

June Anti-Slavery Movement [Donate now | Anti-Slavery International](#)

July Harbour Project Asylum Seekers in Swindon [Please Donate to The Harbour Project](#)

Emma News

Congratulation to Emma duly elected as the Green party County Counsellor for Shrivenham in the May local elections.



A most warm welcome to Emma whose application to the Religious Society of Friends was accepted at the OSAM on the 10th of May 2025.

Emma will also be an Ecumenical Accompanier during this summer in Palestine. We will miss her, though I am sure we will be holding her in light as she bears witness.

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is an international programme coordinated by the World Council of Churches. It brings people from around the world to the West Bank to serve for three months as human rights monitors. We call them Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs).

EAPPI was founded in response to a call from the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem. Since 2002 over 1,500 international volunteers from 22 countries have served as EAs. In the UK and Ireland, it is coordinated by British Quakers on behalf of 16 churches and NGOs who we call our partners.

Eyewitness is a short film about EAPPI and the role it takes as an international presence in occupied Palestine. It shows accompaniment in action.

https://youtu.be/voVG_kWv2Gk

Thoughts on Area Meeting

The afternoon session of area meeting on Saturday 10th of May at Faringdon discussed area meetings

We have heard that, at the conference on the Future of British Quakerism, it was reported that far fewer Friends feel connected to their area meeting than to their local meeting (90% vs under 40%).

Qf&P 4.02: Area Meeting's "role is to develop and maintain a community of Friends, a family of local meetings who gather for worship and spiritual enrichment. It should provide that balance between worship, mutual support, administration, learning, deliberation and social life which can make its meetings enjoyable occasions and build up the spiritual life of its members."

The Area Meeting has begun the process of setting up a working group to reflect on and take forward all the ideas, reflections and shared experiences coming out of this session. Some names have been submitted today, and we hope to receive others from local meetings. Jennifer Barraclough has offered initial support by convening the first meeting of the working group, which we would expect to report back to AM in September.

Some Faringdon Friends have started attending other meetings on the occasional Sunday to foster closer connection to know one another in the Spirit.

We agree to hold a fund-raising social event on Saturday the 30th of August 2025. Details to be confirmed at our July Business meeting.

Report on the life of Faringdon Meeting – May 10th, 2025, to Area meeting

Our meeting is growing with regular attendance of 15 or more. Friends express a strong sense of warmth, welcome and community within our meeting. The feeling of our meeting for worship can be one of deep stillness, the silence helps us to connect with the inner light which we hope and pray keeps us on the right path.

Our Spiritual Nurture Friends have arranged study groups on a regular basis.

We take an active role in Churches together in Faringdon and have led a session of the Lent course in our meeting house in April. We were open to provide refreshment for those taking part in the Ride and Stride Day

We alternate our business meetings with a Shared lunch where we have time to get to know one another on another level'

The meeting house is used by several groups including a theatre company for rehearsals, U3A groups and a space for Asylum seekers to meet and study English. ESOL. This provides help to our finances.

Faringdon meet with Burford and Charlbury meetings regularly to explore how we can support each other, discuss questions and concerns and also have fun.

In the Autumn we held a very successful book sale to raise funds for National Friendship Fund which is a very small charity giving small grants to destitute refugees. This was a good opportunity for outreach, and we were able to welcome a great many people to our meeting house.

In September our Quinquennial review of the Meeting house took place and we were pleased that there were no major costs incurred.

We are at present discussing and designing signage for the outside of the building to make ourselves more visible

Sadly, during the last 12 months our friend John Cottis passed away. we still miss his presence in our meeting

We also lost a valued friend Charles Wickam who died suddenly.

Thank you, Pat,

[Quakerleles \(Ukuleles group\)](#) performed at Area Meeting leading the meeting with several songs/hymns from the World Quaker Song Book.



Speaking Truth to Power

I'm Andrew Gray, a member of Harrogate Meeting writes, I have co-founded called Suffrago.org.

Inspired by Quaker values of truth, integrity, and community, Suffrago offers a quieter, more thoughtful way to engage with public life. At a time when noise and division dominate many social media platforms, Suffrago aims to inform, empower, and encourage respectful dialogue.

One feature allows Friends to easily find and contact their local MP, along with clear, reliable information about their record. You can view your local dashboard here:

<https://www.suffrago.org/uk/witney>

Westminster Meeting Police raid on the 27th of March 2025.



Thank you for the pictures, Sue

Tim Gee Quaker, known to some of us, is the General Secretary of Friends World Committee for Consultation, the international body connecting Quakers around the world. The World Office is in London.

He writes

Like generations of Quaker children, I grew up with stories of when our faith was persecuted. Under the Quaker Act of 1662, Quaker meetings were raided for no better reason than people gathering there, and the children kept the meetings when their parents were jailed.

According to a [panel of the Quaker Tapestry](#), one of London's meeting houses was pulled down altogether. But people still gathered to meet in its ruins.

In comparison to those days, Quakers in Britain today are not persecuted. Our forebears stood with others to promote causes of religious freedom and their logical extensions, freedom of speech and the right to protest. The cultural memory of our story informs solidarity with others.

All of this helps explain why the [recent police raid](#) on the Westminster Quaker Meeting House has shaken the U.K. Quaker community so strongly.

On March 27, more than 20 uniformed police, some equipped with tasers, forced their way into the Westminster Meeting House. They reportedly broke open the front door without warning and searched the whole building, arresting six women attending a welcome meeting for the nonviolent protest group Youth Demand in a room its organizers had rented.

The violent injustices we suffered in centuries past, look hauntingly similar to recent events. This time, the arrestees weren't Quakers, and it wasn't during worship. In some ways though, that is beside the point. What person taking the command "love your neighbour" seriously would only express solidarity with themselves?

Quakers hold all of life to be precious, all places to be holy, every meal a communion, every word a potential for prayer and every journey an opportunity for pilgrimage. Taking action for peace and justice can certainly be a form of ministry. To us, the right to protest is part of the freedom of religion.

As part of a commitment to simplicity, Quakers tend to meet in relatively plain, calm buildings. This has the added benefit that they serve as places of sanctuary, used by other groups. I am told on the day of the raid; an art class and psychotherapy session were also disrupted.

In Britain — and I imagine this is the case elsewhere too — Quaker meetings only rent out rooms to groups that are committed to nonviolence. It is a basic democratic principle that people should be able to meet to exchange ideas about how to challenge present day injustices.

There aren't a great many things a Quaker might describe as sacrilege. Carrying a weapon though, especially on Quaker premises, is one of them. Bashing in a door without ringing the bell to handcuff young people talking about addressing injustice is certainly another. The police will no doubt be challenged for this action, as [journalists](#) and [members of parliament](#) from across the spectrum have been doing. Whatever the outcome of that though, the authorities have overlooked one important historical fact. This kind of oppression doesn't work.

When early Quakers were persecuted, their numbers multiplied. In recent days, many more people than usual have been at Quaker meeting with many making meaningful solidarity visits. On April 3, 400 people gathered in silence outside the London police headquarters.

From <https://wagingnonviolence.org/2025/04/quaker-police-raid-arrest-london/>

Janie relates the contemporary persecution to the historical persecution of Faringdon Quakers,

She writes,

*The recent forced entry to Westminster Meeting House reminded me of the time it happened to local Quakers. The incident happened in 1686 and was recorded in John Boorne's, *Life of Oliver Samson*, which we have in our library (ref D/BOO). We have Oliver's own account of what happened. (I've modernised the spelling and dates) on pages 307-8.*

The meeting house had already been closed by Thomas Fettiplace JP. By his orders the doors had been shut up “and fastened in an extraordinary manner with locks and chains, and the window nailed up”

Oliver had been in prison for some years for refusing to swear to take an Oath of Allegiance. “But when our friends heard that I was likely to come home and have some liberty again, they got open the doors of our Meeting House a week or ten days before I came out of prison, which they did out of kindness to me, that this raging persecutor might not lay blame on me for opening them....” Nevertheless, on the 28th of February 1686, John Edmunson, “an envious man and informer came to our meeting house in Faringdon, where we assembled to the number of about thirty or forty sitting in silence waiting on the Lord. And when they had pulled and hauled till they had got us all out of the meeting house the said Judas Edmunson, plucking a key out of his pocket, locked the door and so shut us out of the Meeting House.

Oliver was arrested again but pardoned in April 1686 under the general pardon issued by James II. Possibly the meeting house could then be re-opened, but Vale Monthly Meeting was not held in Faringdon until a year had passed.

Janie Cottis

A Thought From Eckhart by Pdraig Pearse

That evening long shadows fell.

He found a quiet place between,

Warmed by the late sunlight.

Mown grass released its fragrance's to air,

Crows were hopping on the stubble,

Light fired a brick gable.

There was a river in the valley,

Swelling into a silver lake;

He could hear the hum of the city;

God's love under it all,

Simmering to overflow.

From Out of Silence Dedalus 1999. Chosen by Sue

What to say to enquirers about our faith - a good start!

Lifelong Quaker from Friends Journal Arthur Larrabee Philadelphia monthly meeting, says,

There is a living, dynamic, spiritual presence at work in the world which is both within us and outside of us.

Quakers use many names to describe this spiritual presence.

Among the names we use are God, spirit, the light, the inward light, the inner light, Christ, Truth, Love.

There is that of God in everyone.

This statement of belief is similar to the first statement, and Quakers will talk about there being that of God in everyone, and it is the belief that the Creator has endowed each person with a measure of the divine essence, and that as a consequence, all of life is sacred and interconnected.

Each person is capable of the direct and unmediated experience of God.

Our belief leads us into a form of worship that does not rely on clergy or liturgy or creed.

Rather, we come together in the silence. We sometimes refer to our worship as "waiting worship"

Waiting to hear- listen - for the still, small voice within, and listening for that of God - the still, small voice - speaking to us.

Our understanding and experience of God is nurtured and enlarged in the community.

When we come together in community, each of us brings our own manifestation of the divine energy. When we experience and embrace our diversity; we experience a much larger understanding and vision of God.

The Bible is an important spiritual resource, and the life and teachings of Jesus are relevant for us today.

For many of us the Bible is an inspired record of humankind's interaction with God through the ages. Quakers find that the truth and teachings found in the Bible are an inspiration for daily living and also an inspiration for our worship together.

The revelation of God's truth is continuing and ongoing. Quakers are very clear that the revelation of God's truth did not end with the writing of the Bible.

We believe that God has continued to reveal God's truth and make God's will and energy - truth known to humankind down through the ages to the present day.

Quakers welcome truth from whatever source it may come.

We find that our experience of worship and our experience of the Divine is enriched by welcoming truth from different sources.

Our inward experience of God transforms us and leads us into outward expressions of faithful living, witness and action.

Personally, and collectively, we witness to God's presence in our lives by the way we live our lives and model God's truth in the world.

One of the consequences of listening for the inward voice and being led into outward expressions of faithful living and witness and action are the Quaker testimonies.

Testimonies that are well known today are testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship.

Modelling God's presence in our lives is more important than espousing beliefs.

Quakers believe that the way we live our lives is of much more importance than what we say. There is an old Quaker expression, "let your life speak" and that's very much a part of Quakerism: the understanding that the way we model God's truth in our lives, is to let our lives speak it.



Tadpole Bridge from Sue

