

Clerks Update

A newsletter from Quaker Life

Issue 9: Spring 2024



Welcome to the spring issue!

Welcome to this spring edition of Clerks' Update, the communication channel for clerks of local and area Quaker communities. You can view an archive of past messages on our website at www.quaker.org.uk/clerks-update.

Information for Quaker clerks

Area Meeting nominations to Meeting for Sufferings

Last year a call was made for nominations to the next triennium of Meeting for Sufferings which begins after this year's Yearly Meeting. Area meetings are asked to nominate a representative and alternate (see *Quaker faith and practice* 7.05a and 7.07). Area meeting nominations need to be made ahead of Yearly Meeting in July when those nominated will be appointed. The first meeting of Meeting for Sufferings in the new triennium will be on 5 October.

Many area meetings have already sent us their nominations but if yours hasn't done that yet, please send them to us at, sufferings@quaker.org.uk in the next couple of months. This will allow your nominations to be included in papers ahead of Yearly Meeting.

Swarthmoor Hall reopening

Swarthmoor Hall is reopening on 29 March 2024 following an extended period of closure for restoration and renovation. Our dedicated heritage and conservation contractors have meticulously restored the old hall, breathing new life into this historic gem known as the cradle of Quakerism.

Spread across extensive grounds we have comfortable accommodation, well-equipped meeting rooms, beautiful gardens and a welcoming café. Our spacious meeting area is perfectly suited to group exercises, meetings and gatherings and the sweeping countryside views provide an ideal backdrop for contemplation and relaxation.

We have planned a series of events throughout the year including a week of celebrations to mark the 400th anniversary of the birth of George Fox. Keep up to date with news by checking our website www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk.

We look forward to welcoming visitors back to this special place. See [2024 Programme Guide](#).



Abbreviations: BYM – Britain Yearly Meeting; CCQW – Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales; LM – local meeting; AM – area meeting; YM – Yearly Meeting; QLCC – Quaker Life Central Committee; FWCC – Friends World Committee for Consultation

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Outreach

Quaker Week 2024

This year Quaker Week will be Sat 28 Sept to Sun 6 Oct, with the same theme as last year of 'Simple. Radical. Spiritual.' There will be some new materials, as well as those we offered last year. We're experimenting with having the same theme for two years running. We'll see if it's successful, but this campaign was very warmly welcomed by Friends, generally. We feel there's still more we can do to explore what those words capture about Quakerism and how they speak to newcomers. Materials will be available to order from July. Visit www.quaker.org.uk/outreach where details of Quaker Week 2024 will be updated.



We are also offering **new free resources for Quakers attending Pride events** this year, whether as individuals or with an organised presence as a meeting. You will be able to order these from the beginning of April, along with other resources such as badges, banners and t-shirts, that may be useful for any outreach you are involved in this year.

Outreach network sessions

Outreach network sessions run every month, covering a range of topics including welcoming newcomers, running and promoting events, attracting younger people. They are a chance to connect with other Friends who are interested in outreach to share ideas and inspiration. This month, we will be focusing on Pride events and how we can engage as part of or in support of LGBTQ+ communities.

You can register for [Monday, 18 March, 7.30pm](#).

This new blog explores [why being an LGBTQ+ ally matters](#) and why we're encouraging Friends to celebrate Pride this year.

Discovering Quakers

You can now sign your Quaker meeting up to [Discovering Quakers](#) to receive enquiries from people interested in Quakers. Discovering Quakers is an outreach initiative, independent of Britain Yearly Meeting, which runs digital advertising campaigns across the UK. Their new service connects local meetings with new enquirers. [Learn more and sign up!](#)

The Quaker Life Local Development Worker in Yorkshire, Craig Barnett, is piloting some work with Discovering Quakers over the coming months.

Website and social media support

Are you responsible for your meeting's website or social media accounts? Come along to our new drop in sessions offer a space to ask questions and share good practice.

Register for the session on [Wednesday, 20 March, 12.30pm](#).

Help Us Build a Better World

New leaflet coming soon

Look out for copies of a new leaflet, 'Help Us Build a Better World'. It will be dropping through your meeting's letterbox soon! It gives a brief overview about the work of Quakers in Britain, which is discerned by all of us through the Society of Friends. It explains how Friends and Attenders in your meeting can support this work. If you need more copies, please email contributions@quaker.org.uk.

World Plenary – Will You Create a Hub?

The 2024 Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) World Plenary will be the first hybrid global gathering of Quakers ever and FWCC wants to bring the experience to as many Friends as possible.

Friends are creating hubs at their meeting houses and churches so they can gather and share in the experience of this global Quaker gathering that was formerly only available to representatives who could travel in-person.

FWCC is hoping many Quaker meetings create hubs so more Friends may witness the first hybrid world gathering of Friends.

For more information, please see the frequently asked questions, <https://fwcc.world/wpm>

Quaker World Relations Committee

Quaker World Relations Committee is planning some preparation sessions for British Friends participating in the World Plenary. If your meeting is planning to be a Hub, please also contact Michael Booth, Secretary of Quaker World Relations Committee qwrc@quaker.org.uk so that Friends in your Quaker community can join these preparation activities.

Youth, Children and Families

Junior Yearly Meeting Nominations reminder

JYM 2024 is a residential event for 15–18-year-olds that is happening as part of Summer Yearly Meeting in central London. Each area meeting can nominate up to three young people for a guaranteed place; the deadline for nominations is **Sunday, 24 March**.

For more information about JYM and to access the nomination form, go to www.quaker.org.uk/events/junior-yearly-meeting-2024



Events

Yearly Meeting 2024

Bookings for Yearly Meeting, including programmes for Children & Young People, open on Monday, 11 March. Calling letters have been sent to all clerks in the week beginning 4 March.

Summer Yearly Meeting will be held over a long weekend, from Friday, 26 to Tuesday, 30 July 2024. Preparation sessions and Special Interest Meetings will be held online from Friday, 5 to Wednesday, 10 July 2024.

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC), saw the long weekend as an opportunity to experiment. This will include a celebration evening on Sunday, for the 400th Anniversary of George Fox's birth. As well as sharing discernment as an all-age community in what we are calling Exploration sessions. These are facilitated activities offering ways to engage creatively with the themes of Yearly Meeting, in all-age and age-specific groups. Exploration sessions are as much a part of Yearly Meeting's discernment as the more traditional minuted sessions. This shared discernment will be an adventure, and we ask Friends to join these experiments with open hearts and minds.

This year, we will ask Friends to consider Integrity and Truth and we will discern the formal role of the Yearly Meeting in steering the Society of Friends and how this is best kept continuous and relevant.



Accommodation is not provided, if Friends plan to attend Yearly Meeting in person they will need to arrange their own accommodation. Friends shouldn't be put off coming to Yearly Meeting because they can't afford it. If anyone needs help with costs for Yearly Meeting, please speak to Friends in your local or area meeting or your worshipping community as they can often help. If they can't, Friends can ask for help from the [Yearly Meeting bursary fund](#).



Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs 2024 Conference

The Power of Truth – Breaking through stigma, letting in the Light

Launde Abbey, East Norton, LE7 9XB, 4pm Friday, 5 to 1pm Sunday, 7 July

Dependent behaviours imprison people with their pain and despair through stigma, guilt and shame. Whether alcohol, other drugs or gambling, the effect on individuals and those close to them is the same. To the outside world, many people privately affected in this way can appear strong, productive, resilient. Behind closed doors, the prospect of breaking through the silence, even with friends and family, can feel insurmountable.

The conference's theme is *the power of talking openly about experiences*, whether this is our own or those of someone close. If we can find the courage to speak honestly, we can help to overcome stigma and thereby help others to do the same. It is also about the essential need to listen and respond without prejudice or judgement. To meet the darkness with the Light. In particular, we will consider how, as Friends, we can respond with compassion – when and wherever we encounter these problems, including within our Meetings.

QAAD conferences provide a safe, confidential space to share insights, inspiration and concerns. The cost of attendance is £270.00 which includes full board and single occupancy accommodation. Bookings will need to be confirmed by Friday, 31 May.

For further information, please contact QAAD Director, Alison Mather: alison@qaad.org 07867 557727. Full details will also be posted on the QAAD website: www.qaad.org

Training and learning

Woodbrooke

Being a Quaker Clerk

2 April to 7 May 2024, online

Are you a new, prospective or less experienced Quaker Clerk? Join this online course to explore the different aspects and expectations of a clerk's role before, during and after Meeting for Worship for Business.

Book your place: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/being-a-quaker-clerk



Grants

Adult Education Grants

These are aimed at members and attenders gaining further, higher or vocational education to equip themselves to serve society and/or Quakers in Britain. Applications are open all year and will be considered at Grants Group's June, September and November meetings. The deadlines for applications are:

- 26 April for the June meeting (for courses beginning in or after September)
- 26 August for the September meeting (for courses beginning in or after December)
- 11 October for the November meeting (for courses beginning in or after February)

For more information and an application form please go to: www.quaker.org.uk/adult-education-grants

Hope Grants

These are small grants to improve the quality of life of Quaker members and attenders who are unemployed or unable to make a living wage. Friends in financial need can apply for a grant of up to £750 towards items or activities that will improve their quality of life.

More information and the application form are available from our website: www.quaker.org.uk/hopegrants