

A review of the activities of Britain Yearly Meeting  
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in 2018



# OUR FAITH OUR WORK





This review is organised around the six themes set out in *Our faith in the future*, a word picture of how Quakers in Britain today would like us to be in the future.

You can read *Our faith in the future* and find out more about it at [www.quaker.org.uk/future](http://www.quaker.org.uk/future).

# In Friendship, welcome



Dear reader

As a Quaker I know that in the stillness of a Friends' meeting we can experience the divine at first hand. We can hear the promptings of love and truth in our hearts and recognise them as the leadings of God. Our Quaker work arises from our Quaker faith.

So what's the work Quakers are led to right now? The world we live in urgently calls for our help, to prevent climate breakdown, to challenge injustice at home and abroad, and to build peace. We are guided to work for nonviolent social change in East Africa, to resist the militarisation of schools, to bear witness to human rights in the Middle East, to challenge our governments' policies on carbon reduction and to turn our country into a place of sanctuary for migrants and asylum seekers. We may be quiet, but our voice is loud.

At the heart of all of this is our strong and thriving Quaker community. We're challenging ourselves to examine our own diversity and work on being welcoming and inclusive, on being both easy to find and worth the finding. We make sure the world knows we're still here and that spiritual seekers know where to look for

us. We give our Quaker meetings the support they need to include people of all ages in our worshipping community. We're helping Quaker meetings to connect, learn from each other and strengthen themselves.

Britain Yearly Meeting, our national Quaker organisation, exists to support Quakers with all of this work. We can't cover everything we do in this brief review, but we hope all Quakers know and value the work that is done in their name. Where we succeed, it's because Quakers guide us, work with us, and offer service, time and financial support.

Thank you.

In Friendship,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Parker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Parker  
Recording Clerk

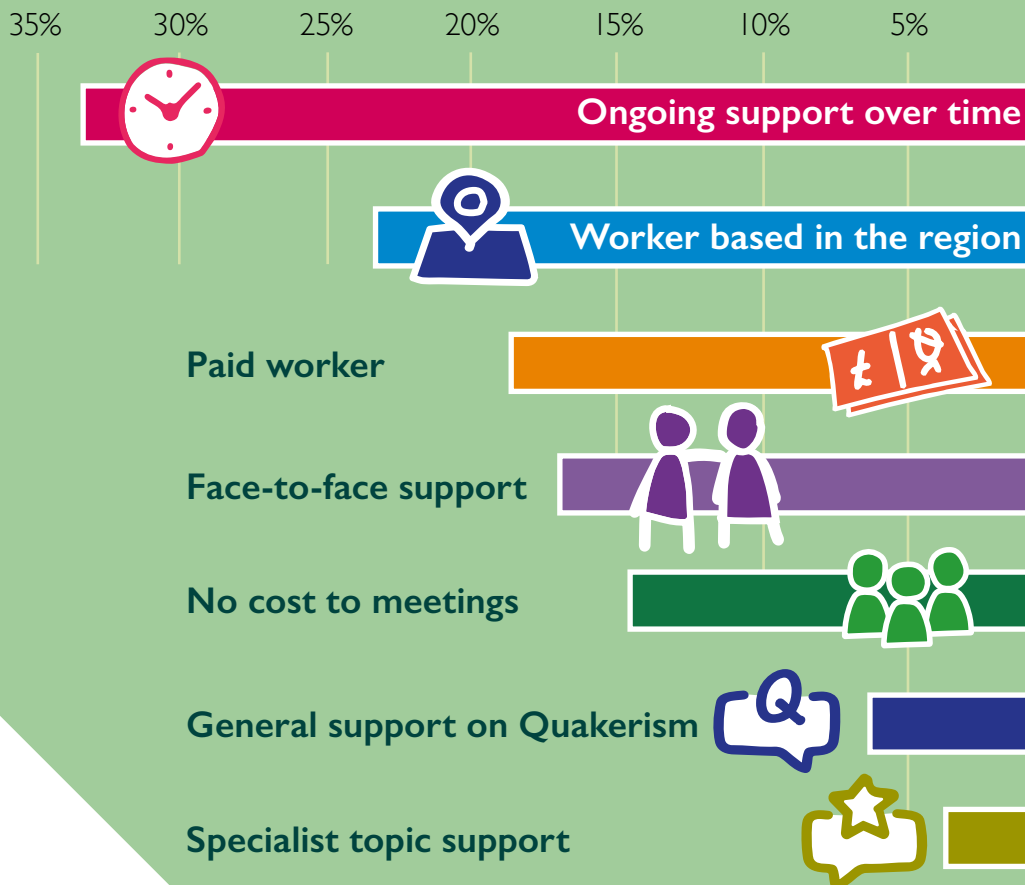


# Meeting for worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker

*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.*

## What's important about Vibrancy?

Vibrancy in Meetings is a three-year pilot programme that aims to help Quaker meetings thrive. Friends were asked to rank key aspects of the programme. The chart shows what proportion of the 106 respondents placed each aspect first.\*



## Vibrancy in Meetings report

*An independent assessment was conducted to better understand the impact and progress of the Vibrancy in Meetings programme.*

*Friends with whom the programme has worked were surveyed, and responses from the 141 respondents found that Friends valued the workers' ability to listen, understand the issues they were facing and provide high-quality support.*

\*Source: NCVO report



Get the report at [www.woodbrooke.org.uk/vibrancy](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/vibrancy)

### Good vibrations

Run by Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) in partnership with Woodbrooke, the Vibrancy in Meetings pilot programme consists of four development workers located in four regions across Britain, plus a national coordinator.

*My aim was for the podcast to be something anyone could do. We'd like to bring some of that peace we find in meeting to others at home.*

Jessica  
Hubbard-Bailey,  
Nottingham  
Young Quakers



We want meetings to become more connected, confident, engaged, and resilient.

THE  
YOUNG  
QUAKER

For Young Friends Everywhere



Listen to all episodes of the *Young Quaker Podcast*, including the 'Silence special', at <http://youngquakerpodcast.libsyn.com>

We began by identifying the needs of Quaker meetings. The development workers visited local meetings and spoke informally to Friends, building trust and confidence. They helped meetings think about many issues, including how they meet their spiritual, practical and pastoral needs, property and employment, and inclusion.

In 2018 – the second year of the programme – we took stock. We looked at what has worked, the challenges, and possible next steps when the pilot ends.

We see meetings becoming more connected, confident, engaged, and resilient. This will contribute to a vibrant yearly meeting and help improve the support we offer to meetings. BYM and Woodbrooke trustees will consider final recommendations for the development of the programme in summer 2019.

### The sound of silence

Quaker worship made the national headlines in 2018. February's episode of the *Young Quaker Podcast*, which captured the near-silence of a meeting for worship, caught the attention of BBC Local Radio before being picked up by *The Guardian* and *Metro*. It even found its way onto *Have I Got News For You!*

The 'Silence special', recorded by Nottingham Young Quakers at the city's meeting house, led to widespread discussion on the merits of silence and contemplation in a busy world. It's thought to be the first time a Quaker meeting for worship has been recorded and broadcast in its entirety.

By the end of the year the episode had been downloaded 3,104 times and listened to over 3,500 times.

## Talking heads

Mental health in our meetings has long been of concern to Quakers of all ages. BYM is working to help Quaker meetings better understand and support individuals who are encountering mental distress. As Quakers, we recognise the importance of open, non-judgemental conversations, so encouraging dialogue is a key part of our work on mental health.



Around 1 in 4 people in the UK experience a mental health problem each year.

In June we began offering an accessible workshop called 'Opening the door to talking about mental health'. Participants learn about mental health in a Quaker context. We delivered eight workshops in 2018. Around 140 Quakers participated and it has even been delivered in New York and Australia yearly meetings.

Meetings can request a workshop at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/opening-the-door>.

We sent out 2,000 copies of *Mental*

*health in our meetings*, a leaflet which offers detailed advice and guidance to meetings.

We took the opportunity to work closer with the Retreat York Benevolent Fund by becoming the employer of a Mental Health Development Worker. This three-year post is helping to develop assistance for area meetings wishing to engage with concern around mental health in society. The Retreat York Benevolent Fund also offers Quakers funds for mental health care.

## Simply does it

We recognise that Quakers today have less time for the administration of their meetings and communities. So in mid-2018 we launched the Simpler Meetings Project, a three-year pilot that aims to free up the time and energy of clerks, trustees and treasurers. It will reduce the administrative burden on these key role-holders by providing them with more straightforward guidance and templates.

The project is also reviewing how we communicate with meetings and will offer some individual support to meetings going through significant organisational changes. The project has already discussed ideas among area meeting clerks, explored how area meetings are experimenting with the way they do business, and simplified safeguarding documents and webpages.



Download the leaflet from [www.quaker.org.uk/blog/mental-health-in-meetings/](http://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/mental-health-in-meetings/) or order a hard copy from [quakercentre@quaker.org.uk](mailto:quakercentre@quaker.org.uk)

*My role has become easier because the workload has reduced. That works out as being more enjoyable. The job was getting in the way of family life, so it's also eased situations at home for me.*

**A Quaker role-holder on Vibrancy in Meetings**

# 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.*

In 1660 Margaret Fell rode 360 miles on horseback from Swarthmoor Hall to London. She carried a declaration to appeal to King Charles II to end the persecution and suffering of Quakers.

She declared:  
*We do ... inform the governors of this nation, high and low, that we are a people that desire the good of all people, and their peace.*

Nearly 360 years later, a group of Quakers swapped reins for handlebars to repeat the ride on wheels and deliver a new declaration inspired by these words.

360m

## Quakers ride for equality and the common good



**13** days from Ulverston to London



**20** cyclists rode each day (on average)



**23** local meetings visited



### In the saddle

In the summer a group of Quakers cycled from Cumbria to London to present a statement of support for the welfare state to the government.

The ride was inspired by a faith-led concern of Friends from Kendal & Sedbergh Area Meeting. They are deeply troubled by the suffering caused by welfare cuts and rising inequality in the UK.

After covering an impressive 360 miles in just 13 days, the riders arrived at Downing Street on 3 August. There they delivered their *Declaration for equality and the common good*, which calls on the government to end the dismantling of the welfare state and ensure a safety net for all. It argues that we can, and should, afford to care for disadvantaged groups in society. The riders also delivered accounts from people affected by cuts to benefits or public services, which they had collected en route.

The riders were upheld in their witness by the loving support and hospitality of Quaker communities. Friends and meetings along the route accommodated them, and many more read out their declaration at meeting for worship.

### Voices of youth

Children and young people are a valued part of Quaker communities. We foster their engagement and spiritual development at local meetings and through regional and national events.

We're working to improve engagement with Quakers aged 11 to 18 and find new ways of involving them in the life of their meetings. So in June we launched a three-year pilot project to explore how Quaker meetings could benefit from the support of a dedicated youth development worker based in their region.

We placed two workers, in Bristol and Sheffield. They are providing support and inspiration as well as seeking out and

*70 years ago we chose to afford our welfare system. We believe we can choose to afford it now, and we must. We should not stand by and watch our most valuable social asset being dismantled. We have a moral responsibility to uphold it.*

Sally Ingham,  
rider for equality



Young Quakers taking part in the Young People's Programme at Yearly Meeting 2018.

developing new opportunities. We're particularly keen to involve young people in decision-making, and the workers will listen carefully to the needs of the community.



*We have thoroughly enjoyed our time so far as trustees, and have felt continually upheld by other trustees, BYM staff and the wider Society. We hope that while the yearly meeting is reflecting more broadly on its diversity, it will increasingly recognise the gifts of under-represented groups and develop creative ways to facilitate spaces where everyone feels they can offer service.*

Ellie Harding and  
Georgina Bailey,  
BYM Trustees



We are keen to hear additional insights or ideas from young adult Quakers. If you have thoughts to share, send an email to [youngadults@quaker.org.uk](mailto:youngadults@quaker.org.uk)

The workers are already making a difference. Sheffield Meeting is now running a successful and well attended youth action group. In December it held a Winter Social to celebrate the work so far. Many young non-Quakers went along, and several were keen to take part in future Quaker events.

### Young at heart

Responding to a 2016 survey, young adult Quakers in Britain challenged us to be a more inclusive and age-diverse church. So in 2017 we launched the Engaging Young Adult Quakers Project, a three-year initiative aiming to ensure we are truly open and welcoming to 18- to 35-year-olds.

A key part of the project has been to make our governance structures more inclusive, and in 2018 we appointed two young adult Quakers as BYM Trustees. Both are in their 20s and began their service in January 2019.

In another first, Meeting for Sufferings – our national representative body – created four new places for young adults, enabling them to participate equally in its decision-making. This will in turn help to increase the number of young adults nominated to the body in the future.



The Diversity & Inclusion Project will help us build a more inclusive community.

### Getting to know you

Since 2017, when our Quaker community heard a call to examine its diversity, BYM has been looking at how to develop in more inclusive ways. In June we launched our Diversity & Inclusion Project to begin work on this.

The first step to building a more inclusive community is knowing where we stand. So in late 2018 we put out a short, anonymous survey that will map our current diversity. This is the first time all Quakers, both members and attenders, have been asked to provide this kind of information.

Friends were quick to engage with the survey, and a meaningful picture is beginning to emerge. The responses are helping us to identify the ways in which we are already diverse and where our strengths and weaknesses lie in terms of inclusion.

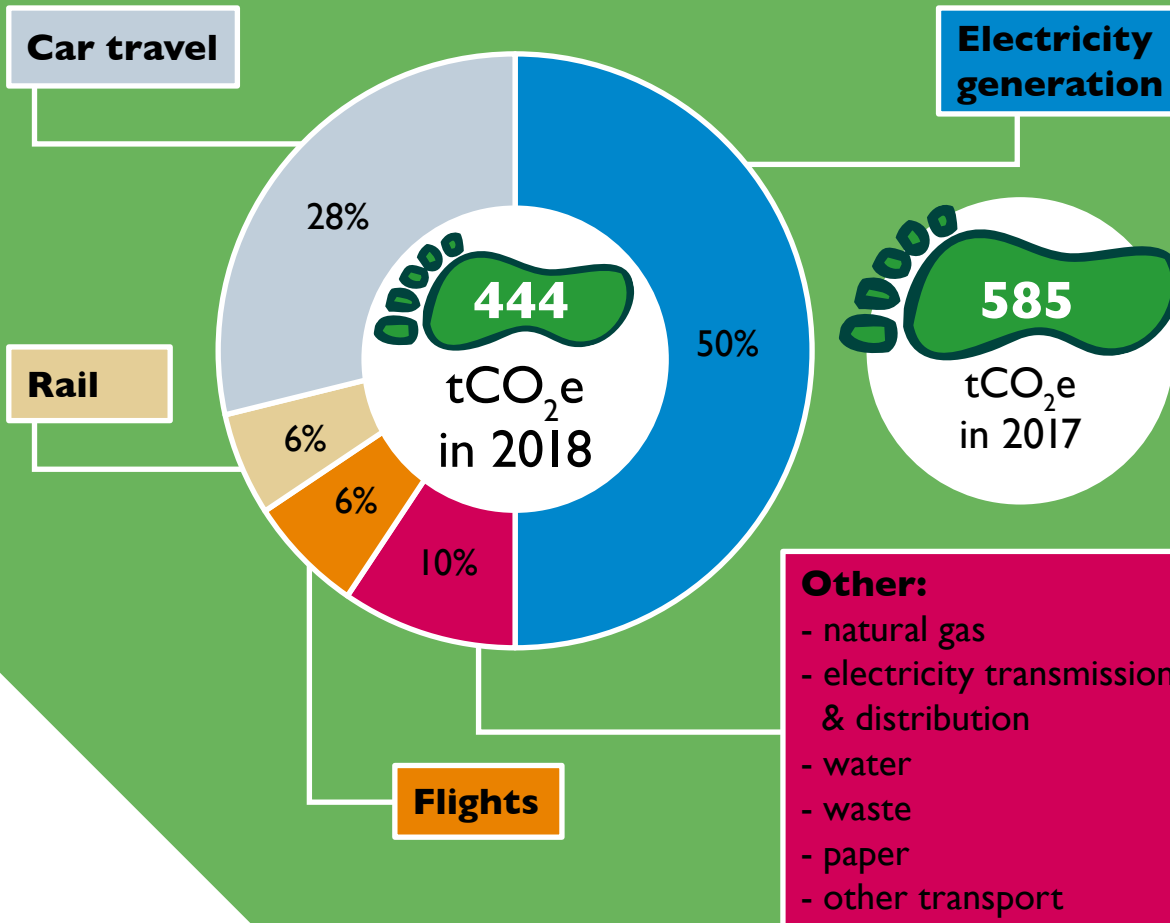
In the future we can use the survey to check on our progress. It will help Quakers as a community to define themselves – only by knowing who we are can we plot our journey to where we want to be.

# 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.

## Quakers are committed to becoming part of a low-carbon community.

There are many actions we can take to be more sustainable in the work that we do. In 2018, working with Friends House Hospitality, our carbon footprint was reduced by 24% across Friends House and Swarthmoor Hall.



## A sustainable house

Carbon footprints are measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e). This is calculated by combining the six key greenhouse gases and multiplying them against their 100 year global warming potential.

In 2018 the combined carbon footprint for Friends House and Swarthmoor Hall fell by 24% to 444 tCO<sub>2</sub>e from 585 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2017.\*

The reduction helped earn Friends House Hospitality gold certification for the third consecutive year. Switching Friends House's heating to be entirely fuelled by biogas was a major factor in this, reducing heating emissions by 91% from 2017.

\*Source: Carbon Smart report 2018

*Non-Quaker partners value our presence because our spiritual basis is not imposed, but adds moral weight to pragmatism, and works on people's innate possibility for change. Our practice of equality makes us good negotiators as we do not defer to those in power or talk down to those left out.*

**Lesley Grahame,  
Norwich Meeting**

## Climate control

Climate change is perhaps the biggest threat to all life on our planet. We need to act now to avoid catastrophic consequences. Quakers are not alone in believing this. In 2018 we worked with a host of other organisations to press for urgent action, calling on the UK government to show more ambition and leadership.

In July Paul Parker, BYM's Recording Clerk, represented Quakers at a Vatican conference for faith and community leaders, diplomats, activists, and experts. It was a chance to discuss the need for a coordinated faith voice on climate change. Our shared concerns prompted Claire Perry, Minister for Energy and Clean Growth, to ask BYM to convene a small group of

faith leaders to meet her in September. We brought together members of the Anglican, Catholic, Jewish and Methodist faiths. We heard that the government aims to meet the UN's target of net-zero emissions by 2050, and made the case for urgent, concrete political action. In November we joined fellow members of the Climate Coalition to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Climate Change Act. We renewed our call for the government to set more ambitious emissions reduction targets.

BYM staff also supported Quakers around the country in their local collaborative work, which included lobbying politicians, campaigning for fossil fuel divestment, and direct climate action. As part of the No Faith in Fracking campaign, Quakers in Lancashire took part in interfaith vigils outside Cuadrilla's Preston New Road site. They also joined other activists in a week of direct action, for which BYM helped with planning, communications and media coverage. Quakers in Birmingham and in Merseyside are also working with local faith groups on low-carbon initiatives.

In November Meeting for Sufferings – our national representative body – reaffirmed its 2011 commitment to become a low-carbon community. This will continue to be a key part of BYM work.



Interfaith activists at Cuadrilla's Preston New Road fracking site.



## Peace be upon youth

The centenary of the end of World War I was a moving occasion, not least because every year since the armistice has seen war rage somewhere. While the government is spending millions to promote a 'military ethos' in our schools, Quakers believe in teaching peace. In our peace education work we encourage children to examine the root causes of violence and to build peace in their schools and communities.

In 2018 we continued our work with Corrymeela, Coventry Cathedral, Education Scotland, Oasis Trust, and Wales for Peace on the Inspire project. Inspire helps young people develop in a spirit of peace and social justice. Together we're promoting peer mediation and sanctuary schools and helping young people address questions of conscience.

On 9 November Inspire 'Remembrance for Peace' events were held across the UK – in school assemblies, churches and mosques. As an organising partner, we hosted close to 1,000 local schoolchildren for a mix of music, drama and reflection at Friends House in London. The children built a peace tree and listened to stories of peacemaking from around the world, shared how they build peace in their playgrounds and classrooms, and considered



Children enjoying the 'Remembrance for Peace' event at Friends House.

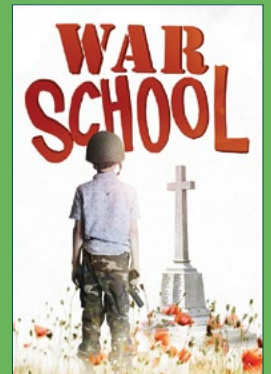
what it means to stand up for peace – both today and a century ago.

## Film school

We also helped produce a documentary film that exposes and challenges militarisation in our civic life. *War school* unpacks the government's strategy of targeting the education system and promoting public support for war. We provided the filmmakers with information and contacts from our anti-militarism coalition. A grant we secured from the Network for Social Change ensured the film could be finished and enabled us to create related learning resources. The film, which was launched at Friends House in October, features the work of Quakers in Britain and our long-time partners ForcesWatch and Veterans for Peace.

*I learned about white feathers. They were given to you if you didn't go to war. But you have to believe in your conscience. This means you have to do the right thing, and you have to choose what the right thing is.*

Year 3 pupil,  
Argyle Primary  
School, London



For information about screenings nationwide and to watch the film's trailer, visit [www.war.school](http://www.war.school)

# 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.

## Thoughts and words

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

The first book was published 80 years later. Since then it has continued to be revised for new generations.

The most recent revision is currently on its fifth edition.



Get the book at <http://bookshop.quaker.org.uk> or read online at [www.quaker.org.uk/qfp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/qfp)

## Generations of discipline: a timeline of Quaker faith & practice

1656

First statement of discipline

1738

First written version, as a manuscript

1833

FIRST PRINTED VERSION AS RULES OF DISCIPLINE

1959

Christian faith and practice published

1994

Quaker faith & practice published

2019

Latest revision started



Quakers of all ages attend Yearly Meeting.

### Friends well met

Yearly Meeting is the annual gathering of Quakers in Britain. We come together to worship, make decisions and spend time as a community. In 2018 we welcomed over 1,100 people to Friends House in London, including 160 Quakers aged under 18 and 40 Friends and visitors from around the world.

The annual Swarthmore Lecture was given by Quaker artist and activist Chris Alton. He shared how he seeks to challenge people and effect change through his art, and how art can be a powerful act of witness.

The stand-out decision from 2018 was the call to revise our central text, *Quaker faith & practice*.

### Long revision

Since 1738 our 'book of discipline' has been the written expression of the breadth of Quaker theology through the experience of Friends, both individually and corporately. In its current form, *Quaker faith & practice* also describes the central structures of BYM and includes *Advices & queries*, an inspiring and challenging collection of insights for Quakers to consider in their daily lives.

The decision at Yearly Meeting 2018 to revise the text provides a chance to

*We want a book that can speak and be accessible to all present and future Quakers. But it should also build on the work and spiritual insight of previous generations.*

Michael Booth, Church Government Adviser for BYM



Over 1,100 people came to Friends House for Yearly Meeting 2018.

rearticulate who Quakers are as a faith community today. It is an opportunity to incorporate the insights of younger and more diverse people, and to show that Quakerism is a faith fit for the 21st century. Following the decision, over 300 Quakers offered to serve on the committee that



Send us your ideas for the revision at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qfp-idea>





Get the *Changing face of faith in Britain* report at [www.quaker.org.uk/QCCIR](http://www.quaker.org.uk/QCCIR)

will take the revision forward. And we received just as many suggestions for topics, passages and ideas for the next book.

A revision committee consisting of 24 people has now been appointed by Meeting for Sufferings – our national



Minutes recorded at Meeting for Sufferings in 1738 on display in the Library at Friends House.

*We have been both inspired and challenged by our religious diversity. Viewed from a distance, our Quaker community may seem like a single body. Up close, it sparkles in its infinite variety.*

Yearly Meeting  
Epistle 2018

representative body. The committee reflects the diversity of Quakers in Britain. It draws on Friends from a range of occupations, abilities, identities and ages – two are under 18.

The revision committee begins its work in early 2019. It will be consulting with Friends and Quaker groups from across Britain, so be ready to have your say!

## Spirit of the age

The Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) helps us work with other faiths and human values groups. The committee considers questions such as how Quakers can best work in a shifting religious landscape. In 2018, to help with this, QCCIR used BYM legacy funding to commission a report from the Centre for Research in Quaker Studies at Woodbrooke. It provides fascinating insights into our interfaith work, the ways in which Britain is changing, and the spirituality of new Quakers.

## Body language

Quaker recognised bodies (QRBs) are groups that demonstrate some of the many interests and concerns Quakers pursue as part of their wider faith commitment.

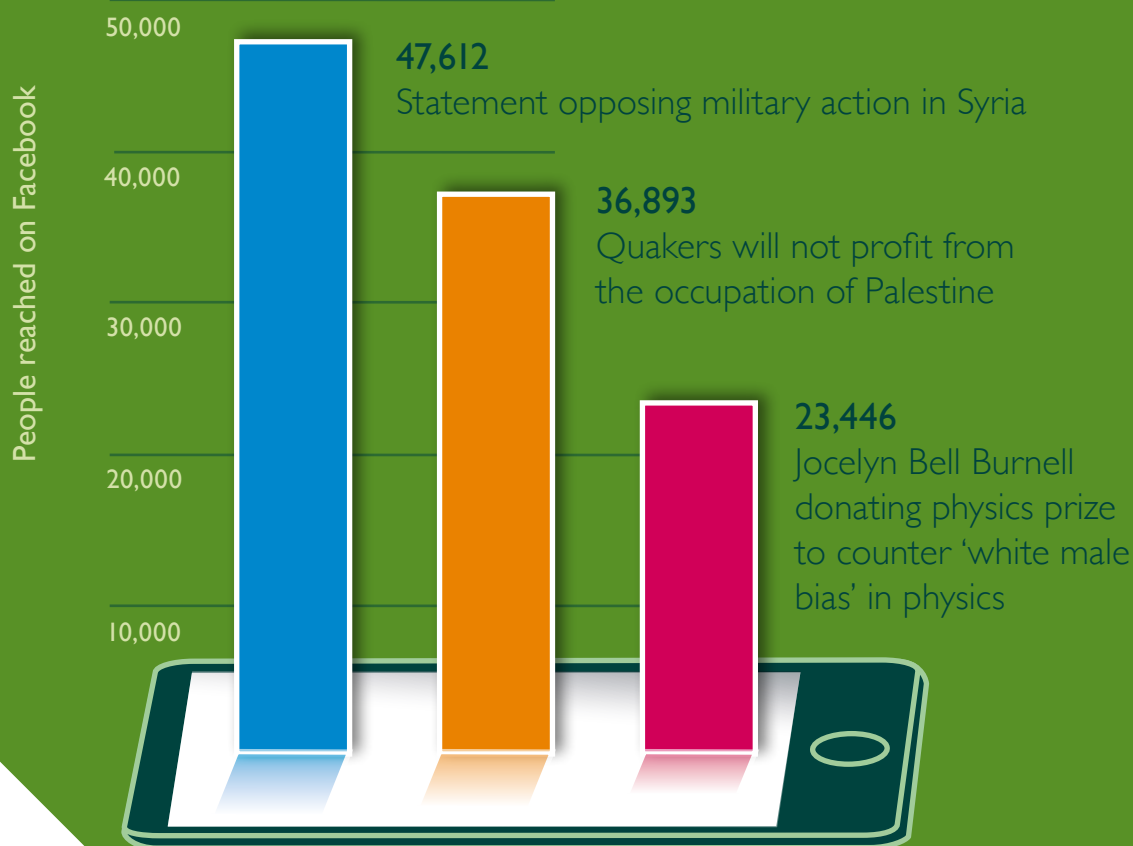
They were known as 'listed informal groups' until 2016, when we adopted the new QRB structure. This includes independent groups as well as those linked to parts of the BYM structure. The new approach has clarified the benefits and responsibilities for each body, and for BYM. Since 2016 these groups, and new ones, have been registering as QRBs. There were 34 QRBs registered at the start of 2018 and by the end of the year 55.

# 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 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.

## Social statements

The Quaker community continues to grow online, with more followers and readers than ever. Our top social media post was seen by almost 50,000 people and garnered thousands of reactions and interactions on Facebook.



## Reading up

Our social media following was up across all websites:

- Facebook 12%
- Twitter 19%
- Instagram 87%

We also received 69% more blog views in 2018, with:

- 62,221 total times our blogs were read
- 864 readers on average per blog
- 2,402 average readership of our top 5 blogs.



Follow us on social media  
@BritishQuakers



Listen to the faith stories of four Quakers and watch their short videos at [www.quaker.org.uk/journeys](http://www.quaker.org.uk/journeys).

*There is room for more at the table, and we value everyone who might sit at it. Our gathering around that table enriches us all.*

Jon Martin,  
Ministry &  
Outreach Officer  
for BYM

### Moving journeys

To help share the Quaker message with a wider and more diverse audience, we launched eight new animated videos in 2018. Four 30-second videos are aimed at those new to Quakerism, while four animated 'Quaker journeys' tell the stories of four Quakers and what their faith means to them. These are accompanied by four new leaflets on Quaker community, worship, faith and living, based on their stories.

### A welcome week

Quaker Week, which takes place every autumn, is a chance for meetings across Britain to open their doors and share their faith. The theme for 2018 was 'room for more'. Our visual concept of a shared meal and an open table encouraged Friends and meetings to think of outreach as hospitality. The theme was also inspired by



the welcome being offered by Sanctuary Meetings to migrants and refugees (see page 19). Many of these meetings have been sharing meals across cultures and traditions.

We produced a resource pack for meetings that suggested ways of using food and hospitality to offer welcome and encouragement to those wanting to find out more about Quakerism. Dozens of meetings held outreach events, and 21 hosted talks by BYM staff on Quaker faith and action. Quaker Week attracted plenty of media coverage: Joanna Eden, a jazz musician and Quaker, spoke on BBC Radio 2's *Good morning Sunday*, and Friends gave daily *Thoughts for the day* on BBC Radio Devon.

### Scots guarded

Quakers are concerned by the increasing militarisation of society and our education system. In 2016 Quakers in Scotland and ForcesWatch petitioned the Scottish government to ensure that armed forces visits to secondary schools in Scotland are subject to greater scrutiny, guidance and consultation.

In June the Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee published a report into their petition, which was responded to by the Cabinet



Secretary for Education, John Swinney. We asked the committee for further details to flesh out the government's response, and they have agreed to contact the government about this.

The report made a number of recommendations, including conducting a child rights and wellbeing assessment on whether the content of visits is appropriate and balanced, and that data about the visits be made publicly available by the Ministry of Defence.

With no clear guidance around these visits there is a danger that the education system can be used to market an armed forces career without fully informing young people of the risks involved. We're pleased that after more than three years of campaigning, military visits to Scottish schools are coming under greater scrutiny.

### Finders seekers

Festivals offer us the chance to create a vibrant, visible Quaker presence among a community of spiritual seekers, activists and artists. Greenbelt – an annual festival of faith, justice and the arts – is the perfect fit. Over the August bank holiday weekend staff and volunteers worked with Quakers to host the 'ResisTent'. Our programme covered topics like spirituality, Quaker identity and activism, and included

talks, children's activities, debates, worship, stand-up comedy, and even a silent disco!



The ResisTent at Greenbelt 2018.

People of all ages visited our tent, took part in activities and attended worship. A number of visitors had engaged with Quakers at Greenbelt in the past, and over 80 per cent of visitors were non-Quakers, some of whom have since been to local meetings to explore Quaker worship.

### Take five

We relaunched our podcast in 2018 as *A Quaker take*, producing five new episodes that covered topics ranging from parenting to peace education. Check it out at [www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/podcast](http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/podcast).

*Over 2,300 people passed through the 'ResisTent' over the weekend. From babes in arms to octogenarians, the Quaker programme had something for everyone: art, comedy, debates, worship, a death café, Turning the Tide sessions, and – the highlight for many – a silent disco!*

Mel Cook,  
Children's Work  
Officer for BYM

*I loved visiting the ResisTent and meeting Quakers there. The evening worship was so moving. I'm going to find my nearest Quaker group when I get home and take it further!*

Annie, visitor to  
the ResisTent

# 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'.*

## Turning the Tide in East Africa: 2018 at a glance

### Tidal swells

*In October the Turning the Tide team in East Africa hosted the first ever East Africa Turning the Tide Gathering, bringing together peacebuilders from Rwanda, Kenya and Burundi.*

10



Full-time staff

62



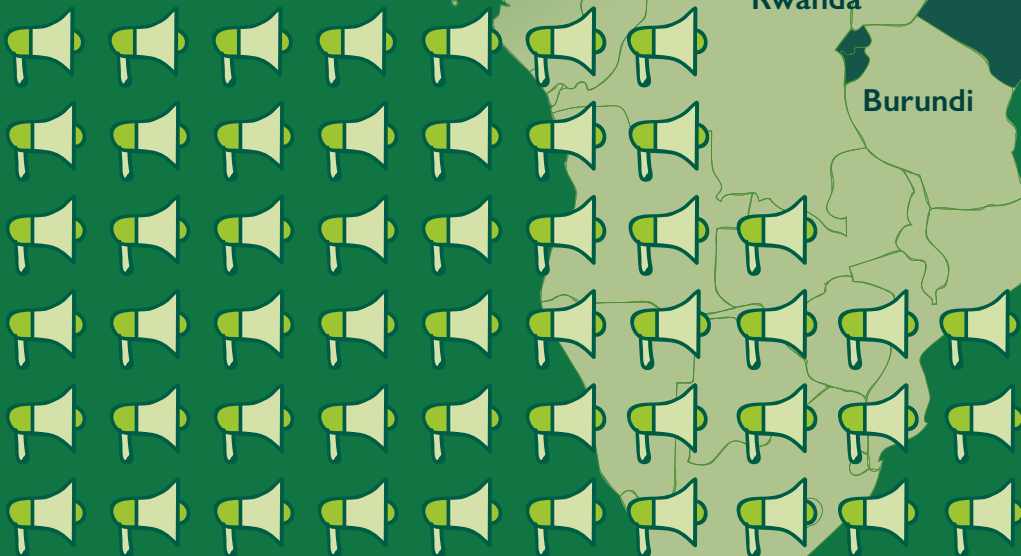
Volunteers

1,015



People trained in nonviolent campaigning

52 Nonviolent social justice campaigns supported



Kenya

Rwanda

Burundi

## Power to the people

We work with local partners to build a nonviolent grassroots peace movement in East Africa. The Turning the Tide (TTT) programme trains and supports peace activists in Kenya, Burundi and Rwanda as they spread the tools of active nonviolence to those who want to challenge injustice.

In 2018 the programme in Burundi helped achieve remarkable success when it backed a campaign to restore power to a community that had relied on generators since 1945. The campaign brought electricity to an entire village, including a health centre, five schools and several businesses.



The East Africa TTT team at the 2018 gathering.

It began when TTT activists trained four people – including a nurse and a police officer – from the Kwibuka area in central Burundi. They decided to use their training to challenge the injustice of living without mains electricity and formed a campaign group. First, TTT helped them identify

local allies. They met with key members of the community, who all pledged their support.

The campaigners then identified the government agency responsible for providing power. They learnt more about the situation from government workers, who put them in touch with the leader of the agency in Kwibuka – a powerful man with political influence. Rather than launch a public protest against him, the campaigners chose to invite the man to their village to try to win his support, and he accepted. They walked him around their schools and clinic, showing him the effects of a limited power supply on the community.

Their tactics paid off: the agency leader gave his support to the campaign. Local services helped buy the cables needed to supply the power, and within weeks the community had been reconnected.

## Not-for-profit

In November we became the first UK church to announce it would not invest any of its centrally held funds in companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine.

The decision – taken by our trustees and guided by our national representative body – stems from our long history of

*This was a very successful campaign. Kwibuka is an area known for its lack of electricity, but TTT's methods of nonviolence helped to change this. The training opened people's minds and took away their fear of tackling such a big issue.*

Aloys Ningabira,  
National  
Coordinator for  
TTT Burundi

*We know this decision will be hard for some to hear. We hope they will understand that our beliefs compel us to speak out about injustices wherever we see them in the world, and not to shy away from difficult conversations.*

Paul Parker,  
Recording Clerk





Protest banner at a detention centre.

working for a just peace in the region and of pursuing ethical investments.

We hope the decision highlights the injustice of the occupation and encourages others to think about their own investments.

### New email update

In 2018 we combined three email updates into one monthly e-newsletter: *Quaker faith in action*. For the latest news on Quaker work for peace, justice and sustainability, sign up at [www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-faith-in-action](http://www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-faith-in-action).

### Baking it better

In September the Friends House Hospitality Company began working with the London Pathways Partnership on the Bake the Difference programme. The programme provides training and support to people with a diagnosis of personality disorder and a history of offending or antisocial behaviour, helping them back into work.

Participants are learning the essentials of cooking and baking for a full academic year. They will then gain a hospitality apprenticeship certificate, which will help them find stable employment. The fruits of their labour are regularly sold at Friends House and are a big hit with customers!

### Sanctuary and solidarity

Quakers' belief in the value of every person leads us to welcome those seeking sanctuary. Our Sanctuary Everywhere programme works with Quakers across Britain to challenge the government's hostile environment and support migrant rights. We promote safer routes of migration and call for an end to indefinite immigration detention and unjust deportations.

We support close to 100 Sanctuary Meetings in Britain – Quaker meetings that have joined community welcome projects and are building alliances with migrant-led groups and others to change the law.

For Refugee Week in June, we made and shared a short video. In it we celebrate 20 years of Refugee Week with 20 of the things Quakers are doing to protect human rights and act in solidarity with newcomers to the UK. You can watch it at <http://bit.ly/20RacialJusticeActions>. We also marked Refugee Week by hosting 'These Walls Must Fall', an evening of poetry, music and resistance at Friends House. It was inspiring to see creative responses to global inequality, and to hear from grassroots organisations at the heart of building a culture of welcome.

*Bake the Difference has helped me – it's the confidence of working in a professional kitchen. Being back in work was one of the biggest fears I had. Having this opportunity is breaking me into that life. And I'm doing better than I thought I would.*

Bake the Difference programme participant

# Thank you

Dear Friend

As Clerk of Trustees, I feel privileged to have a bird's eye view of Britain Yearly Meeting's work, and to see the difference it is making. The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme enables Friends and others to carry out vital witness in Palestine, making a real impact on the everyday lives of people living with the occupation. The Sanctuary Everywhere programme brings together and amplifies local witness with asylum seekers, extending a hand of friendship and welcome. And we continue to support the worship and communities of local Quaker meetings across the country.

This is my chance to thank all our staff for everything they have achieved this year. And I want to thank you too – whether it's for your financial contribution, your service as a volunteer or on a central committee, or for your prayerful upholding of those who carry out the work done in our name. Without your support, none of this could happen.

During 2018, trustees have led work to identify the priorities for central work in the next few years. This sits under *Our faith in the future*, the shared vision for all Quakers in Britain. It's

now clear that what we do and don't do through the centrally funded work should be decided by how it contributes to us becoming 'A simple church supported by a simple charity to reinvigorate Quakerism'. And this includes our witness to the world.

Working towards this kind of energising simplicity needs investment – at least in the short term. We know that the Vibrancy pilot project, and the Simpler Meetings project, have been valuable to Friends. So part of our job as trustees is to see how the benefits of this work can help the whole yearly meeting – sustainably and long into the future.

Please help us do this, in any way you can.



Caroline Nursey  
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](http://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](http://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](http://www.quaker.org.uk/givetime) or phone 020 7663 1115 to find out more.

## Leave a legacy

### **Give Quaker work a bright future**

In 2018 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](http://www.quaker.org.uk/legacy) for more information or phone 020 7663 1117.



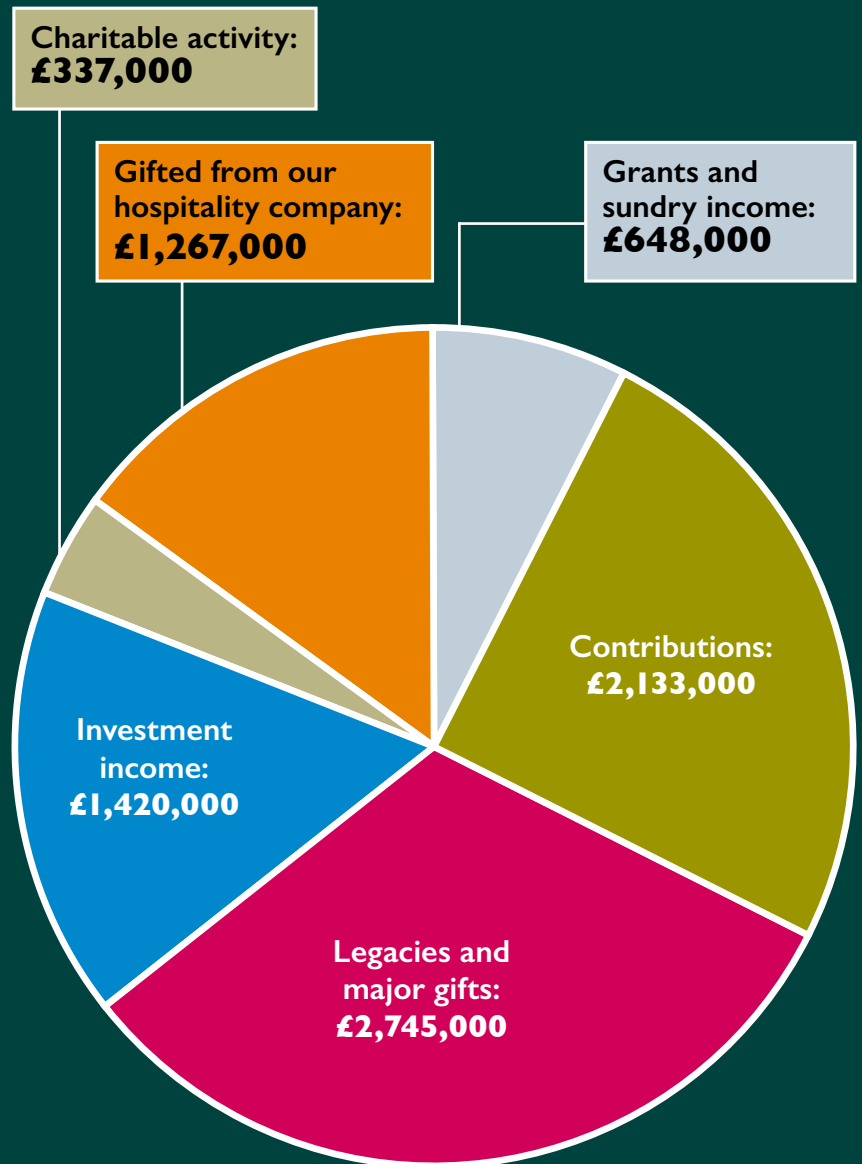
# 2018 finances at a glance

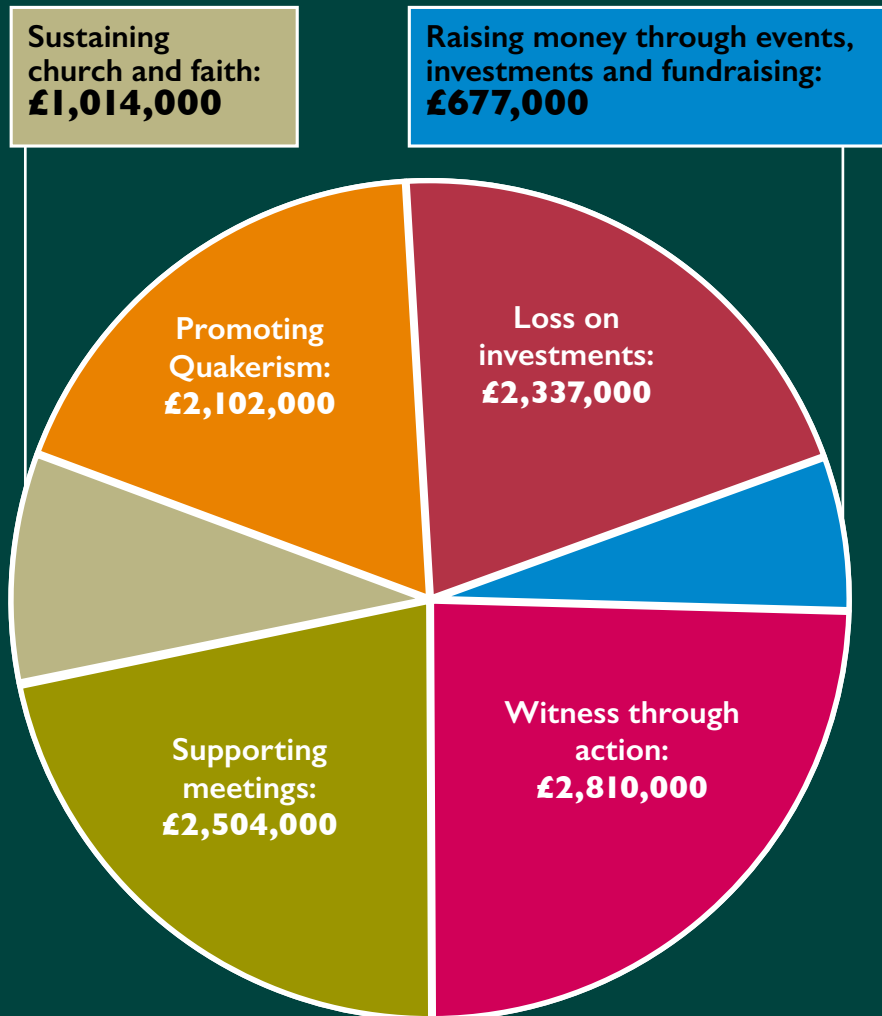
In 2018 the bulk of our income was gifted to us by Quakers – a fantastic show of support for Britain Yearly Meeting's work. But it was a lean year for legacies, which are always hard to predict, and contributions from Friends and meetings also fell slightly. In all, voluntary income was down almost £0.75m on the previous year.

Fortunately the hospitality company once again delivered a record-breaking gift towards Quaker work – raising its contribution by almost a third as well as covering most of the running costs of Friends House. But this level of growth is not sustainable: we only have so much space and lettings will reach capacity in the next few years.

At first glance there seems to be a big gap between our income and expenditure, but this is mostly accounted for by the loss in value of our investments. In 2018 there was much uncertainty in the wider economy and December saw a substantial fall in the stock market.

**Income:**  
**£8,550,000**





However, we invest for the long term and expect to recover the loss over the next 5–10 years. Our actual spending on charitable work was around £8.4m.

Despite the investment losses, Britain Yearly Meeting remains well-resourced and financially sustainable. Over the next five years, we will continue to invest in the future of the Society by developing resources and services to support Quaker meetings to be diverse, to thrive and to grow.

Our Spirit-led work for a more peaceful and sustainable world is needed now more than ever. Meeting this need will mean changes to our structures and practices: this may incur costs in the short term, but as a simpler and more efficient organisation we will be able to make a greater difference in the world.

For more detail about our finances, you can read the full 2018 report and financial statements at [www.quaker.org.uk/annualreview](http://www.quaker.org.uk/annualreview)

**Expenditure:**  
**£11,444,000**

## In black and white

**12,666** members

**7,433** attenders

**1,476** children not in membership

**21,575** total Quakers in Britain

**55%** adult women

**33%** adult men

**7%** children

*5% unrecorded. 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.*

**12%** decline in membership over the last ten years

**14%** total decline over the last ten years

**28** marriages: 7 same-sex, 21 opposite-sex



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The body text font used is Gill Sans Light. It has been chosen for its legibility and accessibility. Sans-serif fonts are most appropriate for readers who are partially sighted or who have learning disabilities (including, for example, dyslexia). Gill Sans adds to this accessibility by using traditional Roman character spacing, which is believed to further reduce the potential confusion between letters.



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.

Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
Registered charity number 1127633  
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Follow us on social media @BritishQuakers.

**[www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)**