**Media Guidance for George Fox 400 events and coverage**

For guidance on how to contact the media please see this toolkit on the Quakers in Britain:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/reaching-the-media>

Please also feel free to contact me, Cato Pedder, media officer, on catop@quaker.org.uk if you have any questions.

On the following pages I have included two draft press releases. Please personalise the words highlighted in blue to the local/area Quaker meeting event.

Please feel free to rewrite, but I’ve written in the style most likely to be picked up by reporters. Do add local quotes as you see fit.

Press releases should be sent to media outlets in the body of the email. The subject line of the email should read: Press Release: [headline]

The email should start with a one-line summary of the story, I often use the introduction. This is because the first line shows on a lot of email platforms inbox previews.

Local papers often run long articles, so I’ve included more information on George Fox etc. at the end for them to choose from. Please add under your contact information and photographs etc if you wish.

**a) if Fox visited the site use this one**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**date**

**[Place] Quakers celebrate 400th birthday**

Four hundred years after the birth of George Fox, Quakers in [place] are joining others across the world in celebrating the life of one of their founders with a [event type].

Born in 1624 into times of religious and political upheaval, Fox visited [place] in [date] as he travelled across England, sharing his belief that God is found in everyone and building a faith centred on truth.

Facing current political and social turmoil, Quakers still live their faith in the world, working to tackle the root causes of violence and to build a just and peaceful world.

Now, to mark the 400th anniversary of Fox’s birth [name of meeting/area] Quakers are [short description of event, e.g. Opening meeting house/holding a party] at [time] on [date].

[Any other details of event]

Born to a weaver and his wife in a small Leicestershire village in July 1624, Fox toured Britain and even travelled overseas to Barbados and North America, to spread the word.

And in [date] Fox visited [place] [clear details of why he came, what he did].

Since his visit in [date] Quakers in [place], along with others around the world, have followed this example.

[Details of Quakers from [place], e.g. conscientious objectors, prison reformers, if available]

Quakers still respond to the challenges facing society by following their faith. [details of any local work, eg. Food banks, climate action etc]

Quakers in Britain work for peace, climate and social justice. Quaker communities create spaces for people of all faiths and none to explore their beliefs in quiet stillness. Following the example of George Fox and early Friends, Quakers continue to live and work by testimonies to peace, simplicity, truth, integrity and equality.

**ENDS**

**Media Information**

For more information please contact [name] on [mobile number] or at [email address]

[Cut and paste photo/other media and include credit]

**b) if Fox did NOT visit the site use this one**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**date**

**[Place] Quakers celebrate 400th birthday**

Four hundred years after the birth of George Fox, Quakers in [place] are joining others across the world in celebrating the life of one of their founders with a [event type].

Born in 1624 into times of religious and political upheaval, Fox travelled across England, sharing his belief that God is found in everyone and building a faith centred on truth.

Facing current political and social turmoil, Quakers still live their faith in the world, working to tackle the root causes of violence and to build a just and peaceful world.

Now, to mark the 400th anniversary of Fox’s birth [name of meeting/area] Quakers are [very short description of event, e.g. Opening meeting house/holding a party] at [time] on [date].

[Any other details of event]

Born to a weaver and his wife in a small Leicestershire village in July 1624, Fox toured England, Wales, and even travelled overseas to Barbados and North America, to spread the word.

Since [date Quakers started in place] Quakers in [place], along with others around the world, have followed this example.

[Details of Quakers from [place], e.g. conscientious objectors, prison reformers, if available]

Quakers still respond to the challenges facing society by following their faith. [details of any local work, eg. Food banks, climate action etc]

Quakers in Britain work for peace, climate and social justice. Quaker communities create spaces for people of all faiths and none to explore their beliefs in quiet stillness. Following the example of George Fox and early Friends, Quakers continue to live and work by testimonies to peace, simplicity, truth, integrity and equality.

**ENDS**

**Media Information**

For more information please contact [name] on [mobile number] or at [email address]

[Cut and paste photo/other media and include credit]

**Further information on George Fox:**

George Fox is the best known of the group of men and women who founded Quakerism. He was born in 1624 in England, during a turbulent time in British politics and religion. In his youth, he became dissatisfied with the inconsistency of Christians around him – saying they believed one thing, but not showing it in their actions outside of church. He wanted to be part of a faith community that lived out what they believed with **integrity**. After years of talking to religious people, reading the Bible and sitting in quiet reflection, he had the realisation that God was present in everyone. This meant that the hierarchy of the church, with priests acting as intermediaries between people and God, was unnecessary. Everyone could have a **direct relationship with God**. This was a radical belief in 17th century England and unpopular with religious and political authorities. Fox was imprisoned many times for proclaiming his views.

In his 20s and early 30s he travelled around England meeting people with similar ideas about the church who were looking for new ways to worship and live a faithful life. Many of the people he met came together to form the first Quaker community and went on to shape the religion that hundreds of thousands of people live by today. The mission of these early Friends was to spread the word of their truth, that there was **that of God in everyone** and they had a right to worship in the way they wanted – without priests, with no need of churches, waiting together for direct messages from God.

Elizabeth Hooton was one such early Friend. George met her in 1647 and some of the first Quaker Meetings for Worship were held at her house. She became a strong advocate for Quakerism in England and America, acted against clerical authority and petitioned for better prison conditions. Another was James Naylor, who had recently left the army and was seeking a different way of life when he met George Fox in 1652. He found his spiritual home in Quakerism and led many people to explore the faith for themselves. In the same year George visited Swarthmoor Hall in Cumbria, where he met Margaret Fell. She was a brilliant writer and organiser and was key to the early organisation of the Society of Friends. These early Friends, and many more, were imprisoned on multiple occasions for living out their testimonies to **truth and equality** and acting against established rules of society that contradicted those beliefs.

Their **testimony to** **equality** meant George Fox and other early Quakers refused to take off their hats in deference to people of higher social status; an imprisonable offence at the time. This powerful act opposed the view that some people deserved more respect than others and serves as the basis for a continued confidence in Quakers to stand up for what is right.

Fox held the conviction that he “lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars”, and so refused a request to join Cromwell’s army in the civil war against the King. This action, along with the 1660 declaration that Quakers “utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons” marks the beginnings of the Quaker **peace testimony**.

The **testimony to simplicity** that grounds the lives of Quakers today can be found in early Friends’ commitment to living without exuberance or excess, providing space for the Spirit to lead them. Quakers around the world today regard the values that George Fox and early Friends lived by as fundamental to living as a Quaker, apparent in the testimonies to **truth, equality, simplicity, integrity and peace**.

Current concerns for Quakers in Britain include increased militarisation, climate change and racial justice. Just as George Fox and other early Friends were not perfect (it took more than 100 years for Britain Yearly Meeting to reach clarity that owning other human beings was incompatible with Quaker membership, and even longer for Quakers to comply with the truth in that message), Quakers today are aware of the need to look inwards and discern how to respond to historical injustices like transatlantic slavery and colonialism – and their ongoing legacies which are re-made in and structure today’s world. The world today is very different to the world Fox lived in, and Quakers are still responding to challenging issues in turbulent times, following the Spirit-led leadings in their hearts.