

Making an impact

Six stories from our work

May 2026



Yearly Meeting of Quakers in Britain



From training to transformation: Inspiring children's work across eight local meetings



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Friends in several local meetings had been calling for more support to help them develop and deliver children's meetings with confidence. Many were looking for fresh ideas, practical tools, and a deeper grounding in how to nurture children's spiritual lives within Quaker worship. In response, the Area Meeting Children and Young People's Committee reached out to the Quakers in Britain volunteer training team, who created a joyful, energising all-day event on 'Exploring the Spiritual with Children and Young People.' The event was attended by 16 Friends from eight local meetings across two area meetings.

Trainers Ellie and Madeleine offered a warm, well-rounded programme designed to build confidence, strengthen skills, and spark creativity. The day opened with a reflective exercise exploring the meanings of "religious" and "spiritual", encouraging participants to deepen their understanding of children's spiritual needs. From there, the trainers moved into practical session planning techniques and demonstrated how simple activities – such as colouring or crafting – can create unexpectedly rich opportunities for meaningful conversations in children's meetings. They also shared an abundance of easy-to-use resources, including book lists, Godly Play™ and Faith and Play™

sets, and online printable materials such as *Journeys in the Spirit*.

The enthusiasm and motivation generated was immediately evident. Participants described the day as "inspirational" and "well organised", and many appreciated the space to swap ideas and approaches. Several left feeling newly confident to try out ideas, including first-time children's meeting facilitators.

Six months on, the impact continues to grow. One participant has been successfully using Godly Play materials both in children's meeting for worship and in local primary school sessions. She also plans to adapt a group activity from the training – a collaborative tree collage – for an all-age Meeting for Worship in local woodland, deepening intergenerational connections.

The training has planted seeds of lasting confidence, creativity, and connection. Friends now feel more equipped to welcome children and families into worship, and plans are already underway for another training day to build on this momentum.

Junior Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee: Nurturing faith and leadership

For young Quakers to grow in their faith, they need chances to explore their spirituality, connect with peers, and take on meaningful Quaker roles. Many live in areas with few other young Quakers, limiting opportunities to attend local events and making it harder to see Quakerism as something personally relevant rather than simply part of their family background.

Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) offers a special and transformative space for young people to experience Quakerism as something alive, personal, and shared with peers. Each year, over forty young Quakers from across Britain – and sometimes beyond – gather either alongside Yearly Meeting or at an independent residential event. For many, JYM becomes a vital moment of spiritual discovery and community.

A distinctive strength of JYM is its peer-led nature. The event is shaped by an Arrangements Committee (AC) of 16 to 18 year olds, discerned by a nomination committee of their peers and appointed by JYM. Over the year, the AC meets through residentials, online meetings, and a dedicated Facilitation and Leadership training programme run with Woodbrooke. Supported by Quakers in Britain staff and adult volunteers, they discern the event's theme and design sessions, workshops, and social activities. During the gathering they act as Elders, Base

Group Facilitators, Clerks, and community-builders, intentionally creating a welcoming and inclusive space for participants with varied levels of experience of Quakerism.

JYM also gives young Quakers a voice within Yearly Meeting. Each year, the Clerks draft a Minute and an Epistle; once agreed by JYM, these are shared with Yearly Meeting in session, often read by the young people themselves. After the event, young people return to their local and area meetings to report on their experiences, which helps to nurture all age Quaker communities.

The impact is significant. In 2025, over 80 percent of participants said JYM helped them explore their spirituality, understand Quakerism, and feel part of the Quaker community. All participants reported that the event helped them engage with issues meaningful to themselves and to Quakerism. Young people described feeling spiritually connected, inspired to prioritise attending Meeting, and encouraged by discovering a vibrant peer community. For AC members, the experience is especially profound. They gain confidence, leadership skills, and a deep grounding in Quaker processes. Many report lasting friendships, personal growth, and a strengthened Quaker identity.

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Peace Education course launched at The Open University



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Our teachers and students are under immense pressure from both internal and external factors. Students' communication skills have been impacted by Covid, increased screen time, and social media. Many young people are also overwhelmed by global issues like climate change and war, which they encounter instantly on their phones. Rising exclusion rates – especially in England and Wales – disproportionately affect marginalised students. And those who are permanently excluded are twice as likely to commit serious violence within a year, compared to similar students who remain in school. In 2024, 86% of teachers said their job negatively affected their mental health.

Peace Education offers a hopeful, practical response. It supports wellbeing, develops social skills, and helps children manage conflict constructively. It enables students to explore complex issues – like identity and war – while building empathy, inclusion, and agency. Yet, few training opportunities in Peace Education exist in Britain. We wanted to reach new audiences, particularly trainee teachers, knowing this is a key moment to introduce Peace Education into their practice.

When Quaker academic Lucy Henning joined The Open University, she invited us to collaborate on a new course to appear on OpenLearn, the OU's free learning platform. Together, we developed Principles and Practices of Peace Education – a 12-hour self-guided course that helps educators explore peace from the personal to the global.

The course launched in February 2025 to enthusiastic response. At the launch, Professor Hilary Cremin delivered a keynote to a record-breaking audience, young peer mediators shared their experiences, and partners offered activities, workshops and reflections. Our practitioner webinar welcomed over 100 participants, including teachers and training leads.

Since then, over 800 people have enrolled in the Principles and Practices course. While some took the course for personal interest, 80% plan to apply it in teaching or training. Feedback describes the course as “thought-provoking” and “inspiring”, with 88% saying they're motivated to learn more. We are now working on a Welsh version in response to strong demand. This course is a vital step toward equipping educators to foster peaceful classrooms and helping young people become the peacebuilders of tomorrow.

Grounded in Spirit, Growing in Solidarity: The Quaker Earthcare Gathering

Time and again, we heard Friends express a deep longing for Quakers to come together for an extended period of shared reflection, community, and spiritual grounding. Many spoke of wanting more space to explore how Quaker faith, practice, and collective discernment could strengthen our capacity to meet the Earth crisis with hope, clarity, strength, and compassion.

To meet this need, Quakers in Britain staff collaborated with experienced Friends working on climate action to design a long weekend dedicated to earthcare. Together, we organised an immersive gathering that brought 114 Friends – including six young adults and six children – into community for worship, learning, creativity, and shared exploration. The gathering offered a rare opportunity for reflection and connection around a shared purpose.

Responses from participants show that the impact of the event was deeply felt. Of the 68 participants who completed evaluations, an overwhelming majority reported strengthened relationships (57 people), deeper insights (49 people), and a renewed or clarified sense of leading or calling (36 people). Many also left

with new questions and pathways for exploration (30 people).

Participants' reflections captured the spirit of the weekend. One Friend spoke of feeling 'plugged-in to the cosmic grid', while others described the event as 'a very powerful experience' and 'a model of inclusive creativity'. Several noted a liberating shift in how they approached their capacity for earthcare – a movement from anxiety to relief in knowing how much is already being done.

The gathering has already begun to nurture a resilient, faith-led movement for earthcare – one grounded in companionship, spiritual depth, and shared hope. Young adult friends have picked up the mantle and are planning an earthcare gathering this year. And two of the children who first met at the gathering now regularly write to and call one another. Looking ahead, we hope the impact of the gathering continues to ripple outward as Friends engage with the climate crisis from a place rooted in Quaker faith, strengthened by supportive community connections, and inspired by renewed clarity and courage.



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Responding to the second police raid on Westminster Meeting House



© Michael Preston for Quakers in Britain

On 5 March, Metropolitan Police officers entered Westminster Meeting House for the second time in under a year, arresting 15 supporters of Take Back Power – a nonviolent campaign group advocating for a wealth tax – who had hired the space for nonviolent direct action training.

This followed a deeply troubling incident in March 2025, when more than 20 uniformed officers forcibly entered the Meeting House without warning, breaking open the front door and arresting six women attending a meeting in a hired room. That heavy-handed raid prompted an intensive staff response, a rapid press response, parliamentary advocacy, an interfaith open letter, and a Meeting for Worship outside New Scotland Yard.

Staff responded to the second raid immediately, preparing a press statement that evening and coordinating with the communications team and management. Over the following two days, the team handled interview requests, drafted social media content, and engaged with public comments, generating extensive media coverage and a significant boost in social media traffic. We again collaborated closely with grassroots Quaker climate activists to support a meeting for worship outside New Scotland

Yard, providing stewarding, media liaison, and photography and videography.

This second raid presented particular communications challenges. The police had prepared and shared their own press release with the Press Association almost before the raid had concluded, seizing the narrative early. The campaign group's website also advocated more controversial tactics, requiring careful and nuanced messaging. Staff navigated these complexities while remaining clear in articulating Quaker concerns about the increasing criminalisation of protest and the expansion of police powers under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023.

The incident fed directly into parallel parliamentary advocacy. Our team co-organised a mass lobby of MPs on the dangerously vague 'cumulative impact' clause in the Crime and Policing Bill, with hundreds of constituents attending. The following day, we co-hosted Gina Romero, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, at two events, giving British campaigners and parliamentarians direct access to internationally recognised expertise.

Protective presence in South Hebron Hills: EAPPI Programme in Palestine and Israel

In January 2026, one of our Ecumenical Accompaniers, Joe, stayed with a Palestinian family – Moussa, his wife Amal, and their two-year-old granddaughter – in the South Hebron Hills of the occupied West Bank. A few weeks before, Israeli settlers in army uniforms from the Susiya and Ma'on illegal settlements had broken into Moussa's property late at night, cutting the gate open and confiscating his car. Unfortunately, such incidents are all too common. The family's home sits directly beside an Israeli hilltop settlement, leaving them under constant threat of settler violence. Moussa often sleeps only one or two hours a night and has had to barricade his home with iron fencing and barbed wire to feel even a minimal sense of safety.

Moussa asked the EAs to stay overnight as a form of 'protective presence' against these threats. With Ecumenical Accompaniers there, he was finally able to sleep a few extra hours – a small change, but life-changing in context. The next day, he felt safe

enough to leave home for several hours. He travelled into the city, attended Friday prayers at the mosque, collected his wife's medication, and bought feed for his shrinking flock of sheep – all tasks he cannot usually do without fearing for the safety of his family.

Moussa told the EAPPI UK and Ireland team, "We need internationals here with us. Everything is much worse since October 7."

The presence of human rights monitors like Joe makes a real, tangible difference in Palestinians' daily lives – offering not only a sense of safety, but also the reassurance of international solidarity.



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Making an impact

Quakers in Britain are making a real difference – within our own communities and across wider society.

In this collection of six case studies, we hope that you can see the breadth of our work and how we are making an impact: from defending the right to protest, to providing protective presence for a Palestinian family; from integrating principles of peace into the education system, to supporting young people at Junior Yearly Meeting.

All this work has been shaped through careful discernment and commitment. We hope you feel inspired by and proud of this work.

None of this would be possible without your continued support. Whether you contribute time, energy or financial support, we thank you for enabling this work to flourish.

More information about how you can support our work can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/giving

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