

SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT

Becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community



living
witness
Quakers for Sustainability



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Becoming a low-carbon,
sustainable community



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Living Witness

Living Witness aims to help Friends develop their witness to sustainability and take it to the wider community in Britain and elsewhere. It supports a growing and vibrant network of Quaker meetings who are exploring their corporate witness.

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Quaker Peace & Social Witness

Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) is entrusted by Yearly Meeting to work locally and globally for peace and justice. It supports Quakers to act on these concerns.

QPSW's Sustainability & Peace Programme supports and encourages Friends in Britain to live more sustainably.

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We are grateful for all the sustainability stories contributed; some are included in full, and you will find quotes from others throughout the toolkit. They are an excellent testimony to the work that is already taking place. Though we were not able to include every contribution, all of the sustainability stories that were sent to us are now up at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability. Please send more to sunnivat@quaker.org.uk as we would like to share as many of these stories with as many people as possible.

Feedback

Please let us know what you thought of these resources, and how useful you found them. Suggestions for amendments or possibilities for future work would be gratefully received. Please contact sunnivat@quaker.org.uk

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SECTION 1: SETTING OFF

This section:

- * welcomes you to the toolkit
- * discusses how to use it
- * reflects on our corporate commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community
- * provides tips for your sustainability group
- * suggests ways to support Friends through the change that is needed

1. SETTING OFF

Welcome to the Sustainability Toolkit

At Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG) in Canterbury in August 2011 Yearly Meeting made a corporate commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community. Our commitment calls on all Quakers to act personally, as meetings and corporately; to be accountable to one another; and to celebrate the changes that we are able to make.

The aim of this toolkit is to support Quaker meetings on their journeys to becoming low-carbon, sustainable communities. Our commitment identifies meetings as having particular tasks in realising this vision: meetings are asked 'to consider how truth prospers with regard to sustainability, taking care to relate this to all our testimonies – peace, truth, simplicity, equality and care for the environment' and 'to practise speaking truth to power at a local level'.

This may seem like a daunting task. It may well bring up lots of questions. This toolkit is designed to help meetings explore these and to support you in your witness to what the commitment means for your particular communities.

In the toolkit we identify what we understand to be the different stages in the journey of change that Yearly Meeting has begun. We provide resources to help your meeting take its next step on this journey.

In our experience a healthy approach to change engages our heads, our hearts and our hands. The toolkit therefore contains a range of material – including learning resources, reflections, practical action, group activities and Friends' stories – appealing to each of these. We also know that all three are intimately connected: 'Growing in the spirit is a consequence of taking action, and action flows from our spiritual growth; here is the connectedness we seek'.

This toolkit draws on the expertise and experience of Living Witness and Quaker Peace & Social Witness in supporting Friends to take action on sustainability. It relies particularly on resources created and used by Living Witness. It also contains many stories from Friends who are taking action on sustainability. Many more were contributed and all are now online at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability-stories.

We hope you find the toolkit useful. Please send us your feedback using the details on the inside front cover.

 For a full copy of Minute 36 from YMG 2011 go to page 89.

"The action we are ready to take at this time is to make a strong corporate commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community."

*Yearly Meeting Gathering 2011,
Minute 36*



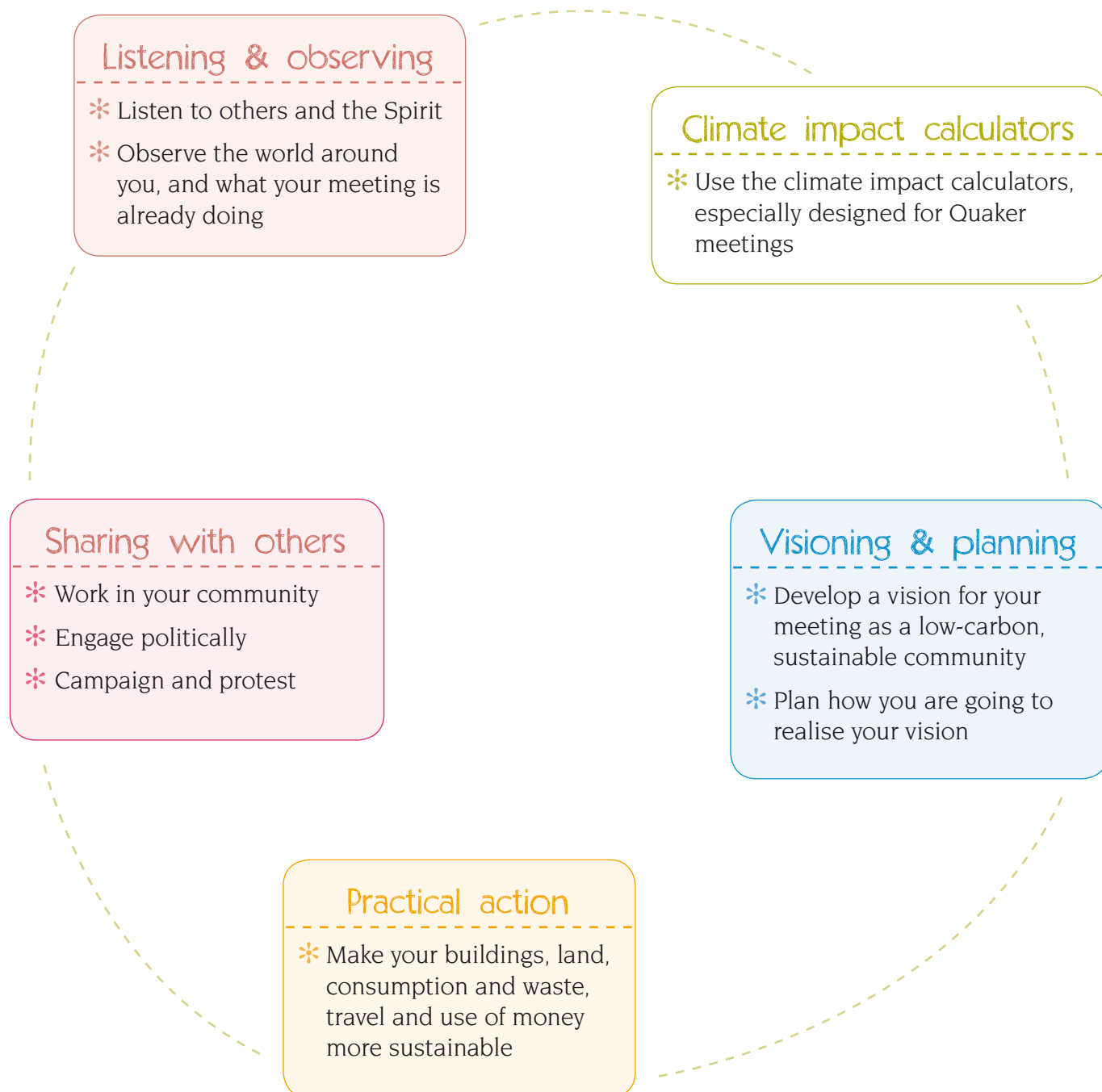
Friends at Yearly Meeting Gathering, 2011. Photo: ©Mike Pinches 2011

Using the Sustainability Toolkit

We've divided the toolkit into sections. In our experience these represent a useful way of understanding the stages in a journey of change.

You may want to use the toolkit by moving through each section in the order in which they appear. But your journey won't always be smooth or linear, and some of its stages may coincide; it is likely to involve plenty of stopping and starting and jumping back and forth. So feel free to dip in and out of the toolkit, taking what you need, when you need it.

This is your toolkit, so use it in whatever way is most helpful to you. Share it, photocopy it, and add your own thoughts and creativity.



Who is the toolkit for?

We have written this toolkit primarily for local meetings. However, much of its contents should be helpful to area meetings and area meeting trustees and others concerned about sustainability in meetings and the use of property.



Friends of Cotteridge Meeting stand in front of their new solar array. Photo: Harriet Martin

Getting support

This is a 'do-it-yourself' toolkit; however, there is plenty of support available should you want it. See the Further resources section on page 78. You can contact Living Witness and QPSW for support at any time. See the front of the toolkit for contact details.



A shared meal at the Quaker Community, Bamford. Photo: Living Witness/Quaker Voluntary Action



Sharing your stories and experiences

- * Read the sustainability stories at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability-stories. Email your own story to sunnivat@quaker.org.uk
- * Sign up to the earthQuaker newsletter at www.livingwitness.org.uk
- * Sign up to the Sustainability...for Peace newsletter and e-updates at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability
- * Share and discuss on the Quakernomics blog at www.quaker.org.uk/quakernomics
- * Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SustainableQuakers
- * Engage with your area meeting, Meeting for Sufferings and Yearly Meeting
- * Come to a Living Witness Link Group meeting or QPSW conference



The meditation pond at Pales Meeting House. Photo: Martin Williams

Look out for the following symbols:

-  This means that there are resources listed in the Additional support and resources section to support you.
-  This indicates that there is a group exercise for you to use.

Reflection: Becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community

At its gathering in Canterbury in summer 2011, Britain Yearly Meeting made 'a strong corporate commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community'. This act of faith by the gathering was also a call to faith for Quakers and local meetings in Britain.

In the context of unpredictable global change, we cannot know at present exactly what will be required of us. However, as the Yearly Meeting minute says: 'Our actions have as yet been insufficient... We need to arrive at a place in which we all take personal responsibility to make whatever changes we are called to... We need to allocate adequate resources' and the process 'needs to be joyful and spirit-led' and 'to flow from nowhere but love'.

But what is a low-carbon, sustainable community? How low is low? How much should we be focusing on carbon? What does 'sustainable' mean? And what kind of community can we be – should we be – as a yearly meeting? These are all questions that Friends have been wrestling with, in particular over the last ten years in the regular Living Witness Link Group gatherings. None of them has a simple answer and we find that they need exploring and re-exploring in our local meetings.

What would be a Quaker approach to sustainability?

A Quaker approach to sustainability must start in worship, asking together how we are led. Here we can ask, 'what does love require?', 'what difficult truths are we called to face?' and 'what is God's will in all this?'.

Our response may arise from love and a sense of the sanctity of all life – a call to answer that of God in every being, every rock, stream, dung heap. It must also be grounded in Truth, especially being willing to see where we are doing harm, where we are part of a system of harm. And we must find the way to hold to that truth while also being compassionate to ourselves and others.

We may also respond out of a concern for humanity, for current and future generations and for society as a whole. To be sustainable, our society must enable individuals, communities and the natural world to flourish. It will be unstable if it fails to care for the well-being of every individual, or for community cohesion, or for the ecosystems on which it depends. The Quaker testimonies of equality and peace are witness to our vision of a world grounded in love and in answering that of God in each other. They call for a transformation in the economic system as well as in the systems of government and justice.



Young Friends and the Big Top, YMG 2011.

Photo: ©Mike Pinches 2011

"The process of coming to terms with the impact of intensified human activity on the natural world has enabled my spiritual sense to deepen and widen."

Jonathan Dale, Central Manchester Local Quaker Meeting

1. SETTING OFF

Ultimately, sustainability means finding our joy, our life, fulfilment of our deepest needs, in ways that cause no harm and that enrich the world. Friends' witness has been that happiness has little to do with material consumption. The worshipping community lies at the centre of the Quaker way – sharing our journey, our search for meaning, walking with others and pausing in companionship with them.

Why the focus on carbon?

Humanity is degrading natural systems and habitats in many ways. Some of the biggest challenges to sustainability result from a few areas of increasing human activity and consumption:

- 1) demand for energy for transport, heating and cooling, information technology and manufacturing; these depend mainly on diminishing fossil fuel reserves and result in carbon emissions which cause climate change
- 2) demand for food, especially meat and dairy products, contributing to climate change and taking up a growing proportion of the world's land surface and fresh water
- 3) use of materials (especially timber, cement, metals and plastics) and land to construct buildings and roads.

There are many more issues – toxic pollution from industry and agriculture, nuclear waste, overfishing. However, it makes sense to single out climate change because it has causes in common with many other environmental challenges. It also compounds their effects, especially in destroying natural habitats and biodiversity. Climate change is the single environmental problem that is most likely to cause famine, mass migration and conflict for humans and mass extinction for other species in the coming decades.

How low is low?

We don't really know how fast we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to prevent catastrophic climate change. Uncertainty can be a cause for inaction but given the scale of potential consequences we should be doing whatever we can to prevent them. The UK government has committed to an 80% emission cut by 2050. The European Council has said that an 80–95% cut is needed by then in industrialised countries. The implication is that we should be reducing emissions by between 4 and 8% every year. So far there is no sign of government policies or public action that would bring about this pace of change. However, some individual Friends have already developed lifestyles with personal greenhouse gas emissions 60–70% below the national average.

*... sustainability means
finding our joy, our life ...
in ways that cause no
harm and that enrich
the world*



Photo: Alick Beale

1. SETTING OFF

Making such personal changes can bring great satisfaction, and also gives us credibility in working for change in our local communities and advocating more ambitious government policies.

And what kind of community do we really need?

Community matters for several reasons. Our experience is that being part of a group plays a key part in sustaining a different way of life. People's consumption choices are shaped by those of their family, friends and colleagues. We need the support of friends who share our values and priorities and with whom we can develop a different set of lifestyle norms. Community and relationship also lie at the centre of healthy human life, and our hope and faith in a sustainable future.

Many groups have recognised the importance of community for sustainability. It is at the heart of the Transition movement and has also been a focus for government policy. But community initiatives often get mired in conflict over goals, strategies and ways of being and working.

To be sustainable a community must enable its individual members to flourish – otherwise they try to change it or to leave. The traditional Quaker testimonies to truth, equality, peace and simplicity are part of our witness to a form of community that is good for its members and is also able to build positive links to other communities.

Advices & queries captures much of the Quaker understanding of what makes a healthy community – for instance, number 17:

'Do you respect that of God in everyone though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern? ... When words are strange or disturbing to you, try to sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others. Listen patiently and seek the truth which other people's opinions may contain for you ... Think it possible that you may be mistaken.'

At its best, Quaker community is grounded in deep listening, respecting and valuing difference, and being willing to let go of our own positions and find a way forward in unity. This is the kind of community we need to build in our local and area meetings, in the Yearly Meeting and also with others beyond Quakerism. Perhaps this is where Quakers have a particular gift to offer the world.



On a Quaker Voluntary Action working retreat.

Photo: Jasmine Piercy.

“Our Quaker community was strengthened, energised and cheered time and again.”

Harriet Martin, Cotteridge Quaker Meeting

1. SETTING OFF

Some questions you might explore, perhaps with others in your meeting in a worship-sharing or discussion session:

- * How do Quaker values connect to your vision for a sustainable society? What other values are important to you and how do you express them in your life?
- * What might 'low-carbon' mean in practice for you individually? And for your meeting?
- * How can you build a stronger and more supportive community in your meeting? What about your workplace or other groups you are involved in?

*Listen patiently and seek
the truth which other
people's opinions may
contain for you ...*



YMG 2011. Photo: ©Mike Pinches 2011

Acting as a group

Our worshipping communities are our vehicle for the journey towards becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community. Most meetings taking action on sustainability have at least started by setting up a sustainability group, or similar, though you may find your group becomes the whole meeting.

Some tips for your sustainability group:

- * Get to know and be known by Friends in your meeting. This probably means listening as well as talking and taking time to participate in the spiritual, social and business life of the meeting.
- * Be comfortable with the fact that some people will leave the group and others will join but that whoever turns up are the right people.
- * Think about *how* you run your meetings. How often will you meet, for how long, and over what period? Try to share out the facilitation. You may find the following useful:
 - 🔍 Guidelines for facilitators (page 76), particularly if your group is doing any of the
 - 👥 group exercises (see Section 6).
- * You may want to create together some simple, clear written aims, for example to raise awareness and take action on sustainability in your meeting. You don't need to spend too long on these (they're just a starting point) but it may be helpful to have something to refer back to.
- * Depending on how many people there are in your group you may want to establish sub-groups to focus on particular themes and activities. Groups could be tasked with investigating and feeding back on a particular area for potential action. Similarly, different groups could be responsible for different areas of action.
- * You could bring the concern to your local business meeting. The timing and usefulness will depend on your meeting and your relationship with it.
- * Be patient and ask for help. A group will benefit from the reassurance, support, stimulation and resources available in a wider network. You may want to join Living Witness, or explore what other green groups there are locally.
- * Accept and expect that your meeting may find it difficult to come to a decision on these issues. Threshing meetings are a good way to share different opinions openly. See *Quaker faith & practice* 12.26.

"I have made better progress in acting with others than going it alone."

Martin Smith, Wooldale Quaker Meeting



A drawing by a young Friend, YMGM 2011.



1. SETTING OFF

- * Think about engaging others outside of your meeting in your activities. We know that some meetings feel too small to do things on their own. For many, action on sustainability has been a good way to engage with others in the community.
- * Celebrate your achievements! Shared meals can be a good way to do this.

Supporting Friends

Our corporate commitment asks Friends 'to be tender with one another and to support one another through the grief and fear that radical change will provoke' (Minute 36, page 89). Engaging with sustainability is about personal transformation and emotional, mental and spiritual journeying. In our experience worship sharing and inner transition are as important as practical action.

Here are some suggestions for how you can support Friends:

-  Exercise 1 (Sowing the seeds of action, page 67) aims to help Friends explore how their values inform their actions.
-  Exercise 7 (Exploring your path, page 74) is designed to support Friends to identify the different paths they might want to take.

You could use the *Be the Change* study group sessions produced by Living Witness.

Go to www.livingwitness.org.uk/publications.html

Carbon Conversations: six meetings about low-carbon living outlined in a book and led by trained facilitators.

See www.cambridgecarbonfootprint.org

Ecocell: a toolkit established by Christian Ecology Link, designed to help you live a simpler, more Christian lifestyle.

See www.christian-ecology.org.uk/ecocell.htm

EcoTeams: you can join an existing team or start a new one.

Information at www.ecoteams.org.uk



Muswell Hill Quakers invite local dignitaries including local MP Lynn Featherstone to plant 100 trees to celebrate 100 years of their meeting.
Photo: Trish Carn



Young Friends in discussion, YMG 2011.
Photo: ©Mike Pinches 2011

Sharing

Some meetings have found it helpful to find ways for Friends to share what action they are taking on sustainability, including their successes and challenges. You could do this in a way that enables the information to be shared with others such as those renting your building. Ideas include:

- * Put up a sustainability notice board for pictures, posters and notices.
- * Create a 'green wall': invite Friends to use a notice board or similar as a place to stick up short notes about action they are taking on sustainability. Establish the life of the board (months rather than weeks) and then when it is over discuss what was shared.
- * Consider having a 'green action' or 'green tips' section in your newsletter. Perhaps you could even get one in a community newsletter.
- * Make a 'pledge tree': invite Friends to use a notice board, or better still a tree-shaped board, to make sustainability-related pledges. If you are feeling creative make leaf shapes for Friends to write their pledges on. These and the board could be decorated as part of an activity for children and young Friends.

"My story shows that significant change is possible and making it is a journey towards well-being – not a path to hardship. It's been exciting and involves learning new skills."

Martin Smith, Wooldale Quaker Meeting



*The pledge tree created by staff in Friends House, London.
Photo: ©Colin Edwards, 2011*

Sustainability story

'Our advice is to start a group'



Calf Cop Meeting's Sustainability Witness and Action Group has begun to consider what responsible stewardship of the Meeting's land and buildings means in the light of sustainability. Photos: Jamie-Rose Campbell

We started a sustainability group at Calf Cop Meeting in October 2010. We are charged by our Meeting to consider the issues and to report back in due course with our ideas for action.

So far we have shared some of our own responses to the issues, and how these connect for us with the Quaker testimonies. We have begun to make links with others in the local community working for sustainable solutions. We have also begun to consider what responsible stewardship of our Meeting's land and buildings might mean in the light of sustainability.

We feel clear that working on practical projects of direct value both to members of the Meeting and to the local community is a natural way to live out and share our values: spiritual and practical, outreach and testimony, all at once. We hope in this way both to inspire others and to be inspired by them in a shared response to the urgent need to change how we live.

We hope to initiate further projects to reduce our carbon impact, while also building closer links with neighbours and friends. Early ideas for projects include composting toilets for the Meeting House allotments, and planting trees to frame and preserve the site of an earlier Meeting House on the land.

The next step for us will be to share our ideas with the Local Meeting as a whole, and with the Trustees of our land and buildings, and to reach agreement together about what developments are right for us as a Meeting. We know, for example, that others in the Meeting may yet need to be convinced that climate change is real, urgent, and something which Quakers should concern ourselves with!

It is early days for us as a Meeting, but in our sustainability group we already feel a renewed energy and pleasure in starting to make changes together. Our advice is to start a group, and to start to make changes, however small. Share the process as well as the outcomes, the feelings as well as the ideas. The problems we face are global and the scale can be scary, but there is a lot of joy in responding locally and starting where we are.

*Contributed by Mary Swale,
Calf Cop Meeting Sustainability Witness and Action Group (SWAG)*

SECTION 2: LISTENING & OBSERVING

This section aims to help you do three things:


- * listen to the leadings of the spirit and the concerns, values and experiences of yourself and others
- * observe and learn about the world and explore why it is we need to become a low-carbon, sustainable community
- * observe what you are already doing as a meeting to become a low-carbon, sustainable community

2. LISTENING & OBSERVING


Listening

Quaker and non-Quaker groups engaging with sustainability have found that change stems from much more than increased knowledge or understanding of facts (important though these are). Our desire and ability to change is influenced by our values, past experiences, concerns and hopes for the future, and by those around us.

We have found that it is important to give space to explore these with others.

 Exercise 1 (Sowing the seeds of action, page 67) offers one way in which you could explore your values.

Finding our way forward also involves careful listening to the leading of the spirit in worship.

 Exercises 3 and 4 (page 70) are activities suitable for an all-age meeting for worship or special event.

While these are not aimed specifically at this age group, they are activities that children and young people can certainly be a full part of.



Children at YMG.

Photo: ©Mike Pinches 2011



Learning

We have found that a lot of Friends feel insecure in their knowledge and welcome the opportunity to learn and to discuss sustainability. It is a complex and emotional subject that forces us to grapple with science and economics as well our values and beliefs. We also recognise that we don't all agree on the problem or the way we should respond.

There are lots of ways to deepen understanding and discussion.

Film screenings

Film screenings are an easy and effective way to raise awareness and engage people.

 For some suggestions see pages 84–85.

Hosting a speaker

You could invite someone from your meeting or local community who works on sustainability to speak about the issue and what they do.

Members of Living Witness and Quaker Peace & Social Witness are also available to speak. For contact details see the front of the toolkit.

“Are you open to new light, from whatever source it may come? Do you approach new ideas with discernment?”

Advices & queries 7

2. LISTENING & OBSERVING

The Transition movement (see page 58 for further information) suggests starting a film screening or talk by inviting people to turn to their neighbour and tell them who they are and why they are here. They recommend doing this even if you know each other already, because you might not know why people are engaged in the issue.


After the film or talk invite people to do the same thing but with the person on the other side, this time to talk about their thoughts on the film. In their experience people enjoy this and it's a good way to start building connections. At a Quaker event you may also want to end with a short period of quiet reflection or worship sharing.


 See page 77 for some guidance on worship sharing.

The 'Living sustainably' issue of *Journeys in the Spirit*, Youth Work edition – Issue 12, February 2011 (see Further resources, page 82) suggests some questions to think about when watching two of the recommended films: *The Age of Stupid* and *WALL-E*.

Organising a workshop or study group

You could organise a one-off or series of workshops for your meeting, or an ongoing study group.

 For ideas on good resources to use, including those for all-age and children's activities, see study pack and group work on page 82.

 You could also arrange for Woodbrooke-on-the-Road to run a session at your meeting or for a Living Witness Resource Person to visit. See page 82 for details.

Reading and discussing

There are many briefings and books available to read and to base discussions around. You could also start a library in the meeting house containing relevant books and resources. Friends may enjoy reading up on an issue and then exploring how local activity could respond to that. You could open this up to the public too.

 See the Further resources section (page 78) for ideas.

Attending conferences and events

Quaker Peace & Social Witness and Living Witness, as well as Woodbrooke, the Quaker Council for European Affairs and the Quaker Community at Bamford, run conferences and events on sustainability. Consider nominating or supporting a Friend to attend and then holding a discussion group based on their report of the event.

“Bring people with you, don't make them feel guilty. Inform and engage them in the debate. Encourage others to move at their own pace but move. Always keep spiritual issues at the heart of what we say and do.”

Virginia Donovan, Wimbledon Quaker Meeting



Reading the Swarthmore Lecture book, 'Costing not less than everything'.

Photo: ©Mike Pinches 2011

Sustainability story

'We agreed that our first challenge was to educate ourselves'

The Meeting started to take action in earnest towards promoting sustainable living in July 2009. This was prompted specifically by a visit of one of our members to a conference held in Brussels in 2008 organised by the Quaker Council for European Affairs combined with material from the Living Witness Project and the excellent QPSW study booklet *Responding to Climate Change* – and, of course, the feeling that we really should be doing something as a Meeting and not just individually.

So, what did we do? Well, we began by organising a meeting to decide how to proceed. At the meeting we agreed that our first challenge was to educate ourselves – the better, eventually, to enthuse others! We achieved this in various ways; the two most successful being a) to watch and subsequently discuss various documentaries about climate change, including *An Inconvenient Truth*, David Attenborough's *The Truth about Climate Change*, Greenpeace's *A Convenient Solution* and finally *The Age of Stupid*; and b) to invite Living Witness Project to provide a one-day workshop.

Simultaneously, we managed to get an agreement with a free local magazine, *The Bideford Buzz*, to have a 'Green Page'. For this, we paid £150 for an article once a month for about six months.

We organised the public showing of three of the documentaries on two separate occasions. This was publicised by sending a letter to each local councillor, by advertising in the local press and by distributing leaflets and putting up posters wherever we could.

This attracted an audience of about forty, including some councillors and the Liberal Democrat Candidate for Parliament. We asked the audience to sign up if they were interested in organising a local group. Although perhaps only six or seven people signed, this, it turned out, was enough!

The outcomes? Firstly, and to our great relief (we are all somewhat 'past our prime'!), the baton has been handed on to a new organisation: The Bideford Sustainability Group. There is now a steering group and three focus groups, one of which is exploring the possibility of becoming a Transition Town. Two Friends from Bideford Meeting are members of the steering group but others have the main roles within it.

Secondly, as a result of the one-day workshop, we have managed to eliminate a 'cold spot' in the Meeting House and we are considering the feasibility of solar panels. Thirdly, we have a 'green slot' in our own Meeting Newsletter once a month.

Contributed by Jacqui Poole, Bideford Quaker Meeting



Sustainability story

The Wandsworth Green Fair

The Wandsworth Green Fair in 2009 arose out of a small 'green discussion group' at Wandsworth Quaker Meeting. We were considering ways of helping others in the Meeting to learn more about sustainability, and of doing something practical to involve the wider local community. We hit on the idea of a Green Fair which we would invite other local groups concerned with sustainability to organise with us, at the Meeting House, which is centrally located near the shopping centre.

The local business meeting was very supportive.

We fixed on a September date, and invited a range of local groups to a planning meeting about six months ahead. Some of these were already known to us, but a fair amount of research and networking was involved to get this far.

A couple of local Transition Town groups, Friends of the Earth, the local Green Party, the local Cycling Campaign, Food Up Front, etc., as well as a couple of local businesses (e.g. one that made organic juices), campaigns and charities were involved. The day itself offered opportunities to learn about energy efficiency, local wildlife, composting etc. as well as fun activities. A series of short films were shown and locally produced food and crafts were sold. The lunchtime talks and discussion on 'Climate change for the confused' and 'Building sustainable communities: what can we do together?' were the most successful.

A good time was had by all, with the Meeting House pretty full for much of the time, and a good sum of money raised. The planning process helped build stronger links with those involved, which have proved helpful in other local initiatives since then. Advance publicity in the local press brought a few people in but much more advance publicity and posters would have been helpful. Visitors asked about Quakers, and those running the event with us were able to see how some of our beliefs were put into practice – not just in our relation to stewardship of the earth but also in discussing why we didn't want raffles or wouldn't have a bar.

All in all, a lot of work but very rewarding. Our premises are probably not right to do such an ambitious event regularly, but the idea of inviting other local groups to run a joint event on our premises is certainly worth considering elsewhere.

Contributed by Linda Murgatroyd, Wandsworth Quaker Meeting



Meeting check-up

This check-up is designed to help you identify what you are already doing as a meeting to become a low-carbon, sustainable community. This will help you affirm your successes as well as prioritise what you would like to do next.

We recommend that you do this as a group, and that you share the findings of the check-up with the rest of the meeting. Skip the sections that aren't relevant to your meeting. There is space for notes after each section if you feel you have more to add. Some questions ask you to answer 'yes' or 'potential to develop'; feel free to choose both.

Photocopy this check-up and continue on additional sheets of paper if necessary. You could create a big chart for your wall, based on the questions below, and add to it as you do things over time.

Listening and learning

How many sustainability-themed sessions have you held in the last year – including talks, films, discussion or action groups, learning or worship sharing sessions? (Tick one)

☐ None ☐ 1–2 ☐ 3–4 ☐ 5

How many of these involved children and young people?

☐ None ☐ 1–2 ☐ 3–4 ☐ 5

Notes:

See pages 19–22 for some suggestions for listening and learning.

Supporting Friends

How are Friends supported to take action in their own lives to become low-carbon and sustainable?

Is there a way for Friends to share with others what they are doing to live more sustainably, e.g. a notice board or newsletter?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Notes:

See pages 14–17 for ideas for supporting Friends and sharing.

2. LISTENING & OBSERVING

Climate impact

Have you calculated the climate impact of your meeting?

Use the Meeting Climate Impact Calculator to work out the climate impact of your building and the activities of your meeting. A sample hard copy is enclosed. Feel free to photocopy it, or request further copies using the contact details at the front of the toolkit. However, you may find it easier to fill it out online at www.quaker.org.uk/climate-impact-calculators.

Filling out the calculator does take some effort; you may well want to do it over time, and focus on one section at a time.

As a meeting you could commit to filling in the form (or part of it) again in a year's time. Then you'll be able to see the difference your activities have made, and we'll be able to chart development across Yearly Meeting.

See also the Climate Impact Calculator for individuals. A sample copy is enclosed. Again, feel free to photocopy it, or request further copies using the contact details at the front of the toolkit. However, you may find it easier to fill them out online at www.quaker.org.uk/climate-impact-calculators.

You could work together as a meeting to calculate your individual impacts and then add these to the results from the Meeting Climate Impact Calculator to get an even fuller picture of your impact.

QPSW is recording the climate impact of meetings in order to baseline the climate impact of Britain Yearly Meeting and track how this changes. Please send your results to Sunniva Taylor using the contact details at the front of the toolkit.

Who is taking action?

Are the sustainability initiatives in the meeting coming from one Friend (e.g. the warden), from a small group (premises and finance or other), or are they whole meeting decisions?

Notes:

Energy use

How have you tried to reduce the energy use of your building, e.g. being careful with heating use and lights?

Notes:

2. LISTENING & OBSERVING

What have you done to increase the efficiency of the building (e.g. draught-proofing and insulation, or installing a more efficient boiler)?

Notes:

Have you started generating your own green energy (e.g. by installing photovoltaic panels)?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Notes:

Have you made efforts to reduce the water usage of your building?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Notes:

Do you manage meeting house land in a way that is beneficial to wildlife and biodiversity?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Notes:

See pages 35–48 for ideas on what you can do to make your building and land more sustainable.

2. LISTENING & OBSERVING

Consumption and waste

As a meeting are you making efforts to consume in sustainable ways (e.g. by using environmentally friendly products)?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Does your meeting have recycling facilities?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Notes:

See pages 49–50 for ideas on how to reduce consumption and waste.

Transport

Have you made any changes to help Friends make environmentally friendly choices about how they travel to meeting (e.g. sharing cars, changing the meeting time to make it easier to use public transport, installing bike racks)?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Notes:

See page 51 for some suggestions of what to consider.

Use of money

As a meeting have you considered how your money is invested, particularly with regard to sustainability?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Notes:

See pages 52–54 for information on investing sustainably.

2. LISTENING & OBSERVING

Political action

As a meeting have you engaged in any political or advocacy action related to sustainability in the last year (e.g. invited your MP to speak, held a stall with information about climate change, or supported a Friend involved in climate change activism)?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Notes:

See pages 61–63 for ideas on how to engage in political action.

Community engagement

Is your meeting engaged with any local sustainability groups?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Do you advise building users of your environmental concerns and request that they use the building in environmentally friendly ways?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Have you considered how your building or land could be used as a community space for sustainability activity?

☐ Yes ☐ Potential to develop

Notes:

See Section 5 for ideas on sharing and engaging with others.

Having filled in this check-up it may be a good idea to spend some time as a group considering what you have found. Identify some actions that you now want to take. Use the following sections to help you work out what you might do. This process might need to take place over a few months, or you may identify something straight away.

You could write down your ideas for action here (please continue on additional paper if necessary):

SECTION 3: VISIONING & PLANNING

This section aims to help you:

- * vision for your meeting/local community/Britain Yearly Meeting as a low-carbon, sustainable community
- * plan your next step as a meeting and as individuals

3. VISIONING & PLANNING

Reflection: Visioning

Visions are important. We need to know what we don't like and what we would like to change (to be aware of what is unsustainable and unjust and why); but we also need to know what we do value in our world, what seeds we would like to nurture, and what world we'd like to live in (what does a low-carbon, sustainable world look like?).

Visions of a changed world have long been part of Jewish and Christian spirituality. For example:

- * Micah 4:3: "... they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they make war anymore."
- * Revelation 21:3–4: "He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more."

Early Quakers took up this heritage, looking forward to an imminent transformation that would bring about the Kingdom (or Republic) of God. The Quaker testimony emerges from a sense of being on the threshold of the Kingdom. By living the life of the Kingdom today we make the transformation possible. Or, in other words, if we live our vision today we make it a reality.

Yet for some reason we, and other groups working on sustainability, have found that people often seem reluctant to talk about their dreams. So it's good to make time and space for Friends to imagine the world they are working for.

Living Witness often ask groups to reflect on their vision for a sustainable world (e.g. see table on page 30). How would it look if these three spheres – of personal life, community, and the Earth – were all flourishing? The responses are broadly similar from group to group. They speak of a world of much stronger communities, where people respect one another and nature, where spiritual values are more important than material values. It is a world where national boundaries are unimportant. It is an egalitarian world.

Often, the vision includes concrete elements – such as people growing and eating local food, being able to live and participate fully in society without a car, using renewable energy sources for heat and electricity. It also includes a more general shift in the infrastructure, markets and technologies that shape our lives, making it easy to live sustainably. These aspirations are common to many groups working for sustainability.

"My advice to other Quakers is to start with whatever seems important locally, to build alliances and networks, and to develop a vision that can be shared by all members of the community."

Gerald Conyngham, Exeter Quakers

*... if we live our vision today
we make it a reality*

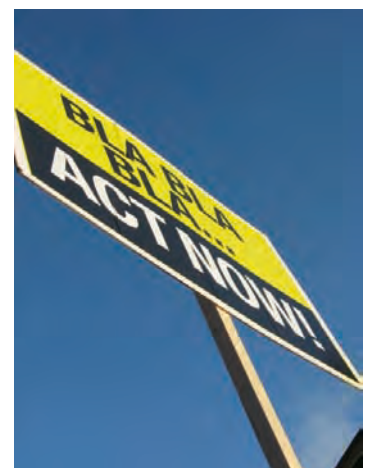


Photo: Sunniva Taylor

3. VISIONING & PLANNING

Contrary to the mainstream assumption, the general feeling is that changed lives would be better for us, as well as for our communities and for the natural world.

Snatches from Young Quakers' Visions for an Ideal or Sustainable World

(from a Living Witness Project workshop in August 2002)


Being in a community
In contact with the earth
Practising crafts and trades
Cities with more green spaces
Less rules and regulations – we would dance all night
Streets where people know and love each other and strangers
No car – living close to friends and family – living in a community
Free education
No nations or boundaries
Fitting in
Doing true work (craftsmanship)
Beauty
Schumacher and Gandhi
Fair exchange of values, services and labours

Resolving conflict
Security, trust, safe in our own homes
Fulfilment
Respecting each other
Complement rather than contradict
Meeting needs in a sustainable way
Living in beautiful places
Shifting care from artefacts to people, nature and planet
“I thought I wanted choice but I don't: I want everything to be organic, fairly traded, all systems respecting people and earth.”
Easier to talk to people in the neighbourhood
Less need to go to work
Be in the garden on sunny days



Young Friends' visions of a sustainable future. Drawn at YMG 2011

We have provided two exercises to help you vision. You could use them for visioning your meeting, or your local community, as a low-carbon, sustainable community, or you could use them to ask the same question of Yearly Meeting – what would a low-carbon, sustainable Britain Yearly Meeting be like?

 See Exercise 5 (Vision map) and Exercise 6 (Vision meditation) on pages 71–73.

Sustainability story

'We stepped forward in faith'

With careful analysis, determination, and a concerted effort, 90% reductions in fossil fuel use are possible! Between 2004 and 2010 Cotteridge Quaker Meeting reduced its energy use by more than 70%. In addition, we are now generating 20% of our original usage. Thus, by June 2011, our energy usage should be down to c. 10% of our 2004 starting point.

When Cotteridge Quakers started on this road in 2005, we did not know how far we could travel. We stepped forward in faith. We were driven by a concern for our planet and, more prosaically, by a desire to be comfortably warm in meeting.

As we made improvements, our gradually decreasing meter readings were a source of encouragement and strength. Generous gifts of time and money from members of the meeting, as well as growing fuel savings, enabled projects to continue.

In retrospect we can see that it was not so much that we 'stepped out onto a road'; rather, we climbed onto a cycle. The cycle wheel went round and round, propelling our projects forward. We repeated time and again the same sequence: problem identification and analysis, Premises Committee suggestions, Business Meeting decisions, fundraising, action, feedback. Members of the meeting who consistently volunteered time and practical skills as well as finance were our energy source. Encouraging graphs emerged which drove the cycle forward again and again with new actions identified, analysed, agreed, acted on and tracked by electric meter. Our Quaker community was strengthened, energised and cheered time and again.

As we cycled through the years we added another cog in the wheel gearing: external fundraising through awards and grants from trusts and governmental bodies. The evidence of our graphs and the enthusiastic efforts of volunteering Friends began to give a Midas touch to our application forms. Over six years we have spent about £120,000 (c. £40,000 from the Low Carbon Building Phase 2 Fund and the Veolia Environmental Trust, c. £15,000 from assorted Quaker trusts, with the remainder from Area Meeting or local meeting funds).

Contributed by Harriet Martin, Cotteridge Quaker Meeting



Friends of Cotteridge Meeting stand in front of their new solar array. Photo: Harriet Martin

Sustainability story

'Developing connectedness in our witness'

In April 2008 Laurie Michaelis held a spiritual learning day on the Living Witness Project for our Area Meeting. He inspired us with his knowledge and personal commitment. Laurie showed that Quakers are uniquely placed to make a difference as individuals, in the wider community and at government level.

Many of us already live in a more sustainable way whilst retaining an acceptable standard of living and quality of life. This is in accordance with our testimony to Simplicity and an example of how we can truly "let our lives speak".

We considered how we wanted to work together and decided that we need to develop connectedness in our witness; sharing experiences, gifts and burdens between Quakers locally and centrally, and with others beyond the Society.



Wimbledon Meeting's garden now grows vegetables and fruit as well as flowers.

Photo: Bill Douglas

- * See change as positive – don't give things up but embrace new ways
- * Work as a community on both personal and Meeting issues
- * Build spirituality and support into our work
- * Share knowledge and have fun
- * Be non-judgmental, accept other ideas
- * Accept the world in which we live.

An informal support group met four times. It was a useful starting point but we decided to incorporate it into our monthly speaker sessions.

Mainstreaming sustainability into our meetings and activities and making it the 'norm' made more sense, got better results and reached a wider audience. Sustainability issues are now very much a part of how we work together. Although there was some reluctance to give over part of the garden to vegetable and fruit, we all benefited from the produce.

Providing simple information, messages and specialist speakers from outside helped to stimulate debate. It reinforced the message that we were all starting at different points and it was our individual progression that was important and taking small steps together could make a difference.

Key members of our Meeting spoke enthusiastically about and demonstrated their commitment by how they lived and how this is integral to and not separate from our Quaker values and testimonies.

3. VISIONING & PLANNING

The outcome is that we are more aware of the impact of sustainability on our lives, local community and the planet.

Our advice is to bring people along with you, don't make them feel guilty. Inform and engage them in the debate; encourage others to move at their own pace but move; always keep spiritual issues at the heart of what we do and say.

We plan to review what we have achieved, what worked well, what helped us to move forward and what our next small steps are.

Contributed by Virginia Donovan, Wimbledon Quaker Meeting



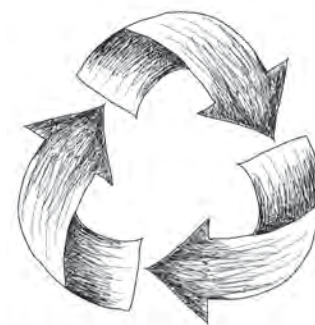
Susanna Riviere in Wimbledon Meeting House garden.


Photo: Bill Douglas

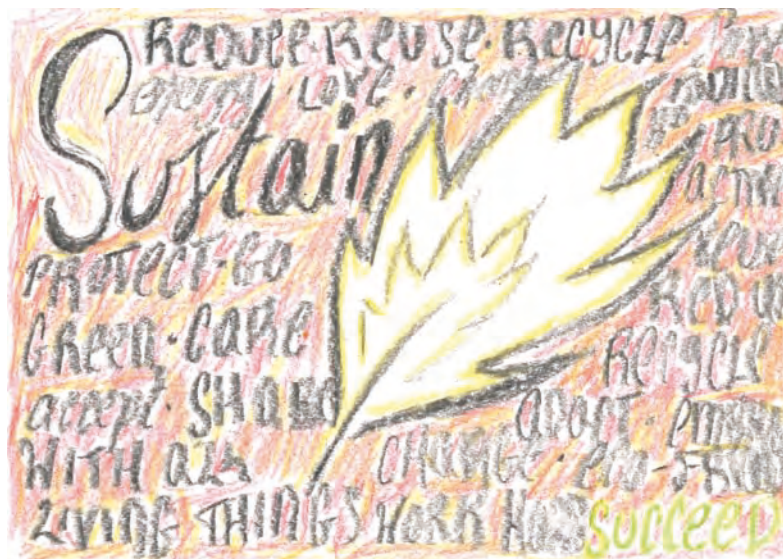
Planning

Meetings have taken many different approaches to planning their sustainability activities. Many have found that what works best is to move forward one step at a time. However, you need, at least, to prioritise the steps you take. The meeting check-up in Section 2 is designed to support you in doing this.

We've found that Friends can often be concerned or confused as to what they can contribute personally. We all have skills to offer, whether as energy experts, scientists, economists, listeners, gardeners, musicians or artists, people who like to make and fix things, facilitators or planners.



 Exercise 7 (Exploring your path, page 74) helps Friends identify their role.



A drawing by a young Friend, YMG 2011.

SECTION 4: PRACTICAL ACTION

This section aims to support your meeting to witness to its vision for becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community. It covers:

- * buildings
- * land
- * consumption and waste
- * travel
- * money

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

Buildings

Our buildings are an opportunity to act as patterns and examples of low-carbon, sustainable living. They can speak out in the local community by demonstrating to others what is possible, and be spaces to foster the growth of sustainable communities.

When considering what changes to implement think about:

- * What you have control or influence over, and who needs to be involved. Most meeting houses will be the responsibility of your area meeting, so make sure that you are in touch with area meeting trustees. Any substantial changes will need their approval. Other people you should collaborate with include your property committee and warden.
- * Your meeting may not own a building, but you may well be able to influence the building owner on these issues.
- * Sustainable living is not supposed to make people feel miserable! Don't turn the heating down so low that it is detrimental to people's well-being, or make changes that make it harder for the less able to access the building.
- * Cost, including what is most cost-effective relative to the scale of the changes proposed.

Energy

Most of the energy we use in our buildings for heating, hot water, lighting, appliances and cooking comes from burning fossil fuels (coal, gas or oil). We either burn them directly or indirectly through the use of electricity. For most meetings energy use for heating will be the most significant activity under corporate management.

The amount of CO₂ we release from energy use in our buildings depends on four main factors:

- 1) Our use of 'energy services' – the level of heating and lighting we require, boiling water used to make drinks, hot water for washing up, use of computers, photocopiers, refrigerators, etc.
- 2) The care with which we manage our energy use – switching off heating and lights when not using rooms, boiling only the amount of water we need, etc.
- 3) The efficiency of the building and of appliances.
- 4) The source of the energy (our choice of fuels and also the sources used for electricity generation).

"Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone."

*George Fox, 1656,
Quaker faith & practice 1.02*



*Cotteridge Meeting had reduced energy by 70% by 2010. Here the classroom is being prepared.
Photo: Harriet Martin*

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

Of course, the simplest and most cost-effective way forward is to try to use as little energy as possible, from whatever source. Though generating your own energy is an attractive idea, it will cost less and save more carbon to begin changing behaviour and increasing the efficiency of the building. See page 41 if your building has listed status.

REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF ENERGY USED

These are generally low-cost activities

Use less heating

- * Only heat rooms that are in use.
- * Keep doors between rooms shut and draw curtains after dark.
- * Use the smallest room needed for a given activity.
- * Schedule building use to reduce the number of hours when the heating is needed.
- * Reduce the thermostat temperature, but remember to consider the needs of unwell and older people in your meetings for whom cold can be uncomfortable and a health risk.
- * Install timers for the heating and hot water or – if your building use varies a lot from day to day – make sure the heating is switched off manually when it's not needed.
- * Put up signs asking building users to keep the temperature low.

Use less hot water

- * Don't leave hot taps running.

Read your meters

- * Reading electricity and gas meters on a monthly basis could help reduce energy use as you will become aware of how much you are using and notice if anything is amiss.

Use less artificial light

- * Keep windows clean and free from obstructions to take advantage of natural daylight.
- * Turn lights off when not in use, or when not needed (during meeting for worship perhaps!).
- * Put up 'switch off' signs by light switches.

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF THE BUILDING AND OF APPLIANCES

Draught-proof

- * Windows: use sealing strips to prevent draughts.
- * Doors: attach suitable draught-proofing strips to all edges of doors (and/or make a draught excluder).
- * Floors: seal spaces around skirting boards and gaps between floorboards.

N.B. Be careful not to block off all ventilation as this can lead to condensation and damp.

Insulate

Loft insulation has a very short payback period, as does cavity wall insulation. Solid wall insulation may not pay for itself in energy savings.

Check for grants and subsidies.

Of course, savings depend on the way the building is used. A meeting room that is only used for a couple of hours a week is not worth insulating – but then perhaps it isn't worth keeping as a meeting room!

- * Roofs: if possible fit loft insulation in the loft space.
- * Walls: Fill any cavity walls. External or internal insulation can be put on solid walls, though it is more expensive.



Roof insulation for Cotteridge Meeting House. Photo: Harriet Martin

- * Windows: replace broken or cracked window panes. If possible replace single glazing with double-glazed units, or add secondary glazing. Homemade secondary glazing, made from clear polythene taped to window frames, is cheap (though may damage your paintwork). Hang heavy lined curtains that extend the length of the windows, or fit thermal (heat-reflective) blinds.
- * Floors: add a carpet with underlay, or other floor covering that keeps in heat (such as cork tiles).
- * Hot water cylinders (storage tank): make sure that the cylinder is insulated and hot water pipes are lagged.
- * Radiators: put silver foil with insulated backing behind radiators, particularly on external walls, to reflect heat back into the room. Attach a shelf above radiators to do the same and to prevent hot air rising.

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

Install a more efficient boiler

If your boiler is 15 years old or more, replacing it should pay for itself.

Check for grants.

- * When your boiler or heaters reach the end of their useful life, look for the most efficient replacement appliance. With boilers, try to get one with a SEDBUK rating of A (90% efficiency and above). See www.boilers.org.uk for information. Also consider whether there are more carbon efficient alternatives. For example, consider replacing direct electric heaters with gas heaters (cheaper in any case) or a heat pump (though this is very expensive and definitely not worthwhile if gas is available).



A condensing combi boiler located near a solar heated 'heat store'. Photo: Tom Greeves

- * You may be able to save energy by installing a 'combi' (combination) boiler. This heats water directly when a hot tap is turned on, rather than keeping a storage tank full of hot water.

Use energy-efficient lighting

- * Replace incandescent light bulbs with more efficient alternatives (the carbon impact is so significant that it is worth doing this before the incandescent bulbs have stopped working):
 - ~ CFLs (compact fluorescent lamps) – the most common and cheapest energy-efficient light bulbs available. Special dimmer-switch-compatible ones are now available.
 - ~ LED lights – even more efficient and long lasting, and coming down in price. These can now replace halogen lamps (which use nearly as much electricity as incandescent bulbs).
- * Remember efficiency for external lighting too, and check that motion sensors work properly.
- * Use light-coloured paint and mirrors to reflect light.

Replace appliances with more efficient ones

The most efficient appliances are usually more expensive, though may pay for themselves in energy savings.

- * The appliances that use most energy are generally freezers, fridges, washing machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers. TVs – especially those with large plasma screens – can also be significant electricity users. When replacing appliances choose those with the highest rating for energy efficiency. Grade A electrical appliances (A+ or A++ for fridges/freezers) are best, or look for the Energy Saving Trust's blue 'Recommended' label. See www.energysavingtrust.org.uk for more information.

Sustainability story

Enabling a Grade II* listed meeting house to tread more cheerfully with a lower carbon footprint

A structural survey in 2004 showed that the Meeting House floor was starting to rot. The electric heaters required replacing. After meetings in the winter the walls and windows ran with damp and the room became stuffy. By 2008 the gallery was sagging and was minimally usable.

As well as planning the major essential repairs we saw that it was essential to drastically reduce condensation as an integral part of reducing the environmental impact of the building. A professional environmental audit included recommendations to replace the electric heating with gas (reducing CO₂ emissions by 40%), to incorporate zone control and thermostatic radiator valves, to improve draught proofing and to upgrade loft insulation to 250mm. All of these measures were planned into the refurbishment, but the damp problem remained.

Our solution was to install heat exchangers. Stale, moist air, particularly during and after use of the Meeting Room, is extracted through heat exchangers which warm the incoming fresh air to well above dew point. Convection from the heaters now draws moist air from the floor space through the ventilator grilles. Thermal transfer efficiency is about 70%. Such heat exchangers are really nothing new. However, concealing the system in a listed building and making it absolutely silent in Meetings for Worship were real challenges, both of which were overcome (see photos).

Assessing the cost benefits is harder. There has been a substantial increase in use of the Meeting House by community groups (and consequent energy usage) partly because the Meeting House environment is improved. What is clear is that our interaction with the community and consequent outreach has increased as an unexpected by-product of our eco-friendly improvements.

Contributed by Michael Elstub, Settle Local Meeting



Settle Meeting House, a grade II listed building. Photo: Michael Elstub*



Settle Meeting House has two air exchange units which recycle hot air at ceiling level, reducing energy needs. Photo: Michael Elstub

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

USE GREENER ENERGY

Don't use electricity for heating or hot water

- * You will nearly always have lower carbon emissions by using an efficient gas boiler, or efficient point-of-use heaters, compared with electrical heating.

Green electricity tariffs

- * Most electricity companies now offer a green tariff. A green tariff means that some or all of the electricity that you buy comes from renewable resources. However, all electricity companies are now required to obtain a proportion of their energy from renewable sources, so your purchase is unlikely to increase the demand for renewable energy in the UK. For more on this see *Is Green Electricity Really Green?* at www.livingwitness.org.uk/publications.html

Generate your own energy

- * Both electricity and heat can be supplied from renewable sources. Those most likely to be useful for meeting houses are:

- * Photovoltaic (PV or solar) cells: these can be mounted on your roof to generate electricity. With the feed-in tariff they can be a good investment for a meeting. This scheme does raise some complicated ethical issues, however. Contact Living Witness if you'd like to discuss these.



Cotteridge Meeting House's PV array. Photo: Harriet Martin

- * There are a number of companies that now offer to install PV cells for free. The Energy Saving Trust has a comprehensive list of questions to think about if a company approaches you.
- * Wood-fuelled boiler: this could be a good heating option for a rural meeting with local wood available, particularly if there is no mains gas.
- * Energy sources less likely to suit the needs of most meetings are:
 - ~ wind turbines
 - ~ air source heat pumps
 - ~ ground source heat pumps
 - ~ solar panels for heating water
- * Details of all of these sources are available on the Energy Saving Trust website.

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

Water

Much of Britain suffers from water shortages, and as water comes directly from rivers and groundwater every drop we use has an impact on the environment. Electricity is used to pump water, and chemicals are used to make it clean enough to drink.



Reduce the amount of water used to flush the loo

- * Put a 'hippo' in the cistern – some water companies offer them for free. You may want to try it out in one toilet before installing them in every cistern.
- * When buying a new toilet choose a water-saving, low-flush or dual-flush model and consider waterless urinals for the men's loos.

Reduce water used for washing up

- * Don't leave taps running! Invest in a washing-up bowl.

Save water in the garden

- * Install a water butt.
- * Consider choosing plants that won't need watering, and allowing your lawn to develop a scorched look for a few weeks in the summer – it will recover!

Reduce water wastage

- * Mend dripping taps.

Install a water meter

- * If you have a water meter installed your bill will reflect your consumption, which is likely to save you money.

Listed buildings

There are plenty of ways to adapt your building even if it is listed.

If you wish to alter or extend a listed building in ways that affect its character or appearance you will need to apply for listed building consent from your local planning authority. The application may well be forwarded to English Heritage (for England), Historic Scotland (for Scotland) or Cadw (for Wales) for expert advice.

Talk to your local authority's conservation officer and/or local planning officer before making any changes to a listed building. They can advise you on changes and applications.

The Advisory Committee on Property (www.quaker.org.uk/property-matters) may also be a source of advice about listed buildings. It would normally be the responsibility of area meeting trustees to initiate contact with them.

Sustainability story

Eco-renovation in Oxford Meeting, Grade II listed

Oxford Meeting is blessed, but also burdened, with our plain-but-handsome 17th-century premises fronting on St Giles, and our 1950s oak-panelled Meeting House in the garden, built like a Cotswold stone barn. We are deeply attached to them, but we have also been painfully aware for years of the icy draughts, the inadequate insulation, and the antiquated heating systems, which have all contributed to a hefty carbon footprint.

A decade ago we switched to a renewably-sourced electricity supplier, Good Energy. And at long last, in 2010, we have embarked on a radical, step-by-step eco-renovation. It takes a lot of time, money, and commitment; but at least we are now on the way.

Eco-renovating a Grade II listed building is complicated; and every last detail requires official consent. Aside from this, our two obvious problems were getting the methods and materials right, and finding the necessary funds.

We began with our Library, a high-ceilinged room with three external walls. Turn off the gas fire and within a few minutes the place used to be freezing. We got detailed advice from a specialist eco-builder. In this kind of building (possibly in many buildings), lining with conventional insulation board can lead to a gradual build-up of condensation between it and the wall, which can practically wipe out the insulation effect. And standard insulation board carries sizeable environmental costs in its manufacture. So we went for a wood-fibre based, breathable insulation called Pavatherm (www.natural-building.co.uk) on all walls, the floor, and the sloping ceiling, with breathable lime plaster on top. That work is now complete. Even without any heating, this formerly icy room now feels comfortable.

We are now moving on to our Meeting House itself, starting with the kitchen, which used to stream with condensation on walls and windows and is now fully eco-refurbished. But in the tall, barn-like space of our meeting house all the heating still flies up to the ceiling. The ideal solution would be under-floor heating, from an air-source heat pump itself powered by PV panels. But under-floor heating would mean tearing up the beautiful oak floor and putting in a new one. It seems the 'right' long-term solution, but could we possibly justify such expense? We are still wrestling with this.

Contributed by Alan Allport, Oxford Local Meeting



*Plastering begins after insulation work, making Oxford meeting house library much warmer.
Photo: Alan Allport*

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

Auditing

You may want to commit some money to paying an external auditor to look at your building, do an energy assessment and provide advice on where you could make savings. Explore the options in your local area.

The use of your building

Quaker meeting houses and other Quaker property have the potential to be spaces for radical witness to sustainability in their communities. This depends on how they are used.

Some things that your group and meeting might want to consider include:

- * Who uses your building, and who is it let to?
- * Are there other groups in the community that would welcome a place to meet or to have as a hub – perhaps a local Transition group needs somewhere to meet, to keep a Transition library, or to use as a base for community-growing schemes?
- * Could you transform the building into an ‘eco-centre’ or similar? Could you use it to host events or art exhibitions on the theme?
- * Do you encourage and support users to think about energy issues and sustainability? Put up notices asking people to turn off lights/turn down the heating/shut doors, etc.
- * How do you reach out to building users and share what you do? You could signpost all the changes you have made to the building and have a display up about your plans, including the reasons why you are doing it.

🔍 See page 85 for ideas on where to get additional support for becoming a low-carbon, sustainable building.

“... the idea of inviting other local groups to run a joint event on our premises is certainly worth considering elsewhere.”

Linda Murgatroyd, Wandsworth Quaker Meeting



A drawing by a young Friend, YMG 2011.



Friends at the Quaker Community at Bamford. Photo: QVA/Living Witness

Sustainability story

Quaker House, New Milton

Quaker House is a care home for forty elderly residents in New Milton, Hampshire. In 2010 the board authorised the installation of solar water heating as its first step in improving energy efficiency and hence reducing energy costs. As a not-for-profit housing association, Quaker House fees for residents are lower than those at other care homes in the area. Sustainability is therefore a means to retain modest fees.

Solar water heating was chosen as it is well established, and there is a large established base. Technological and installation risks were therefore minimal.

Luckily, Quaker House has a large south-facing roof. New Milton is just one mile from the sea and is fortuitously located in one of the sunniest parts of the UK.

We ran a competitive tender process and were surprised at the wide variation in bid costs. We selected a contractor who offered value and who demonstrated a proactive understanding of our needs. The contractor also had extensive experience of installing solar water heating.

We were fortunate in obtaining grant finance for 75% of the project. We received one of the last grants from the Department of Energy and Climate Change and were blessed by the receipt of a grant from the Quaker Housing Trust.

We have an energy monitor close to reception so that residents can see the temperatures of the solar panels on the roof and the resulting temperature in the hot water tank. Some residents are quite excited by 'their home' becoming greener.

The local paper printed a story on the project. We felt that the visibility of Quaker House as well as its sustainability has been enhanced.

Contributed by Anthony Woolhouse, New Milton Quaker Meeting



Front of Quaker House showing solar water heating tubes on the roof.

Photo: Anthony Woolhouse



Energy monitor at Quaker House.

Photo: Anthony Woolhouse

Land



Holmfirth Transition Town's first community blackberry-picking event, September 2010. Photo: Martin Smith

Many Quaker meeting houses (and other Quaker buildings) have land attached, be it a small garden, a burial ground, or a number of fields. As spaces that may well be visible to the wider public they are good opportunities to speak out through example. If your meeting doesn't own land you may be able to apply some of these ideas to a local patch of ground.

Biodiversity is essential for sustaining the natural living systems or ecosystems that provide us with food, fuel, health, wealth and other essentials. We can help to maintain biodiversity by preserving and creating the habitats that wildlife needs. The land could also be an ideal place for people to learn about biodiversity and conservation.

If your meeting house is old, it may well have land that has been little touched by modern management techniques – if so it's important to conserve the long-established habitats. Or you may only have a very small amount of land, perhaps mostly tarmaced. In this case, think about what changes you could make to create a space more attractive to wildlife.

"We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will... Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life..."

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A drawing by a young Friend, YMG 2011.

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

Trees and shrubs

- * Could you plant more? If so, plant varieties that have value for birds, butterflies and other insects.
- * Native plants are best for wildlife.
- * Fruit and nut trees mean you will benefit from the produce.
- * If you have a lot of space could you plant a small wood, perhaps as a community project?

Hedges

- * Hedges are great for birds to nest in, particularly if you keep them thick.
- * Try to use native species.

Flower beds

- * Some are very good for insects.
- * You could plant flowers that can be used in the meeting house. Plant herbs that members can use.

Vegetable patch

- * Could you plant a meeting house vegetable patch?

Photo: Jamie-Rose Campbell



Walls, old stones and dead wood

- * Leave these – they can be a haven for plants, insects and animals. Gravestones are similarly important for lichens and mosses, so you may choose not to clean them.

Paving and tarmac

- * Try to reduce the amount of paving and tarmac covering the land. It's not kind to wildlife and also means that rainwater cannot be absorbed into the ground. If you do need to have a solid surface try to make sure that there are spaces between stones for water to soak through.
- * Make sure you provide access for everyone to enjoy your land: a well designed paved path can allow people who are unsteady on their feet or in wheelchairs to enjoy your land, and still allow rainwater to drain off.

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

Grass

- * Only mow regularly those areas that need mowing for access or amenity.
- * Try to leave some patches unmown to encourage meadow grasses and flowers.

Compost heap

- * Good for worms, spiders, slow worms and the garden.

Go organic

- * Don't use chemical pesticides, herbicides or fungicides.
- * Don't use peat – it is irreplaceable.
- * Install a water butt to collect rainwater.

Other ways of attracting wildlife

- * Nesting boxes
- * Bird feeder and table


Creating a peace or quiet garden

Could you turn some or all of your land into a peace or quiet garden? Meditative spaces can be very important in communities and for reflecting and developing an awareness of sustainability concerns.

See www.worldpeacegardensnet.org and www.quietgarden.org

Community engagement

Like the building itself, any land you have access to is potentially an excellent place for community engagement and outreach work. Consider whether there is a local group that could benefit from using your land or that could help you to maintain and cultivate it.

 See page 86 for ideas on where to get additional support for using your land sustainably.



*Planting 100 trees at Muswell Hill Meeting during centenary celebrations.
Photo: Trish Carn*

Sustainability story

Transforming a field into a 'living space'



The land around Pales Meeting House before, during and after. Photos: Martin Williams

The Pales is a beautiful stone thatched meeting house 1,100 feet up in the hills of Radnorshire in mid Wales with spectacular views. Alongside the Meeting House are a graveyard and a field of about a quarter acre. The latter had for decades been used for free by the neighbouring farmer for grazing his sheep.

Having been wardens here for a number of years, we had gradually developed the use of the meeting house by having water and heaters installed so that groups who appreciated the spiritual atmosphere of the place could come and be nurtured by the 'specialness' of the place.

Some Quaker groups, Link groups and Children's meetings had begun to come and camp in the field and we decided we wanted the field to become a part of the Pales living space and not just an overgrazed field.

In 2002, we received a grant from Coed Cymru to plant 200 native provenance trees – ash, oak, crab apple, hazel and willow – the latter being by a special dispensation as we wanted to grow our own for the willow workshops which had been happening at Pales. (We now crop the willows, using the good ones for crop props, woven fencing and the residue for tinder.) So, on two consecutive weekends, through blizzards and Welsh driving rain, working parties, fortified by large quantities of hot soup, came and planted the trees. Eight years later, the trees are now over our heads and it's such a joy to wander through windy paths created to encourage meditative walking through the woods.

There were some boggy marshy patches in the field and we decided to drain a channel to the bottom of the field and dig a pond. The water drains into the pond and then overflows into a bog garden before draining away via soakaways. The steepness of the land has meant that the pond is always full of water throughout the year. Within 12 months it was a thriving ecosystem with frogs, toads and all manner of creatures living in it. Within two years newts and a range of damsel and dragon flies had arrived. We used some stone from the nearby quarry to create some seating in a circle around the pond – ideal for epilogues under the stars – and planted lilies and reeds in the pond and a variety of flowers and shrubs around to provide a sheltered oasis on a wild Welsh hillside. Campers now have a flattened area to camp on and a bonfire area too.

What a joy to have witnessed the growth of a green and magic space full of wildlife, butterflies, bees and birds where before there had just been a windswept barren heath.

Contributed by Lynda Williams, warden, Pales Meeting House

Consumption and waste



Friends sharing a meal. Photo: ©Mike Pinches 2011

“Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength. Do not be persuaded into buying what you do not need or cannot afford...”

Advices & queries 41

Many of the products we use, and the quantity of them we consume or throw away, are damaging to the environment. Changing the choices we make, both individually and collectively, may take some thought and effort; however, it is likely to cost less rather than more money to consume in a more sustainable manner. This section covers areas of consumption and waste most likely to be relevant to a meeting.

CONSUMPTION

Cleaning products

- * Avoid phosphate- and chlorine-based products. Use the most eco-friendly ones available instead.

Food

- * Try to use the LOAF principles:
 - ~ Locally produced
 - ~ Organically grown
 - ~ Animal friendly
 - ~ Fairly traded

Redecorating and refurbishment

- * Use eco-friendly paints, varnishes and wood treatments:
 - ~ Try to use water-based plant paints. If you can't get hold of these try to purchase paints with zero/minimal VOC (volatile organic compounds).
 - ~ Use natural wood preservative.
 - ~ Use non-chemical paint and varnish remover.

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

REDUCE, REPAIR, REUSE AND RECYCLE

Reduce

- * Reducing the amount of waste you produce is always more carbon-efficient than recycling it after it is produced.
- * Use the Meeting Climate Impact Calculator (enclosed or online) to calculate what contribution waste makes to your overall footprint.
- * Use china or long-lasting plastic tableware rather than disposables.
- * Avoid packaged food.
- * If possible create a compost bin (or ask someone to take appropriate food scraps home for theirs).

Repair

- * When things break or wear out try to mend them before buying new items. For example, could you re-cover chairs rather than replace them?

Reuse

- * Buy recycled goods if possible, including toilet paper, paper towels and napkins, and stationery.
- * Buy labels from charities so you can reuse envelopes.

Recycle

- * Have clearly labelled boxes for each category of recycling – these can be taken to local authority recycling centres when full, if the council won't collect them.
- * All light bulbs can now be recycled, including energy-efficient CFLs. Check with your local authority.
- * Take unwanted goods to a charity shop or advertise on Freecycle (www.freecycle.org) or Freegle (www.ilovefreegle.org). Perhaps set up your own freecycle system for the meeting.
- * QPSW stamp club at Friends House takes used stamps and sells them to generate funds for Quaker work.



YMG 2011.

Photo: ©Mike Pinches 2011

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

Travel



Anne Brewer and her granddaughter toil up the hill.
Photo: Colin Brewer

Everyone has to travel to get to meeting, so it's worth putting some thought into how and how far people have to move. This applies to area meetings and yearly meeting as well as local meetings for worship. Considering transport arrangements might therefore have a big impact on the collective carbon footprint of the meeting as well as individual Friends' footprints.

Transport choices might seem to be up to individual Friends, but the choices that the meeting makes collectively (such as the time of worship) can make a difference to the options available.

It may be helpful to make travel the focus of discussion to increase awareness of the issues.

Some things to think about:

- * Could you conduct a survey of how and how far Friends travel to meeting, and ask why they made those choices?
- * Does the time you hold meeting for worship affect the way people travel (are there buses at that time, for example)?
- * Would it be possible for people to share cars, or would they be encouraged to cycle if they could do so with someone else?
- * Are there facilities for cycle parking at the meeting house?

See the Meeting Climate Impact Calculator and Individual Climate Impact Calculator for details of how to calculate your greenhouse gas emissions from travel. These tools will also help you to calculate the relative contribution of travel to your total emissions.

"Come rain or shine I cycle or walk the four miles to Meeting on Sundays. There are recognisable benefits to my health, but as I toil up the hill on my bike on a dark, wet evening I have to remind myself why I am doing it!"

Anne Brewer, Dorking Local Meeting



YMG 2011.

Photo: ©Mike Pinches 2011

Use of money

The way in which we use money is a very important part of our spiritual witness and is one of the many ways we can build a low-carbon, sustainable future. Money acts in the world on our behalf, and, whether we have a little or a lot, where we put it matters. Our bank accounts, pension funds and the savings of our meeting investments make us all part of the wider financial system. Depending on who we bank or invest with, our money could on the one hand be used to finance the development of a low-carbon, sustainable future, through funding renewable energy for example; on the other it might be lent to companies that cause pollution and threaten human rights, thereby undermining our vision of a sustainable and just world.

Translating our desire to use our money ethically into financial decision-making may seem like a big challenge. There are, however, many resources available to help you with this task.

Finances are the responsibility of the area meeting, including setting reserves and investment policy. Local meetings wanting to take action will need to refer their suggestions to area meeting trustees.

Spending and giving

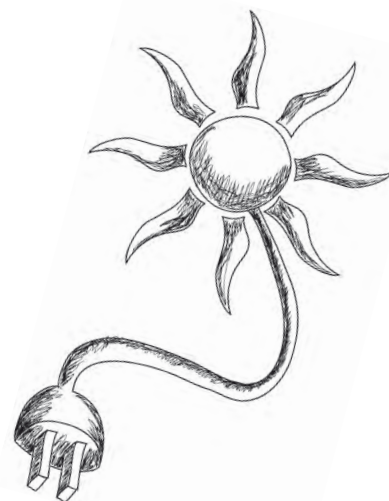
Before you explore questions about how your money is invested, you might want to ask how much money you need in reserve. Quaker meetings are charities, and the Charity Commission has regulations on how much a charity should hold in reserve. Would your financial assets be better spent in the world or donated to others? Investing your money in improving the sustainability of your building may bring returns in terms of reduced energy costs too.

How is your money invested?

Your meeting's money could be invested in a variety of ways. Pages 53–54 outline some of these and suggest things you might want to think about. The Charity Commission now recognises that charities and faith groups must be allowed to invest according to their values. However, this does not mean that trustees can invest anywhere, and they still have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that any investments are made in the best interests of the group. These issues are complicated and you should seek professional guidance.

“...thought should be given, not only to security and rate of interest, but to the conditions under which the income is produced and the effect which the investment may have on the welfare of all, through social or environmental impact, at home or elsewhere.”

Quaker faith & practice 20.56



4. PRACTICAL ACTION

Banks and building societies

Banks pool the money that is deposited and use it to make loans or to invest in the financial markets. You don't necessarily know what companies they are investing in.

- * Consider avoiding the main high street banks and putting your finances into those considered more ethical, such as the Co-operative Bank, Triodos or Ecology.
- * What is your bank/building society's ethical policy? Do they have an environmental policy? The website www.yourethicalmoney.org compares the policies of different banks, including those on green/ethical lending.

Stocks and shares

Your meeting may have money invested in the stock market.

As a shareholder you are a 'member' or part-owner of a company. This means that you have certain rights – such as the right to information about the company and the right to attend the AGM and question the managers. It means that you also have responsibilities – to pay attention to what the company does and (depending on how your shares are held) to vote on necessary matters.

You might want to consider:

- * Negative screening: you can refuse to invest in things you think are unethical.
- * Positive screening: you can consciously invest in companies that are doing positive things for the environment; or you can consciously invest in the ethically 'best' companies in each sector.
- * Engagement: you may choose to accept that the companies you invest in are not perfect but that you can engage with them to try to influence them to change.
- * Again, www.yourethicalmoney.org provides information on ethical investments including comparing them on the basis of their environmental policies.
- * The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) provides resources and support to help you understand issues of corporate and investor responsibility and to engage with companies. See in particular their guide *Investment and Engaging with Companies: A Guide for Faith Communities*. The guide explains how invested funds provide opportunities for dialogue with companies and fund managers, information on how churches hold their funds, and some practical dos and don'ts of dialogue and engagement.
- * ECCR's report *The Banks and Society: Rebuilding Trust* gives an overview of the various social, ethical and environmental issues connected with the banking sector and is a good introduction for anyone struggling to understand what their bank does with their money. See www.eccr.org.uk

4. PRACTICAL ACTION

Social investment

You may want to invest specifically in projects or organisations that are actively seeking to bring about a more sustainable and just world.

- * Areas in which social investment opportunities are emerging include community land and reinvestment trusts, ecological building projects, organic food and fair trade initiatives and microcredit-based social development programmes.

Sustainability

As a meeting you may want to think about developing an investment policy. This will help you to think about what you want to invest in, based on the values and principles you would like to uphold. It's not easy and you will probably have to compromise. You don't need to do it all at once – start by identifying your key areas of concern.

In developing a policy, some issues around sustainability that you may wish to consider include:

- * Climate change: some key contributors to carbon emissions include airlines, electricity and fuel suppliers, car manufacturers and cement producers. Do you want to avoid investing in them altogether? Or are you happy to invest in the most progressive company in each sector? How do you reconcile your dependence on these products with the damage they do?
 - * Building the alternative: could you invest in low-carbon, renewable technologies needed to build a sustainable economy? What about nuclear power?
- 🔍 See pages 86–87 for ideas on where to get additional support for using your money sustainably.

“We should only invest in accordance with our principles.”

Young Friends Central Committee, 1980, Quaker faith & practice 20.57



*Power station in Copenhagen.
Photo: Sunniva Taylor*

Sustainability story

'... the potential for money to work for good ends'

In the late 1980s, I was teaching in the economics department of a university in England. Two significant events in my life had just happened: I had become a member of the Religious Society of Friends and I had been invited to become a non-executive director of the (then fledgling) Ecology Building Society (EBS). The latter experience is one to which this story particularly relates. The principal rule of the EBS is that it will only make loans on buildings and land which will contribute to what we would now call sustainability. It showed me – far more than anything I encountered in academic life – the potential for money to work for good ends ... or to be part of the problem.

As members of the board, we connected with other organisations and initiatives who are concerned to bring ethical principles into spending and saving: Triodos Bank and the Ethical Consumer magazine, in particular.

I have continued to work on these issues. Fast forward to 2010: a Special Interest Group (SIG) at Ireland Yearly Meeting entitled 'Is your money working for a better world?'. The emphasis was on our personal use of financial services and the decisions we make with respect to our Society's finances. It was about how small savings can be part of the solution. Those who attended felt that we had done more to raise consciousness.

So, forward again ... to November 2010. With the help of other Friends, a meeting took place in Dublin during National Ethical Investment Week (NEIW). The theme was 'Making our money work for a better world'. We had speakers from Triodos Bank and Oikocredit, and I spoke about the work of the Ecology Building Society. The meeting was well attended, but there's much more work to be done: to raise consciousness, to improve understanding, to allay some of the (understandable) despair – even cynicism – which now surrounds financial services.

One more small step in time: to Birmingham on 1 March 2011, when the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) launched its report *The Banks and Society: Rebuilding Trust*. This is a valuable resource in that it explains more about how financial services have failed the sustainability agenda and what, as users of these services, we should be doing to bring pressure for change.

Contributed by Tony Weekes, Ireland Yearly Meeting

SECTION 5: SHARING WITH OTHERS

This section:

- * reflects on how we share our testimony
- * explores how Friends can and have worked with community groups
- * provides some tips for political engagement
- * suggests how you might get involved in campaigning and activism

5. SHARING WITH OTHERS

Reflection: Sharing our testimony

As we begin to awaken, individually and as a group, we come to know new aspects of the truth. We may feel called to share our truth with others, offering them the awakening we have experienced. This sharing can be the basis of deep social change. We need to work on all levels available to us, using all of our imagination and communication skills in a prophetic witness. Acts of prophecy can include speaking out to name what is wrong with the current system, setting out a poetic vision of the way things could be, or symbolic acts to draw attention to the change that is needed.

Engaging beyond our local meeting is a vital part of staying healthy and continuing to grow as worshipping communities. As we become involved with others in our neighbourhood, we can both receive enrichment and find that we have something to offer them. We may even find out more about our own path and identity.

In Britain Yearly Meeting we are still finding our corporate response. There are sometimes doubts that there is a distinctive Quaker contribution to sustainability. Others in the interfaith and green movements have a stronger sense of a Quaker role – not least because Friends are often key organisers and voices in these movements. Quakers are seen as people who are committed, keep coming to the gatherings, and try to live out their values in their own lives.

Perhaps one of the striking differences between Quakers and others is in the approach to campaigning. Climate change campaigners have tended to paint their agenda in terms of good and bad, friends and enemies. The ‘perpetrators’ of climate change may be government, big business, ‘the rich’, ourselves. But the call to answer that of God in everyone implies that we treat ourselves and others with love, trust and respect. This connects to the essential feature of Quaker practice – silent listening. Quaker spirituality is a listening spirituality. It involves listening to the Inward Light available to each one of us, to its expression in others’ words, and to the Spirit moving in the gathered meeting.

There is an increasingly clear role for Friends in taking Quaker practices to other groups. Quaker decision processes are particularly suited to dealing with the current world situation, with its complexity and diversity of interests. They are also suited to addressing conflict, building community and developing a collective will.

“Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak...”

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Engaging beyond our local meeting is a vital part of staying healthy and continuing to grow as worshipping communities



Photo: Jasmine Piercy

5. SHARING WITH OTHERS

There may also be insights to share from experience with Quaker processes and structures. For instance, they work best when we have sufficient time and commitment to listen to each other and to reflect deeply, both individually and together.

Quaker processes and discipline are best transmitted through experience. They are easier to learn than to teach. Some of the best experiences have come from Friends making quiet suggestions in non-Quaker groups they are involved in. Some have introduced a moment of quiet to prepare for the meeting. Others have appointed someone to draft minutes in the meeting and make sure everyone agrees the wording. Or they have adopted ground rules about not interrupting, and building on what has been said rather than debating.

To be able to offer support to others, we need regular experience of practising our listening disciplines. We also need to develop our corporate responses to issues such as climate change and energy security. So it is in practising and applying our own discipline that we may most effectively offer a witness in the world.

Some questions you might explore, perhaps with others in your meeting in a worship-sharing or discussion session:

- * What other groups are you involved in, in your community, workplace or elsewhere, which could benefit from Quaker experience?
- * In what ways could you share Quaker insights and practices with others?

Acting with others

Many Friends have found their way into sustainability through involvement in non-Quaker groups. Some meetings have found that they can offer support to the activities of community groups, perhaps through the free loan of their building or by upholding the groups' activities.

Quakers have been particularly involved with the Transition movement. A Transition initiative is a community-led response to the pressures of climate change, fossil fuel depletion and economic contraction. Visit www.transitionnetwork.org to find out about them and to locate your nearest one. See also www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability for information on events and connections Quakers have been making with the Transition movement.



Multi-faith campaigning in Copenhagen, 2010.

Photo: Sunniva Taylor

“ ... So all our testimonies, all our Quaker work, all our Quaker lives are part of one process, of striving towards a flourishing, just and peaceful Creation – the Kingdom of God.”

Audrey Urry, 1994,
Quaker faith & practice 25.04

Sustainability story

Developing the links between existing community groups

Since October 2009, three members of Leyburn LOM have been involved in setting up a transition group, Transition Richmond Yorkshire (TRY). The primary focus has been awareness-raising. We think it is important to value and develop the links between existing local community groups, rather than seeming to evangelise with an exclusive message about climate change, e.g. local environmental protection, fair trade, shop local initiatives, etc. We started with a very successful film showing in the local cinema (charging normal prices) and we have held several talks during the year. Our main awareness-raising activity has been a thought-provoking and continually changing window display, by courtesy of a sympathetic local grocer. Topics have included keeping warm in winter; composting tips; bicycle use; school students looking to the future; foraging and jam-making; fair trade linked with shop local (being aware of labelling and where things come from), plastics and recycling.



From left to right: TRY window – Fairtrade and Shop Local; TRY window – ‘Keeping warm in winter’; TRY window – ‘Composting’.
Photos: Transition Richmond Yorkshire

A very active ‘Growing Food Together’ sub-group has evolved, which is identifying and bringing into use waste-, council-owned and other land. (It’s quite a challenge to convince and then work with the local authorities to get this going.) Pruning and care of local fruit trees and demonstrating apple pressing and juicing in the market place have been other activities. We recognise the value of being involved with the local council and related organisations. Some of us attend the meetings of the council’s Green Living Task Group, so that we can feed in ideas and make links e.g. we are contributing to the planning of an eco week, involving local businesses and schools; it will also see the launch of an arts group involving local musicians and artists.

Contributed by Janet Quilley, Leyburn Quaker Meeting

Sustainability story

Gaining a voice in the community

Challenged by a talk on global warming by the co-chair of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, in 2001 a Friend and I were moved to bring the concern to our Meeting and subsequently founded a community group to raise awareness about climate change, encourage energy saving and promote renewable energy in our small market town.

Llanidloes Energy Solutions (LLES) is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year and we now have about 150 members. Though few are very active it gives us a voice in the community to promote sustainability issues and we have the support of the mayor and town council. We are now part of the Low Carbon Communities Network, and have held regular films, talks and market stalls on different topics, so have quite a high profile in the town. Many people know we have strong links with the Quaker Meeting and we have four Quakers on the trustee board. We pioneered Open Eco-House days and have held three very successful Green Fairs which have attracted visitors from near and far and involved local schools, churches and other community groups. We have done household Energy Surveys to encourage cutting carbon, loan out Energy Monitors to track electricity use, and recently have had the loan of an infra-red camera.

Last year we launched the 10:10 Campaign in the town and organised an eco-renovation of the town's community centre, which included installing solar PV panels on the roof to generate electricity. We have also installed solar panels on the public toilets to provide hot water.

LLES has had many successes but also many failures and disappointments over the years as projects have failed to come to fruition. I think my main role has been faithfully to hold things together through difficult times and uphold the project in prayer, which I feel has been crucial. I think the Quaker ethos has also promoted harmony in the group.

A recent high was being given a Wales Green Hero award for my work with LLES.

Contributed by Gwen Prince, Llanidloes Quaker Meeting



Llanidloes Energy Solutions, who have four Quakers on the trustee board, hold regular stalls.

Photo: Gwen Prince

5. SHARING WITH OTHERS

Political action

Political activity begins in deriving policies from our testimonies and concerns. It may require going beyond our comfort zone in narrowing down options for action and political change. Some Friends may see it as divisive. Such activity may start with meeting your local Member of Parliament (MP), Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP) or Member of the Welsh Assembly.

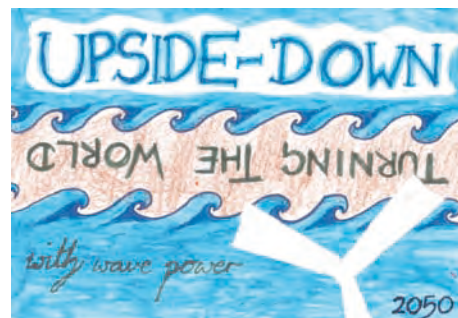
If our worshipping communities are essential vehicles for our discernment they may be no less relevant to our political activity. Part of our witness is about how we do politics as much as what we say to whom. One starting point might be to invite your MP to visit your meeting and to share worship with you before having an informal conversation with him or her over lunch. By doing so you may draw your representative into your worship as much as extending your witness into political activity. Meeting an MP in your place of worship may be more inclusive and sustainable than travelling to a Westminster office. It also illustrates a collaborative way of working as it is likely to be easier to explore problems together in this context. You can then follow up with more direct questions.

What can your MP do for you?

Raise a concern with a minister

Any good MP should be willing to raise a concern brought by a constituent with the appropriate minister. Whether you are concerned about the impact of a coal burning power station on the environment, the impact of an additional runway at the airport, the cost of a carbon tax or environmental impact assessment, your MP should write to the Minister raising the concern and inviting their response. It is always better to write to your MP asking them to raise your concerns with the Minister than to write to the Minister directly. A letter that you write directly to the Minister will have little influence. It is unlikely to be seen by him/her and will probably be answered by a junior civil servant. A letter from your MP, however, will be responded to by the Minister personally and be read at a more senior level within the civil service.

If the MP supports your concern they may add in their covering letter points of their own. Your concern will then be strengthened. One technique you may use is both to ask your MP to raise your concern with the Minister and to ask them for their personal view. This requires them to put their position on the record. If it is added to the letter covering yours to the Minister it will strengthen it.



Drawing by a young Friend, YMG 2011.

*Political activity begins
in deriving policies from our
testimonies and concerns*



Simon Bond of Maidenhead Quakers and Laura Bigoni from CAFOD meet Home Secretary Theresa May to discuss the UK's role in dealing with climate change, November 2010.

Photo: taken on Laura Bigoni's camera by one of Theresa May's staff

5. SHARING WITH OTHERS

When raising concerns with your MP you should seek to be concise, factual and accurate. Letters are best kept to two sides of A4. If you need greater space it may be better to submit a report, a statement of concern, or a memorandum and to make your approach to the MP a covering letter. Be very clear about what the outcome is that you hope for, what you are going to ask for, questions that you need clarifying and any follow-up that you're asking for.

Written questions

Any good MP should be willing to table appropriate questions on your behalf. These should be factual and not involve disguised opinion or innuendo. They should be neutral in tone avoiding irony or satire. Written questions are submitted by the MP to the table office and should be answered within a working week of their being tabled. Answers are put on the record by being printed in Hansard and on the Parliamentary website.

Oral questions

Question Time takes place for an hour from Monday to Thursday after prayers. Each major government department is responsible for answering questions every five weeks according to a rota called the Order of Oral Questions. The questions asked must relate directly to the responsibilities of the government department concerned. Prime Minister's Questions take place every Wednesday from 12 noon to 12:30 after the department that is being questioned on that day. Oral questions are more newsworthy and effective in raising issues with government. An MP will generally choose carefully those questions that he or she seeks to ask orally and will often be wary about putting a minister of his or her own political party in a difficult position. Oral Prime Minister's Questions also allow for an MP to raise a supplementary question that relates to the subject matter of the original question.

Practical points

- * Research your MP's background carefully before contacting them. Find out their political opinions and interests and wherever possible think about how the issue will look from their point of view.
- * Be courteous and positive and avoid being aggressive or unduly deferential. Remember that they are busy but that it is part of their job to represent you. Wherever possible seek to make common cause and appeal to common interests.
- * If offering criticism always try to be positive about initiatives where you feel they have helped.



Quakers join 'Moving Planet Day' on 26 September 2011, calling on the world to move beyond fossil fuels.
Photo: Sunniva Taylor

“Politics cannot be relegated to some outer place, but must be recognised as one side of life, which is as much the concern of religious people and of a religious body as any other part of life...”

*Lucy F Morland, 1919,
Quaker faith & practice 23.06*

5. SHARING WITH OTHERS

- * Wherever possible write on behalf of a group or organisation rather than as an individual.
- * Ask your MP's advice about how they feel you might advance your cause.
- * Follow up meetings with a courteous letter thanking the MP for their time, summarising the issues that you have raised and being clear about any expectations that you have regarding what you hope them to do and what you have agreed.

“Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national, and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement may demand.”

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Campaigning and activism

Many Friends are called to speak ‘truth to power’ and to protest and resist practices and actions contrary to building a sustainable and peaceful society. This may take the form of joining campaigns or taking nonviolent direct action.

QPSW is a member of the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition, the UK's largest group of people dedicated to action on climate change and limiting its impact on the world's poorest communities.

We are also a member of a number of other organisations and campaigns with whom Friends can take action to build a non-violent sustainable community.

See www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability for current opportunities to speak out.



Quakers at 'The Wave' march, December 2009.

Photo: Liam Geary Baulch

Sustainability story

Becoming an active environmentalist

Thanks to my parents I have always been environmentally conscious on a personal level. I was brought up as a vegetarian recycling-fanatic, and as they've never had a car went everywhere by bike or train. However I started to take ownership of my response to issues of sustainability after attending Junior Yearly Meeting about five years ago: generally inspired, I looked to make a change and decided to return to being vegetarian after some years of rebellion.

Yet it was only really when I began university two years ago that I became a more active environmentalist. Through People and Planet I did numerous campaigns on diverse green issues, and attended loads of protests including Climate Camp at the G20. In December 2009 I helped organise the Quaker contingent at The Wave march in London, before cycling part of the way to Copenhagen with two university friends to protest and document the UN Climate Conference from the outside.

Protecting the environment and striving towards a truly sustainable world is our shared responsibility. Certainly the Quaker testimony to Simplicity has been important to me in encouraging my actions, but fundamentally I think I'm driven by a desire for justice: for people in the developing world who are suffering the most from our unsustainable mistreatment of the planet, but also for all plant and animal species whose existence we jeopardise.

I would urge all Friends to be moved to action by the many aspects of Quakerism that lead back to the great importance of sustainability, but also to remember that sometimes it is important to take a break from campaigning now and then (as I am doing at the moment!) because otherwise you can risk 'burnout'.

Contributed by Owen Everett, Watford Quaker Meeting



Owen Everett, Watford Quaker Meeting, cycled to Copenhagen in 2010 to protest outside the UN Climate Conference.

Photo: Jesse Meadows

Sustainability story

Creating strong resilient communities

How can we respond to the enormous challenges the world is facing, including peak oil, climate change and increasing inequality? Quaker Testimonies to Simplicity and to Equality show me the need to change the way I live and to think about people in developing countries who are already suffering the effects of climate change. This involves working at every level: individual, community and national. As a Quaker I bring recognition of the need for change based on a conviction that the way our society is organised is fundamentally flawed, and that we need to move towards one in which right relationships at every level are considered more important than economic growth. The Transition concept attracted me because of its emphasis on the positive, i.e. creating strong resilient communities. There is no blueprint but many ideas, and the focus is on playing to people's strengths and interests; and a recognition that priorities will vary in different areas.

Crediton is a market town in Devon with a wide range of community organisations. We were one of the early Transition Towns and now have over 300 members and active subgroups looking at food, energy, transport and waste. I have been chair for the past three years.

Our successes include:

- * A campaign to get rid of plastic bags (partially achieved).
- * Open weekends promoting renewable energy, e.g. solar panels, PV cells and ground heat pumps.
- * Organising 'swishing events' at which people can exchange clothes and learn how to repair and reuse what they own.
- * Getting local organisations to support the Copenhagen Conference and make pledges about how they would cut their emissions (part of the 350 campaign to reduce emissions to 350 parts per million).
- * Setting up a website to promote local food production.

The hardest part is reaching out to the wider community and encouraging more people to become active. We struggle to find the best way of communicating – a way which recognises that major changes are needed in our lifestyles but that this can be seen as life enhancing, rather than something negative. We are working closely with local schools since engaging young people is crucial if we are to have a lasting impact.

Overall I feel pleased with what we have achieved and we are now seen as a vital part of the local community and recently won the Devon Small Green Steps Award.

My advice to other Quakers is to start with whatever seems important locally, to build alliances and networks, and to develop a vision that can be shared by all members of the community.

Contributed by Gerald Conyngham, Exeter Quakers



*A cycle rally in Crediton in 2008 to reclaim Crediton for cycling.
Photo: Gerald Conyngham*

SECTION 6: GROUP EXERCISES

This section contains:

- * Group exercises:

1. Sowing the seeds of action
2. Exploring the challenges that face us
3. A story of the fragile Earth
4. A simple ritual
5. Vision map
6. Vision meditation
7. Exploring your path

- * Guidelines for facilitators

- * Guidance on worship sharing

6. GROUP EXERCISES

1. Sowing the seeds of action

Aim

The aim of this exercise is to help participants explore the values that inspire them to take action.

Timing

You can adapt this exercise depending on the time allowed. If you only have 20 minutes you could probably address one or two of the questions. To look at all of them you will probably need about an hour.

Materials

Flipchart paper and pens.

Preparation

Write up the questions below on the flipchart paper. Make sure you write them clearly in large letters and that you position the paper where everyone can read it.

Process

- * Invite people to move into groups of two or three.
- * Explain to the groups that they are going to read five questions, in turn, and then reflect and discuss on them in their groups.
- * Then ask the group to share around the first question, giving them 10–20 minutes (depending on how much time you have available). Warn them when you are a few minutes away from the end of the allotted time.
- * You may want to encourage Friends to work in worship-sharing mode. See page 77 for guidance on worship sharing.
- * Repeat the process for the second, third, fourth and fifth questions.

The questions

1. What makes you glad to be alive on this earth?
2. What do you really need and what do you value most in your life?
3. What in society helps you to meet those needs and values, and what makes it difficult?
4. How does your Quaker involvement support or challenge your needs and values?
5. Your needs and values are the seeds that can lead you to act and to try to build a world in which these values flourish. What kind of nourishment do your seeds need to flower?

Worship sharing (10 minutes)

After the groups have discussed all five questions (or as many as you have time for) come together as a whole group to share.

Explain that you are now going to gather in worship to reflect on what you have been discussing. Remind the group that each person should have a chance to speak once, if they wish, and to leave a small silence after someone speaks, before they do.

2. Exploring the challenges that face us

Aim

This exercise is intended to give Friends the space to speak of their true reactions and responses to the plight of the world, with others acting as witness. It can be enlightening both to those who do not feel strongly or who know they feel detached or numb, and, conversely, to those who experience their feelings as strong, needing expression, or getting in their way. For people who do not identify with either of these states, it can be a powerful witnessing experience.

This exercise is based on the 'Truth Mandala' exercise from Joanna Macy and Molly Young Brown in *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World* (New Society Publishers, 1998).

Facilitators' note

This exercise is a bit more challenging, both to facilitate and potentially for participants. Make sure you feel comfortable with the text and process before you start, and explain to people that the exercise is intended to bring up emotions and that they should be prepared for that.

"I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness."

George Fox, 1647,
Quaker faith & practice 19.03

Timing

You should allow at least an hour for this exercise, though the time needed will depend on the number of people in the group.

Materials

A stone – in this exercise this will represent fear.

A handful of dry leaves – in this exercise these will represent grief, sorrow and sadness.

A stick – in this exercise this will represent anger. It is not for hitting but for grasping tightly with both hands.

An empty bowl – in this exercise this will represent absence, a sense of deprivation or need, our hunger or our numbness.

A small rug, or similar.

Preparation

If you are going to facilitate this session familiarise yourself with the aim section above.

Familiarise yourself with the meaning of the different objects.

Lay the rug on the floor, and place one object at each corner. Hope, and other positive emotions, is the space in the middle of the rug.

Position a circle of chairs around the rug (one for each person).

6. GROUP EXERCISES

Process

- * Ask people to take a place in the circle. Introduce the exercise. You may want to just read out the aim, or say it in your own words. Explain that the purpose of the objects is to help us voice the truth of our own experience. Each object represents an aspect of our feeling life. Then introduce each object, using the list above to explain what each one means.
- * Explain that each person can go into the centre and pick up one of the objects, choosing the one that represents their dominant feeling of the moment. They can then stand with their objects and speak about what they are feeling. When they have finished they place the object back where they found it. Let people know that they can speak with more than one object. If they are feeling hopeful, or another positive emotion, they can simply stand on the rug without picking up an object. Explain that there should then be a pause, as in worship sharing, before someone else moves to the centre.
- * Tell people that there is no expectation that they actively take part and that witnessing is just as important, but that there will be time for everyone to partake at least once, should they wish to.
- * Ask the group for a commitment to confidentiality.
- * Explain that there will be a period of silence at the beginning and someone can start when they are ready. Say that you will give notice before the last few minutes that the process is coming to an end, and that you will end with a period of receptive silent worship.
- * Then enter the silence.
- * As you approach the end of the allocated time, or when you feel that the group energy is changing and the time has come to finish, invite anyone who still wishes to participate and has not yet done so to enter the circle.

Worship

Make sure you end the process with a few minutes of silent worship or worship sharing.

3. A story of the fragile Earth

This is a story told in what is called the Godly Play style. What is offered is a simple script, simple instructions and open questions to use for everybody to explore the story's meaning for themselves.

The story begins with the laying out of a soft black cloth that represents the universe before anything was formed. Then come the stars. Then comes a small blue planet – water, sky, earth, creatures and people. Then come the things that go bump in the night – pollution from planes and cars, chemicals and war. Then the helpers appear.

The instructions and script for telling the story, details of the simple equipment needed and how to set up a reflective and creative space are all available at:

www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability

A story kit can be borrowed from the Quaker Life Children and Young People's work team (see Additional Support and Resources for contact details). At least one month's notice is required. It may also be possible to be put in touch with Friends with experience of telling Godly Play style stories.



Photo: Sunniva Taylor

4. A simple ritual

This activity or ritual offers an opportunity to go beyond what we 'think' about what human beings are doing to the Earth.

After time to relax, still and centre, everybody is invited to slowly allow into their mind part of creation – plant, animal, bird, insect, water, earth, rock, stone, air, tree – whatever occurs to them without deliberate thought. Questions are then offered about the life of what has come to mind. Everybody is then asked to wonder if it has a message for us. Time is then spent making a mask that represents the aspect of creation that each person has chosen. Then a council is convened and people are invited to speak from behind their mask and give any messages to us as humans. This was done with 5–11 year olds at Yearly Meeting Gathering 2011. It was moving, powerful and engaging. A detailed plan for this activity can be found at:

www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability



YMG 2011.

Photo: ©Mike Pinches 2011

5. Vision map

Aim

The aim of this exercise is to provide a space and means to vision what your community would be like if we had succeeded in becoming low-carbon and sustainable. You could use it to explore visions for your meeting, local community, Britain Yearly Meeting, or society.

Timing

You'll need at least half an hour to do this. Longer would be better.

Materials

Large pieces of paper.

Coloured pens.

Preparation

Arrange chairs (and tables if you have them) into groups. Groups of four are probably best, but you can change this depending on how many people there are. Give each group a large piece of paper as well as a selection of coloured pens.

Process

In groups explore the following questions. You can take as long as you want and be as creative as you want. Perhaps leave the results pinned up somewhere in your meeting house for people to reflect on.

Explain to people that they are being asked to imagine what the world would look like in 2030 if we had successfully built a flourishing low-carbon, sustainable community. You could identify community as your meeting, local community, the UK, or the world.

- * *Food*: What would we eat? How would it be produced, stored, supplied, cooked, shared?
- * *Transport*: What changes would there be in the places we need to travel to – for work, visiting family and friends, shopping, etc.? How would we get there?
- * *Energy*: What changes would there be in the way we use energy for heating, cooking, lighting, appliances? What would our energy sources be?
- * *Work*: Would there be any changes in our working patterns?
- * *Holidays*: What sort of holidays would people be taking? Where would we be going? How would we get there? What would we do differently once there?
- * *Housing*: How would our houses be different?
- * *Local communities*: What would our local communities look like?
- * *Dealing with waste*: What changes might have occurred in the waste we produce and the way we deal with it?
- * *Education*: Would education be delivered in the same way?
- * *Quakers*: What differences would there be in the way we live our lives as Quakers?

*"You see things;
and you say,
'Why?' But I dream
things that never
were; and I say,
'Why not?'"*

*George Bernard Shaw, 1921,
Back to Methuselah,
Part 1, Act I*

6. Vision meditation

Aim

The aim of this exercise is to give space for imagination and dreaming about the future. Visions are important. A vision gives us something to aim for, inspires people and gives hope.

Timing

It would be good to allow at least 45 minutes for this exercise, including the sharing after the meditation.

Materials

You may want to have some paper and pens available for after the visioning.

Preparation

If you are facilitating the session take time to familiarise yourself with the text on page 73.

When it comes to reading the text do so at a relaxed pace, in a calm voice.

Put the pens and paper somewhere in the room where they will be easy to access.

Process

- * Introduce the exercise using the text under Aim, or in your own words. You may want to draw on the text on pages 29–30.
- * Explain that you are going to read something and that the idea is for people to try to visualise around this. They are being asked to sit in silence and reflect on what the words you read bring up for them. Explain that people will respond in different ways and that this is fine. You can let people know that if they are not comfortable with the relaxation parts of the instructions they are free to ignore them, and that if they fall asleep that's okay too!
- * Begin with a short silence before using the suggested recitation. Then read the following text in the manner explained above.

6. GROUP EXERCISES

Start by making yourself as comfortable and relaxed as you can – just take a moment for that. You might want to put your feet flat on the floor. And if you're comfortable with it, let your eyes close. Become aware of your body ... where it touches the ground and seat ... become aware of your breath. Relax into your body and into your breath ...

Take from the following guidelines those elements which engage you.

I'd like you to think of places you know well in your neighbourhood and in your daily life. Notice the things you like about them, and things that you dislike. Notice the people. Notice what you can see, hear, smell, feel ...
[pause 2 mins]

Now, in your imagination, leave your neighbourhood. You'd better do it in a sustainable way, so perhaps it's for a walking or cycling trip around the world. But you are away for a long time: ten, fifteen years ... [pause 1 min]

Now it's 2025 and you're coming back. And as you return to those places you know, you realise that your neighbourhood has changed profoundly. It really does feel like coming home because it has become the place you dreamed of living in; it has become sustainable.

Notice how it's different, how it has changed. Notice the things that are the same, the things that are familiar. How does it look, this new neighbourhood? What do you feel? What can you smell, hear? ... [pause 2 mins]

Ask yourself what sort of qualities of character – like courage, patience, strength, gentleness or any other – you feel you need to live in that world, or to help make the sort of world that you would like to live in. Just try to think of one quality, a characteristic that you feel you need, and when you find one, hold that in your mind and just think about it for a moment or two. .. [pause 1 min]

And now ask yourself – perhaps ask the people in this new world – what happened to bring about this change? How do people relate to each other in this changed world? What do they do with their time? How do they live? ...
[pause 2 mins]

In a moment I'll ask you to come back into the room and sit for a few minutes in silence. You may like to record something of what you've just experienced on paper, perhaps in words, perhaps a drawing. When you're ready, open your eyes ...

After the visioning

Suggest to people that they turn to their neighbour for five minutes to discuss what they have experienced.

Also explain that there is pen and paper available if people would rather reflect by themselves in that way.

Then bring everyone together. Explain that you are going to spend 10–15 minutes in worship sharing reflecting on the ideas and images that came up.

See page 77 for guidance on worship sharing.

7. Exploring your path

Aim

The aim of this exercise is to help individuals identify where they are led to take action. It shows that we don't all have to do everything, and that we all have skills to contribute. It will also help to highlight the importance of working together and supporting one another.

Introduction

The huge range of possible actions, and the lack of support in the daily lives of many of us, can lead to indecision, procrastination, denial of the relevance of acting, or even despair. Some of us will see this in the lives of close friends, if not in ourselves. So any support, acknowledgement and celebration of actions we have taken, or the inspiration behind them, is something valuable that your Quaker meeting may be able to play a unique role in.

One of the advantages of looking at our priorities together is that it shows we don't all have to do everything. Some of us may be called to change our own lives and households, while others are called to engage with national or international government or business. Very often, if we start with action in the sphere that feels easiest or most important for us, we are later drawn to action in other spheres.

Timing

The timings below are based on an hour-long exercise; however, it would be possible to do it in less if you reduce the time for each part, particularly the worship sharing at the end.

Materials

Spheres of action diagram (page 75), either drawn onto flipchart paper or photocopied so there are enough for every person in the group.

Preparation

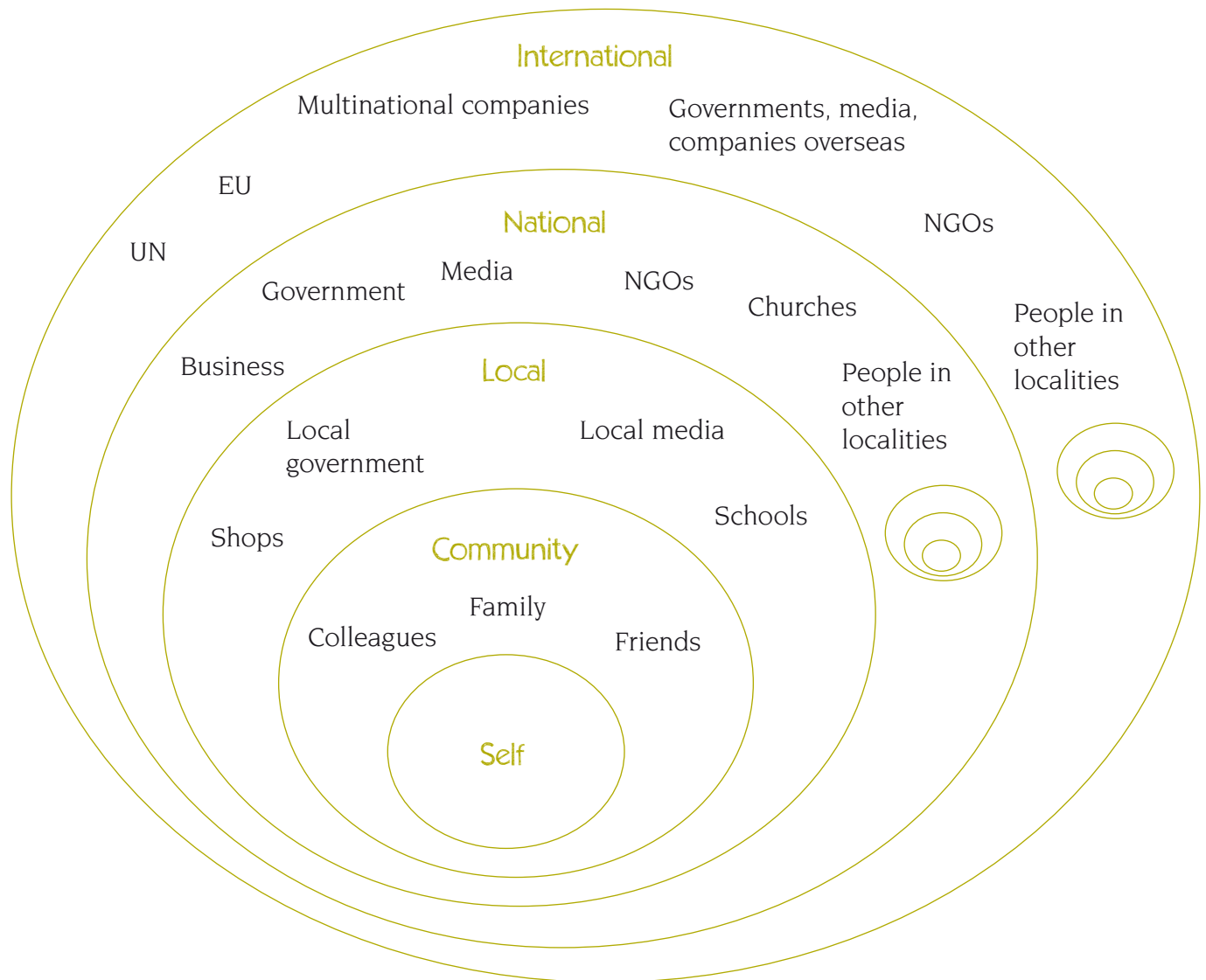
Draw the spheres of action diagram on the flipchart or give a photocopy of the diagram to each Friend.

Have pens available for Friends to write/draw on the diagram if they wish.

Process

- * If you are facilitating the session, introduce the exercise using the information in the introductory section, adapting it as you see fit. (5–10 mins)
- * Then ask Friends to divide into small groups of 2 or 3. Explain that they are being asked to look at the diagram in their groups and discuss where they feel most drawn to or able to act. (15–20 mins)
- * Call for quiet before explaining that there will be ten minutes for personal reflection and that the pens provided are for Friends to record their thoughts on the paper if they would like to. (5–10 mins)
- * Call the group into a circle and explain that you will finish the session with worship sharing (15–20 mins). See page 77 for guidance on worship sharing.

Spheres of action



Guidelines for facilitators

Relax

Your role is to help participants enjoy and benefit from an activity or exercise and learn from each other. Remember you do not have to be an expert on the subject. Your job is to help the workshop go well.

Consider working with a partner

We recommend that two people take responsibility for leading an activity or exercise. This means you can support each other, and one person can be aware of the needs of the group while the other leads. Take turns.

Be prepared

Read and familiarise yourself with the exercise, and how you are going to run it. Check you have the materials you need and that you understand the timings suggested.

Be flexible

The timings are suggestions only; generally larger groups will take longer to do exercises, and smaller groups less time. You may also want to alter timings if something appears to be going really well. You can be creative.

Establish group agreement

For some of the exercises you might want to establish confidentiality – nothing said in the room is repeated outside. See if the group would like to agree to this. Another approach might be to speak only from experience, but allow everyone to contribute, or not as they wish, and value and listen respectfully to everyone's contributions even if you disagree with them. You may want to write up your group agreement somewhere and remind the group of it from time to time.

Be aware

Do not let one person dominate: make it clear that you are encouraging everyone to participate. Make space for those who find it harder to speak in a group. Be aware of those with sight, hearing or mobility impairment and try to do what is necessary to enable them to participate fully. Check with them beforehand what they need and prefer. Encourage participants to write clearly.

Small groups

Working in small groups can create a heightened sense of safety for those who find larger groups difficult, but be aware that some people don't like it. You can use a variety of ways to split up the group depending on what you feel is best: for example, suggesting people turn to someone near them, counting around the room, or finding someone they haven't worked with before.

Worship sharing

Worship is a means by which we open ourselves up to God's power and creativity in the world, and give thanks. It is from this that we find our reasons and means to act. Gather to share in worship around sustainability. Worship sharing allows you to focus your worship on a particular concern; this helps to explore your own experience and share with others more deeply than in normal conversation. You may want to start with a poem or story on the theme to get people thinking, or include this as part of a longer session containing other activities.

Before gathering to share in worship remember the following:

- * Worship sharing is in the spirit of worship, grounded in silence
- * Participants should speak when they are ready
- * Others should focus on listening, upholding the speaker and letting go of any desire to react or respond
- * Leave some silence between contributions so that the group remains centred
- * Participants should not speak more than once, at least not before everyone else has spoken.

See *Quaker faith & practice* 12.21 for further guidance on worship sharing.

SECTION 7: FURTHER RESOURCES

This section includes information on:

- * Where to get funding
- * Additional support and resources
- * 'Gathering up the threads', Minute 36, Yearly Meeting Gathering 2011

7. FURTHER RESOURCES

Funding

Many of the steps you take towards sustainability needn't incur great financial cost. In fact, plenty of the actions suggested in this toolkit will cost you nothing to implement. Nonetheless, here are some suggestions for where you could go for financial support should you need to.

Your local and area meeting

Before applying for outside support think about what resources the meeting already has. Make sure that your meeting's annual budget includes a 'sustainability' category. The meeting might decide to commit a certain amount each year to this budget. Alternatively, the meeting might want to put forward specific proposals each year. You might also want to think about fundraising within your meeting.

Directory of Quaker and Quaker-related grant-making trusts

The Directory of Quaker and Quaker-related grant-making trusts is available (free of charge) on request from Blake Humphries (020 7663 1063 or blakeh@quaker.org.uk). It is only available to Friends/attenders within Britain Yearly Meeting, and only available in printed form.

Energy Saving Trust, Green Communities

The Green Communities project aimed to support, facilitate and promote community-based energy projects. Their helpline, training and expert support were ended due to funding constraints; however, they still have a very helpful website, which includes a searchable funding database. See www.energysavingtrust.org

Environmental Funders Network

The Environmental Funders Network (EFN) is an informal network of trusts, foundations and individuals making grants on environmental and conservation issues. It does not itself distribute grants; however, on their 'Who's Involved' page you will find a list of funders to which you may want to apply. See www.greenfunders.org

Feed-In Tariff

If you install a renewable electricity generation system (like photovoltaics) on your meeting house premises, then you will probably be eligible for the Feed-In Tariff. This is a payment per kWh of renewable energy generated, which is paid via your electricity company. See www.fitariffs.co.uk/FITs. The Feed-In Tariff raises some complicated ethical issues; contact Living Witness to discuss these.

A similar scheme for heat is also under development. See www.rhinentive.co.uk/RHI

Green Grants Machine

This website provides information on environmental funding schemes. See www.greengrantsmachine.co.uk

Landfill Tax Credit Scheme

If your meeting house lies within range of a qualifying landfill site you may be eligible for funds from this scheme. Funding is dependent on the applicant already having secured the promise of funding from a third party. The Meeting Houses Fund is prepared to play the role of the third party funder. Details of the scheme are available at www.entrust.org.uk and details of how the Meeting Houses Fund can support applications to the scheme are available from Kevin Ellis, Property Manager, on 020 7663 1085 or kevine@quaker.org.uk.

Local government grants

It may be worth enquiring whether your local authority has any relevant schemes.

Meeting Houses Fund

The purpose of the Meeting Houses Fund is to provide financial assistance to meetings carrying out improvements to their premises including warden's accommodation, for acquiring and developing new premises and supporting substantial repairs to historic meeting houses. See www.quaker.org.uk/property-matters or contact Kevin Ellis (020 7663 1085 or kevine@quaker.org.uk) for further information.

QPSW Sustainability Grants

QPSW Sustainability Grants are intended to provide support to Quaker (or Quaker-supported) projects focussing on sustainability.

Applications are invited to support projects that address sustainability concerns through practical action or educational or exploratory work. They must be initiated or supported by a local or area meeting and applicants should be able to provide a minute of support from the meeting. A maximum of £2,000 and minimum of £100 may be requested.

Contact Sunniva Taylor, QPSW Sustainability and Peace Programme manager, for more details: 020 7663 1047 or sunnivat@quaker.org.uk

Additional support and resources

UK Quaker bodies

- * **Advisory Committee on Property (ACP):** acts as the central advisory body to area meetings and other owning bodies within Britain Yearly Meeting relating to meeting houses and other property used for the purposes of the Society (including burial grounds and trust property). The ACP will advise on property matters relating to redundancy, demolition, sale, lease, purchase, alteration, extension, historic buildings, repair, maintenance of existing buildings and new building. See www.quaker.org.uk/advisory-committee-property
- * **Children and Young People's work team, Quaker Life:** provides resources, support and training to work with children and young people. See www.quaker.org.uk/cyp or contact Bevelie Shember, Administrator, on 020 7663 1013 or bevelies@quaker.org.uk.
- * **Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC):** brings together Quakers from all traditions around the world for fellowship and discernment. See www.fwccworld.org
- * **Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB):** a group of Quakers, most of whom are appointed as representatives by area meetings in the north of Britain. Their purpose is 'to advise and encourage Friends, and through them their fellow citizens, in the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth'. See www.nfpb.gn.apc.org
- * **Quaker Community at Bamford:** runs a programme of retreats which range from silence to seasonal celebrations, from gardening to discussing Quaker responses in Palestine and Israel. Their short courses focus on Quaker spirituality and Quaker approaches to sustainability and community. The community also welcomes enquiries from attenders and Quakers interested in joining. See www.quakercommunity.org.uk
- * **Quaker Housing Trust:** a channel through which social housing projects can get advice, support, loans or grants that would be difficult to find elsewhere. See www.qht.org.uk
- * **Quaker Life:** works to strengthen and sustain the fabric of Quaker life within our Yearly Meeting (www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-life). Michael Booth, Quaker Life's Supporting Meetings Officer, is available to discuss any difficulties you may have with decision-making. Contact him on 020 7663 1107 or michaelsb@quaker.org.uk.
- * **Quaker Stewardship Committee:** set up by Yearly Meeting to support meetings in their stewardship of finance and property; encourage accountability, transparency and integrity in all our affairs; and enable Friends to work with statutory bodies, such as those administering charity law, on issues that affect all meetings and their associated bodies. See www.quaker.org.uk/qsc
- * **Quaker Voluntary Action:** provides practical opportunities to put faith into action and to develop new ways of volunteering that meet the challenges of our time. See www.qva.org.uk
- * **Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre:** runs courses exploring Quakerism and themes of interest to Quakers, such as Peace and Reconciliation, Quaker History and Spiritual Journeys. See www.woodbrooke.org.uk

7. FURTHER RESOURCES

Study packs and group work

- * *Be the Change: Resources for Study Groups* comprises five session plans for study groups by Living Witness. For more information go to www.livingwitness.org.uk
- * *Engaging with the Quaker Testimonies: a Toolkit*, Quaker Books, 2007: a resource produced by the Testimonies Committee to help Quakers engage with the implications of the testimonies in our own lives and work. Available from the Quaker Centre bookshop at Friends House or online at www.quaker.org.uk/shop
- * *Friends World Committee for Consultation, Global Change Consultation*. A programme to discern the merits of a more coordinated Friends' response and a deeper understanding of the spiritual underpinnings of Friends' witness in relation to global change and its myriad facets. An invitation to explore six queries. Details at www.fwccglobalchange.org
- * *Good Lives* study packs. The Good Lives programme helps Friends and others bring head, heart, hands and spirit together to equip ourselves for the challenges facing humanity and the Earth. The study packs are based on the programme. Available at www.woodbrooke.org.uk
- * *Good Lives* courses and other courses at Woodbrooke with the Good Lives logo are designed to help Friends and others bring head, heart, hands and spirit together to equip ourselves for the challenges facing humanity and the Earth. See www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/good-lives.html. Good Lives also goes 'on the road' to meetings.
- * *Seeds of Violence, Seeds of Hope*. A resource by the Friends Testimonies and Economics Project of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Available to download at www.fgcquaker.org/library/economics

See www.livingwitness.org.uk for details on asking for a talk or workshop to support your meeting in developing a Quaker sustainability witness.

Resources for all-age activities and children and young people

- * 'Living sustainably', *Journeys in the Spirit*, Youth work edition, February 2011: the aim of this edition is to help the group think about the relationship between the way they live and the world; to make the link between living sustainably and being a Quaker; to explore their ideas of a sustainable world; and to inspire and provide some ideas for action. Aimed at 12–18 year olds but equally suitable for adults.
- * 'Sustainability', *Journeys in the Spirit*, Children's work edition, August 2007: offers a variety of activities on the theme of sustainability suitable for children's meeting (ages 4–12).
- * 'The Simple Life: Advices & queries 41 & 42', *Journeys in the Spirit*, Children's work edition, February 2011: reflects on how we relate to and treat the world around us (ages 4–12).

All of these resources are available at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability

7. FURTHER RESOURCES

Quaker resources

- * *350 Years On: The Peace Testimony Today*: a statement by the Peace Campaigning & Networking group, July 2011. Available to read at www.quaker.org.uk/350
- * *A Quaker response to the crisis of climate change*: a statement by Meeting for Sufferings, endorsed by Britain Yearly Meeting in 2009. Available at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability
- * *A Quaker testimony to the Earth*, Suzanne Finch, published by Bridport Preparative Meeting. Available to borrow from the Quaker Centre bookshop at Friends House (www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-centre).
- * *Better World Economics*: newsletter of QPSW's Economic Issues programme. See www.quaker.org.uk/better-world-economics
- * 'Building Sustainability, Building Peace': a QPSW think piece reflecting on what it means to have a commitment to peace in a world faced with climate change, environmental degradation and resource depletion. Available to download at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability
- * *Costing not less than everything: Sustainability and spirituality in challenging times*, Swarthmore Lecture 2011, Pam Lunn, Quaker Books, 2011. Available from the Quaker Centre bookshop at Friends House or online at www.quaker.org.uk/shop
- * *earthQuaker*: the quarterly newsletter of Living Witness. Contains thoughtful articles, news and notices of forthcoming events. Available to download at www.livingwitness.org.uk/earthquaker.html
- * Economic resources from Quaker Peace & Social Witness: QPSW is developing resources to support Friends in learning about the economic system and its alternatives. See www.quaker.org.uk/justice-and-equality
- * *Faith in Action: Quaker social testimony*, Jonathan Dale et al, Quaker Books, 2000. Available from the Quaker Centre bookshop at Friends House or online at www.quaker.org.uk/shop
- * *Green Advices & Queries*: produced by Earth: Our Creative Responsibility Group, a sub-group of Quaker Peace & Social Witness, 2002. Available at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability
- * *Holding faith: creating peace in a violent world*, David Gee, Quaker Books, 2011: asks what committing to peace means in a violent world and how the commitment shapes our relationship with one another, ourselves and the Earth. Available from the Quaker Centre bookshop at Friends House or online at www.quaker.org.uk/shop
- * Quaker Earthcare Witness: a North American network of Friends and other like-minded people who are taking spirit-led action to address the ecological and social crises of the world from a spiritual perspective, emphasising Quaker process and testimonies. See www.quakerearthcare.org
- * Quaker Institute for the Future: QIF's mission is to advance a global future of inclusion, social and economic justice, and ecological well-being through participatory research and discernment. See www.quakerinstitute.org
- * Quakernomics: a discussion forum for Friends interested in economics. Go to www.quaker.org.uk/quakernomics-blog

7. FURTHER RESOURCES

- * *Responding to climate change*: prepared by QPSW, this study pack comprises six briefing sheets that look at different aspects of climate change. It includes reflection points and suggestions for action and is suitable for group study. Available to download at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability
- * *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Garver, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, 2008.
- * *Sustainability ... for Peace*: newsletter of QPSW's Sustainability and Peace programme. See www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability
- * 'Sustainable security: a briefing for Friends': a briefing outlining the concept of sustainable security, with reflection points for Friends. It is co-produced by QPSW, Northern Friends Peace Board and Oxford Research Group. Available to download at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability
- * 'Sustainable Security statement of concern': produced by the sustainable security group of Northern Friends Peace Board, with questions for consideration. See www.nfpb.gn.apc.org
- * *The Creation was Open to Me*: an anthology of Friends' writings on that of God in all Creation. Compiled by Anne Adams and published by Quaker Green Concern (now Living Witness). Available from info@livingwitness.org
- * *Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly*, Living Witness Project, 2008. Available online at www.livingwitness.org.uk

Films

Films that explain the problem:

- * *An Inconvenient Truth*. Dir. Davis Guggenheim. United International Pictures, 2006. A documentary film about former US Vice President Al Gore's campaign to educate citizens about global warming via a slide show.
- * *The Age of Stupid*. Dir./writer Franny Armstrong. Spanner Films/Passion Pictures, 2009. A drama-documentary-animation hybrid which stars the late Pete Postlethwaite as a man living alone in the devastated world of 2055, watching archive footage from the mid-to-late 2000s and asking "Why didn't we stop climate change when we had the chance?". See www.spannerfilms.net/films/ageofstupid
- * *The End of Suburbia: Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream*. Dir./writer Gregory Greene. Electric Wallpaper Co., 2005. This film discusses the dwindling supply of cheap energy in the form of fossil fuels and its effects on society. See www.endofsuburbia.com
- * *WALL-E*. Dir. Andrew Stanton. Disney/Pixar, 2008. This animation film takes place after mass consumerism on earth, led by a mega-corporation, Buy n Large, has left the planet covered in rubbish.

7. FURTHER RESOURCES

Films that create inspiration for solutions:

- * *Beyond the Tipping Point?* Dir./prod. Dr Stefan Skrimshire, 2010. A documentary film about climate, action and the future. See www.beyondthetippingpoint.com
- * *Costing not less than everything: Sustainability and spirituality in challenging times*. Swarthmore Lecture 2011, Pam Lunn. A recording of the 2011 Swarthmore Lecture plus accompanying slides. Available from the Quaker Centre, Friends House.
- * *In Transition 1.0*. A film about the Transition movement, created using footage contributed by Transition Initiatives from around the world. Work on the follow-up, *In Transition 2.0*, is now under way. See www.transitionnetwork.org/transition-movie
- * *Just Do It: A Tale of Modern-day Outlaws*. Dir. Emily James. Left Field Films, 2011. This film claims to lift the lid on climate activism and the daring troublemakers who have crossed the line to become modern-day outlaws. See www.justdoitfilm.com
- * *The Economics of Happiness*. Dir./writer Helena Norberg-Hodge, Steven Gorelick, John Page. International Society for Ecology & Culture (ISEC), 2011. This documentary is about the worldwide movement for economic localisation. See www.theeconomicsofhappiness.org
- * *The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil*. Dir. Faith Morgan. The Community Solution, 2006. The film seeks to educate audiences about peak oil and the impact it will have on transportation, agriculture, medicine and other industries. Cubans share how they transitioned from a highly mechanised, industrial agricultural system to one using organic methods of farming and local, urban gardens. See www.powerofcommunity.org/cm/index.php

Films that reawaken our connections to the earth:

- * *Animate Earth: Science, Intuition & Gaia*. A documentary film written and presented by Dr Stephan Harding. It is an emotional and scientific journey that explores the complexities of our relationship with the Earth, and contains interviews with leading thinkers in the field of ecological awareness. See www.animateearth.com
- * *Home*. Dir. Yann Arthus-Bertrand. Prod. Denis Carot & Luc Besson, 2009. This documentary film uses striking aerial footage from around the world to highlight the diversity and fragile balance of life on Earth. See www.homethemovie.org

Posters and displays

- * Sustainable Security display: the display is made up of 8 A3 panels and is available in large A1 (borrow for free) and smaller A3 (buy for £25, borrow for free) formats. It explains the concept of sustainable security in a clear, visual format. See www.quaker.org.uk/sustainable-security-display
- * Quakers and Sustainability display: this display is made up of 8 A3 panels, exploring why Quakers are active on sustainability and what actions meetings are taking. Good for outreach or inreach. Available to borrow or buy. See www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability

Support for becoming a low-carbon, sustainable building

- * Climate Impact Calculators: for Meetings and Individuals. Available at www.quaker.org.uk/climate-impact-calculators or hard copies on request from QPSW or Living Witness using the contact details at the front of the toolkit.
- * The Advisory Committee on Property: this Quaker committee can provide technical advice on the bricks and mortar of your building. See www.quaker.org.uk/property-matters
- * The Energy Saving Trust is a government-funded, free and impartial service. They offer advice and support for finding sources of funding (they are a referral agent for local authority and national grants). Their website contains lots of helpful information on many of the areas covered on pages 35–44, including appliances, how to generate your own energy, details of the Feed-In Tariff scheme, plus guidance on accepting free PVs. You can also ring them for advice. Visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
- * Northfield Ecocentre is a Birmingham-based charity inspiring people to live greener lives. It is a project owned by the Central England Quaker Area Meeting. Their website contains factsheets on many of the areas covered on pages 35–44. See www.northfieldecocentre.org, particularly under 'Advice'.
- * 'Witness of Our Buildings' information sheets, produced by Living Witness. Available to download at www.livingwitness.org.uk/buildings.html

Using your land

- * Caring for God's Acre: aims to inspire and support local communities to care for churchyards and burial grounds in a way that benefits both people and wildlife. www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk
- * EarthAbbey: a movement of people helping one another to live more in tune with the earth. See www.earthabbey.com
- * Eco-congregation Module 9: Planting and Conserving Eden. See www.ecocongregation.org
- * Grow Zones: 'a community project bringing help and inspiration to your garden, wonderful food to your table and adding friendship and purpose to your life'. See www.growzones.com
- * Landshare: connects growers with people with land to share. See www.landshare.net
- * Quaker Garden Project: a Norwich-based movement encouraging Quaker Meetings around the country to make the best possible use of the land on which their meeting house is built. See www.norfolk-quakers.org.uk
- * Transition Initiatives. Transition Network helps communities deal with climate change and shrinking supplies of cheap energy (peak oil). This process, which is called transition, aims to create stronger, happier communities. See www.transitionnetwork.org

Using your money

- * *Ethical Considerations for Quaker Investors: Profits and Principles*. These notes on investment were prepared by Quaker Finance and Property Central Committee in April 2001. Available from Sunniva Taylor on 020 7663 1047 or sunnivat@quaker.org.uk

7. FURTHER RESOURCES

- * *Investment and Engaging with Companies: A Guide for Faith Communities*. The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR), 2008. Includes sections on the relationship between faith, values and finance; the 'business case' for corporate responsibility; why faith groups need to invest responsibly; how churches hold their funds; and the practical dos and don'ts of dialogue and engagement. Available to download at www.eccr.org.uk
- * *Is your money working for the world?: A study pack for individuals and groups to help bridge the gap between faith and practice*. Jennie Levin. The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, 2000. Contains lots of exercises helpful to groups exploring these issues. Available at www.quaker.org.uk/files/Is-your-money-working-for-the-world.pdf
- * *The Treasurers Handbook* includes a section on ethical investment. Available to download at www.quaker.org.uk/treasurers-handbook. Britain Yearly Meeting supports treasurers in other ways too: see www.quaker.org.uk/treasurers
- * ECCR can provide a speaker to help your meeting explore the issues around ethical investment and money. Go to www.eccr.org.uk or contact Helen Boothroyd on 020 8965 9682 or helen.boothroyd@eccr.org.uk.

Other organisations

- * 10:10: a movement of people, schools, businesses and organisations cutting their carbon emissions 10% at a time. See www.1010uk.org
- * *Carbon Conversations*: six meetings about low-carbon living outlined in a book and led by trained facilitators. See www.cambridgecarbonfootprint.org
- * Carbon Trust: provides specialist support to help business and the public sector boost business returns by cutting carbon emissions, saving energy and commercialising low-carbon technologies. See www.carbontrust.org.uk
- * *Ecocell*: a toolkit established by Christian Ecology Link, designed to help you live a simpler, more Christian lifestyle. See www.christian-ecology.org.uk/ecocell.htm
- * *Eco-congregation*: an ecumenical programme helping churches make the link between environmental issues and Christian faith, and respond in practical action in the church, in the lives of individuals, and in the local and global community. See www.ecocongregation.org
- * *EcoTeams*: you can join an existing team or start a new one. Information at www.ecoteams.org.uk
- * Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR): a church-based investor coalition and membership organisation working for economic justice, environmental sustainability and corporate and investor responsibility. See www.eccr.org.uk
- * Energy Saving Trust: helps people to save energy and reduce carbon emissions. Visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
- * Operation Noah: a Christian organisation providing leadership, focus and inspiration in response to the growing threat of climate change endangering God's creation. See www.operationnoah.org
- * Transition Initiatives: a community-led response to the pressures of climate change, fossil fuel depletion and economic contraction. Go to www.transitionnetwork.org

Other books

There are numerous books about sustainability and sustainable living. The following are just some that we have found particularly useful or inspiring:

- * Goodall, C. (2007) *How to live a low-carbon life: the individual's guide to stopping climate change*, Oxford: Earthscan (Taylor & Francis Group). A detailed examination of the steps we as individuals can take to reduce our carbon footprint.
- * Hopkins, R. (2008) *The Transition Handbook: From oil dependency to local resilience*, Totnes: Green Books. The founder of the Transition Network explains the Transition movement, why it's important and how to get involved.
- * Jackson, T. (2011) *Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*, London: Routledge. An easy-to-understand demolition of the infinite growth foundation of conventional economics and a sound exposition of what we could substitute for it.
- * Mackay, D. (2008) *Sustainable Energy – Without the Hot Air*, Cambridge: UIT Cambridge. Stuffed with the numbers related to energy, this book aims to cut through the 'twaddle' surrounding green energy and give people the information to talk truth to inconsistent hyperbole.
- * Macy, J. and Young Brown, M. (1998) *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World*, Canada: New Society Publishers (D&M Publishers). This book offers an analysis of the situation we are in, followed by a host of group activities for those who wish to explore their approach to inspiration.
- * McIntosh, A. (2008) *Hell and High Water: Climate Change, Hope and the Human Condition*, Edinburgh: Birlinn. Summarises the science of what is happening to the planet, both globally and using Scotland as a local case study. The author goes on to suggest that politics alone is not enough to tackle the scale and depth of the problem, arguing that at root is our addictive consumer mentality.
- * Stibbe, A. (ed.) (2009) *The Handbook of Sustainability Literacy: Skills for a changing world*, Totnes: Green Books. This book is made up of 33 chapters, written by experts from the field of sustainability. Available at www.sustainability-literacy.org
- * Tudge, C. (2007) *Feeding People is Easy*, Pari (Italy): Pari Publishing. This book argues that we have all the necessary techniques, wisdom and good will to feed people and to create what the author calls 'Enlightened Agriculture'.
- * Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. (2010) *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*, London: Penguin Books. Provides hard evidence to show how almost everything – from life expectancy to depression levels, violence to illiteracy – is affected not by how wealthy a society is, but how equal it is.

Yearly Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) In Britain at the Yearly Meeting held in Canterbury at the University of Kent

30 July – 6 August 2011

Minute 36: As led ('Gathering up the threads')

'Sustainability is an urgent matter for our Quaker witness. It is rooted in Quaker testimony and must be integral to all we do corporately and individually.'

(A framework for action 2009–2014)

A concern for the Earth and the well-being of all who dwell in it is not new, and we have not now received new information which calls us to act. Rather we are renewing our commitment to a sense of the unity of creation which has always been part of Friends' testimonies. Our actions have as yet been insufficient.

John Woolman's words in 1772 sound as clearly to us now:

'The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.'

(Quaker faith & practice 25.01)

So we have long been aware that our behaviour impoverishes the earth and that it is our responsibility both to conserve the earth's resources and to share them more equitably. Our long-standing commitment to peace and justice arises in part from our understanding of the detrimental effect of war and conflicts, in damaging communities and squandering the earth's resources. As a yearly meeting we have considered this before, and in 1989 we adopted The World Council of Churches' concern for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, minuting that this concern 'grows from our faith, and cannot be separated from it. It challenges us to look again at our lifestyles and reassess our priorities, and makes us realise the truth of Gandhi's words: "Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is"'.

In 2009 the Yearly Meeting endorsed the statement made by Meeting for Sufferings on 'A Quaker response to the crisis of climate change'. This statement was addressed to the Copenhagen Conference and all Friends and meetings were urged to take up its challenges.

In preparation for this yearly meeting gathering, in the background reading, in many of the events and activities, in the Swarthmore lecture and in yesterday's introduction and threshing groups, prophetic voices have prompted us to wrestle once again with the immensity of the challenge we face.

We are grateful to those Friends who have responded in their own lives and who have encouraged and informed us. We know that some Friends and meetings have made changes to reduce their impact on the environment, and that there is much more which may yet be done.

continued overleaf



7. FURTHER RESOURCES

We need to arrive at a place in which we all take personal responsibility to make whatever changes we are called to. At the same time, we need to pledge ourselves to corporate action. The environmental crisis is enmeshed with global economic injustice and we must face our responsibility as one of the nations which has unfairly benefited at others' expense, to redress inequalities which, in William Penn's words, are 'wretched and blasphemous' (*Quaker faith & practice* 25.13).

The action we are ready to take at this time is to make a strong corporate commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community. This will require a process to establish a baseline of current witness and a framework in which individual Friends and local meetings can share their successes.

We need to allocate adequate resources to this process. This process needs to be joyful and spirited, with room for corporate discernment at local, area and national level. We believe this corporate action will enable us to speak truth to power more confidently. Growing in the spirit is a consequence of taking action, and action flows from our spiritual growth; here is the connectedness we seek. Only a demanding common task builds community.

'Whom shall I send?' We hear the call to this demanding common task. How will we answer it?

We have been reminded of the current work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness. We ask Meeting for Sufferings to work with area meetings and our staff to make better known our current witness and to give thought to appropriate aims for our corporate commitment and the framework which will allow our successes to be shared. We ask them to look at the priorities in A Framework for Action and ask Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees to see where there are resources that can be allocated to these priorities to support our corporate commitment and to take our action forward. In addition we ask Meeting for Sufferings to look at the issues of public policy that we might be led to adopt and advocate in the political arena.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees to report back to Yearly Meeting each year on the progress of this concern.

We ask area meetings to consider how truth prospers with regard to sustainability, taking care to relate this to all our testimonies – peace, truth, simplicity, equality and care for the environment.

We encourage local and area meetings to practise speaking truth to power at local level by establishing relationships with all sections of local communities, including politicians, businesses and schools, to encourage positive attitudes to sustainability.

To individual Friends we issue a clear call to action to consider the effect of their lives on the world's limited resources and in particular on their carbon usage. We ask Friends to keep informed about the work being done locally, centrally and throughout the Quaker world and to educate themselves.

But above all that, Friends keep in their hearts that this action must flow from nowhere but love.

If we are successful in what we set out to do, we will need to be accountable to one another, but we will also need to be tender with one another, and to support one another through the grief and fear that radical change will provoke.

'I may have faith enough to move mountains; but if I have not love, I am nothing... Love keeps no score of wrongs, takes no pleasure in the sins of others, but delights in the truth. There is no limit to its faith, its hope, its endurance. Love will never come to an end.'

(1 Corinthians ch. 13: verses 2–8 (parts), New English Bible)

Lis Burch, Clerk

‘The action we are ready to take at this time is to make a strong corporate commitment to become a low-carbon, sustainable community.’

Yearly Meeting Gathering 2011, Minute 36

What is a sustainable community and how should local meetings respond to the Yearly Meeting call to action? Living Witness and Quaker Peace & Social Witness have drawn on their collective experience and expertise to produce the Sustainability Toolkit. This timely resource helps Friends to explore these questions and to develop their sustainability witness.

It offers tools for learning, self-evaluation and practical action – as well as inspiration from Friends already keenly engaged – to support meetings in building sustainable communities. Also included are climate impact calculators to enable meetings and individuals alike to measure and minimise their own carbon footprints.

Whether you are just embarking on the journey towards sustainability or have been on the path for some time, the Sustainability Toolkit will prove a valuable companion.

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