

Northern Friends Peace Board



**A development plan,
describing our work and our priorities in
the period up to our 2013 centenary**



Northern Friends Peace Board

Victoria Hall, Knowsley Street, Bolton BL1 2AS
01204 382330 nfpb@gn.apc.org <http://nfpb.gn.apc.org>

Charity SC 024632

Published July 2009

Introduction

This document looks forward over the coming four years to 2013, the year that will mark the 100th Anniversary of the setting up of Northern Friends Peace Board. It gives information about the way in which we currently work, draws on detailed reviews and thinking about our work that have taken place over recent years and sets out a vision and strategy for the coming years built on these foundations. We hope that it will be of benefit to our own members in working together, to supporting individuals and groups (particularly to Quaker Meetings in the North of Britain, our main funders) and to others interested to know more about our work. It has been written by a sub-group of our Executive Committee, our trustees, with reference to our wider membership throughout the process.

As Quaker work, we seek to reflect:

- a) the outward concerns that are so central to our life and witness and;
- b) the distinctive Quaker way of prayerful listening in our worshipping community that is the foundation and heart of what we do.

There are many challenges facing us in the world and we need to give time to listen to the 'still small voice' and to support one another as we seek to live faithful lives, individually and together. We regard this as a current that flows through all the proposals described in this paper. Without it, our work does not offer anything distinctive and is less sustainable. With it, we may find life-affirming and spirit-filled ways of giving shape to our individual and collective activities for peace.

Let us then try what Love will do - Isaac Pennington

Background

Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB) was set up in 1913, after a conference of Quarterly Meetings (the then regional groupings and main administrative unit amongst Quakers in Britain) in February of that year. The conference minuted that the Board was to...

'advise and encourage Friends in the North, and through them their fellow Christians and citizens generally, in the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth.'

That same minute requested that those Northern Meetings should provide sufficient funds for a full-time Secretary. This has been done since that time. The current Co-ordinator (the job title changed in 1986) is the seventh to work for the Board over that period.

The work of the Board has inevitably varied over this time, but common threads throughout are:

- **Provision of information**, comment and thinking on topical peace concerns, including work on exploring the conditions necessary for building peace in the world.
- **Publicising peace-building** as an alternative to prevailing military-orientated thinking.
- **Supporting** individuals and organisations in responding to current challenges — including those facing (during war-times) conscription..
- **Making Quaker peace concerns visible** and bringing Quakers together to reflect and to develop insights and thinking.
- **Building bridges** between individuals and groups.

Initially a concern just of some of the Northern English Quarterly Meetings, our supporting membership soon expanded to include Friends in Scotland, in North Wales and in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire. The Quarterly Meetings were replaced by General Meetings in 1967 and at this point the responsibility for providing Representatives to and funding for our work was passed onto the Monthly Meetings in the area covered. In 2007/8 these became Area Meetings.

In 1985 the Board committed itself to:

- developing as a resource for supporting Friends in Meetings
- acting as a catalyst for action and thinking on peace, from the international to the personal levels
- to ways of working that reflected our Quaker foundation and commitment to peaceful means and ends.

“We need to be both realistic and visionary” they minuted, reflecting on the gifts that individual Friends can each give to the endeavour and to the corporate discipline and clarity that need to be nurtured and developed.

How we Work

The meetings of the Board and Executive are held in the manner of Friends, with quiet worship being the context in which discussion takes place and decisions are made. Decisions are minuted at the time, with some additional notes appended to minutes on occasion where a minute is not needed. The Board and the Executive each have Clerks to facilitate this process. Sometimes one person has Clerked both bodies, but more recently the roles have been divided. Our Treasurer is another key member of the Executive, with responsibilities for financial oversight, in consultation with other Executive members and the Co-ordinator.

The biggest part of our membership is composed of Friends (and some Attenders) appointed by Area Meetings as Representatives. There are four meetings a year for Representatives, taking place at different parts of the North, normally at Quaker Meeting Houses. A number of Area Meetings also appoint Deputy Representatives, ensuring fuller representation. A paper outlining the roles and responsibilities of Representatives is included in the Appendix and can be summarised as:

- Being a two-way channel of **communication** between Area Meetings and NFPB
- **Being aware** of Friends’ peace concerns and **guiding** the direction of NFPB’s work.
- **Serving** in a range of capacities on various sub-groups and committees in partnership with the Co-ordinator to implement our work.

We co-opt some Friends to serve in addition to appointed Representatives. This is in order to help provide continuity in our work (a Representative may have completed their three-year term of service, for example, but still have much to give in a particular area of project activity), and to bring in particular areas of skill and expertise.

As with many other Quaker groups, NFPB was considered charitable through excepted status as part of the Religious Society of Friends. We became an independent charity in 1996, registered in Scotland as **Charity Number SC 024632**. We report annually to the *Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)* (the equivalent of the Charity Commission with similar reporting and accounting requirements). There is not currently a requirement that we also register with the Charity Commission but do try to work within its requirements as well as those of OSCR. Our Executive Committee serve as our Trustees, and in their turn meet four times a year. Eight Friends currently serve on our Executive Committee, these being appointed for no more than two terms of three years. Financial administrative tasks are currently undertaken by an Administrative Assistant who includes this in one day per week of work.

In addition to the Board and Executive, we appoint sub-groups to undertake particular tasks. These range from our Nominations Committee to project groups. These report regularly to both the Board and Executive.

Finance

The **core** of our funding comes from Quakers in the North of Britain. Most of this is contributed by **Area Meetings**, whilst some Area Meetings have devolved the responsibility for financial contributions to NFPB to their Local Meetings. Friends also provide funds through **collections and through individual donations**. A smaller amount of funding comes from Charitable Trusts that donate on an annual basis, and a smaller amount still comes from sales of our publications and from fees for events. We do apply for and have, over the years, secured additional funding from **charitable Trusts** for specific areas of project work. This has given us scope for developing our resources and activities that would not otherwise be practicable.

Over the past five years we have received **legacies** from a small number of Friends. We have taken the decision to keep a significant portion of the monies from these invested, giving us an annual return to supplement the funds received from Friends and Meetings. Our decision to invest the bulk of these funds has also partly been informed by changes in pensions legislation that could mean that our Trustees would face a substantial liability if we were at any time deemed to have withdrawn from our membership of the Pensions Trust Growth Plan. This has caused some anxiety amongst our Trustees but we have worked carefully in consultation with the Pensions Trust to ensure that our funds and work are secure.

Our Trustees agree a **budget** each autumn, our Financial Year running from January to December. On the basis of this budget, we propose a suggested amount per member that Area Meetings might use as a guideline for their financial contributions to NFPB. Whilst some Meetings are not able to use this figure, due to insufficient funds locally, in general terms it has proved to be a very effective way for us to plan our financial affairs, with the support, generosity and cooperation from Area Meetings.

We have carried out periodic **risk assessments** and put together priorities for risk management on the basis of this. Staff and Trustees have attended training for and implemented practices to strengthen our reporting and financial control procedures.

What we do

General description

The following is a short list of the type of activities undertaken by NFPB over recent years:

- Organising conferences, workshops and other **events**, for Friends and others.
- Producing written **publications**, from printed materials to web-based.
- Publicising **opportunities** for engagement and action on peace concerns, through our membership, through our links with Quaker meetings and through our web-resources

The Board's current Co-ordinator and its Administrative Assistant work from an **office in Bolton**, Lancashire, in a town-centre Methodist building. This office is also used from time-to-time for meetings of sub groups. Rental for the office is less than the market-rate for a similarly sized space, reflecting the supportive nature of the landlord-tenant relationship. Executive Committee members undertake regular Health & Safety and Fire Safety inspections of the office and have been involved in practical assistance in the office from time to time.

The Board's Co-ordinator meets periodically throughout the year with a **mentor**, a Friend with appropriate professional experience and interest in our work. He also has annual review meetings with members of the Executive. The Executive is committed to staff and committee development, encouraging attendance at appropriate training courses and other learning opportunities.

We maintain working **links** with a number of other bodies, Quaker and non-Quaker. For example, we are members of the Network for Peace, the International Peace Bureau, Scotland's for Peace and the Network of Christian Peace Organisations. We have cross representation with the Peace and Disarmament Programme of Quaker Peace and Social Witness and attend the annual Peace and Service Consultations of the Europe and Middle East Section of the Friends World Committee for consultation. Other relationships with individuals and organisations arise through our work.

We maintain and regularly update a well-used website, linked with other web-based resources. We produce two or three issues of a simple **newsletter** '*The Peace Board*' each year, sending this, as well as other materials, to Northern Quaker Meetings, to individual Quakers and interested organisations and people. We also try to ensure a visible presence at meetings of Britain Yearly Meeting and other Quaker events when appropriate.

Current work

In 2003/4 we undertook a review of our work, drawing on a **consultation** exercise amongst Northern Friends. NFPB members were encouraged to explore with Friends and Attenders a number of questions about their peace concerns, what they found helpful and what difficult in taking action and speaking out for peace. Responses to these were collated and we devised a work plan that sought to address at least some of the needs expressed. This has consisted of:

- **Making more of the opportunities for meeting and learning together that our Board meetings provide**, encouraging stronger links with the Quakers in the areas in which we meet and bringing in a range of inspiring and thought-provoking speakers. These have include Quaker activists, peace academics, politicians and youth workers, amongst others.
- Work under the heading of '**Speaking our Peace**', aiming to encourage wider understanding of some of the root-causes for a lack of peace and greater confidence in speaking out for positive alternatives. Activities have included organising workshops for a range of groups and production of web-based resources and materials.

We previously undertook work under the broad themes 'challenging militarism' and 'culture of peace'. We identified specific areas of concern that had arisen within these that merited further efforts, relating to specific issues relevant to the North of Britain. This has consisted of:

- Continuing project work on the themes of '**Peace, Faith and Race**'. This work has been chiefly concerned with a series of conferences to explore peacebuilding in our communities, at a time when faith and racial equality issues have been central. We have used additional funds from our reserves to produce a short DVD from our most recent conference to be used as a discussion resource and promotional tool.
- We have undertaken some limited work on **Missile Defence**, working in collaboration with other organisational members of the Missile Defence Working group in building wider awareness of the implications of US missile defence policy to the bases in Yorkshire and raising our concerns with government, through correspondence and meeting with officials. We have also promoted the regular Meetings for Worship that take place at Menwith Hill and Fylingdales.
- In 2007 we began the process of putting together proposals for developing work with **young people**, an area of concern that had been identified in our 2004 review and more recently. We have made modest steps in this direction, for example by developing and identifying specific web materials relating to young people and peace.

In 2007 our Trustees also held a weekend residential meeting at which they began to formulate some priorities for future work. These, along with elements of existing current work, form a significant part of the vision and strategy set out in the remainder of this document.

Future Priorities for Development

Centenary

In addition to the proposals outlined in the next section, we hope to mark the Board's centenary in 2013 with a number of activities. In particular we envisage:

- a) a publication that reflects on the Board's history over the past 100 years and
- b) a gathering to consider current peace concerns and priorities, drawing inspiration from work that the Board has already undertaken and placing our vision in the current context.

Action plan

We have also mapped out how we see our work as a whole developing and the following section describes this. It identifies four main areas, outlining the general aims within these and some specific work proposals to implement .

The areas are:

- A) Relationships with Friends
- B) Communications
- C) Building Common Cause
- D) Sustainability

We invite...

- Friends to consider serving on the Board as Area Meeting representatives, when the time comes for a new appointment to be made. We also sometimes co-opt Friends to work with us, when they have particular concerns, passions or skills to contribute.
- Meetings and other Quaker groups to get in touch with us if they can see opportunities for us to contribute to an activity, to offer a workshop, or to collaborate in other ways.
- Other groups or organisations taking action for peace in the world to get in touch, to let us know about their concerns and discuss possible areas of common concern.
- Individuals to likewise let us know about their peace concerns and activities: we may be in a position to publicise these or to put you in touch with others.
- Individuals, groups, Meetings and other organisations to continue funding our work or to provide additional funding from time to time.

<p>A. Relationships with Friends</p> <p>1. Supporting Area Meeting Representatives to NFPB in their role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information and action ideas for Meetings and individuals - Support with materials for presentations and talks and written materials - Opportunities (at Board meetings and other times) for reps to meet together on a regional basis 	<p><i>In practical terms this will mean:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 3 mailings a year to Local Meetings • Briefing sheets about the Board and its work, to be produced twice a year and articles for AM newsletters once a year • Notes and talk outline to accompany presentation materials for Board members to use, by end of 2009 • Experiment with different ways for representatives to meet and /or collaborate between NFPB meetings during the period.
<p>2. NFPB Board meetings as opportunities for coming together to learn and discern – for NFPB members and other Northern Friends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued efforts to involve local meetings in the hosting and content of our Board Meetings. - Worship and community to be central to our way of working. - Weekend / extended day meetings for building community 	<p><i>In practical terms this will mean:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite invitations from Meetings interested in hosting us from now until the end of 2009 and continue to liaise with Meetings over content of Board meetings, linking in with local concerns when appropriate. • Weekend meeting of the Board in Spring 2010 • Revisit the possibility of NFPB elders being appointed. • Incorporate periods of worship sharing and reflection whenever possible in our meetings and at NFPB weekends, such as that proposed for Spring 2010.
<p>3. Organising events for learning, reflection, encouragement and empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mix of those at invitation of local meetings those planned and initiated by us - Mix of styles of working (eg. Speakers, workshop, audio-visual, practical, skills-sharing etc) - Reporting on events and share learning more widely amongst Friends 	<p><i>In practical terms...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further to the May 2009 review, continue to offer the range of events developed by the Speaking our Peace programme • Invite NFPB members to get involved in planning these and in facilitating them, providing training when necessary • Produce a new leaflet for Meetings in time for the Yearly Meeting Gathering • Executive to consider on a regular basis the concerns arising at Board meetings, with a view to arranging additional learning opportunities connected with these • Set up and use regionally-based planning groups, when possible • Consider further use of audio-visual media as well as written reports to share learning
<p>4. Speaking to Meetings and contributing to other Quaker events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offering talks about our work, workshops, partnership in arrangement of conference / workshop type activities and helping arrange for speakers on key peace issues 	<p><i>In practical terms...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflet for Friends & Meetings, indicating what we offer • Training for Board members & others • Production and use of a range of media to support these • See also under point (1) above

<p>5. Supporting NFPB involvement in e.g. BYM, QPSW Conferences etc.</p>	<p><i>In practical terms ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •NFPB reps to be appointed to QPSW conference each year supported by good supplies of literature and background information about NFPB •Keep in touch with organisers so involvement at early stage possible. •Literature produced with a view to communicating to a wider audience of Friends
<p>B. Communications</p> <p>1.Effective use of range of media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Attractively designed – but not extravagant – print-based materials – Website and linked electronic tools, regularly updated and publicised – Video and audio media, from professionally produced to budget / grass roots efforts 	<p><i>In practical terms...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communications strategy to be developed by end of 2009, with consideration of modest redesign of logo, house-style & website •Evaluate Peace, Faith and Race project's DVD with a view to further use of video and audio resources •Think of the possibility of using colour when producing printed materials •Development of website and use of social networking tools in the context of the Communications Strategy •Email lists when appropriate for group work and communicating on specific areas of concern •Use of <i>Powerpoint</i> for presentations when value likely to be added by doing so.
<p>2. Ideas for action and involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Making sure Friends are sufficiently informed of existing campaigns and opportunities linked to these. – Supporting the development of skills for taking action on peace concerns. – Affirming positive initiatives and encouraging thinking 	<p><i>In practical terms ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Regularly updated web pages •Produce and distribute issue briefings for mailings for Meetings as well as more reflective materials •Use of email to promote these materials in appropriate ways. •Training for Friends in specific communication / action skills, either from in-house knowledge or 'bought-in' expertise. •Develop guidelines and framework for networking activities, to ensure it remains relevant to our work. •Provide opportunities for speakers to share information and inspiration with Friends at our Board meetings.
<p>3.Making the Peace Testimony visible to the wider world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing a clear framework to enable the Board to raise its profile in the media and in other settings. 	<p><i>In practical terms ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •In conjunction with Communications strategy, develop guidelines and rationale for NFPB media profile •Consider 'NFPB-ware' - e.g. T-shirts, pens, etc. •Work proactively with QPSW and the Quaker Communications department in thinking about this •Review the available leaflets, pamphlets etc. for wider public consumption

<p>C. Building Common Cause</p> <p>1.Our activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Actively encourage diversity in speakers and other contributors to our events, giving space for voices to be heard that might otherwise be marginalised –Ensuring accessibility of venues for public events –Consideration of other aspects of accessibility, building on West Scotland AM work <p>2.Networking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Publicity to and networking with other groups of Friends, not just Meetings (e.g. Young Friends and appropriate Listed Informal Groups) –Cultivating and maintaining good working links with BYM centrally managed work, especially QPSW work on peace and disarmament –Maintaining membership of relevant networking bodies and seeking opportunities to build contacts with non-Quaker groups and people addressing similar issues. 	<p><i>In practical terms ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Be on the look-out for speakers coming from diverse and minority backgrounds •For all our activities, consider ways in which young people might be involved as contributors or participants •Ensure and publicise the accessibility of events •Consider the best ways of making all our materials, printed and electronic, more accessible to those with a range of disabilities, drawing on expertise of Quakers and others who have already thought this through. •Be proactive in building links with BYM funded work, other Quaker committees and projects and the range of listed informal groups, building on the spirit of BYM's <i>Framework for Action</i> whilst being ready to think strategically about this. •Develop and maintain (and use!) a mailing list for supporting individuals and other supportive groups.
<p>D. Sustainability</p> <p>1.Financial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue budgeting for similar level of spending for core operations – Look for diversity of funding sources – Investment of reserves in ethically-sound way, whilst using some of these as and when needed – Improving our capacity for selling our materials and for attracting additional funders, individual and corporate. 	<p><i>In practical terms ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Seeking additional funding for special projects from time to time •Investment policy & practice regularly reviewed •Set up online fund-raising and sales facility on website by autumn 2009 •Reports to Friends making clear the value of their contributions in making things happen •Fundraising strategy •Be alert to possible joint-funding for collaborative work with other groups
<p>2.Organisational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Explore different ways of working together to save time, energy, money etc. whilst enabling wider participation –Training for NFPB members and staff 	<p><i>In practical terms ...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Further use of e.g. phone conferences, regionally-based project groups, trying out different models of working over the next three years. •Annual review of Exec training needs and more formal induction of new Exec members

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continued support for staff training •Annual induction session at Board meetings •Mentoring of new members by more long-standing members.
<p>3.Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consider green concerns in all areas of activity, from office equipment to catering for events etc. -Climate change, energy and resource concerns included when appropriate in project work, events and other activities etc. 	<p><i>In practical terms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Environmental audit of the office and our other activities, implementing action arising from this over the coming two years as and when appropriate and financially manageable. •Develop guidelines for travel relating to our work, based on reducing carbon emissions •Develop a strong component in our work around sustainable security as the alternative to military-based security. •Proactive networking and resource gathering on peace / climate / resource-scarcity concerns and action-opportunities flagged up where environment-conflict link is strong

Appendix

The role and responsibilities of Area Meeting

Representatives to Northern Friends Peace Board

A paper for Area Meeting Nominations Committees and for appointed Representatives

Preamble

The Northern Friends Peace Board was founded in 1913 to “advise and encourage Friends in the North, and through them their fellow Christians and citizens generally in the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth.”

The work of the Board grows out of the peace testimony of the Religious Society of Friends. Its activities will vary according to the changing needs of the times – covering peace from the levels of the personal to the international – but this spiritual basis remains at its root.

1. The Board meets four times a year for Board Meetings, which are both meetings for worship for business and a forum for Friends in the north of Britain. These are held on Saturdays, (sometimes with one weekend residential meeting a year) and venues can be anywhere within the Board's area ('north of the Trent'). The Board also occasionally arranges a weekend Retreat for its members. Board members are encouraged to attend all Board Meetings, as far as it is possible; some Monthly Meetings also appoint a deputy or alternate Representative. Meetings of sub-committees and working groups (see point [3] below) will often take place between Board meetings.
2. We hope that all Board members will be involved in, and aware of, peace concerns in their own local area. The Board will offer support and encouragement to them in this work, and also the chance to enlarge and enhance their skills and understanding of peace work.
3. The Board encourages participation of all Board members. This can be in many ways:
 - In the decision-making and discernment of the Board, which is the foundation of our other activities
 - As members of Board working groups, sub-committees or project groups
 - As representatives to other bodies and delegates to conferences,
 - and in any of the activities organised by the Board.
 - We hope that all members will have a chance to offer their particular interests and skills to the service of the Board during their period of membership.
4. We ask Board members to be a conduit of information on issues of peace – both from the Board to their Monthly Meetings, and from their areas to the Board, to bring local peace concerns to the Board's attention.
5. Although Board membership does require a time commitment, it also offers help and inspiration to Friends already involved in peace work. Many actively involved Friends find that a period of Board membership is a source of strength to them in their work.
6. We are aware of the special gifts that Friends of a more contemplative nature have to offer us. The presence of such a Friends on the Board might bring us spiritual enrichment.
7. We hope that Board members will be open to new ways forward, interested in new directions for Quaker peace work, and supportive of new activities undertaken by the Board.
8. We welcome the appointment of young Friends and we are anxious that we do not overlook Friends who have much to offer us, but who have other responsibilities such as young families. We value the special insights they could bring us, and will do what we can to make their full participation possible.