

# Update

Oct/Nov 2019

## Northern Friends Peace Board

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Charity SC 024632



Meeting for Worship at Faslane on 29<sup>th</sup> September, with a number of NFPB members present after their meeting in Edinburgh the previous day. Photo: Janet Fenton

## NFPB meetings

NFPB members have met in **Carlisle and in Edinburgh**, in June and September respectively. At the first of these meetings we heard from local Friends about their activities as a **sanctuary Meeting**, and in supporting **Quaker peace work in West Africa**.

At both meetings we heard from Friends about peace concerns and activities across the NFPB area and also had workshop discussions about some current challenges and concerns, and about activities we (as individuals) decide to undertake.

In reflecting on our **witness**, questions of effectiveness, companionship, inspiration, challenge and the importance of nonviolence were all considered. We were reminded that rest and self-care cannot be neglected in the midst of busy and active lives.

Friends have spoken at our meetings of the great support and inspiration they get from taking action with others in these challenging times. Friends are very aware of the connections between the current political and social discord in Britain, the distortion of our economy by the interests of military industry, the impact of the growth economy geared around consumption, and pressing concerns about climate and our fragile earth.

A good number of our members had been at the witness and action organised by **Roots of Resistance** ahead of the DSEI arms fair at the start of September, and spoke of the spirit-filled and vibrant Quaker presence of which they had been part. The vision and energy of young people in this, and in action to address the climate emergency, were welcomed. We heard news of those from our membership who had been arrested during the week of action and upheld them in our worship.

We have been reminded at our meetings that both individual and collective effort continues to be needed to promote the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, encouraging politicians and civic leaders to unite around its vision and its commitments. NFPB's working group on Nuclear abolition is offering workshops to support Friends and others wishing to learn about these issues and act upon them.

In the light of growing tensions between the US, UK and Iran, the Board sent an open letter to the Foreign Secretary in June to raise our concerns about the dangers of a drift to war.

NFPB Trustees are beginning the process of amending our **constitution**. Alongside this, NFPB members have encouraged greater clarity about the roles of our Trustees, of their Clerk and of the Clerk to the Board.

As part of the welcome from Edinburgh Friends, local Quaker Andrew Farrar shared some panels of the display which he had produced on first world war Quaker conscientious objectors. By coincidence, he was also one of two descendants of former NFPB Secretaries – Stanley Farrar and Robert Long – present at the September meeting.

Other issues addressed at our meetings are covered elsewhere in this update. NFPB next meets on 30<sup>th</sup> November in Leeds.

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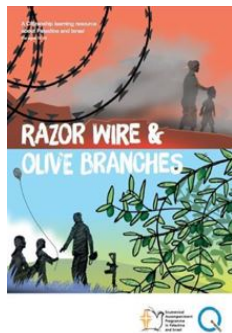
## Mailing list

If you would like to receive this update directly, please contact the NFPB office (details at the top of this page).

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## Peace Education resource – Palestine and Israel

Ellis Brooks from QPSW attended our meeting in June and described how the experiences and knowledge from Ecumenical Accompaniers in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) had been drawn on in producing a new peace education resource, Razor Wire and Olive Branches. Ellis lead us through one of the many carefully-researched exercises in the pack. For information - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/free-resources/teaching-resources-2#heading-1>



## Faslane Meeting for Worship

In September NFPB members were amongst the twenty Friends who gathered for a Meeting for Worship at Faslane, the naval base in West Scotland that is the home of the UK's Trident submarines. After the Meeting, Friends planted flower seeds and bulbs outside the base, expressions of our hope and vision for a different world and in memory of those who have been part of Quaker witness there over the years. (see photograph over the page)

## Ecumenical Networking

NFPB is a member of the Network of Christian Peace Organisations (NCPO), (<http://ncpo.org.uk>) bringing together peace initiatives and groups from a range of broadly Christian perspectives. Earlier this year, NCPO produced a briefing on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Members of the network were also present at the alternative service and witness outside Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the official service to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 'continuous at-sea deterrent' by nuclear weapons. On 25<sup>th</sup> April in 2020, a national NCPO conference is to take place in London.



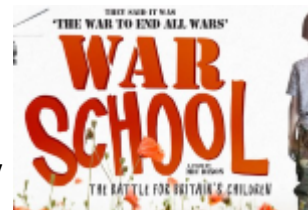
At the end of October, NFPB will be represented at a three-day conference in Glasgow on Conflict and Faith, organised by Place for Hope and drawing on peace-builders, thinkers and community activists from the UK and beyond. Some of those involved issued a "Call to Action in Times of Transition and Change", (<https://www.placeforhope.org.uk/blog/call-to-action-in-times-of-transition-and-change>) which reads, in part: 'We call for a culture that nurtures an intentional process of respectful, robust disagreement particularly in times of polarisation. The contemporary challenge for us all is to maintain the dignity of the human person in our personal and public discourse.'

## Extinction Rebellion-Peace

XR Peace, a new coalition working with Extinction Rebellion, invited us to join them ahead of action beginning of 7th October. Friends were positive about the links being made between these movements and wanted to support Friends who are involved. We did not feel we were in a position to make an active contribution at this stage but Friends looked forward to finding out more and to building connections.

## War School

A number of Quaker Meeting Houses have been used as venues for showing the film War School. The documentary explores the nature of the UK military's approach to recruitment and its efforts to promote interest and support from children and young people.



Sometimes joined by members of Veterans for Peace, film showings are opportunities to learn and to raise awareness of the issues and to promote and facilitate discussion. A list of forthcoming film screenings and a contact for arranging these can be found at <https://www.war.school>.

## Workshops

NFPB workshops have taken place in different parts of the country and we would like to be putting on more of them. As well as the package of four workshops that we offer, we will be looking for opportunities to put on one-off small events on specific current peace concerns, with both input and discussion.

We are also keen to offer shorter workshops when appropriate, as we are aware that full-day workshops are not always easy to fit in with other commitments. If you would be interested in having support from NFPB in putting on or hosting a workshop, for Friends and others, please get in touch. (<http://www.nfpb.org.uk/our-work/workshops>)

The most recent workshop we facilitated was at Barmoor, for Pickering and Hull AM, on the theme of Rethinking Security. Friends reflected and discussed some of the concepts around security, and considered both how these relate to current concerns and ways forward for taking action.

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## Thank you

Thank you Friends for your continued support of our work, financially and in many other ways.

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