

Our activities in 2019

Introduction

Energy, uncertainty, vision, passion, hope and disappointment – just some of the components of the political and social context of the year, with divisions over Brexit competing for our attention alongside the dramatic expressions of nonviolent power through Extinction Rebellion and Quaker Roots of Resistance witness at the DSEI arms fair in London – amongst many other things.

Northern Friends Peace Board has continued to provide space and resources for reflection, learning, energising and for sharing ideas and information during a time when all have been needed. Friends' commitment to living and acting on their testimonies is inspiring and, as importantly, effective in helping create positive changes towards peace.

At our final meeting of the year, it seemed appropriate that we were all encouraged to join hands and sing; we are connected, we support one another and we have a vision and commitment to change and to life itself. This short report aims to give a flavour of how we have gone about that in our collective activities, with all the support, inspiration and input from Northern Quakers and others that make it possible.

We find ourselves writing at a time of greater challenge still, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. At such times, we know that we need our F/friends and we need our visions. Thank you for both and for so much more.



NFPB members at our meeting in Leeds in November

NFPB Members' meetings and activities

Four meetings of Northern Friends Peace Board members took place in 2019, in Liverpool, Carlisle, Edinburgh and Leeds. At these meetings Friends reflected on current concerns, shared information about activities at the local and regional level, heard speakers and engaged in workshops and discussions. Among the issues discussed were peace education relating to Israel/Palestine, nuclear weapons, nonviolence, climate, asylum and sanctuary-seekers.

A number of NFPB members had been involved with the Roots of Resistance Quaker witness at the DSEI arms fair in September, and our meetings provided an opportunity for preparation and for reflection on the learning from that experience. We also reflected on the theme of 'Turbulent Times', addressing the question of what love requires of us in this context. Our members were invited to take these concerns and questions to their Meetings for further exploration, and we also reproduced a revised

version of a discussion paper as leaflet.

During our meetings we reflected together on the nature of our witness and action, the changes we wish to see as a result of our action and how we support ourselves and others. A wider consultation of our members on these and related issues took place later in the year and we had an opportunity to share these with Quakers from other parts of Europe during the FWCC Europe and Middle East Peace & Service Consultation.

NFPB members considered the relationship between the Board and its trustees, the roles of Clerks to the Board and to Trustees, and the scope and potential for Board members to undertake specific service on behalf of the Board.

Members of the Board again took part in a Meeting for Worship at Faslane on the day following our meeting in Edinburgh.



Ellis Brooks from QPSW leads a peace education exercise at our meeting in Carlisle

Support for Quakers and the wider peace movement

Through all our activities listed above, we play an active role in sharing and disseminating information and ideas throughout the year, at meetings and events, through our website and social media. This year we also established a new 'Peace Round-up' newsletter for our members and others who might be interested. Our website was well used, and the new hosting and format was ready by the end of the year for launching in early 2020.

We supplied materials, from posters to tea towels and banner kits, and distributed briefing materials and leaflets for Quaker Meetings and events. We ran workshops at Bakewell and at Barmoor, and changed our offer to be more responsive to changing needs and concerns.

Partnerships and networks

As in previous years, our work with other groups and organisations is an important element in our work. We continued to support the work of ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons), with meetings in York, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Through our Coordinator's role on one of the sub-groups of Rethinking Security, we built on our relationship with that network, including collaboration in supporting a conference that established the new Secure Scotland initiative. We contributed to an ad-hoc group looking at Arms Conversion/ Defence Diversification and supported Friends in their peace witness.

We were represented at the Glasgow ecumenical gathering on 'Conflict and Faith' and continued our active involvement with the Network of Christian Peace Organisations. We contributed a workshop to the Fellowship of Reconciliation conference that took place in Leeds.

Our links with other parts of the Quaker world continue to work well, with cross-representation with QPSW and our involvement with the Peace and Service Consultation of FWCC Europe and Middle East Section. We were well represented at Britain Yearly Meeting and ran an interest group meeting on nuclear disarmament issues.



NFPB members at a vigil at the MBDA weapons factory near Bolton

Finance and administrative

Trustees addressed a number of substantive issues during the year, including reserves and investments, constitution amendments and work to improve the office environment. A number of issues were considered relating to the changing and challenging context, both internally as Quakers in Britain, and externally in relation to the political, economic and environmental pressures. These would be taken forward in a review process in 2020. Trustees reviewed the working environment for staff and approved modest upgrades to the NFPB office. Our income from individual donations and financial contributions from Local and Area Quaker Meetings was at the level for which we had budgeted. Trustees explored options for investing some of our reserves, although we again drew on these to meet a deficit in our income compared to expenditure. A more detailed Trustees' report and our accounts are available from our office on request (see contact details below) and via our website - <https://bit.ly/2VhHdnd>. Our communications and networking activities continued through the year, using social media, a regularly updated website, short newsletters sent to each Area Meeting and Local

Meeting, reports for representatives to take to their Area Meetings, plus responding to a range of enquiries and requests for materials. As well as the new 'Peace Round-up' of relevant news, comment and resources and our NFPB Updates, we sold and distributed a range of resources and materials. As part of the website improvements, we added an online shop, donations facility and a blog section.



NFPB trustees at a meeting in York

Receipts and payments for the year ended 31 December 2019

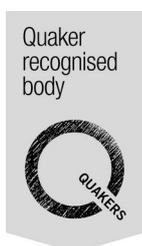
| Receipts | 2019 | 2018 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| <i>Donations</i> | 36,495 | 35,670 |
| <i>Legacies</i> | - | 12,020 |
| <i>Grants</i> | 5,048 | 5,062 |
| <i>Sales and Fees</i> | 602 | 1,100 |
| <i>Investment Income</i> | 856 | 932 |
| Sub-total | 43,001 | 54,784 |
| Receipts from asset and investment sales¹ | - | 45,927 |
| Total Receipts | 43,001 | 100,711 |
| Payments | | |
| <i>Charitable Activities²</i> | 49,078 | 51,300 |
| <i>Governance costs</i> | 1,182 | 1,226 |
| <i>Pension scheme exit charge¹</i> | - | 40,456 |
| Total Payments | 50,260 | 92,982 |
| Net receipts/payments | (7,259) | 7,729 |

Notes:

1. In 2018 we sold the remainder of our investment reserves in order to pay off a liability to the Pensions Trust, following a decision by trustees in 2017. This cleared our liability and NFPB Trustees began research towards future income-generating ethical investment arrangements.

2. Charitable activities are all activities relating to our purpose, including staff, office and travel etc.

Full accounts and trustees' report available on our website via <https://bit.ly/2VhHdnd>



Northern Friends Peace Board

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