

Our activities in 2020

Introduction

Dear Friends,

The year covered in this summary of our activities has been unexpected, challenging and full. It began with the usual mix of meetings and activities, but of course continued in a very different manner, with the Covid-19 pandemic shaping all aspects of our work. Different visions of security have been themes through the year, with human and planetary vulnerability being impossible to ignore.



Photo by Alin Andersen on Unsplash

Another theme is that of connections, with the paradox of not being able to meet in person for most of the time whilst being able to connect across continents and “almost-meet” in the virtual world.

There has been an energy that has accompanied the response to these changed circumstances but also frustration and the profound distress at the cost to lives and communities. As the year closed, the introduction of vaccines gave us the glimpse of better times ahead (in terms of Covid), as indeed did political developments in the United States. We recognise, however, that more radical change will be needed, addressing some of the systemic fault lines that the pandemic has exposed.



Photo by Braño on Unsplash

It will take a while to find how the life and activities of NFPB, and of Quakers generally, have been changed by this past year, but our vision and sense of purpose remain strong. Thank you all for your interest, support, contributions, connections and inspiration as we continue this journey.

Activities

With representatives from Area Meetings across the North of Britain, Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB) supports Quakers and others in taking action for peace. With several meetings a year, our members become a community and network of support, linking us with Friends through the Northern part of Britain. We organise events, produce resources, facilitate the sharing of information and ideas and work with and alongside Quakers and other parts of the peace movement.

This has been a time of great uncertainty but also for reflection and for finding new ways of being a loving and dispersed community committed to peace.



NFPB members and other Friends meeting in Derby, February 2020

Our first meeting of 2020 - at the end of February - was a very positive one; our members gathered at the Quaker Meeting House in Derby, with a warm welcome and good attendance from local Friends as well as our members travelling from far afield. We had stimulating discussions, heard about planned performances by Quaker actor Michael Mears to mark the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and shared news and ideas for our future priorities and strategy. Just a short while later, all that seemed like a very different world, with pandemic restrictions completely transforming how we worked through the rest of the year.

Two further full Board meetings took place in June and October respectively, these being online. Most area Meetings were represented at these, and members contributed to and agreed a new strategic vision for our work. At these, and our informal monthly meetings (that took place from August) Friends shared time in reflection, passing on news of peace witness during times of restriction and discussing concerns and action

opportunities. We were pleased to welcome a number of additional Friends to these events, from beyond our membership.

We kept in touch with the wider community of Friends through our mailings of the *NFPB Update* and the *Peace Round-up*, the latter being a monthly information sharing resource, and by continuous development and updating of our website and social media.

We made contributions to online events organised by Woodbrooke and by Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and participated in the annual Peace and Service Consultation of Friends World Committee for Consultation. These were among many such online openings in which staff and NFPB members played a valuable role.



The ways in which we have worked with the wider peace movement also changed. Since we have not had to travel, many groups and networks have met more frequently and taken work forward in new ways. For instance, the UK group promoting the Global Campaign on Military Spending developed a new focus that led to the engagement of a paid worker to strengthen this project in the UK. We were pleased to be able to contribute to the fundraising and recruitment process to that end and to supporting this new initiative. We also continued our involvement with a network of groups promoting Arms Conversion and Defence Diversification.

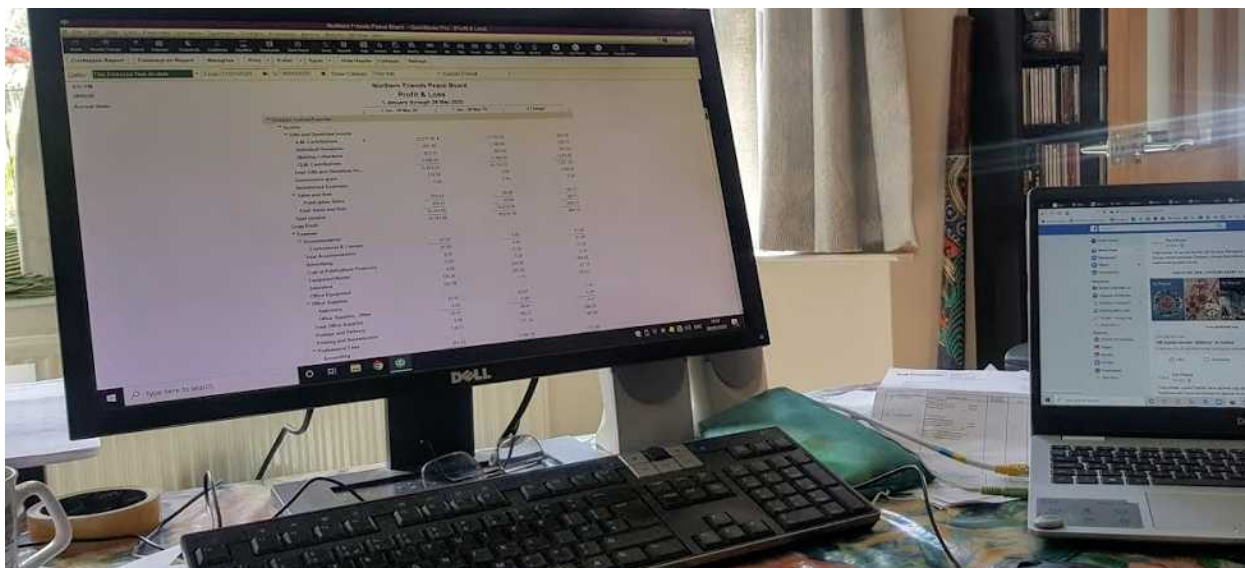
The Rethinking Security initiative, of which NFPB and Quaker Peace and Social Witness are both part, launched a blog shortly before the pandemic, and this has proved to be a rich source of material that has highlighted many aspects of security in the current context. We were pleased to support this blog and other outreach initiatives.

A conference of the Network of Christian Peace Organisations had been due to take place in April 2020. The network met online throughout the year and began planning for an online alternative subsequently took place Spring 2021. Members of the network shared resources and developed joint activities in relation to the 75th anniversaries of the end of the second world war and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and also spent time responding and reflecting on issues of racial justice in the light of the killing in the United States of George Floyd.

As the year ended, Friends and others were preparing to mark the entry into force (on 22 January 2021) of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a treaty that has its roots in humanitarian concern and that has been enabled by countries that are not tied into security strategies with weapons of mass destruction at their core. Our Nuclear

Abolition working group was actively involved throughout the year with the wider network of UK groups involved in the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

Governance and finance



Our trustees met throughout the year, with the first of these being in person in January and other meetings taking place online. Robert Keeble completed his second term as a trustee and Alan Frith and Peter Speirs were appointed to serve from January 2021.

Trustees had started a strategic review process in 2019 and continued this in consultation with NFPB members during 2020, with a document reflecting priorities for the future agreed in November. Key elements to guide our work forward include:

- Giving greater consideration of, and action to promote, **sustainability**, for example, through using the framework of rethinking security.
- **Widening our reach** in terms of those involved and participating, and with whom we aim to communicate. For example through our nominations processes and project work and building a wider network among Friends and beyond.
- Paying attention to **organisational resilience**, developing clear and responsive ways of working and developing and strengthening our financial strategy.
- Becoming better at responding to and taking a lead on **new issues, changing context and changing needs**.

Throughout 2020 and in the period ahead it has been and will be important that we keep in touch with Britain Yearly Meeting committees and staff, being alert to opportunities for effective collaboration in the context of changes in that work. We have, as ever, greatly valued the supportive working relationships with our Friends and colleagues during 2020.

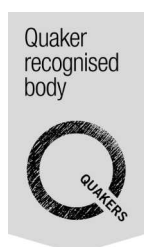
Philip Austin and Steven Waling continued their work as Coordinator and Administrative Assistant respectively. From late March to November, Steven was furloughed due to the pandemic (with support from the Government's job retention scheme), returning to work in stages. Both worked from home until and beyond the end of the year, facilitating and joining events online and producing and distributing materials and resources as described in the previous section.

Our income was broadly in line with our budget, although this did lead to an operating deficit. Funds were transferred from reserves to new ethical investment packages, in order to generate additional income. Areas of expenditure changed during the year as a result of the pandemic necessitating investment in technology and changed working practices. We are grateful for all the generous financial support from Friends, at a time when many in their Meetings are also facing financial uncertainties.

Receipts and payments for the year ended 31 December 2020

Receipts	<i>2020</i>	<i>2019</i>
<i>Donations</i>	35,912	36,495
<i>Grants</i>	6,243	5,048
<i>Gross receipts from other charitable activities</i>	100	602
<i>Investment Income</i>	1,146	856
Total Receipts	43,581	43,001
Payments		
<i>Charitable Activities</i>	48,233	49,078
<i>Governance costs</i>	1,016	1,182
Total Payments	49,249	50,260
Net receipts/payments	(5,668)	(7,259)
Cash converted to investments	22,000	-

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



Northern Friends Peace Board

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