

Slide 1 Cotteridge Quaker Meeting gained a Silver Ecochurch award in 2016. We are now working toward gold. Installing 60 PV panels on our roof in 2010 was the culmination of six years of work “greening” our meeting house, quite literally the panels were the icing on the cake

Quakers have no set liturgy, but often refer to a collection of Quaker writings called Q Faith and Practice. Much of this wisdom is summed up in 43 Advices and Queries at the front of Faith and Practice. Over the years Friends’ ministry has often focused on two of these:

42 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. Do you keep yourself informed about the effects your style of living is having on the global economy and environment?

43 We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God’s continuing creation.

Slide 2 It had been six years earlier in December, 2004, that Laurie Mikaelis, a Quaker who had worked on scenarios of climate change outcomes for an IPCC report, spoke to Quakers in south Birmingham about acting on climate change. Four or five of us were inspired to form a “Living Witness” group to act on climate change starting with our Quaker meeting and its building. Over 14 years the size, membership and name of our group have varied, but it has always been clear that we need to find and work with like-minded people if we are to learn, plan and act. We were fortunate with our group. In 2004 it included the meeting’s treasurers, a member of the premises committee and an engineer who was devoted to solving problems with the use of energy efficiency and renewable energy. I am convinced that the support and validation of a group is necessary to move a congregation forward as a sustainable community. A single voice is a lonely voice.

Slide 3: Action 2—Improve energy efficiency & fund raising. Cotteridge Quakers have an all-electric building. In 2005 we switched suppliers to purchase 100% green electricity. We then started 5 years of hard work, raising

money, changing light bulbs and insulating. We moved from traditional lighting to LED. We dry lined our solid walls. We installed 160mm insulation over our flat roof. We changed glazing to high performance double glazing on all our windows.

Slide 4: Action 3—improve the way we heat our building. We gradually replaced our old night storage heaters with air to air air source heat pumps.

Slide 5: Action 4—Measure. From 2004 on we measured and recorded our energy use daily for 8 years. This enabled us to see how each improvement lowered our use of fossil fuel.

The resulting graph helped us raise funds. We appealed in 2004 and 2006 to our own meeting, in 2009 to Veolia for roof insulation and in 2010 to other trusts for solar PV funding. In all we raised and spent well over £100,000.

Slide 6: Action 5—Encouraging life style change. In 2011 Quakers nationally decided we would become “a sustainable community.” Despite this, we and others in our meeting have found making changes in personal behaviour considerably more difficult than making our building more energy efficient. About 2006 from a national Quaker group I learned of Ecoteams, groups who worked together to monitor and reduce their own energy use, in their homes, their travel, their food and shopping. Over three years we had two Ecoteams in our meeting and one at the Northfield Ecocentre. Carbon Conversations are similar to Ecoteams, but with better resources. In 2018 eight members of our meeting have come together for a Carbon Conversation; we are also leading a second group which attracted some local Anglicans. Calculating and then reducing your carbon footprint is a key part of Carbon Conversations. This handout gives details of accessing this material.

Currently we are experimenting gently nudging behaviour change by using the beans in bottles activity on display in the foyer. Changing personal behaviour is far more difficult than insulating our building, but will, in the end, have a much greater impact.

Slide 7: Celebrate! Take time to rejoice in your progress with everyone involved!