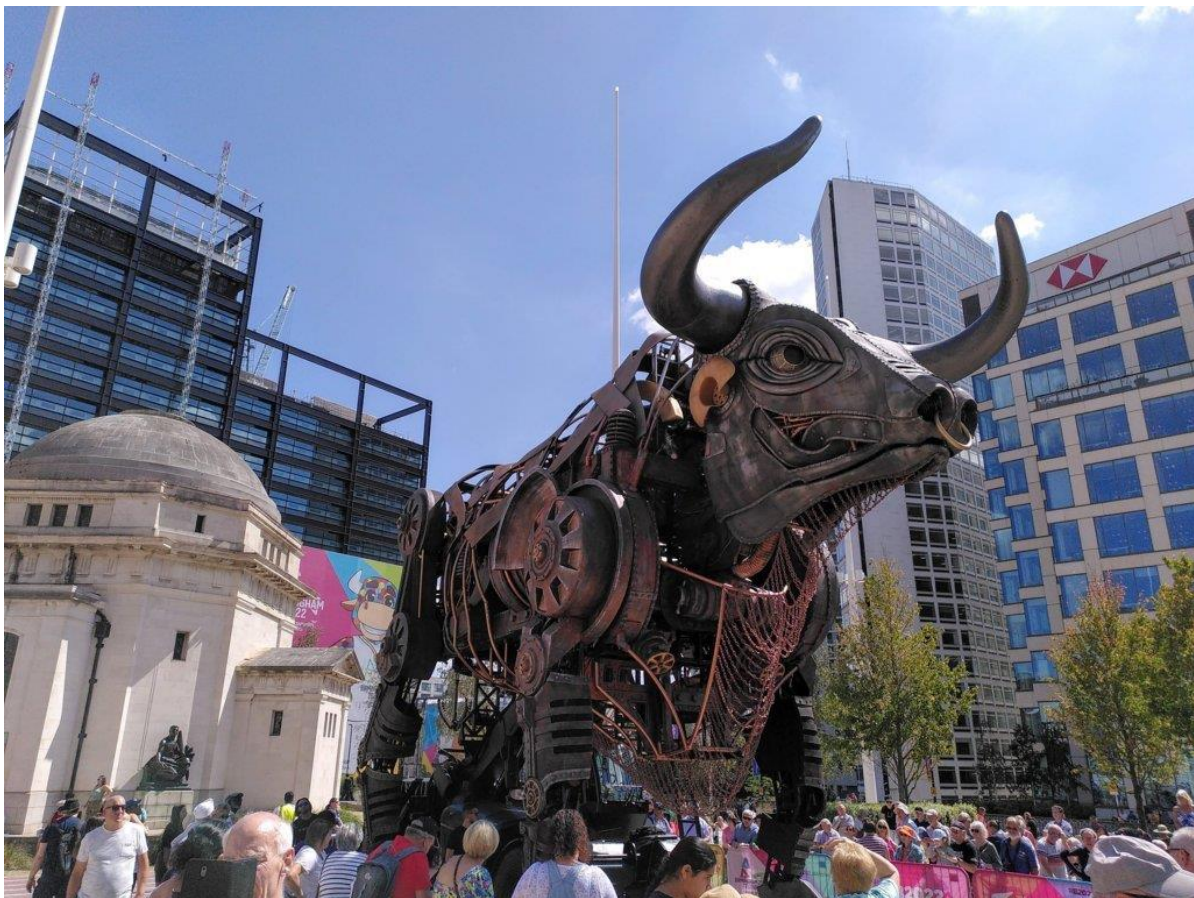


Peace Hub Annual Report 2022



In 2022 Peace Hub built back from Covid, welcoming back first our regulars, and then walk-in visitors as the year progressed. Returning to our friendly café-style layout in the Hub, we were able to hold fruitful discussions on complex topics, connecting with people's concerns. We tapped into the buzz around the Commonwealth Games to recreate a space that allowed different opinions to be heard and shared values to be found.

Photo: the 'Raging Bull' whose part in the Commonwealth Games opening ceremony was a metaphor for healing and shifting from violence to peace.

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Peace Hub is a branch of The Central England Area Quaker Meeting Charities, registered charity number 224571.

About Peace Hub

What is Peace Hub?

Peace Hub is a friendly, café-style space in central Birmingham, focussed on peace & justice. It is a semi-autonomous branch of Central England Quakers, or CEQ, (registered charity number 224571), with its own management committee, budget and bank account. The building is owned by CEQ, with the top two floors sub-let to Peacemakers (West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project).

The organisation acts as a Hub for peace & social justice activity in the city, connecting members of the public, activists, faith groups and NGOs with each other, via three main strands:

1. Our drop-in space is open to the public three days a week, to spread awareness and encourage action around a series of peace & justice themes.
2. We offer office support and expertise to voluntary and faith groups working for peace & social justice, to multiply their impact.
3. We work with local and national NGOs to deliver joint workshops and engage a wider audience in campaigns for peace & social justice.

Peace Hub aims to engage members of the public of all faiths and none. As a Quaker organisation our commitment to peace & social justice (and the various themes) springs from our faith, and we are happy to discuss this with any of our visitors who are interested.

Vision Statement

As Quakers we are called to act for Peace and Justice. Peace Hub seeks to provide a centre from which an inclusive community is inspired to take up this call.

We aim for Peace Hub to become a Quaker-led service to the public that people of all faiths and none in Birmingham and the Midlands are glad to have. We hope that Peace Hub will become a place to which people naturally come when wanting to act for peace and justice, and provide a base for networks of peace-makers.

Aim & Objectives

Aim: A centre from which a diverse community in Central England is inspired to act for peace and justice.

Objectives:

We seek to meet this aim using a rolling programme of peace and justice themes, through which we:

- Inform the public on a wide range of peace and justice issues
- Stimulate dialogue with the local community about peace and justice
- Offer hope through positive examples of peace-making and justice-building
- Encourage people to act for peace by
 - Advocating for local, national and international structures that support peace and justice - as Quakers say: 'speaking truth to power'
 - Showing solidarity with peace-makers and justice-builders

We further support our aim through ongoing activities:

- Supporting community & interfaith cohesion
- Encouraging people to make peace in their own lives
- Upholding activists and groups working for peace and justice
- Explaining why Quakers as a community are called to act for peace and justice

Work & Witness at the Hub

One of Peace Hub's core strands of work uses a rolling programme of peace and social justice themes to engage the public and encourage them to take action. For the duration of each theme, there is a display at the Hub highlighting relevant information and posing stimulating questions, along with a simple action that people can take part in, as well as corresponding articles on our website and social media.

After two years of opening and closing due to Covid, in 2022 we were able to be consistently open for the full year, and to return the Hub to a more friendly café-style setting. Although there was still some nervousness around public spaces, members of the public were able to chat about our peace & social justice themes in a more relaxed atmosphere. We answered questions, listened to concerns and offered ways for people to take action. Perhaps most importantly, we held fruitful discussions on difficult topics such as the legacy of colonialism, or the Ukraine war.

The space we have created to allow different opinions to be heard and shared values to be found, sits in contrast with the fraught way these discussions often play out online, or are avoided altogether in other settings.

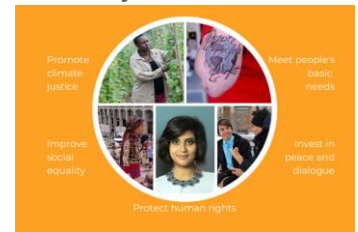
We ran three peace & social justice themes in 2022, building on our wide-ranging set of existing themes and materials, and trying new approaches to make best use of these, and connect with topics in the public imagination at the time:

Live, Love, Learn – This theme is about peaceful and sustainable education. In conversations with the public, we highlighted the work of Peacemakers educating for peace, and our joint project Junior Peacemakers. We raised questions about militarism in schools and education equality around the world, linking into the Our Shared World coalition promoting UN Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 “equipping our society to create a more sustainable, fairer, peaceful and resilient world.”

Sharing Common Wealth? – This theme explored issues of peace and justice in the Commonwealth, tying-in with the lead up to the Games hosted in Birmingham at the end of July. We connected with education organisation Tide to create prompts and questions about the history of the Commonwealth, how that affects inequality today and how we might work for a more equitable future. This included links to tax justice, modern slavery and LGBTI+ rights. Members of the public took action in support of LGBTI+ activists in Ghana, who are facing repression partly under laws imposed under the British empire.

Tying-in our theme with the games was an effective strategy, with a spike in visitors interested in our displays, as we capitalised on the general buzz around the city.

Safe & Sound – This broad-based theme, used the five principles created by Rethinking Security: invest in peace; meet people's basic needs; protect human rights; promote climate justice; improve social equality.



Within this scope we tried a new approach of hosting 'sub-themes' each lasting a month. These highlighted different aspects, aiming to show the connections:

- meeting people's basic needs and the Enough is Enough campaign which members of the public signed up to support;
- remembrance for peace and white poppies, where people provided a creative response to militarism and remembrance;
- social equality and Together with Refugees, as visitors sent paper aeroplanes to their MPs with messages of support for refugee rights.

This new approach maximised the reach of the displays and materials created for the theme, whilst keeping fresh interest for more regular visitors.

Partnerships & Reaching Out

Junior Peacemakers

Junior Peacemakers is a joint project with our sister organisation Peacemakers (West Midlands Peace Education Project). The sessions blend personal & interpersonal peace skills with critical thinking about peace & justice issues in the world.

Children learn about a topic connected to one of our themes, exploring how it connects to peace within, peace between and peace throughout. At the end of the day children develop ideas of how they can share their learning with the rest of the school.

In 2022 we continued to develop the model of running Junior Peacemakers in schools, working with a whole year-group at a time. We took the workshops to 373 children in 9 schools across the West Midlands from Years 3 to 6. There were a number of favourite activities:

- Using the giant floor map in the Climate Justice workshop proved to be very popular with both children and staff, and supported critical thinking about the inequitable causes of climate change and those suffering from its effects.
- As part of Creating a Healthy School, children created natural art in the playground, to much excitement. They expanded their ideas about what art is and where they can do it, particularly in ways that do not use up resources or damage our environment.



Footsteps (Faiths for a Low Carbon Future)

The interfaith climate network held several events on faith and the environment, which we helped to organise and promote. Footsteps also received funding to map Birmingham's faith communities and use this to connect with new faith groups on Project 4F (Faiths for a Fair low-carbon Future). As part of Project 4F our coordinator took part in a panel discussion about communicating with the public about complex issues, broadcast on local radio station Unity FM.

Following COP26 the previous year there was a strong desire to bring communities together and take action at grassroots level, to complement (and influence) the slower processes of national and international climate action. There was also more awareness in our interfaith activities of the importance of justice.

Footsteps and Peace Hub are focussing on climate action that responds to the needs of the most vulnerable communities, rather than being imposed top-down and maintaining the status quo.

At the end of the year, Footsteps began a new Energy Champions project, supporting people in faith communities to provide simple advice and signposting on energy use in the home to those in their communities struggling during the cost of living crisis. The pilot is continuing into 2023, with Peace Hub hosting meetings for the network, and a planned theme connecting the energy and climate crises.

Brum Climate Justice Coalition

Following successful activities in 2021, the COP26 Coalition transformed into the Climate Justice Coalition, with the local branch becoming a network bringing together a wide-range of groups to share ideas and support each other's actions. Being part of a network including established NGOs, trade unions, community and faith groups, political organisations and direct action groups has strengthened our role as a 'Hub'.

Uniting around our shared values of climate justice while respecting differences of approach is very much in line with Peace Hub's vision, and provides a model for campaigning on many issues.

Once again we came together with a broad range of groups concerned about the climate to organise a march through Birmingham during COP27. Although much smaller scale than last year, several hundred people attended, and connections between diverse groups were reinforced. It was especially good to have members of the Egyptian diaspora in a leading role, connecting us to people in the host country who were not able to demonstrate themselves.

CEQ Peace Committee

Together with Central England Quakers Peace Committee, we held a successful event to mark the installation of the white poppy mosaics in the garden at Bull St. held close to Armistice Day, the event was attended by around 20 people, with Christian CND and Fellowship of Reconciliation also joining. At the same time we had a joint display of different colours of poppies at the Hub with contributions from Hall Green, Walsall and Bull St Friends.

Birmingham City of Sanctuary and Together With Refugees

We continued to work with Birmingham City of Sanctuary on the Together with Refugees campaign, symbolised by the orange heart. In the lead up to one of the votes on the Nationalities and Borders Bill, we joined an event with hundreds of schoolchildren, and attended by councillor John Cotton, to display orange hearts at Carrs Lane church.



Sadly the bill did pass in the spring, so the campaign switched to focussing on challenging its implementation, and the plan to send people to Rwanda. We integrated this into the Safe and Sound theme, as one of our new sub-themes, encouraging members of the public to make paper aeroplanes to send to MPs.

As with the Climate Justice Coalition, bringing together a broad range of groups around our shared values of respect and welcome for refugees has been effective in building resilience in the face of the hostile environment.

It's a Penalty

It's a Penalty utilises major sporting events to highlight modern slavery, and how the public can report it. We joined their campaign during the Commonwealth Games, connecting to the Faith Alliance of the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership through Birmingham Churches Together. It's a Penalty's access to high-profile athletes (including Usain Bolt) for the campaign video and posters helped attract the attention of a wide audience beyond those already interested. This helped open up conversations about a difficult topic that people often don't want to think about.

Stay in Touch

We welcome feedback, suggestions and opportunities for collaboration from our stakeholders.

Please feel free to contact our coordinator, Peter Doubtfire:

Peace Hub 41 Bull St, Birmingham, B4 6AF

office@peacehub.org.uk 0121 238 2869 @QuakerPeaceHub (Facebook & Twitter)

Measuring Impact

373

children joining Junior Peacemakers

344

in-person visits to the Hub

169

people reached through external events

After two turbulent years, 2022 saw Peace Hub 'building back better' from covid, enjoying a full year of in-person engagement, alongside the greater online reach that has become part of the new normal.



Some covid-restrictions remained in place at the start of the year, and a general sense of nervousness hung around public places, which restricted walk-ins and new visitors in the first few months of 2022. However, many of our regulars began returning during this period, and we were able to offer space to reconnect and refamiliarise with some of the relational, community-building aspects of activism, that so many had been missing.

As spring arrived, the final legal restrictions were lifted, and confidence grew. We were able to return the Hub to a more friendly café-style layout, attracting more walk-in visitors. A buzz was building up in the city centre throughout the summer in anticipation of the Commonwealth Games, which our theme tapped into. The refreshed layout also helped to facilitate more meaningful conversations around difficult topics in a relaxed and open manner. This was especially important as our themes made links to the Commonwealth, cost-of-living crisis and refugees – all emotive issues which need time and space to unpick.

These were topics that chimed with people's concerns, helping to bring visitors in, and we were able to break down some of these seemingly overwhelming problems and offer outlets for action.

The café layout allowed for the return of our 'action menus' – placing petitions and letters relevant to the themes directly in front of people, to sign in-person on the spot. This approach helped increase the number of signatures in support of causes from LGBT+ rights in Ghana to cost-of-living needs in the UK. Having something meaningful to do right then-and-there helped give visitors a sense of purpose in coming in and cemented the issues we present into something concrete.

Of course, Peace Hub was not the only organisation building back and returning to in-person events after the pandemic. We continued to bring Junior Peacemakers to schools in partnership with Peacemakers, reaching over 300 children. We were able to support Footsteps to return to a full annual programme of events, and along with other events that we supported or jointly ran, reached a further 169 people outside the doors of the Hub. These activities brought our total in-person engagement to over 880 people.

Alongside the return to in-person activity, we maintained the peak levels of online engagement that built up during the pandemic. We once again received over 3000 visitors to our website in 2022, making over 5000 views. More than 1300 of those views were for pages and posts relating to our Sharing Common Wealth theme, mirroring the interest this theme generated in-person. Twitter and Facebook posts multiplied the reach of information and calls-to-action about our themes, with over 2000 followers across the two platforms.

3100

Website visitors

2300

Social media followers

CEQ Peace Hub Accounts for 2022

We would like to thank all our donors (individuals, Quaker Meetings and trusts) whose support allows our work for peace & social justice to happen. Please see the back page for details of how to continue to support this work in 2023.

	£ 2022	£ 2021
INCOME		
Peacemakers rent	7,020	7,020
Donations from individuals	3,313	3,467
Donations from Local Meetings/Branches	2,164	2,552
Grants from Trusts	4,000	5,000
Grants from CEQ Area Meeting	3,000	5,000
Other income (including room hire)	669	800
Recharges for consultancy work	368	656
	20,534	24,495
TOTAL INCOME		
 EXPENDITURE		
Salary	16,364	15,635
Activities	3,465	-
Workshops	3,465	-
Marketing materials & outreach	216	48
Support costs	677	293
Birmingham City Council Rates	677	293
Utilities, cleaning, maintenance	5,185	3,368
Insurance	522	709
Sundry administrative expenses	747	640
	27,176	20,693
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		
 SURPLUS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	(6,642)	3,802
Fund balance brought forward 1 Jan	18,904	15,102
Fund balance carried forward 31 Dec	12,262	18,904
 BALANCE SHEET		
Debtors		43
Cash at Bank	12,262	18,861
NET ASSETS	12,262	18,904

Peace Hub has a reserves policy which specifies a minimum bank balance of £6,500, to provide protection for cash flow and the coordinator's salary.

Reserves built up during the covid-19 pandemic when operating costs were reduced, the planned deficit for 2022 expended some of our excess reserves, and we have budgeted to bring our reserves back down to our policy level in 2023.

Support our Work

Our work relies on support from people like you, who are passionate about peace and justice. Please consider making a donation using the details below:

BACS transfer to Central England Quakers Peace Hub, CAF Bank,
Sort code 40-52-40, Account 00024686

Send a cheque made payable to "Central England Quakers Peace Hub"
to 41 Bull St, Birmingham, B4 6AF.

Donate securely online at peacehub.org.uk/donate

Future Plans

Engagement with the public

Having built back our capacity and visitor numbers this year, in 2023 we will revisit our plans for growth that were interrupted by the pandemic. Our coordinator and management committee will spend time developing a strategy for our medium-term objectives, potentially piloting new ways of working, including by involving volunteers in a more focussed way. Our vision and aims (see page 1) remain a useful guide to our overarching work – our plan is to review the 'how', rather than the 'what'. We want to make best use of our resources, in order to provide a centre from which an inclusive community is inspired to take up the call to act for peace and justice.

In our themes, we will plan a broad programme of topics, connecting to issues that we are called to witness to over the long term. To complement this, we will use the sub-theme approach of highlighting two or three focus actions over the course of a longer theme. This will allow us to respond more quickly to issues in the public consciousness (for example the cost-of-living crisis), and to the timetable of wider campaigns where work has been done to time action hand-ins to maximise impact.

In-person and online – the best of both worlds

While in-person activity has slowly returned, online engagement has remained at the peak reached during the pandemic. The Hub's focus will remain on providing an in-person space, where face-to-face conversations and community-building can happen. However, it is clear that online engagement is here to stay, with the possibilities of digital connection having been opened up to a much wider audience. We will seek to multiply the impact of our in-person activities through online means, including via hybrid events, re-sharing resources through our website and social media channels, and providing QR codes and shortlinks to online versions of our in-Hub actions. We will also seek to bring the spirit of friendly, open-minded discussion that the Hub fosters to our online activities, where discourse is often more fraught.

Partnership work

We will continue to work with Peacemakers, developing a new joint project Peace Ambassadors that builds on the successes of Junior Peacemakers one-day workshops. Peace Ambassadors would develop this, working with a group of schools across an academic year to expand and embed the learning from the workshops, and allow young people to more meaningfully experience making a difference in their school.

We will continue our other partnership work, tapping into the growing potential of networks. Using a more flexible structure than formal partnership agreements, these allow a diverse range of groups to come together, each bringing different strengths, and supporting each other's projects and initiatives. This model has been successful for many years with Footsteps, and Together With refugees and Brum Climate Justice Coalition have more recently adopted a similar approach. In 2023, we will maximise our impact through the networks we are already a part of, and seek new opportunities to work on other important issues in the same way.