

Local Development Worker Newsletter January 2025



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year!

The photo on the right was taken on a cold but beautiful family winter walk. Anyone know which Area Meeting this is in?

As some of you will know, due to staffing changes and the opportunity to reconfigure the LDW areas, I will no longer be the Local Development Worker for Wirral and Chester and East Cheshire Area Meetings. But I will be covering Gloucestershire Area Meeting! It's been wonderful working with Friends in those two AMs over the last two years, and I look forward to getting to know Friends in Gloucestershire.

I'm already plotting bike routes from train stations to meetings.

It's been lovely to see many of you at the Role Holder Peer Support sessions on Zoom over the last year. We've planned some more, and the dates can be found on the attached poster and at the end of this newsletter. Please do come along to these. They are for up to an hour, and are an informal opportunity to share ideas, questions and challenges.

As always, please do get in touch if there's anything you think I might be able to support you with.

In Friendship,

Hilary Topp

A confident Quaker Voice

In each newsletter I try to offer a few ideas around a question that has come up at several Local or Area Meetings. This time it's 'How can we speak confidently about our faith and spirituality?'. There are lots of reasons why we don't always do this – with each other, and with people who are not Quakers. We don't want to offend anyone, we're all on our own spiritual path, we don't have the words to describe our experience, there isn't time. But it's important that we try. It's important for our Quaker communities that we know each other better, and it's important if we are going to be able to talk about our faith to others, if they are interested.

Here's a few ideas:

The activity on page 11-13 of the [Outreach Handbook](#) is a great place to start. Friends are asked to sit or stand in concentric circles, and ask and answer questions. Perhaps you could run this for 20 minutes after meeting some time? If it's a small meeting you can just talk in a whole group.

Does your meeting provide opportunities for Friends to learn together, and talk about their faith and spiritual lives? Could you have regular discussions about a passage from Quaker Faith and Practice after meeting, or over breakfast, or meet in small groups at another time in the week?

There are lots of resources that you could use, so here are just a few that I've come across that might be helpful.

[Being Quaker Doing Quaker](#) – good questions and discussion ideas, wouldn't take too much planning.

[Sharing our Journeys](#) Although it's a few years old, there are some really good ideas in this resource, especially the sections on 'Exploring Spirituality' and 'Exploring God'. It was written with young adults in mind but lots of the activities would work, or could be adapted, to multi-generational groups.

[Let's explore the Quaker Way](#) You could have a discussion about the picture and text on the first double page. What does this mean for each of us? How do we experience of The Light/God/The Spirit?

[Becoming Friends](#) is a longer and more in-depth course that you could run in your own meeting, or in collaboration with others.

[A Quaker Take on God](#) podcast episode might be a good starting point for sharing our experience/understanding of God.

News from around the LDW 'patch'



Central England Area Meeting Communications and Outreach Committee organised an Outreach Workshop on 7 December. 26 Friends attended, despite the stormy weather. The photo on the left shows Friends sat in concentric circles exploring some of the questions on pages 11-13 of the [Outreach Handbook](#).

The Families Weekend, being organised by Central England and Worcestershire and Shropshire Area Meeting, has proved very popular, with over 50 people booked to attend.

Stockport Local Meeting had an all-age Meeting for Worship followed by a trip to a climbing wall to start off the New Year. Central England Area Meeting are holding a Children's Party alongside the Area Business Meeting in January.

The photo on the right shows Friends from Staffordshire Area Meeting gathered for a very interesting study day on George Fox and Worship in November.



Telford Friends were joined by many others to witness against the SDSC Arms Fair in November. You can read a write up [here](#).

Useful resources

Welcome box video: Really good idea for a resource to help your meeting welcome children and families
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtj6jrXfXF4>

Dates for the diary

Nationally there are lots of online events listed on the Quakers in Britain website [here](#), including Outreach Network sessions, Faith in Action drop-in, Quaker Parent Worship, Online Children's Meeting, 'What is the Quaker Way?' sessions for newcomers, and Woodbrooke courses for role holders.

Role Holder Support Sessions

These one-hour sessions, held on Zoom, are a space to raise concerns, share experience and find solutions. See attached poster, or you can click on the links below to register for the sessions.

Local Meeting Clerks	Wednesday 12th February Thursday 1st May Monday 22nd September
Trustees	Thursday 13th February Wednesday 7th May Wednesday 24th September
Treasurers	Thursday 6th March Wednesday 11th June Wednesday 15th October
Eldership and Pastoral Care	Thursday 27th February Wednesday 2nd July Thursday 25th September
Nominations	Wednesday 5th March Thursday 12th June Thursday 16th October