



**Central England Quakers**

**2024**

## **Barnt Green and Redditch Local Meeting**

- Film showings once a month, plus one about the life of George Fox shown as part of Quaker week. 24 feature films have been shown so far this year, of which two involved Quakers.
- Sharing of our spiritual journeys followed by a shared lunch once a month
- Learning sessions after Meeting for Worship once a month
- We have signed up to Discovering Quakers
- Nature art exhibition and workshop, Quaker History exhibition, talks about art (e.g. ballet, poetry and The Moon in Art)
- Barbara Forbes came to speak with us about refugees and we made a poster for our lobby which says “Quakers Welcome Refugees”
- The Wheel of Friendship has been adopted as a way of getting to know one another within the meeting better

## **Bournville Local Meeting**

### **Meetings for Worship**

A few Friends do take advantage of the “Visit another meeting Sunday”. This often coincides with our Alongside meetings: those in the meeting house, and those online, worship at the same time, but alongside each other rather than together.

In September a same sex meeting for marriage was held at the meeting house.

Our Christmas Day meeting for worship of readings and carols continues to be appreciated. Last year forty-nine Friends from a number of meetings attended.

### **Meetings for Learning**

Once a month we have a shared lunch after meeting for worship. Often this follows one of our Friends sharing their spiritual journey – these are well attended and provide a good way of building a stronger sense of community. In February Rhiannon Grant led a session on spoken ministry.

Our Awayday was held in June at Stourbridge Meeting House. Thirteen Friends attended the day. Mark Russ led us in an exploration of the question: “What does deep hope look like for Quakers in 2024?” Friends found the experience rewarding and challenging. We were touched by the generous approach of Stourbridge Friends and felt it was a warm expression of Quaker community.

We are exploring chapter two in Quaker Faith & Practice along with additional material in *the Friend*. There are six sessions and three groups. The sessions will take the form of worship sharing and discussion.

### **Spiritual Journey Groups**

There have been two journey groups meeting: the Soup Group and the Quaker Faith & Practice Group. Two Friends, members of both groups, have decided to step down from the groups. The QF+P group have decided not to continue. The Soup Group continues with new participants.

## Events

An enjoyable **Quiz Night** was arranged in February which was attended by 28 people from various local meetings. It raised £223 for a Quaker-led organization supporting asylum seekers – Lifeline Options.

Last summer our day outing to **Harvington Hall** was attended by ten people who said that they found it a rewarding experience and a good opportunity for nurturing friendships.

We very much enjoyed in participating in **Fox 400 Pilgrimage** followed by the concert called “Nudges & Winks”.

There have been Bournville **Heritage Open Days** on the second Saturday of September. Last year was a very busy one, with over 950 people visiting the meeting house. There were photos of the meeting house in different times, a Quaker Service Memorial Exhibition, and lots of stimulating conversations with people.

The **Bournville Christmas Festival** is a fun equivalent of the Summer Festival and includes the switching on of the lights at 5.00 pm. We open as a 'quiet space'; display the entries for a children's Christmas card competition and have a stall of books and sundries in aid of the Quaker Christmas Parcel Appeal.

## Bull Street Local Meeting

Bull Street Meeting meets every Sunday, and the regular attendance is usually between 18 and 20. Although the age range is primarily elderly, we have a number of younger Friends and Attenders, which is encouraging, but also enriches our Meeting and adds another dimension to our worshipping community. The Meeting is blended, which means most weeks one or two join us via Zoom.

Alongside our Sunday Meetings for Worship we continue with our Mid-Week Meeting on Wednesday's, which continues to provide Friends and others the opportunity to join with us for a short period of worship during the week.

The reading of Advices and Queries remains an integral part of Meeting for Worship, and passages are read regularly throughout the year. They remain an important framework within which Friends try to live their lives, and continue to inspire as a form of spiritual witness. Alongside this we have periodic sessions throughout the year when a Friends will select and read a passage from Quaker Faith and Practice that they find particularly interesting or inspiring, and one we can all share and discuss. Whilst there will be a range of reasons for reading the passage, this sharing of our central text is something we all enjoy.

Our Business Meetings continue to be held prior to Area Meeting, and these allow us to make necessary decisions, as well as make donations to a range of Quaker and other, usually local, charities.

It was particularly pleasing to welcome Charles Stevenson from Australia again, who was with us for approximately six months. We understand he has written a piece for the newsletter, which we hope will be published in due course. His leaving provided the opportunity for us to have a farewell lunch with him.

A group of Friends visited the 'Victorian Radicals' Exhibition at Birmingham Museum during February, and found this an interesting and enjoyable social occasion.

Bull Street Friends again hosted two Area Meetings throughout the year, a similar arrangement to previous years. Bull Street Friends look forward to these occasions, and welcome the opportunities they bring to encourage and deepen friendships within Area Meeting.

## **Cotteridge Local Meeting**

### **Activities during 2024**

The B30 Food Bank continues to use the meeting house twice a week for food distributions. We now employ a gardener to maintain the gardens at front and rear of the meeting house. We have a fortnightly newsletter circulated to all members and attenders. We have tea and chats amongst attenders after meeting for worship. We continue to have monthly coffee mornings which sends out cards to friends needing support. We have two meetings for learning each month led by members/attenders. We have occasional breakfast before meeting for worship.

We have shared lunches monthly after meeting for worship. We have three small groups meeting throughout the year. We had a residential weekend at Purley Chase. We hosted women from Hope House and Restore in two events of Craft & Tea at the meeting house. We had talk about Food and Sustainability by John Marshall and a retired GP after worship and before shared lunch one month. We participated in the George Fox Pilgrimage in July, which attracted many local non-Quakers. When our warden resigned the meeting community rallied to assume the duties which were shared out over several friends. We have held several social events to help build cohesion of our meeting and reserve use of the meeting house on several Saturdays throughout the year for these. Several of our members are active with Area Meeting, Yearly Meeting and Friends World Committee for Consultation. We organised a public meeting with Churches Together in B30 on Quaker Work in the World. We have worked through major changes in the management of the meeting house and changing use of the bungalow as a community.

### **Challenges**

- A major challenge was the loss of the services of our warden early in 2024.
- We delight in having a children's meeting but are challenged to provide weekly meeting for worship for them with a small team of volunteers.
- We are challenged as an ageing community to attract attenders to join our community. We are challenged by the decline of Cotteridge's high street and our remote location behind shops which possibly is discouraging to new attenders or visitors.
- The heating system in the meeting house failed and required replacement.
- Our Nominations Committee feels challenged to fill all the normal roles and have reduced the numbers serving in some roles.

## **Coventry Local Meeting**

- Sundays Meetings MfW
- Worship in local parks once a month and on Bank Holiday Mondays. Monthly 'Experiment with Light' group and Soul Singing group

- At Christmas a semi-programmed meeting with readings for reflection.
- Monthly Meetings for learning currently on “*Quaker Quicks*”. Monthly Bring and Share lunch and a Spring Party
- Monthly special collections
- Some Friends regularly volunteer with ‘Clothing Coventry’,
- Others act as trustees for the Cathedral Chapel of Unity, the Peace House, the Soothern and Craner Educational Foundation, and the Coventry Migrant Women's House (including maintenance work).
- A display marking George Fox's 400th anniversary in Chapel of Unity, followed by a talk in the Meeting House.
- Several are part of the Lord Mayor's Peace Committee, and played a prominent part in the annual Hiroshima Day ceremony in Coventry Cathedral.
- We provide representatives on a local initiative called Sacred Spaces and on the multifaith forum.
- We have provided support material for Coventry and Warwickshire schools RE syllabus.
- One Friend is on the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations and also on the Interfaith Advisory Group of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.
- Fundraising activities: Table top sale, city walking quiz, skills auction, talk on George Fox.

### **Challenges**

- Challenges about blended meeting as a few people do not like it while others now depend on them. We have consulted in Meeting and discussed extensively in Elders meetings. We now have a working schedule for blended meetings.
- Fundraising for our building project is a challenge. We have held an update meeting for everybody and have a plan for the way forward to take to January BM
- Filling roles: We've moved to having teams such as the Lettings team and the clerking team.

## **Hall Green Local Meeting**

### Worship

The main challenge still remains maintaining the numbers at MfW and the energy of the congregation. Between eight and twelve Friends regularly attend worship on Sunday which is about the same as last year. We continue to miss the presence and regular ministry of our Friend Michael Langford who is house-bound but we have occasionally held short meetings for worship at his home. Similarly, our Friend Eva Lorimer is only able to come to MfW on very few occasions but we keep in touch with her with regular phone calls and visits. We have the occasional visitor and Michael Clarke who is also member of the local Ahmadiyya Community joins us regularly on Sundays although he has had some health challenges recently. Our monthly Meetings for Healing and shared lunches continue with most Friends staying on after MfW on the appropriate Sunday to share food together. On the occasions of our picnic lunches, we have had discussions on topics such as the new wording re the marriage declaration in Quaker Faith and Practice, the meaning of membership

and Quaker funeral practices. We have been very pleased that Friends from Solihull Meeting have joined us for shared lunches boosting the numbers significantly. At the end of November, we held a joint study day with Solihull Friends which was facilitated by the Kindlers entitled 'living adventurously'. Our ministry has been enhanced by the box of snippets from Quaker Faith and Practice as Quaker seeds. The two or three occasions on which we have met to tend the garden have enhanced our fellowship.

We used our network of support to keep in touch with Friends and are confident that the community of the Meeting remains relatively strong. However we are conscious that we place significant responsibility on a few key individuals. We tried to be more creative in our nominations process but regrettably found we had to be pragmatic and most Friends have served more than one triennium in their posts. We would certainly welcome the stimulus that fresh faces and ideas bring.

### Area Meeting

We were represented at most Area Meetings during 2024 and a some of our congregation have attended the special gatherings. Area Meeting was held at Hall Green Meeting House in March and we have offered the premises again in July 2025 acting as joint hosts with Solihull Friends. Our representatives have attended Area Meeting Nominations Committee on a regular basis and our members have participated in the Low Carbon Commitment Group, Elders' and Pastoral Friends' events and other events and conferences. Hall Green Friends have served on Finance, Peace Hub and Property Committees and as Area Meeting Trustees. Our Meeting House manager played an important part not only in ensuring that the revenues from lettings are back at pre-Covid levels but also as Treasurer of the Christmas Parcels' Scheme

### General

We are very pleased that our premises are used regularly by local community groups and warmly welcome followers of a range of different religions - Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist as part of these groups as well as to our own Christian worship. We see working with Solihull Friends as a real step forward which we can build on in 2025.

## **Hartshill Local Meeting**

During 2024 Hartshill Quakers have continued to grow our community with new attenders joining us and becoming fully involved in the life of the meeting. We have held events connected to the anniversary of George Fox's birth 400 years ago in nearby Fenny Drayton. We visited the church and monument in Fenny Drayton, took photographs and created our own mini photo panels to exhibit as part of the anniversary. We welcomed Friends from Northamptonshire Area Meeting who visited Fenny Drayton and our meeting house. In May we also ran a successful Anniversary celebration with exhibitions at the meeting house and guided Quaker walks around Hartshill and Fenny Drayton. In July we welcomed the Area Meeting Youth Group who spent the night at the meeting house and in August we hosted the devotional Area Meeting, another opportunity to share our exhibitions.

As well as our creative reflection sessions on George Fox's anniversary our own events have included two sessions of Experiment With Light. We also held a fruitful garden working party, which helped by our feeling of community, in shared work

needed within the meeting.

We have had some challenges, especially to the property. These have included needing various parts of the oil boiler fixed and we have had issues with water ingress via our flat roof. We have begun to have a new regular hirer which are going to be using the meeting house on a daily basis in the new year.

## **Kings Heath Local Meeting**

We remain a small meeting (average 5 per meeting) but have had an increase in attenders – if not regular and sustained.

## **Selly Oak Local Meeting**

2024 fulfilled a unique experiment by Selly Oak Friends. The elders who had agreed to continue after the Covid cohort, finally and for various reasons stepped back. We had already noticed that there seemed to be a gap at the heart of the meeting. We had no Elders nominated by Selly Oak Meeting and appointed by Area Meeting. We could find no new Friends for Premises Committee. We could not identify a clerk or clerking team. Coordination and cohesion therefore was maintained by a “Holding Group” (HG) of three Friends and one Attender. At its meetings, the HG was joined by a rolling member of our Pastoral Friends’ Group, and by the Convener of Children’s Committee. We had no nomination’s committee other than a process initiated by the HG. Our task as we saw it was to simply hold the community and the spiritual life of the meeting as best we could. Members of the community have told us that they did indeed feel held. Not to lose the experience of former elders as well as taking some burden off the shoulders of a few, we had in 2023 enlarged duty eldership. We continued this process successfully.

Other activities included the following:

- “Joy Fridays” have been held approximately once a month – activities -usually all-age – and food have been provided, much of it on a bring-and-share basis. These were organised by our very active Pastoral Group. They have been challenged but remained faithful to the community needs of our meeting and to individual needs relating to age, mobility and mental health challenges that individuals have had. We have several Friends in Homes at some distance and several who have Alzheimers diagnoses. We also sometimes have young people coming from the local university and are aware that they need a welcome with a light touch.
- Selly Oak Friends played a major role in the Area Meeting “George Fox Pilgrimage Day” which included two music sessions mainly by invited artists but including one of our own members who is a jazz musician, while two of our community were involved with the planning.
- The Meeting came together to support Alison and the Ironside family following the death of John Ironside, a much valued member of our community.
- Two members of our Meeting have been deeply involved in climate justice activism; their witness has been a strength to our Meeting, and they have felt supported by the friendship of the Meeting. Some members of our Meeting are deeply committed to living out a more sustainable lifestyle and their lives speak to the Meeting.
- We have held a number of helpful Meetings for Learning on a Sunday after Meeting for Worship. We periodically take stock of where the meeting is and how it wants to progress. In January we asked Friends to consider what it means to be a Quaker

and what we wanted to learn during the year – we then ran sessions on Quaker spirituality and followed by looking at the spiritual underpinnings of Quaker business method. This will be continued in 2025 through our Eldership and Spiritual Nurture group.

- Our children's meetings have been enthusiastically and creatively led by Rosanna Ghinai, Betty Hagglund and others (mainly parents of the children attending). Our annual bonfire was greatly enjoyed by the children, for one of our younger children it was their first experience of sparklers. We were delighted to welcome a new baby to our community in the Summer. He was lovingly introduced to us by his proud brother during all age worship who smilingly told us all 'I've got a baby.' We have also been privileged to welcome two new families to our community this year.
- Helen Waters, who has been the lead person in the AM Youth Group, has been the administrator to Area Meeting throughout 2024. This has had beneficial effects in helping Selly Oak Meeting to respond effectively to AM needs and requests.
- Several members of our Meeting are involved in the AM Responding to Racism Recognised Group and our Meeting is probably more diverse in relation to Black Brown People of Colour (BBPoC) than at any time in its 98 year history.
- In 2023 the Meeting had been deeply challenged in supporting a person who had been recently released from prison. We invited the Local Development Officer (BYM appointment) to facilitate a discussion that might help to heal strained relationships within our membership. This led in early 2024 to a final discussion held in the home of one of our members when Friends were able to further share their hurt and their truth. This was a major learning experience for our Meeting that raised our consciousness regarding safeguarding for all. It also was a living example of the need for cohesive eldership in our Meeting (our 2023 appointed elders were severely stretched in many ways) and this led to the recognised need for a small group to uphold the Meeting, help to implement appropriate processes and, when necessary, take decisions.
- Several of our trees, including a large black poplar, came down in the December storm. Thankfully, nobody was hurt, nor were any of our buildings damaged. We were humbled to receive generous donations towards the cost of the necessary tree surgery from several of our user groups.
- Our long-standing support of the Women with Hope refugee group has continued this year in the meeting house. Members of the Meeting have joined them for meals and we packed hygiene bags for them at Christmas.
- The meeting house has been a focus for our outreach efforts. During Quaker week we decided to hold a shared meal with the German Lutheran Church who use our space regularly. Several of us also attended their service and their families joined us for the bonfire night. We have all kinds of users of the premises including musicians, sculptors and dancers, a Sikh Ladies group and we have been able to extend the free hours we offer to a local mental health group. The grounds for our community and others are very special – we meet, eat out in summer, have held yoga sessions, BBQs, bonfires, and connected with local wildlife groups.
- Finally, we have felt the loss of Woodbrooke on local premises and the opportunities we enjoyed, not least the visitors who used to come to Birmingham. We have sought to improve our public signage as we are aware that we are now the only Quaker presence on the Bristol Road which is a main artery in and out of Birmingham and so wish to be more visible.



## **Solihull Local Meeting**

The New Year began with Friends searching for a new venue in which to hold our Meetings. With great co-operation and compromise, it was settled and on 18<sup>th</sup> February our first Meeting was held at Shirley Methodist Church. Our first Meeting brought a new Attender, who has been with us since and settled in well, bringing a breath of fresh air with her. Our sign up to the new scheme has meant there have been a number of new enquirers throughout the year, enabling us to give a warm welcome to new faces and give them a taste of the Quaker way.

The year of George Fox's 400<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations has provided a good excuse for outings for the Meeting. There was Hartshill's exhibition in May and Selly Oak's mini pilgrimage in August. Area Meetings have been well represented by Solihull. Friends especially enjoyed Devotional Meetings in Stourbridge and Hartshill, providing us with wonderful opportunities to visit our more far flung Meeting Houses, share spiritual companionship and to socialise with those we rarely get to see. Since moving to Shirley, we have become more aware of our proximity to Hall Green Meeting, prompting an invitation from them to join in with their shared lunches and culminating this year with a Kindlers Event, held between the two Meetings. The experience of mixing has been very positive and we look forward to many more opportunities like this.

Friends within the Meeting have voiced concerns relating to the Testimonies of Peace and Sustainability and have taken this message in outward support of Climate Justice and opposition to the Arms Trade. Some of this action has resulted in arrests and we support our Friend awaiting trial and hold her In The Light.

Regular visits by Solihull Friends to the home of Jean and Peter Shirley for Meetings were well received by them and enjoyed by Friends who took part. Unfortunately, Peter died on 7<sup>th</sup> November, after many years of illness. Everyone at Meeting was pleased to be able to provide the comfort and companionship when we were able and we look forward to welcoming Jean back to Meeting, when she is ready. Solihull Meeting is pleased to be able to help those of us who are incapacitated by illness or age to continue to be a part of the whole. Friends are continually working to adapt ourselves to be inclusive of those finding things difficult. There is always a way and Solihull are determined to find it.

## **Stourbridge Local Meeting**

We are a busy and lively Meeting, and hope that amongst the "great busyness" the truth is prospering. We have found it helpful to list our activities under various headings.

### **Spiritual development, communications and social events**

- The Meeting's primary means of communication is the monthly *Friends Newsletter*, distributed to 75 current and former members and attenders, and other friends of the Meeting.
- The Experiment with Light group continues to meet approximately monthly.

- Several “Desert Island Discs” events have been held, each followed by a shared lunch. In addition to sharing Friends’ music choices the real value of these events is being able to listen to the life journeys of the castaways.
- “Pop Up Breakfasts” (before Meeting for Worship) are held a few times each year
- An All-age Meeting for Worship was held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2024
- Elders arranged an Enquirer’s workshop on 5<sup>th</sup> October, titled “Why Be a Quaker?”
- A “Pilgrimage” walk over the Clent Hills (with an alternative activity for non-walkers), followed by a shared lunch in Clent Parish Hall, took place in May 2024
- A visit to the Black Country Museum took place in June 2024. The cost of admission was funded from a donation in memory of Steve Sharples, a former member of the Meeting, who died in September 2023.
- A generous donation in memory of William Whiting, who died in January 2023, will be used to fund a social event in 2025.

### **Rainbows – Stourbridge Children’s Group**

- Rainbows meet on the last Sunday of each month. Though small in number the children are enthusiastic, and they help to choose and support charities for the Meeting’s special collections. This year they have prepared an animated film celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of George Fox’s birth. Due to declining numbers of children, the future of the group is presently under review.

### **Faith in the community, faith in action**

- Each year grants totalling ca. £12,000 are given to over 20 beneficiaries including the Meeting’s own projects, Area Meeting and BYM
- Stourbridge directly supports a number of local asylum seekers. There is an ongoing special “Meeting of Sanctuary” collection to support this work, and £2,200 was raised during 2024. Our “Sanctuary friends” joined us for a shared lunch on 17<sup>th</sup> November.
- The Meeting plays an active part in Churches Together (Stourbridge). We hosted a discussion evening on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 on the theme, “*The Work of Prison Chaplains*”.
- 10 “Peace Pilgrims” walking from Malvern to Telford stayed overnight in the Meeting House on 12<sup>th</sup> September
- Many individual Stourbridge Friends are “concerned activists” and take part in a range of local and national events/protests.

### **Outreach**

- The Meeting took part in Heritage Open Days on 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> September, with a talk on “*Dr Samuel Johnson, Stourbridge and the Quakers*” on 15<sup>th</sup>, given by John Lampen
- National Quaker week at the end of September was celebrated with daily Facebook posts sharing a range of information about Quakers
- The Meeting had a stall in the centre of Stourbridge on 4<sup>th</sup> October
- 9 members of the Meeting visited Oakwood prison on 7<sup>th</sup> October to take part in their Meeting for Worship, in celebration of World Quaker Day
- The Meeting’s “outreach group” is particularly active, and one member serves on the Area Meeting Outreach and Communications Committee

### **Sustainability**

- A study group of 11 Friends was formed to explore “Faith and Climate Justice”, using the resources provided by BYM, and held six sessions (each based on one of six booklets) in 2024. (We commend this resource to other Meetings)

**Projects:** Stourbridge Meeting supports, and holds restricted funds for, three projects:-

- Uganda: the peace-building and education work undertaken by John and Diana Lampen in Uganda continues actively, and a detailed report was published in the Autumn 2023 edition of “Roundabout”, the Area Meeting newsletter. A member of the Meeting, Julia Furminger, undertook a third trip to Uganda and a second trip to Kenya in Spring 2024 to teach women and girls how to make reusable sanitary products.
- Stourbridge Seir Twinning Group (Palestine): for several years our Meeting has supported a Women’s Co-operative in Seir, a small village in the West Bank near Hebron, with financial and other support co-ordinated by Lynn & Dave Morris. Following the 7 October 2023 Hamas attack, the villagers have been threatened and attacked by Israeli settlers, illegally occupying Palestinian land, and there is deep concern for their safety and future. We receive regular updates from Lynn & Dave.
- Journeymen Theatre: our Meeting has provided administrative support for Lynn and Dave Morris who have, as *Journeymen Theatre*, written and performed powerful and thought-provoking productions on themes reflecting Quaker concerns and testimonies. After over a decade, Lynn and Dave decided to lay the project down in 2023, and they have been working on a “legacy project” to enable their work to be documented for posterity, and to make the material accessible to other performers. Their legacy book was launched in June 2024, and is on sale. The cost of the project was supported by contributions from both Area Meeting (specifically the “Black Country Fund”, arising from the assets of the former Dudley Meeting) and Stourbridge Meeting. The restricted fund for this project will be closed at the end of 2024.

## **Sutton Coldfield Local Meeting**

Our attendance remains relatively stable at around 12-15 people on a Sunday, although we have a new attender coming regularly since late September after being part of an Eco Together group held once a month on a Saturday afternoon. We hold an in-person only MfW once a month in an attempt to accommodate those who continue to find blended meetings a less spiritual experience, but have experienced fewer issues with this after abandoning the larger screen in favour of a simple laptop. We have a hearing-impaired attender who has difficulty in hearing vocal ministry as the microphone system we used before the pandemic is incompatible with the tech. We are looking at ways to resolve this as part of our on-going accessibility audit.

We held a Kindlers workshop on vocal ministry in June, to which we invited members of Walsall, Bull St and Lichfield meetings. This was a positive experience that helped us gain fresh perspectives on ministry, but some of those attending found the pace too intense. We aim to look more closely at how we might better accommodate those who are neuro-diverse or experience undue anxiety or other mental health difficulties in our study groups as part of our accessibility audit. We also held workshops on the Book of Discipline Marriage proposals and on Diversity and Accessibility.

Social events are less well attended than previously, largely due to failing health and caring responsibilities, but we still regularly enjoy shared meals. One particular highlight was Clive and Fiona’s wedding in August, which proved to be a hugely enjoyable event characterised by a very strong sense of community.

## **Walsall Local Meeting**

- The death of our Friend Barbara Groombridge was a big blow to our small meeting, but we as a meeting pulled together over the period: conducting the funeral and memorial meeting.
- We hold a monthly discussion/study meeting
- Regular shared lunches are held.
- An additional weekday MfW is held at a Friend's Apartment, usually on Wednesday afternoon.
- Recycled Christmas and Greetings Cards are made by one of our members and sold in the St Matthews Church Centre with cooperation with the church. Proceeds are donated to Save the Children Charity.

## **Warwick Local Meeting**

Meeting for Worship on Sunday morning continues to be blended and is attended by between 15 and 30 Friends. We have been pleased to welcome some new attenders during the year. We also hold an additional Meeting for Worship on Sunday evening which is held on Zoom. We agreed to lay down Kenilworth Worshipping Group at the end of June due to dwindling numbers. We hold our Children's Meeting generally once a fortnight and this is attended by 4 to 6 children. Our 4 young people regularly attend the Area Meeting Youth Group and Summer School or Senior Conference which they enjoy and where they can create links with the wider Quaker Community.

We continue to develop the spiritual life of the Meeting through our regular Meetings for Learning and our Bible Study Group. One example of the Meetings for Learning was a Friend who shared her experience and information about a Woodbrooke weekend course on Spirituality. The Bible Study group have studied women in the Bible and considered the text of 1 Corinthians.

The monthly meetings of our group "Preparing for Change in Old Age" also continues and the group has invited external speakers for example from the local hospice. We have good links with other local religious groups and this year the Meeting House was a stop on the Warwick Faith Trail when we had the opportunity to share how we worship and an introduction to our Testimonies.

Our Meeting House and garden provide spaces which we enjoy sharing with the local community. The well-supported Conversation Café has been running for over a year, organized by the local Catholic, Unitarian and Quaker churches. Those who attend come from a number of communities including Afghani, Syrian and Ukrainian. Rooms in our building are regularly hired by a wide range of local groups with interests in natural history, literature, music and art as well as counsellors and pilates/yoga instructors.

The use of the building is complemented by the garden and the community cafe. The garden is maintained by a group of volunteers with some support from a professional gardener. It is much appreciated by those who visit and relax there. The community cafe continues to open on weekday mornings and provides a valued meeting place in the Warwick community.

We have two flats one of which was let to a Ukrainian family until earlier this year. We are working with the local authority to let it again to refugees or asylum seekers.