

REPORT on the LIFE of BURHAM
MEETING.

January 2021

At the beginning of 2020 little did we suspect what lay in store for us.

The first meeting of the year was well attended with three Friends from Weston joining us for worship and then a shared lunch at Clive and Sue's home. Since the seven people present were all well acquainted with Quakers the talk turned to how a transfer of administration to NSAM might work and the atmosphere was very positive.

Further meetings were held on the first weekend of February and March. For the March Meeting our room in the Community Centre was crowded as Friends from WSAM joined us. So many were there we lost count. Afterwards the talk was about how Quakers would cope if we could no longer shake hands and hand gel was passed round!

Not long after all public meetings stopped and Burnham began weekly meetings by email. To begin with our Correspondent would email everyone about ten to welcome them with a few words. Others would just say good morning to let us know they were there and in the early days 9 or 10 would join us, double our normal meeting numbers. A virtual meeting enabled the vulnerable, those with children, those who worked or were stuck abroad to join us.

We suggested that we all sat with our devices turned off from ten thirty as long as was comfortable for each of us. It seemed unwise to make people feel they had to sit for the full hour when they were alone in difficult circumstances, although some of us did. At eleven thirty we turn our devices back on and talk if any wants to. We had very positive feedback about this, particularly from an attender who was stuck training paramedics in Vanuatu for eight months.

We were able to appoint to AM for the first time in a long while once AM met on Zoom. After hearing how other meetings held MfW we started beginning our meetings by emailing Advices and Queries, one a week in order. Our correspondent usually adds relevant information and other quotes mainly for the benefit of our six attenders but a useful refresher for us all. Sometimes someone also shares an image of flowers or a landscape.

When public meetings were permitted again we did discuss the possibility of meeting again. However, since the room we rent is in a shared building the H&S conditions there are onerous, and also at least six of those who might attend our meeting are extremely vulnerable so it did not seem viable. This remains the case although we have discussed the possibility of a blended meeting in the future.

Surprisingly 2020 feels more positive than might have been expected. We continue to meet weekly, we have nearly read and considered all Advices and Queries, we share

Quake and news from The Friend every week. We keep in touch with the one attender who is not on the internet by phone and dropping in copies of The Friend. If we do not hear from anyone for a week or two we send an email just checking they are well. In present circumstances this does not sound like asking why they were not at MfW last week!

Transfer to NSAM seems to be on hold for now.

Many positive things have come out of a difficult year and it feels as though we are in closer contact with LM, AM and BYM. Whilst we look forward to the time when we can meet in person again we hope that the positives that have come out of a difficult year are retained.

Sue Hammond-Lovatt