

# WEST SOMERSET AREA MEETING QUAKER NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2019

Quakers from Mid Somerset and North Somerset invite you to  
**Sanity, Spirituality, and Psychiatry**

Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>

10 till 3.30

Taunton Meeting House



Morning workshops:

- How do we support people in our Quaker Meetings?'
- Mental health in our wider community-a Quaker response?

Afternoon:

Keynote address

## **Sanity, Spirituality and Psychiatry**

Dr Quinton Deeley, Consultant Psychiatrist.

Dr Deeley is a founding member of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group at the Royal College of Psychiatrists. He will address integrating spirituality within his professional work as a psychiatrist, and how that also informs delivering contemporary mental health support in austerity Britain.

*See inside for programme and booking form*



A £5000 legacy has been gifted to our AM and trustees recommend that this be used in conjunction with funds from our reserves to drawdown our debt to Friends Meeting House Trust that was incurred by the Taunton Meeting House redevelopment project.

We approve the use of the James Hayllar bequest of £5,000 to contribute to the paydown of the loan from Friends Meeting House Trust to the Taunton Redevelopment Project.

A full report will appear in the Newsletter.

#### Treasurer

**19:54** We approve of the appointment of Jodie Loveday to examine the 2018 Accounts of WSAQM.

#### Earth Action Group

**19:55** We have heard from Earth Action Group (EAG) that a request sent out to LMs to express a preference for one of three suggested topics to be presented as a workshop in the Special Topic Area Meeting on September 21st resulted in replies from most LMs.

Most chosen was the topic entitled, "Transforming the Economy for Climate Justice".

This preference has been communicated to QPSW who are offering the workshops and EAG will contact Gill Westcott of Exeter Meeting who it is hoped will act as facilitator.

#### Britain Yearly Meeting 2019

**19:56** We have heard from Friends who attended BYM. They found this a challenging event in addressing Diversity and Privilege. Friends were informed that there are extensive on-line videos of the talks.

#### Meeting for Sufferings (MfS)

**19:57** Kathy Gollin has reported on MfS 6th July 2019. As a comprehensive report has appeared in the Friend this was a personal reflection on her experience of the meeting.

The two issues which stood out were the consideration of how to take the Vibrancy in Meetings programme forward and our discernment of diversity and inclusion following on from Britain Yearly Meeting back in May, with particular regard to issues of gender identity.

Meeting for Sufferings asks Area Meetings to consider issues of sexuality and gender in the light of what modern medicine has made possible and how they challenge our testimony to equality, justice and truth.

Among the concerns shared was that 'Identity is not a debate', and in light of that how do we support those challenged by this issue?

We agree to send the relevant documents to LMs and encourage them to set up small groups to take the discussion forward.

Kathy Gollin has agreed to send the relevant documents and visit LMs to introduce the papers.

We hope that responses be returned by our next AM on November 16th. Kathy's full report will appear in the Newsletter.

#### Quaker Life

**19:58** Rep. Council of April 2019.

We have heard the Report from Margaret Stenhouse from Quaker Life Rep Council. It was an engaging and informative meeting which is well represented on-line with various videos. We

suggest that LMs might meet to watch these videos together. We thank Margaret for her Report which will appear in full in the Newsletter.

**19:59** Discussion led by Gian Zucchelli on 'Quakers thoughts on the Brexit dilemma.' We have shared our fears and concerns around the subject of 'Brexit'. We feel led to listen to all shades of opinion and hope to work together towards a future for everyone.

**19:60** We thank Minehead LM for hosting this Area Meeting today and for providing us with refreshment and sustenance. We look forward to meeting again as an Area Meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup> at Taunton MH.

### REPORT OF QUAKER LIFE REP COUNCIL APRIL 2019

The theme of the weekend was "Building inclusive Quaker communities" and it continued to look at the thoughts raised by "All are Welcome", which was the theme of the last QL rep council. Do we really offer a welcome place for anyone who wants to join us?

As usual, the Saturday morning speakers were excellent and the Saturday evening programme was both moving and thought provoking. There are links to all these at the end of this report, so you can watch them at your leisure.

I never write many notes at these events even when my conscience is pricked by those around me who seem to write volumes. I just wrote two things. The first was "too many rules". This was a quote from someone in our home group and it took me by surprise, but it made sense when she went on to say: *We mustn't arrive late, we must sit still for an hour, we must stand to Minister, we must only Minister once.* She felt, for example, that people coming to a Quaker Meeting for the first time can find the sitting in silence for an hour difficult and should be told that they can go out if they want to, but are welcome to come back for tea and chat afterwards.

The other thing I wrote was "Listen in depth", also from someone in our home group. This person was Nim Njuguna who I hadn't met before but was obviously well known in Quaker circles, so some Friends will probably know him. He also ran a workshop on Power and Privilege, an important issue which can be hard to recognise for those of us who have it. We were encouraged to use our power and privilege to engage in effective social justice.

At the risk of making this report too long, I feel I must mention some of the video clips we watched on Saturday evening. First we saw 2 TED talks, one by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie called "The Danger of a Single Story" and one by Yassmin Abdel-Magied called "What does my headscarf mean to you?" Then we saw 3 short clips from YouTube: "Where the Hell is Matt", which was supposed to encourage us to spread joy around us but actually created quite a lot of discussion. Then "Blinded by your Grace" by Stormzy and finally "Bridge over Troubled Water" by Artists for Grenfell which left us all in tears.

The link for the Saturday morning speakers is <https://youtu.be/QgylnAWgHio>

One of the speakers (Terry) talked about how he had left school unable to read or write, had been an alcoholic, eventually found Quakers and had now reached the dizzying heights of being a trustee of his Area Meeting!

Margaret Stenhouse

## MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS REPORT – 6<sup>th</sup> July 2019

*Kathy Gollin attended this meeting as alternate representative.*

It was one of the most engaged and interesting meetings I have been to in a long time. *The Friend* reported it very accurately. The two issues which stood out for me were the consideration of how to take the Vibrancy in Meetings programme forward and our discernment of diversity and inclusion following on from Britain Yearly Meeting back in May, with particular regard to issues of gender identity.

There was no doubt that the ViM programme has been a great success. How to replicate it across all Area Meetings with practicalities of costs and recruitment is what needs considering in relation to all the other work we have undertaken. It may be some things will have to be laid down. We may become less London based with regional hubs or clusters of Area Meetings and paid staff. One Friend from Scotland was concerned this was starting to look like paid Ministry, and he had always been proud that in BYM we had never had pastors. To me it feels more like central funding of Travelling in the Ministry.

How to respond to issues of sexuality and gender, and to trans-gender in particular, followed on from Yearly Meeting. It was the first time Sufferings has considered the matter. There were some very moving contributions from lived experience. As our Book of Discipline is going through the revision process this issue is coming more into focus. Two papers were before us, one from Quaker Life and the other from Young Friends General Meeting taking radically differing views. Meeting for Sufferings asks Area Meetings to consider issues of sexuality and gender in the light of what modern medicine has made possible and how they challenge our testimony to equality, justice and truth. It was suggested AMs should take soundings in small groups with sensitivity to the difficulties of confidentiality. Our AM has yet to reply to the enquiry about diversity and inclusion launched last year. There is a useful study session on this subject highlighted in the papers of MfS this time.

### VIBRANCY IN MEETINGS

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/Vibrancy-in-Meetings-Quakers-in-Britain-482765148761447/>



## WSAQM TRUSTEES REPORT TO AREA MEETING – 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2019

This is a report of the year to date. The full Trustees report and annual accounts for 2018 are in preparation.

Trustees have met three times this year in full session and there have been four meetings of the sub groups dealing with Finance and Property and Policy and Communications. We welcomed Sue Brownlie as a new Trustee but three of our number are due to end their term of service in December so please enquire deeply if this is a service you can offer.

Our main business in the first part of the year was overseeing the change of warden at Taunton Meeting House. Lynn Shorthouse left in May before the end of her contract, finding it too difficult to continue commuting from Glastonbury as she had done since October last year. Vicki Ross of Taunton Meeting has been appointed for one year until June 2020. Trustees have had much to learn about the obligations and responsibilities of being an employer. Both flats are now let on a commercial rent and we will be considering where we go next with the wardenship of Taunton Meeting House.

Wellington LM has also been looking to the future. Trustees appointed a firm of architects to look at what might be done to make the Meeting House warmer and more comfortable. Unfortunately, this was seen as an attempt on the part of Trustees to impose solutions on the LM so this was another learning experience for us. It also raised the question of what Meeting Houses are for. Are they part of our Ministry and if so how fit are they for this purpose? We hope to arrange a whole day AM next year when all of us can look at this question in greater depth in the Spirit.

Two new policies have been added to the folder each LM keeps, one on employment and another on a complaints and grievance process.

To end on a positive note, we learned that James Hayllar of Ilminster has left us a legacy of £5,000 for the purposes of the Area Meeting. Our Treasurer has identified a sum of about £12,000 in excess of our agreed reserves and Trustees recommend that this and James' legacy be used to pay down the debt we owe to Friends Meeting Houses Trust for the Taunton project, thus returning the money to Quaker hands for other needs.

Friends considering service as a Trustee will find Chapter 15 of Quaker Faith and Practice very useful.

<https://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/15/>



## PURPLE FIELD PRODUCTIONS

### Summer 2019 bulletin

*Featuring the latest news from Tanzania, Malawi and Sierra Leone, a warm welcome to two more Trustees, and a call-out for more volunteers.*

#### **'LISILOJULIKANA' IN TANZANIA**

Working alongside one of our Tanzanian partners, [ADD International](#), our local distribution manager Annatalia, has been busy with preparations for screenings of Lisilojulikana. There are, after all, a lot of practical things to be organised; film equipment, screening venues, local authority liaison, contingency plans, and so much more. It's a real team effort - everyone has a part to play.

#### **HARD WORK BEHIND THE SCENES**

Firstly, and since Tanzania is a new country for PFP, Annatalia has been undergoing intensive training and recently spent two days in clinic at [CCBRT](#) shadowing the Physical Rehabilitation team who provide physical therapy and support to those with disabilities. Annatalia saw how the right treatment programme can help a child with cerebral palsy, and the importance of early intervention.

Annatalia says;

*"I learned so much about cerebral palsy from the CCBRT Physical Rehabilitation Department. It was good to see the effect therapy can have, and how important it is we get more families the support needed".*

Meanwhile, Roland has been putting together a new backpack film screening kit for Tanzania which will be sent over in the next week. Kevin and Salome will be heading to Dar es Salaam soon to show Annatalia how the film kit works, and to share their experience of running successful screenings, including the all-important post-screening discussion.

It's not all about the UK team and Annatalia however. We must acknowledge ADD International (pictured below) who are helping us plan the first series of screenings. Their ongoing support, advice, and passion for supporting those with cerebral palsy and other disabilities are invaluable. Our thanks to them, and indeed to all our partners in Tanzania who are backing us every step of the way.



## THE FIRST MEETING!



*Peter, Caroline and Elspeth met with Rose and the ADD team in October to discuss screenings of Lisilolulikana across Tanzania.*

## LATEST PROJECT NEWS

**'CHOSADZIWIKA' IN MALAWI:** Kevin, and our Country Representative, Jonathan Mbuna, have been busy working on a distribution programme for the Malawian version of 'Lisilolulikana', renamed as 'Chosadziwika'. Ten pilot screenings will take place in and around Kasungu, a central district of Malawi, next month before the main distribution phase begins targeting at least 70 further screenings. We are also hopeful that local TV stations will be keen to broadcast the film - so watch this space!

**'ME EN YOU, ONE PEOPLE' IN SIERRA LEONE:** The hard-working team at Future View Film Group has been going great guns showing their disability stigma-busting documentary to an audience of over 14,000. It has also been shown on TV six times so far. The impact of the film's message can be seen by the comments made during the post-screening discussion, including:

*"...the blind, the deaf and the dumb, we call them disabled, but after watching the film I now know that we must love them, give them what they need...disability is not the end of life, so make them feel they are important, they are somebody."*

## MEET OUR NEW TRUSTEES

We're delighted that two more Trustees have recently been appointed, bringing us a wealth of experience and skills in different but critical areas. A huge PFP welcome to Rick and Chris!



### **Rick Elgood**

Rick joins us as a very experienced film maker and takes on the role of overseeing our future film productions, including our filmmaking crews and volunteers both here in the UK and overseas.



### **Chris Deary**

Chris joins us to help guide our communications and to make sure we're keeping you, our valued supporters, up to date with our work, including a refresh of our website.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We're still looking for volunteers who can spare a little time, (or a lot!), to help us achieve so much more. Currently, we're particularly in need of someone who can help us spread the word about our work to the press and media.

However, whatever time or skills you might be able to offer, there's something you can do to help, including:

- **Press Officer**
- **Volunteer Co-ordinator**
- **Poster distributor**
- **PFP Ambassador (travelling overseas at own expense)**

Being a part of PFP gives you a unique insight into the challenges experienced in other countries and a provides a positive and fulfilling way to help.

If you are interested in any of the above roles, or would like to help in some other way, [please get in touch](#) for a chat. We look forward to hearing from you!

## WHY IS A TABLE FEMININE IN FRENCH?

As we consider the revision of our Book of Discipline, Quaker Faith and Practice, trans-gender issues are coming more into focus. Meeting for Sufferings has suggested Area Meetings should quietly mull over some of the very contentious arguments in small groups, if only to inform ourselves of what is happening.

The thing that has worried me most is how the anxieties of young people and young women in particular about gender issues are being addressed by adults. I heard recently of a young woman who reportedly posted that she had been worried that she might be a lesbian but after consultation and advice had now concluded that she was actually trans-gender. And added the word “pewh!” to the post. Is trans-gender seen as preferable to same sex? It seems increasingly so. And adults are prepared to oversee actual bodily harm in pursuit of this perception.

Adolescence is a fluid and experimental time of life. It is the responsibility of adults to guard and uphold young people as they grope towards the people they are going to be and refrain from advocating any step that will decide and harden things too soon. Delaying the onset of puberty, for example, is deeply dubious ethically and, by all accounts, a physically damaging procedure that may have lasting consequences.

Will this generation be sued by the next for dereliction of duty?

It feels to me, adolescent before teenagers were invented, that this response to teenage angst is the last gasp of the hippy era. Are adults still attempting to live out beliefs and ideology through their hapless youngsters? With similar disastrous consequences for said young? I’m reminded of the book, *Hideous Kinky* by Esther Freud. Her sister, the young Bella Freud, a victim of her mother’s prioritising “finding herself” in the sixties, when asked what she wanted to be when she grew up replied: “Normal”. All teenagers have a right to find out for themselves what is “normal” for them.

The real enemy here is sexism. Consultation on the proposed Gender Recognition Act seemed to confuse gender with sex, the former a cultural construct, the latter evidence-based science. (I have often seen this distinction denied but never convincingly). Sexism is the expression of both, that is formed, permitted and set by social context and history. That gender change is now possible is to be welcomed as it calls into question all we have inherited from past societies and cultures. We like queries in Quakers and this is a big one. What is worrying is the wholesale demands of both those who change their gender and those who don’t, leave trans-gender people, particularly male to female people, over-militant about perceived rights and feminists over-defensive of theirs. Evidently neither side prioritises loving the enemy.

Quakers hold the space for conflicting views so all may listen and learn. Quakers, at our best, facilitate “the promptings of love and truth”. Love without truth is sentimental, truth without love is sterile. We should not remain ignorant of these dilemmas, nor should we take sides, YFGM please take note. Whether the divisions are between Israel/ Palestine or those who have changed their gender against those who have lived theirs all their lives, ours is not to judge but to listen to both sides in the same spirit that John Woolman went to visit his Native American neighbours “that haply I might receive some instruction from them”. We listen to the fears behind all the anger and ugly acronyms. Trans-gender folk fear rejection, ridicule and harassment and often physical violence. Feminists fear the loss of hard won protection of women-only spaces and medical and legal rights. It must feel like the latest and most audacious blow from the patriarchy to take on the guise of the female and use it to destroy from within, another form of misogyny.

I shall not be around to see the day but in future the term “gender” will have disappeared because the thing will have ceased to be. Why should the wearing of certain clothes, for example, be described by any reference to what you were born with or how you perceive yourself? Who decreed that tables should be feminine in some languages? And where in the assertions and counter assertion of each side is kindness and humour? We humbly beseech thee, St. Grayson Perry and St. Alan Measles to lighten our darkness.

Kathy Gollin

# Sanity, Spirituality, and Psychiatry

Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>

10 till 3.30

Taunton Meeting House

## Programme

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 10 for 10.30   | Arrivals   |
| 10.30          | Welcome and Silence  |
| 10.50 to 11.40 | Groups   |
| 11:50 to 12:40 | Groups   |
|                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do we support people in our Quaker Meetings?</li><li>• Mental Health in our wider community - a Quaker response?</li></ul> |
| 12.40 to 1.30  | Lunch – Bring and Share  |
| 1.30 to 2:30   | Address – <b>Sanity, Spirituality and Psychiatry</b>   |
| 2:30 to 3:00   | Plenary and Questions  |
| 3:00 to 3.30   | Tea and Cakes  |

**Please book as soon as possible to ensure a place:**

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Your Name:

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Email address:

**OR** Postal Address:

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How did you hear about the event?

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Send to Jane Wilson, Mental Health day organising group -

[jane.prioryfarm@talktalk.net](mailto:jane.prioryfarm@talktalk.net)

OR - Priory Farm, 145 Main St, Walton, BA16 9QY

Your place will be confirmed.

There is no charge for the event, but a collection will be taken to cover costs.

## Venue

Taunton Meeting House, 13, Bath Place, Taunton, TA1 4EP The Meeting House is within walking distance of Taunton bus station. Parking is in the paying car parks. All day parking is at Enfield car park, TA1 4AS (the Crescent car park is four hours only)

**SPECIAL TOPIC AREA MEETING  
AT SPICELAND  
SATURDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER**

*“As people of faith, we are motivated by a spiritual imperative to sustain life on earth. Quakers are among those who recognise a personal and collective responsibility to take action so that the poorest and most vulnerable people do not suffer as a consequence of our actions.”*

**Continuing our focus on sustainability the Earth Action Group have been invited to arrange this event.**

**PLEASE PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW.**

Fuller details and times will be circulated via Local Meeting clerks by the beginning of September but the main item on the day will be:

**A Quaker Peace and Social Witness workshop  
from Gill Westcott from Exeter Meeting on**

**TRANSFORMING THE ECONOMY FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE**

We plan to include time in the day for local Friends to share ideas about actions that individuals can take to reduce their carbon footprint.

Local Meetings may also be willing to share their work on developing their local sustainability plans.

There are of course a number of organisations working in the field of climate justice including Extinction Rebellion, Transition groups, Forum 21 and Taunton Green Parents. Quakers are active in many of these groups and this will be an opportunity to find out more about them.

**PLEASE TRY AND COME ALONG.  
SPICELAND IS A BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO SPEND A LATE SUMMER’S DAY.**

If you want to know more or let us have ideas ahead of the day contact one of the Earth Action Group members – John Ainsworth and Fran Hicks in Taunton, Huw Morgan in Ilminster and Pat Bell in Spiceland.