

Quakers in Yorkshire

Trustee Annual Report for the Year Ended 31 December 2022

Achievements and performance

GENERAL

2022 was a year of recovering from the Covid pandemic. It started with uncertainty as to whether physical activities would be possible and ended with confidence that lockdowns and restrictions were no longer needed as vaccinations had overcome the worst consequences. Quakers in Yorkshire was able to hold live events for Easter Settlement, Junior Holidays and Holiday School – albeit with reduced numbers.

The successful year was achieved by the invaluable contribution of a large number of volunteers who gave their time, experience and energy. Quakers in Yorkshire is indebted to the support of all the volunteers. It meant that the charity was able to fulfil its objectives of furthering Quakerism in Yorkshire.

QUARTERLY MEETINGS

Quakers in Yorkshire's quarterly meetings are the forum for its two main roles of administration and inspiration. All members and attenders from Quakers in Yorkshire's constituent area meetings are eligible to attend these meetings. At the meetings Quakers in Yorkshire makes all necessary appointments with names coming from the hard-working Nominations Committee.

The Arrangements Committee, convened by the Clerks of Quakers in Yorkshire, decides on venues, topics and speakers for the following year. This committee of representatives from each area meeting uses its knowledge of local interests and concerns to create programmes which deepen Friends' knowledge and understanding of Quakerism.

The quarterly meetings in 2022 tried to strike the right balance between sensitivity to Covid precautions and enabling Friends to meet together. There was a mix of formats during the year. The January 2022 meeting was a shortened event held entirely virtually, whilst the April and July meetings were entirely live events, at Ackworth and Scarborough respectively, the October meeting at The Mount school was blended which allowed both physical and virtual attendance. Running a successful blended meeting with relatively large attendance presents a challenge for the clerks and there are mixed views as to how well it fosters a real community atmosphere. However, it does allow those who wish to avoid travel the opportunity to participate in events.

JUNIOR HOLIDAYS

Junior Holidays are weekend events for those aged between 7 and 12. Two successful events were held in 2022, at Nell Bank, Ilkley, in June where 35 young people age 7 to 16 attended. The higher age limit was to enable those who missed out during the pandemic to experience a Junior Holiday. A weekend in September at Barmoor was attended by 20 young people accompanied by a teenage volunteer and five adults. Both events were considered to be very successful and were positively received with new friendships made.

HOLIDAY SCHOOL

Each summer the Yorkshire Friends Holiday School organises a week-long event for young people age between 13 and 18. In 2020 and 2021 the Holiday School was

severely disrupted by the pandemic so it was pleasing that in 2022 they were able to get back to the traditional format with a week in August held at Bootham school. This was the 89th to be held this time with a theme of 'Home'. Numbers were down on pre-Covid levels. This seems to be a feature of many residential events. For those attending it was a good week of themed talks and activities with Quaker fellowship and friendships. There is a valuable link with Ireland Yearly Meeting and a number of Irish Young Friends were able to attend.

EASTER SETTLEMENT

Easter Settlement was able to return to its traditional venue of Cober Hill Guest House, near Scarborough, after a two-year absence. It provides an opportunity for Friends, including young people, to experience communal fellowship whilst hearing about aspects of Quaker witness. In 2022 the theme was transformation. There were 43 adults and 5 young people, of whom 28 were first-timers.

OUTREACH

The Outreach Projects Committee provides grants to support outreach projects initiated by local meetings. The year saw a modest recovery in applications from the low point during the pandemic years. There were four successful applications including one to provide Warm Places to respond to the cost-of-living crisis affecting many households.

SAFEGUARDING

Quakers in Yorkshire takes safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults very seriously. There is a Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy who are trained to deal with any issues. The Safeguarding Coordinator is also a trustee. The Under 19's Co-ordinating Group advises on legal requirements and on best practice regarding safeguarding. Advice is also available from Quakers in Britain and from 31:8, a national safeguarding advice charity. A comprehensive safeguarding policy was agreed in 2021 and is reviewed annually. In 2022 a policy and guidelines to support gender diverse young people was approved.

YORKSHIRE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Britain Yearly Meeting employs a youth development worker based in Yorkshire on a fixed-term project. The first employee left during 2021 after having made a significant contribution towards engaging and inspiring young people. The second employee started in early 2022 and has continued to make a major contribution to youth work throughout Yorkshire. As well as continuing activities throughout the year, they actively assisted with the organisation of Junior Holidays and Holiday School and with the youth activities at Easter Settlement. The Link Group for teenagers was restarted after being dormant for a long time. The youth work in Yorkshire was partly funded in 2021 by liquidating an unused Adult School Union fund and giving the money to Britain Yearly Meeting. In 2022 the seven area meetings all agreed to contribute towards the cost for the next three years. This demonstrates the strong commitment to providing youth activities for future generations of Quakers in Yorkshire.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT WORKER

In addition to the Youth Development Worker, Britain Yearly Meeting also employs a Local Development Worker to assist Meetings and Friends in the Quakers in Yorkshire area to enhance worship, witness and community action. This post has been very successful and enhances the sense of a living Quaker community. Both the Development Workers and other national staff are based at the Yorkshire Centre offices in Leeds.

SUPPORT ROLE

In 2022, Trustees agreed to fund a Support Role with the aim of enhancing the services provided by Quakers in Yorkshire. The first appointee has concentrated on developing the quarterly newsletter as a means of publicising Quaker events and activities so as to better link with, and communicate to, Friends and meetings.

SIMPLIFICATION

The Group to Reinvigorate and Simplify Processes and Practices (GRASP) was appointed in 2019 to undertake a review and provide recommendations. In 2021 it published a report with recommendations for ways to simplify procedures with the aim of re-invigorating Yorkshire Quakerism. Since then local and area meetings have been considering the report, although the pandemic inevitably impacted and slowed the momentum. There is strong support for finding ways of reducing the complex structure inherited from the past. The number of roles has grown over the years and takes up time and energy which ought to be available for the core aspects of Quakerism, namely worship and witness. Quakers in Yorkshire is supporting the efforts in local and area meetings by coordinating actions and improving communications so that meetings can work together and simplify. A current focus is seeing whether the charitable functions can be simplified by combining roles across more than one area meeting. This reflects similar efforts elsewhere in the country.

Financial review

OVERVIEW

The third year of the coronavirus pandemic again had an impact on the financial activities of Quakers in Yorkshire, although not as much as last year. Both income and expenditure were significantly higher than 2021. The total income was £52,780, compared to £24,893 last year, as events returned to normality. The increase in total expenditure was £65,831 compared to £51,611 last year but 2021 was inflated due to the giving of funds to Britain Yearly Meeting to fund the Yorkshire Youth Development Worker.

The asset value of the investments at the end of the year was about £808,183, (£973,465 in 2021) which is a decrease of about 17%. The income from the investment was about £14,591 (£12,456 in 2021) which was 17% more than last year. Most of the investments are in permanent endowments where the capital of the funds cannot be spent.

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

The regular events have been returning to normal, though with reduced numbers in most cases. Easter Settlement was held at Cober Hill although with lower numbers; Holiday School was held at Bootham School, again with lower numbers; Junior Holidays managed to run two weekend events, both well supported. There were four requests for Outreach Project grants, all implemented. Glenthorne did well and was able to make all the loan repayments deferred during the previous two years.

It was decided to split the income needed to run the charity into that for core costs and that for support costs. Core costs are those which apply to QiY, such as insurance. Support costs are those to which grants are made each year, such as Outreach. Core costs will be funded by a per capita call on AMs, initially set at £5, as in the past. Support costs will be funded by donation.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

The Forrest (Meeting House) Fund decreased in value by about 11% to £211,270. (£248,978 in 2021). There were two requests for funds, totalling £2,500 out of income of £4,247.

PERMANENT ENDOWMENT FUNDS

The Rawdon Friends School Trust made grants from its income of £6,560. The grants were paid to Ackworth, Bootham and The Mount Schools for bursaries for children of Quaker parents who live in Yorkshire. The portfolio value decreased to £352,689 (£450,484 in 2021).

The Buildings fund made grants of £4,700 out of the income of £3,490 and reserves. The portfolio value decreased to £199,179. (£233,661 in 2021). The Yorkshire General Meeting Charity did not make any grants as there were no requests. This is a small fund with a value at the end of the year of £20,080 (£25,026 in 2021).

David Olver, Clerk of QiY Trustees

Chris Petrie, Treasurer (2022)