

Report to Quakers in Yorkshire July 2025

Glenthorne continues to provide a space where people of any faith or none may stay a while in peace and relax before returning rested and renewed to their everyday lives. Our aim is that Glenthorne be more widely known and utilised as a residential Quaker spiritual centre in the North of England.

We are grateful for the existing community of individuals that work and support all that happens and celebrate the diversity and enthusiasm of this community and the special place that is created at Glenthorne. We recognise the dedication of all staff who give above and beyond our expectations to maintain what is done here. We recognise the need to work with Britain Yearly Meeting's Sustainability commitment but are aware of the wider aspect of this in sustaining the community of people and the business that supports all that we do. We heard the need to keep things simple and maintain the balance while allowing our best practice to develop further. We should listen and learn from all around us.

Our charitable activities are underpinned by the regular events organised by Quaker meetings and groups, by our own extended programme of special courses and by promoting the Welcome Project and other respite breaks supported from our bursary funds.

The Welcome Project provides short respite breaks for asylum seekers and refugees and those made destitute when their asylum claim fails. They come to Glenthorne with an accompanying organiser; these are arranged through local organisations in the north of England working in this field. In 2024 six groups of asylum seekers/ refugees visited us, all from the north of England. Seventy-one individuals came from seventeen different countries. This means that since the project started in 2008 nine hundred and ninety-four men, women and children from sixty-nine countries have benefited from a respite break at Glenthorne.

The general bursary scheme provides the opportunity for financial support to those in need who might otherwise be prevented from the benefits we offer. A wide range of people derive benefit from attending the courses or other programmed events held at Glenthorne during the year and we continue to offer a £100 reduction to enable people under 35 to attend some of our courses.

There is well attended public Meeting for Worship held on the fourth Tuesday of each month with a half hour meeting of Quiet Worship. This has grown out of the Friend in Residence's close working with other churches in Ambleside. We continue to support and pay for a daily online Glenthorne Meeting for Worship at the same time as the daily physical Meeting for Worship at Glenthorne. There is a regular daily online attendance of 20 to 30 people from around Britain and international attenders from Philadelphia and Delhi. The Friend in Residence acts as a gatekeeper for new attenders and has produced various documents for guidance and etiquette of the online Meeting. This Meeting has been running continuously since the start of the Covid pandemic in March 2020.

We have continued to work closely with Woodbrooke Resources and Learning, hosting Woodbrooke courses in 2024, These have become an established part of the many courses that Glenthorne offers publicly. We are offering 4 Woodbrooke courses in 2025 and plan to offer more in 2026. We have continued to develop a stronger focus on spirituality, of enabling adaptation to climate change and enabling younger people to enjoy the facilities and spiritual atmosphere of Glenthorne.

During the year we have made a formal application to Meeting for Sufferings for recognition as a Quaker Recognised Body.

During the year eleven Friends served as trustees although with four stepping down in December 2024 we are actively looking for more to serve. This is especially true for the treasurer's role.

We recorded a busy time in the first year not impacted by the pandemic. The high demand for holidays in the UK continued as did the considerable pressure in finding and maintaining staff levels. We are fortunate in that Glenthorne is managed in a way that encourages loyalty from staff and is a popular place to work. The year started with a high number of bookings and over the year as a whole we achieved 71% occupancy which was an improvement on the previous year.

Over the year we generated a surplus of £83,148. This is a welcome change from previous years and reflects the hard work of all in attracting people to courses and for stays and maintaining the high occupancy rate which includes a significant number of returning guests.

Quakers in Yorkshire, following a request from Glenthorne Trustees at their instigation, released the remains of the Linton Taylor Fund they have held on Glenthorne's behalf. The transfer of funds will be for capital works directed at sustainability improvements and measures to lower the carbon footprint of Glenthorne.

A major focus during the year was the implementation of the recommendations of the Quinquennial Survey. The strategy is to continue to develop a programme of planned maintenance keeping in mind the joint principles of enhancing the condition of the buildings while improving our carbon footprint and environmental impact. The focus during the year was to decide upon a course of action for the roofs and drainage. However, finding contractors available to take on an extensive programme of refurbishment proved difficult. This resulted in some repairs being undertaken where more extensive renovation may have been more effective. A roofing contractor has now been identified, and plans are at an advance stage for the re-roofing of the main building to commence later in 2025. We expect scaffolding to be erected from the 1st September. The works will take about three months and guests affected have been informed in advance. A sum of £175,000 has been set aside for this including contingencies. The garden has continued to be maintained and is much appreciated as a place where guests can sit in peace and quiet reflection.

William Taylor

Clerk to Trustees

July 2025