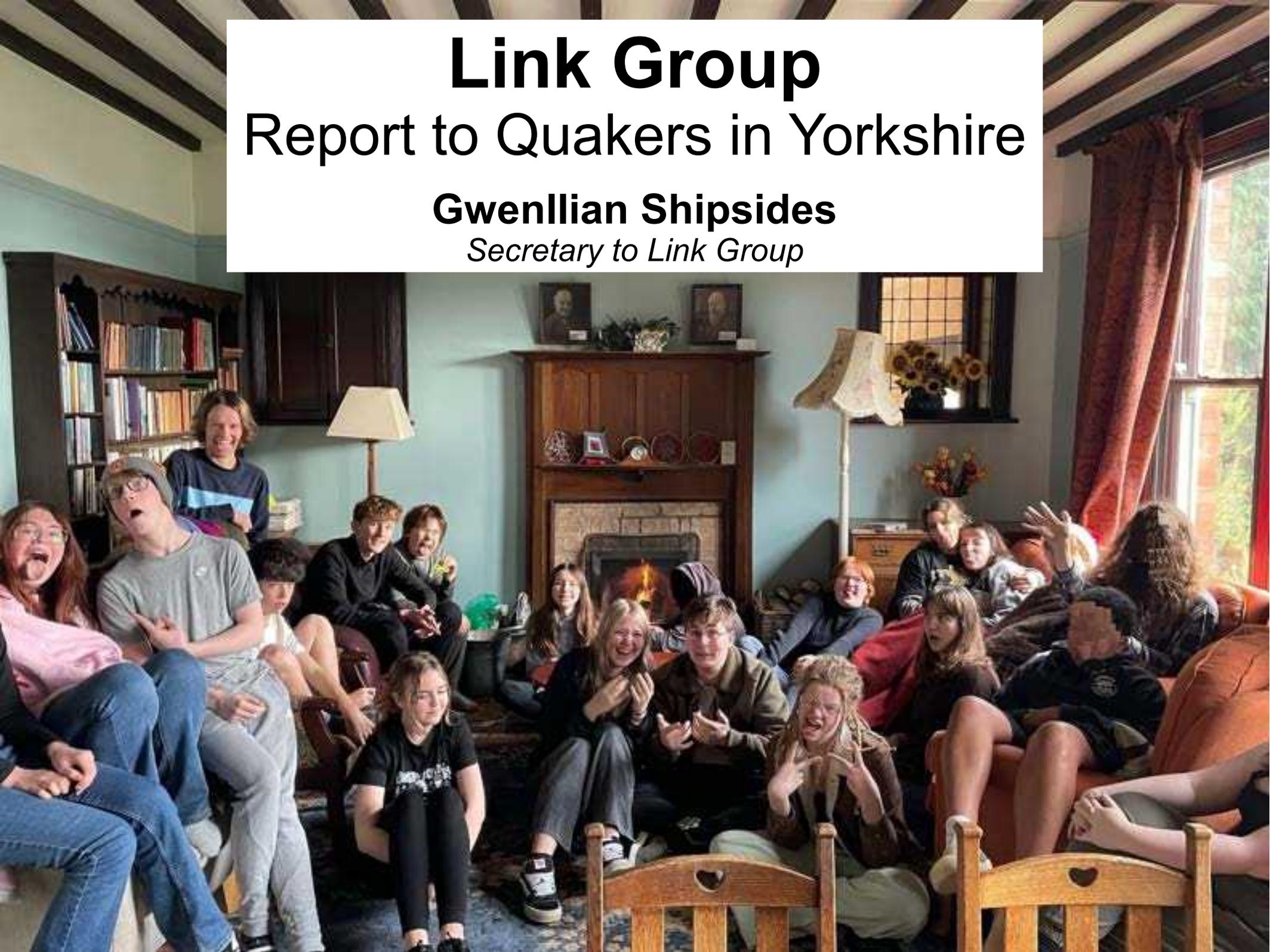


# Link Group

## Report to Quakers in Yorkshire

**Gwenllian Shipsides**  
*Secretary to Link Group*



## **Be Distinctly Quaker**

**Be attractive, welcoming and inclusive**

**Be built on friendship (big and small “f”)**

**...and more than a little Yorkshire!**

# What is Link Group?

- 3 Residential weekends per year
- School years 6 to 13 (ages 11 to 18)
- Targetted at Quaker teenagers in Yorkshire



**Blending high energy activities...**

**...with the spiritual and philosophical.**



# What We Delivered in 2025!



**Community**



**Deepening Worship**



**Walks**



**Activities**



# Themes from 2025



**Airton**

March

*Hillside Philosophy*



**Barnsley**

June

*Community*



**Barmoor**

December

*Wintering*

# December 2022 – December 2025

- Approx 15 participants
  - 4 Volunteers
  - 2 day event
  - 1 successful event run
  - Staff led
- Approx 25 to 30 participants
  - 7 Volunteers
  - 3 day event
  - 10 successful events run
  - Increasingly volunteer led

# Where We Fit In

School Year	Age	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
2 and Below	7 and Below	Local Children's Meeting									Local Children's Meeting			
3	8													
4	9													
5	10													
6	11													
7	12													
8	13													
9	14													
10	15													
11 (GCSE)	16													
12 (AS Level)	17													
13 (A Level)	18													
University	19-21													
Young Adult	18-35													
Older	35+	Local Meeting and Adult Programme									Local Meeting and Adult Programme			

- *Link between younger age provision and adult provision*
- *Maintain engagement throughout the year*
- *Keep teenagers engaged in Quakers despite:*
  - *Lack of teenagers in local meetings*
  - *Increasing self-autonomy*
  - *Competing interests (football, music concerts etc)*
- *Support smaller more regular events like 'Big Questions?'*

# Strengths

- Strong group of volunteers:
  - Diversity of strengths and ability
  - Diversity of experience
  - Strong ability to support a diverse cohort
  - Significant skill with managing mental health issues
- Affordable event
- Increasing participation
- Exposing teenagers directly to local meetings
- Cohort has a high rate of neurodivergent and queer participants

# Challenges

- Wide age range with wildly differing needs
- Expanding group, making finding suitable locations very hard
- Need to grow volunteer base
- Mobile phones/internet
- UK politics
- **Need to continue transition from staff led to volunteer led**
- Cohort has a high rate of neurodivergent and queer participants

# Why Move Away from Staff Led?

- Jo is great but...
  - Might leave
  - Priorities may change
  - Funding could reduce
- Reduce 'hit by a bus factor'
- Volunteer led structure creates a sustainable long-term structure
- Allows Jo to spend more time creating new events, working with local meetings, training volunteers etc

# Structure Changes in 2025

- Ran volunteer away weekend
  - Led to appointment of secretary
  - Started the process of working towards a new structure
- Events now volunteer led
  - Jo still attends in supporting role, but still has a significant role



# What Do We Want from 2026?

- Progress structure changes
- Run a split age group event
- Utilise higher-capacity venues
  
- Aaaaannndddd...
- **Run some really great events!**

# Dates for 2026

- Harrogate
  - Friday 20<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March
- Location TBC
  - Possible Split Age Event
  - Friday 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June
- Sheffield (STC)
  - Friday 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> December



# Spread the Word!

Always looking for new participants and volunteers!





**Q&A Session**

