

## Yorkshire Quaker Camp 2025 learning



The first Yorkshire Quaker Camp was launched in August this year. This is a summary of the planning process, outcomes and learning from the event.

### **Aims**

The Yorkshire Local Development and Youth Development Workers realised that Quaker camps in other areas of the country were highly successful as a way of building multigenerational Quaker community. They proposed starting an annual camp for Yorkshire, to be planned and delivered by local Friends.

The aim was to create a camp that would be affordable and inclusive for all ages, and especially for families and young adults. It would embody good Quaker practice in discernment, governance, worship and community. The camp would demonstrate the potential of all-age Quaker community as an experience that is joyful, spiritually grounded and inclusive.

### **Process:**

Jo & Craig tested their discernment with line managers and Quakers in Yorkshire (the general meeting charity). Quakers in Yorkshire agreed to subsidise the event to ensure it was financially accessible.

Jo & Craig recruited a planning group of 9 Yorkshire Friends through their networks and visits to meetings. There was an initial intention to involve youth and family voice in the planning meetings, however this type of engagement did not gain traction until the residential planning weekend at Worfolk cottage.

The planning group held monthly 1 hour Zoom meetings, using Quaker business method to write minutes using the chat function. (Minutes [here](#).)

The group collected suggestions for potential sites and planning group members did several site visits before selecting [Fell Edge Farm](#) in West Yorkshire. The site had a maximum capacity of 90, which determined our potential bookings.

The planning group held a residential planning weekend at Worfolk Cottage in June 2024. A variety of Friends attended, including two young people. In this weekend the planning group gained a lived understanding of forming an intergenerational community. The young people's focus on shared food, laughter and conversation informed the unpublished theme of the camp, *Joyful Abundance*. The final minute of the planning weekend, spoke to and informed the nature of what we endeavored to create.

*We are really grateful for this chance to be together, in person. It was joy to share (cheese) with Friends of all ages in this beautiful setting. Compliments to the cooks. During our many discussions, we raised a variety of interesting topics, the prospect of a Quaker video game, a cheese orientated meal, and how to appropriately fit 90 Quakers/inquirers into a field. We managed a good walk and a hunt for boggles in as well. We are grateful for the joyous abundance and the abundance of joy. We depart in Friendship and hopeful to return for planning. We enjoyed our boardgames, cheese and a beach that one of our Friends did not approved of, but the rest of us adored.*

*Signed in and on behalf of the planning group – MF (13yo)*

The planning group agreed a pricing structure and [budget](#) underwritten by Quakers in Yorkshire, with an estimated subsidy of around £2000. (Free for under 11s, £25 for young people / low wage, £75 standard and £95 supporter rate). This included three nights plus food. The budget relied on some guesswork about the proportion of children's and low wage tickets that would be sold, as well as likely costs. Included in this structure was, a pay 30% now, 70% later function.

The group did substantial discernment about the ethos and nature of the camp. It was decided to have communal meals with everyone contributing to shared tasks as they were able.

We chose the [Ticket Tailor](#) website as our booking system.

Based on feedback that there was a high level of interest in the camp, the planning group wanted to ensure that it didn't get fully booked by older Friends who were most connected with LM structures. So we decided to advertise bookings first of all to families and young adults, through Jo's youthwork mailing list and family and young adult Quaker Whatsapp groups.

All tickets were sold within a few days of initial publicity, and a waiting list was offered. Almost all of the tickets (apart from the planning group) went to families and young adults.

Sales as follows;

<b>Ticket Type</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Sales</b>	<b>Average age of ticket holder</b>
<b>Under 11's free</b>	Free	24	6
<b>Standard</b>	75	25	43
<b>Supported (subsidised)</b>	25	18	28
<b>Supporter (paying extra)</b>	95	14	46

Members of the planning group were appointed to carry responsibility for food, activities, site, youthwork and eldership & pastoral care in teams of two or three. A couple of extra planning group members were recruited to boost capacity in the food and youthwork teams.

Each team met separately to produce proposals for their area of responsibility to bring to the main planning group meetings.

The final programme included meetings for worship each morning (1 hour) and evening (30 mins) outside. Morning MfW included a children's and teens meeting that made use of the space available on the site. Evening MfW was all-age around a campfire.

Campers were invited in advance to offer to lead activities, and these were offered as optional morning and afternoon sessions, including singing, circus skills, labyrinth

making, crafts, scavenger hunt, walking, Philosophy for Communities etc. Organised children's games and crafts were also available, and a creche was offered for toddlers for an hour each morning. On Sunday evening there was a celebration in the barn with open-mic performances and dancing.

Campers were organised into home groups, that met for some short social activities as well as doing food preparation and clear-up together for one meal each.

The event closed with MfW on Monday morning and a brief closing and feedback exercise.

Due to some last minute cancellations, the numbers attending were 82 Friends, including 28 children and 11 young adults without children.

### **Outcomes:**

Positive outcomes from the camp included:

- Building relationships between Friends of all ages from different meetings and AMs.
- Strengthening the sense of connection with the wider Quaker community for people who don't regularly attend a LM.
- Providing a positive Quaker experience for children and young people which encourages them to take part in other children's and youthwork opportunities regionally and nationally.
- Demonstrating the potential of Quaker worship and in a vibrant community, and stimulating a sense of possibility for other Quaker contexts.

One immediate outcome is that some Friends from Bradford who were at the camp have set up a Whatsapp group for Quakers in the area, and have started to hold evening socials and Meetings for Worship in their homes.

### **Learning:**

There is clearly a high demand for this kind of Quaker activity, including from people who are poorly served by existing Quaker meetings, such as families and young adults. Our pricing structure succeeded in converting demand of these traditionally less affluent user groups into sales. The deficit of this approach was balanced by a flexible pricing

structure, where those who are able to subsidise others, and by a 24% subsidy of the total camp cost, from Quakers in Yorkshire.

Quality youthwork was essential to the success of the camp, including engaging and innovative children's and teens children's meetings. Experienced volunteer youthworkers were recruited to support the YDW on the camp.

We chose a site with a large converted barn and put up a marquee, but would still have struggled on this site if the weather hadn't been good. Water supplies, washing up and kitchen facilities were also limited. As a result, we have booked a site with better facilities that can accommodate larger numbers for next year. This will also include some residential accommodation.

We relied on a combination of Ticket Tailor and Gravity forms to collect all the necessary information from campers (including offers of service, special diets, youthwork permissions, emergency contacts, health needs etc). This proved complicated to administer, and could be streamlined for next time. Notably ticket-tailor does not easily facilitate a pay 30% now, 70% later structure.

Outdoor Meeting for Worship was a highlight of the camp for many people. As well as the experience of worshipping outdoors, several people appreciated the spoken ministry, which is very rare in many small meetings.

The programme was from Friday to Monday, with the main celebration on Sunday night. A lot of people left on Sunday instead, so we have changed the dates to run Thursday to Sunday for next year.

**Craig Barnett & Jo Baynham**