

Giving to Yearly Meeting

John Ashcroft

Here are some notes from my attendance at the Annual Conference of Quaker Treasurers, which, as always, was an illuminating event but raised a big issue for our Area Meeting.

Peter Ullathorne, who is BYM Treasurer, briefly summarised BYM's financial position in 2016, assisted by Helen Drewery, Head of Worship and Witness, who told us how some of the money was actually used, recognising that for Friends to want to give more they need to be inspired by where the money goes to. Peter considers Friends need to increase their contributions from just over £2 million a year to £3 million, equivalent to £225 per member. A further £4 million a year comes from legacies, (but they fluctuate considerably), investment income and Friends House hospitality,

which not only contributed £0.8 million in profits but also pays much of the Friends House operating costs and is a beacon of ethical business and employment practice, with a booklet published to publicise this..

While performance in 2016 beat expectations, due to legacies, these are a source of income that could shrivel as the generation of wealthy Friends dies off. Income from the living will become more important.

Helen Drewery gave as examples of legacy-funded initiatives to increase the take-up of peace education in schools and the vibrancy in Meetings pilots (which include our region). She also mentioned a re-vamped approach to outreach to reinforce local efforts plus a presence at the next Hay Festival (the

highlight if which is a session with 3 Quaker writers).

What is sad is our Area Meeting is one of the least generous in terms of giving to BYM to help this work happen.

I receive periodic updates from Friends House regarding the giving by Friends and Meetings in our Area Meeting. The total figure for 2016 was £10,182 which represents an average of £47 per member, or £70 each if a donation for 2016 sent by Lewes LM but received in 2017 is included. Only seven other AMs gave less than £50 a member.

The central work is our work and has been identified through the discernment of Friends nationally (Meeting for Sufferings on which SEAM is represented). It would be wonderful if SEAM could give more to support it, where Friends are able.

Sussex East Area Meeting - Saturday 14th October, 2017

The Luxford Centre, Library Way, Uckfield TN22 1AR
Arrivals and Coffee from 10 a.m. - Programme below

“We Can End War if We Obey the Law”

Study and discernment of Chris Coverdale's Concern

10.30 a.m.	Meeting for Worship	12.30 p.m.	Lunch - Please bring your own picnic
10.45 a.m.	Introduction to the Discussion Paper	1.30 p.m.	Discernment and Minute Writing
11.00 a.m.	Discussion Groups	2.15 p.m.	AM Business and Notices
12.00 a.m.	Sharing Ideas	3.00 p.m.	Tea and Departures

SEAM - Report of Trustees for Second Quarter of 2016

Forwarded by John Thurley

Governance

The trustees met on 29th April, 23rd May and 24th June.

Trustees have made an application to the Charity Commission for the Area Meeting to be registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. We expect this will take effect with effect from 1 January 2018, when all assets of the Area Meeting will be transferred to the new organisation.

Finance

Trustees continued to keep the state of the whole Area Meeting's finances under review. The main work in the period was the preparation of the 2016 Annual Accounts. The accounts had to be reworked in the light of advice from Quaker

Stewardship Committee in Friends House and our professional advisers.

Trustees agreed to include substantial provisions in the 2016 Accounts to show spending on repairs to Herstmonceux Estate that was agreed in 2016 but not paid until early 2017.

Trustees re-categorised Area Meeting funds and reviewed the Reserves Policy. Trustees agreed to create a Property Fund (replacing the Berta Wilson, Beatrice Chaplin and Building Reserve Funds) and a People Fund.

The review of investments and financial controls was ongoing.

Risk

The risk register was updated and kept under review.

Bexhill

Bexhill Friends are clarifying quotations for the replacement of the flat roof.

Lewes

Trustees approved detailed proposals to tackle outstanding repairs and maintenance of the Meeting

House. This included employing a building maintenance company to plan and schedule the work. High priority work will start in the summer.

Eastbourne

Trustees endorsed the Meeting's proposals to recommence hirings of the Meeting House later in the year.

Herstmonceux

Trustees approved further work on 1 & 2 Penn Cottages to tackle the damp problems there.

Memorial Paragraph - Sue Bromage

Sue was born in Canada where her father was a doctor. After her parents' divorce, Sue moved to West Sussex at about the age of seven, where extended family lived.

She attended school near Bognor Regis and university at Hull. After earning an MSc in Psychology, Sue worked as an Educational Psychologist, providing support to young people in London and Brighton & Hove. She left London in the mid-90s for Plumpton, where she was to spend the rest of her life. Her mother had been a Quaker and Sue found her way to Friends as well, becoming a much-loved member of Lewes Meeting, where

she served in various roles including elder, outreach committee member, and on nominations committee - from 2005 onward. In later life Sue trained and practiced as a spiritual healer, using her gifts for the benefit of both people and animals. Sue had a good sense of humour and an infectious laugh, and was very patient with animals, including her bad-tempered parrot. She was a woman of great generosity and kindness – in both thought and action – and, having struggled with mental illness for her entire adult life, was able to support others living through troubling times. Many in her circle of friends

feel that Sue left us too soon; but she leaves behind a legacy of friendship and love, and a lovely daughter to whom she was devoted.



Eastbourne Friends Meeting: Triennial Report.

Presented by Geoffrey Johnson

Three years ago, on 7 September 2014 to be precise, I noted that Eastbourne Meeting had been on something of 'a roller coaster journey throughout the 2011-14 period'. I'm quite relieved to report that the years 2015-2017 have been relatively calm and productive. At the heart of a process of reconstruction has been our Meeting for Worship. Ministry continues to be varied with members and attenders willing and able to minister in an interesting, nourishing and on occasions a moving manner. Spiritual and social support continues to be provided by our 3rd Sunday shared lunch and 4th Sunday Study Group.

We entered enthusiastically into the QF&P study programme and learned a good deal from our reading of and reflecting on its chapters. One important outcome of these explorations was a decision to invite our weekly 'welcomer' to choose and read one A&Q, at Sunday MfW. As a consequence, most As&Qs have been read once at least during the last two years. As a meeting, our sense is that QF&P does need revision and we hope to be able to share in a process that could be creative and dynamic, if potentially divisive too.

With no designated 'clerk-of-meeting', our three-member clerking-team has shared administrative and clerking duties. Our financial health is in good order thanks to the work of our treasurer and aided by the willingness of Trustees to allow us to receive a proportion of the



Belle Tout from Crowlink - October 2015

rental from the Wish Cottage flat. In return, we have been able to contribute £1000, then £2000 and in this financial year £3000 back to SEAM finances, as well as making a further contribution, by paying aspects of exterior property improvements ourselves. Those attending MfW have also contributed around £2500 over the last 3 years, to mostly smaller local, national and international charities.

This period of relative calm has allowed us to tackle the issue of membership. Over a two-year period, we made every effort to contact those members, who were in our 'green' book but with whom we had lost contact. As a consequence, with the agreement of SEAM, around twenty names were removed from the book; this meant we were in good 'slimmed-down' shape when the SEAM membership clerk took on the exacting task of providing a new membership book. Also in this

period we learned of the deaths of Madeline Hayes, Joy Easten and most recently, Margery Appleton. A number of older members have also entered nursing-care or residential homes.

Our ambition has always to be to re-instate the MH 'hiring-out' programme. It has taken quite a time to reach our goal, but it is good to report that due process has been followed and has led to a decision by SEAM Business Meeting on 9 July to give us a 'green light' for a September recommencement. The documentation preparation has been very much a shared Meeting exercise. However, key to getting the programme in motion, has been the fact that a long term attender, who is very much a part of our core community, has made herself available to take on the role of clerk-facilitator.

The MH premises have been kept in good order and our respective health & safety

inspections have been carried out and are all up-to-date. A building maintenance programme has included, a section of roof-tiling replacement, above the main meeting room; damp damage caused by leakage has been repaired; recently our dining room has been repainted. Our very efficient cleaner keeps the whole building looking clean and cared for. An occasional, though regular attender has transformed the courtyard and made it a space to really enjoy, especially during these summer months.

Finally, in the 2014 report, I

noted that we planned to operate as a team, since 'membership' and 'nomination' and appropriate incorporation of 'attenders', all presented problems. However, with the encouragement of a gradual increase in numbers at MfW, designated member or attender roles now include our treasurer, a correspondence clerk, who regularly takes on the clerking role for Business Meeting, a clerk-facilitator for hiring-out, a premises committee facilitator and a new elder has been appointed. Heartened, we look forward to the next three years.

Not my finest photo ever, but did you know that Sir Ernest Shackleton lived at 14 Milnthorpe Road, Eastbourne? I didn't till I spotted this whilst heading for the beach. Ed.



Sunset over Crowlink - October 2015