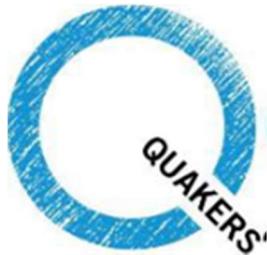


Malvern Quaker Meeting



Newsletter March 2022

The focus of the April Newsletter will be the Away Weekend. If you are going to the Away Weekend, please let me have reflections/reports. Copy date for the April issue is 31st March 2022

Discussions on equality, diversity and inclusion in our Meeting

Melanie Jameson

Malvern Meeting's response to questions circulated as the starting-point for discussions in Local Meetings are summarised below. Some of our discussion went off the question but was still part of the wider picture. Seven Friends attended.

1. Are we aware of our own beliefs and prejudices that may stop us from treating others as equals and including them?

We are all bound to have assumptions – but are we prepared to revise them?

The issue was raised of caste systems within religions which continue over here. How to respond when this caste-based prejudice arises in professional settings?

2. How do we open our community to a wider range of people?

Liz Flanagan's peace education work with schools and sessions with young children were regarded as an excellent example of opening our community.

What about people from other ethnicities? Would they feel at home? We heard that around a third of the Silence Inside worshipping group at HMP Long Lartin are black and that the simple but profound offering of Q Prison Chaplains is equally accessible to all. Could we learn from this?

Finally, what would we offer people from a different community, e.g., the Pickersleigh area of social deprivation? “Come and sit in silence for an hour!”

What we offer is expressed in our Q practices, e.g. our business methods and our focusing initial silence, both of which are often praised. Our witness in non-Q spheres includes how we act, what we support. Committee meetings (for example in national criminal justice organisations) are well aware of the reputation of Qs, which precedes us. WE can speak with the weight of our tradition.

3. How do we welcome people when they attend Meeting and in the on-line community?

Firstly, not all white or all black and Asian people are the same. We must respond to individuals.

As for making Zoom meetings for worship more welcoming, Bath Mtg uses breakout rooms after MfW to pop groups of three or four people randomly together for an informal chat. In this way a new arrival would not need to express her/himself heard in front of a zoom-room full of people.

4. What hindrances to inclusion might be perceived by a newcomer of a different ethnic background?

We might fall into the trap of ‘over-welcoming’ or overwhelming a newcomer of colour.

It was mentioned several times that class, poverty, mental health, LGBT+ and neurodiversity are also considerations when thinking about diversity and inclusion.

5. How do we as individuals and communities work for racial justice in the wider world?

We must be alert not to let racist/prejudice remarks pass, unchallenged. We must take account of candidates’ attitudes when choosing how to vote.

In addition, Malvern Friends drew attention to three documents

1) An article by the late Rosemary Crawley that featured in a recent Friends Quarterly devoted to Diversity & Inclusion (attached)

2) An article on being an anti-racist ally (The Friend 5th March 2021)

3) The much-loved poem on refugees that is read first from the start, then from the end

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/97/ec/06/97ec0686e3ff841fd7e94ea4e8d020c2.jpg>

This matter was considered at the Area Meeting on 12th February. Part of the minute agreed is below:

Friends need to be mindful of how we welcome newcomers, both in person and online. We need to be sensitive to the needs of each individual and refrain from overwhelming enquirers. We need to think about how and where we promote our meetings. We need to speak about our Quakerism with confidence and consider what we have to offer people from a diverse range of backgrounds.

We understand the value of educating ourselves about acceptable language use and to keep ourselves informed on matters of Anti-racism. By being aware of facts and current debates we are in a better position to speak truth to power and challenge

racism when we encounter it. Local Meetings are asked to find new and effective ways to advertise their presence to more diverse audiences.

It is proposed to have a small group 'advertising conversation' as one of the options for the afternoon session at the Area Meeting at Worcester in May. If you would be interested in this please let Clerks know.

Advices and Queries No 2

Bring the whole of your life under the ordering of the spirit of Christ. Are you open to the healing power of God's love? Cherish that of God within you, so that this love may grow in you and guide you. Let your worship and your daily life enrich each other. Treasure your experience of God, however it comes to you. Remember that Christianity is not a notion but a way.

Dr Julie Leoni is an old friend of Liz Flanagan and her neighbour when she lived in Wales. She is an author, educator and researcher, who coaches individuals and organisations to find more regenerative ways of healthy living and working.

Ukraine and us - family to family

Julie Leoni

My family survived World War Two because of the kindness of strangers. Without those strangers I wouldn't be here. I am not perfect or special, but I have tried to live a life where I contribute positively to the world, not just through my coaching, teaching, writing, but how I show up in the world.

Now it is our turn to be the people who help strangers. Amongst this community we have spare rooms and enough money to feed another family and keep them warm.

If I had to escape, I would want to take my children to another family.

Yesterday the Home Secretary announced the opening of the Ukrainian Sponsorship Humanitarian Visa Offer, which will provide a route to the UK for Ukrainians who do not have family ties with the UK but who can be matched with individuals, businesses, community organisations or Local Authorities willing and able to act as a sponsor.

Email your MP and ask about this; email your Local Authority to find out what is happening in your area.

This isn't political. It is family to family, mother to mother, father to father, grandparent to grandparent.

Being active in a crisis is good for us as well as them, reducing stress and trauma because we are activating the adrenalin (Van Der Kolk).

Let's see what we can do as imperfect human beings.

#Ukrainefamilytofamily www.julieleoni.com

Memorial for local Friends who died in 2020 and 2021

A number of Friends died during the pandemic when it was not possible to have a Memorial Meeting: David Simmons, Elaine High Jones, Peter Thomas, Sue Chatfield and Jean Gamlen.

These Friends and Attenders will be particularly remembered during Sunday Meeting for Worship on April 3rd.

Little Friends

Annie Burge

Dear All,

herewith some information about “Little Friends”, that meet in the afternoon of the first Sunday of the month in the Meeting House.

The group is for families with any young children aged 8 years and under and their parents/carers.

There are a lot of activities for everyone, and a “theme” and cake etc!

This last time we were looking at birds, and went out to listen to them all, and tried to identify them. Some people made pictures of some birds and others of us made fat balls to put in “cages” etc which we hung on trees in the front of the Meeting House, one a hazel nut tree and the other an apple.

We hope that you appreciate this work for our meeting and like the bird feeders in the front “garden”. There are also some lovely pictures of birds that we have made and that are in the back of the Meeting house.

Do come and join us (and don't forget there's cake !)



SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

People in Motion is the Special Collection for March, with Jill Etheridge as the sponsor. Information on what was collected for the Afghan Emergency Appeal will appear in the next issue.

The local representative of “People in Motion”, Sally Somersby, has sent this article to explain what this organisation is all about.

PEOPLE IN MOTION

Sally Somersby

Our aim is to support and provide aid to some of the neediest people and communities and to help their emotional well-being and physical needs, both within the UK and overseas.

Pre-pandemic, People in Motion was able to take regular aid along with volunteers who worked in Refugee camps in France and other destinations. Much aid was continually shipped or driven abroad. New arrivals to the UK were, and continue to be, supported, too.

During the pandemic, bubbles of volunteers continued to receive, sort and pack aid. In lockdowns the work still happened, with volunteers washing and repairing and packing aid in their own homes.

Last September PIM had to vacate the large rent-free space that we gratefully used in Colwall. Presently, we are renting shipping containers to store contributions and this winter have experienced some wet and windy sorting and packing sessions in the open air!

Brexit has proved a challenge to us with the distribution of goods with issues of soaring transport costs and paperwork. But even so by joining forces with other aid groups we have been successful in getting aid to France, Syria (medical aid, blankets, and toiletries along with nearly 200 decorated shoe boxes full of Eid gifts for children), Greece and Lebanon.

At present PIM are focusing on targeted campaigns. Our collection of toiletries was a success, and at present we have van loads of tents, sleeping bags and blankets ready to roll. A new initiative is planned soon.

We are grateful to the many people and organisations who support the people who have lost so much. We thank the donators of goods, cash and time, the organisers, the knitters (baby clothes and stunning blankets) and drivers. We thank you Quakers for all your support past and present.

The following item might be of interest to those not going on the away weekend. Please note that there will be no Meeting for Worship in the Meeting House on Sunday 13th March.

Hometime Shared Exhibition

Steering Group, Bewdley Meeting

Bewdley Meeting is holding a Hometime Shared Exhibition on 12th March 2022. The idea is to show how Bewdley Friends have spent their time during the various lockdowns and other restrictions imposed on normal pre-pandemic life. The emphasis will be on art and crafts, but anything could turn up!

The 12th of March exhibition date is for Bewdley Meeting Friends and families, and we hope it will encourage those who have not been prepared to venture out to re-engage. We are now extending this exhibition to encompass all members of S&H local meetings; therefore you are cordially invited to join us on the 12th March.

The exhibition will be between 10am and 4pm. We are planning a light cold buffet from 12pm. To help us organise catering, please can Friends let us know, **by replying by email to bewdleymeeting@protonmail.com**, if you are able to join us.

We will also be having a public exhibition on 30th April, as part of the Wyre Forest Sustainability Festival.



Hometime Shared
Exhibition
of Quaker
Creativity
for Friends & Family

Sat 12th March 10 am - 4pm

www.bewdleyquakers.org.uk/events

Light buffet from 12pm - RSVP
Picnic tables in our garden

The February newsletter from Woodbrooke describes how the venue has adapted and offers a large programme of learning on-line learning@woodbrooke.org.uk. This has the advantage of being more accessible and inclusive. In addition, they are now starting to arrange 'in person' learning around Britain, working closely with the Local Development Workers.

A few courses and retreats are envisaged at Woodbrooke itself, and many local customers book the venue for day events and meetings. Some weekends are available to book for a Meeting or group to hold a residential event, along with tailored tutor support.

However, Woodbrooke describes itself as now being at a crossroads with the pre-pandemic business model no longer viable. They cannot afford to offer Bed and Breakfast, since this was only ever intended to fill in the gaps round the residential courses / conferences which no longer fill up the timetable. But there has been good uptake of the self-catering flat.

Trustees are taking time to consider and discern the purpose of Woodbrooke and how it can best fulfil its ministry. We are urged to support all involved in this task and to take advantage of the range of opportunities Woodbrooke is able to offer – this includes opportunities for online worship.

A poem for burgeoning Spring:

*Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.*

*Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.*

*And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.*

A E Housman