Malvern Quaker Meeting





Newsletter January 2025

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter will need to reach me by 28th February 2025.
Past editions of the Newsletter are on our Meeting website www.malvernquakers.org.uk.

Mary Corfield newsletter@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

If you are not on the Meeting's email list and would like to be, or have changed your email, please contact emailadmin@malvernquakermeeting.org.uk

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Events at Hereford Quaker Meeting House on International Women's Day

Charlotte Lake
Kate Seekings

On Saturday 8th March 2025 3-5pm, Hereford Friends will be celebrating International Women's Day at Hereford Friends Meeting House (21 King St, Hereford HR4 9BX). We would like to invite all neighbouring Friends to join us. You are welcome to come and simply enjoy being served tea and having a chat in a friendly environment, or you can come as a more active participant.

We are inviting a range of organisations from around the county to represent their activities especially, but not exclusively, in relation to women. Their representation can take the form of providing marketing leaflets and information on a table, sending staff to be present to talk around their publicity, or just being present and available for people to chat to over tea as fellow guests. Organisations so far include the Mothers' Union, The Cart Shed, Herefordshire Women's Equality Group, West Mercia Women's Aid, Hereford College of Arts, and the Women's Institute. Herefordshire Mind Artspace will be exhibiting art created specifically for the event; pupils from the Business Enterprise Club from Fairfield School will be selling home- and hand-made items; and we are preparing information about the Quaker Tapestry to sit alongside the newly produced Stitched Atlas, three volumes and a film beautifully created by local craftsmen and women celebrating the life of Ella Mary Leather. We will also be preparing an area of the Meeting House which presents what Quakers were and are, especially female figures both local and national, and will include exhibiting the fantastic boards prepared by Almeley Meeting for its 2023 350th anniversary.

In the middle of the afternoon (probably 4pm) we will be showing a 50 minute performance of "The Empty Plinth", an inspiring play written and performed locally last year about five historic Herefordshire women, performed by local teenage actors. Before and after this, the band "From the Cradle to the Grave", one of whose players is a Hereford Friend, will play beautiful background music.

We are inviting you to contribute in any way which suits you: to join us on the day for tea as a treated guest; or more actively, and in advance. Examples of the latter might include making sweet or savoury finger food; suggesting other organisations we might invite to collaborate, preferably with personal contact details; assisting us in preparing and presenting what it is to be a Quaker; and extending this invitation to others either through your personal or professional networks. For further information, any questions, or offers of help, please contact Charlotte at cmlake3@btinternet.com or Kate at kate@happygekko.com.

We would also like to point Friends to another event organised the same day, which we are working closely with to optimise Herefordshire's celebrating International Women's Day. 'Women at Work' is the theme chosen this year by the now well-established partnership of Herefordshire Women's Equality Group and West Mercia Women's Aid, who will celebrate with guests the achievements of women across different fields and acknowledge the other kinds of 'work' that women often do. The event is free of charge, 11:00am-2.30pm, and is hosted by NMITE at their Skylon Campus at Rotherwas. For further information please contact Jo on joannahenshaw@btinternet.com. We will alert Friends nearer the time on how to book this similarly free, informative and collaborative event and then come along afterwards to the Friends Meeting House.

Advices & Queries No 20

Do you give sufficient time to sharing with others in the meeting, both newcomers and long-time members, your understanding of worship, of service, and of commitment to the Society's witness? Do you give a right proportion of your money to support Quaker work?

HAND-SHAKING AFTER WORSHIP — Jon Critoph and Jill Etheridge

A lot of things changed after lockdown, and our joy at being able to meet again after that led to a lot of milling about, shaking hands and chatting immediately after worship. This often prolonged the important sharing of Reflections on the morning's Meeting, Notices and news of Friends. It seems a good idea to clarify how the hand-shaking proceeds now. An Elder will shake hands to signify that the period of worship has ended, and as a signal to everyone present to shake hands with the two people sitting on either side of them. Further chatting and catching up with each other takes place easily over refreshments.

Special Collections

The Sunday Collection for January was **PACT** which is a pioneering national charity that supports prisoners, people with convictions, and their children and families. Liz Flanagan reported that £196 had been collected.

The Collection for February is for Malvern Cube. The Cube is small and local, offering groups and many activities much needed for young people, helping them to get on a positive path.

News from the Local Development Worker

Hilary Topp

Hilary Topp, our Local Development Worker, has sent the following poster of times and Zoom links for the Peer Support Sessions that will be held in 2025.

Peer Support Zoom Sessions for Quaker Role Holders 2025

These one-hour sessions are a space to raise concerns, share experience and find solutions. They will be facilitated by Local Development Workers Alison Tarpey-Black, Craig Barnett and Hilary Topp.

Local Meeting Clerks

Wednesday 12th February

Thursday 1st May

Monday 22nd September

Trustees

Thursday 13th February

Wednesday 7th May

Wednesday 24th September

Treasurers

Thursday 6th March

Wednesday 11th June

Wednesday 15th October

Eldership and Pastoral Care

Thursday 27th February

Wednesday 2nd July

Thursday 25th September

Nominations

Wednesday 5th March

Thursday 12th June

Thursday 16th October

All Sessions 7.30-8.30pm

Please register in advance to receive a Zoom link by clicking on the meeting date above.

For more information contact Hilary Topp at: HilaryT@quaker.org.uk

Helping to Save Lives in Gaza — Jill Etheridge
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

I received this information as a supporter of the World Food Programme, and found it most encouraging, as against the disheartening news articles on TV.

With the help of our global family of supporters, WFP is still on the ground in Gaza. We are doing everything possible to reach those most in need, including people in UN shelters, communities, and make-shift camps.

With your help, we have worked round-the-clock to provide vital emergency meals to families – just last month, in November, WFP provided half a million people with food parcels, and 300,000 people with hot, nutritious meals. Winter has arrived in Gaza, bringing icy rain and bitter cold. These hot meals are a lifeline to families.

We have also delivered vital fuel and flour, which is enabling bakeries in Gaza to produce bread. Last month, WFP-supported bakeries produced around 2 million bread bundles.

We're also delivering food parcels containing staple items such as pasta, tomato sauce, beans, lentils, dates, and chickpeas. Since the start of this crisis, our teams have sent 9,000 trucks carrying over 150,000 metric tons of food into Gaza for hungry children and families. The kindness and generosity of supporters helped us fill every truck.

Despite the challenges, we remain on the ground in Gaza and the West Bank delivering life-saving food to the most vulnerable people. As I'm sure you understand, access across Gaza is constantly changing, but this is what we're delivering right now:

- Food parcels: over half a million people received food parcels in November 2024.
- Hot meals: last month, we worked with over 60 community kitchens to provide 7 million hot meals across Gaza.
- Support to bakeries: since day one of this crisis, WFP has supported local bakeries to produce bread by providing fuel and flour.
- Nutrition supplements: in the West Bank, we are providing pregnant and breastfeeding women with nutritional supplements.

Sidcot School Quaker General Meeting
1pm to 4.30pm Friday 28th March 2025

We have received information about the forthcoming Quaker General Meeting at Sidcot School in March. If any Friends are interested in going, could you please contact Kate Macdonald kate.brussels@yahoo.com, as this will need to be fed back to Area Meeting in March.

Kindlers

James McCarthy

The Kindlers have offered over 100 workshops on spirituality, worship, and community to a wide range of Quaker meetings since our inception in 2010; this is work that we love and that we believe is of great value. We are offering three new workshops this year, in addition to many of our old favourites. We welcome enquiries about hosting a workshop and would be delighted to hear from your meeting, whether or not you are familiar with our work. For more information follow this link: https://thekindlers.org.uk/workshops/.

Little Friends

Liz Flanagan

Little Friends met on Sunday, 2nd February. Our theme was Babies, and we had two children in Chinese dress to celebrate the Chinese New Year.





Lyttleton Well Update

Sad news received from Peter Bevan - Lyttleton Well is partly closing the cafe and closing the counselling service.

It has been unable to recruit a general manager and also a coordinator for the counselling service.

If you know anyone who might be interested in either post (both paid), get them to contact the Llytleton Well office admin@lytteltonwell.co.uk

The Cafe and Bookshop opening days are now Thursday to Saturday, 10am-3.30pm. Please support the café when open, great for a light lunch, or just tea and cake.

What To Do If You Have Lost the Winter Fuel Payment

Richard Bartholomew

Like me you may well be disappointed that our new Government has cut the Winter Fuel Payment (WFP), and whilst it may not affect much the better off, the effect on the rest could be severe.

There are a number of things you can do about this aside from just feeling aggrieved and writing to the MP. Why not try them?

Firstly, as the WFP is still in place for those people receiving either **Pension or Universal Credit,** make an application and don't assume you don't qualify. Pension Credit tops up your State Retirement Pension and Universal Credit is for those under pension age whether in low paid work or not.

Other help that you can get if you qualify for Pension Credit as well as the WFP is:

- Housing Benefit if you rent the property you live in
- Support for Mortgage Interest if you own the property you live in
- a Council Tax discount
- a free TV licence if you're aged 75 or over
- help with NHS dental treatment, glasses and transport costs for hospital appointments, if you get a certain type of Pension Credit
- help with your heating costs through the Warm Home Discount Scheme
- a discount on the Royal Mail redirection service if you're moving house

Apply by calling the Pension Credit claim line: Telephone: 0800 99 1234 OR ask Citizens Advice or Age UK to help. Similarly for Universal Credit claims. If you are receiving Universal Credit you may be eligible for similar benefits to those listed above.

Secondly, If you have a long-term illness or disability and you've reached State Pension age, you may be entitled to a benefit called **Attendance Allowance(AA)**. It is NOT means-tested and is payable to help with the day-to-day difficulties posed by coping with long-term illnesses or disabilities. If you have difficulties both day AND night then the rate of AA payable is **Higher £108.55 per week,** whereas if you only have difficulties in the day or night the rate is **Lower £72.65 per week**. If you're under State Pension age, you may be eligible for **Personal Independence Payment (PIP).** The qualifying difficulties can be physical, mental or emotional such as anxiety or low mood or a mixture of both, and the limitations that will get the benefit can include things like food preparation, ability to get in/out of bed, ability to get to the WC and use the washing/bathing/showering facilities, but it can extend, too, to the limitations imposed on your social life. This can include whether you are able to get to and participate in religious worship and other social events.

Other help that comes if you qualify for Attendance Allowance:

- Council Tax Reduction
- Pension or Universal Credit - even if you did not qualify before for these benefits you MAY now that you have received AA
- Other benefits or tax credits may increase if you receive them
- Help to get around - by getting a Disabled Persons Railcard and/or a Blue Disabled Parking Badge

- Help your carer might get if they care for you at least 35 hours per week and they otherwise earn less than £151 per week less taxes - **Carers Allowance**

From experience I know that it takes at least 1.5 hours to make a successful AA application, but it can be done in more than one 'sitting'. It is tiring as it requires you the applicant to dwell on what your challenges and difficulties are and NOT on how well you cope with them. This is hard and look at these examples to see what I mean: -

The Stair Lift - one part of the form relates to any equipment that makes daily life easier, and when I asked the applicant whether they used any such equipment, they said "NO", and when I asked what the gleaming new stair-lift was for, they answered, "Oh that's just to get me up and downstairs". My response was "Exactly" and that got entered on the form as a vital piece of kit that demonstrated how getting round the house was now a challenge.

The Magnifying Glass - another AA form was being filled in with a friend, and when he said that he had no equipment to help with daily life, I asked what the magnifying glass was doing on the table, and his answer was, "I just use it to read small type." Again, he would have ignored this part of his application had I not added it in.

Is It Worth the Bother of Applying?

I recently helped someone to claim both Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance, and their weekly income increased by over £100 per week. They have told me that it was worth the bother, and they get to keep their Winter Fuel Payment too!

To Apply for Attendance Allowance ring the **Attendance Allowance helpline**

Telephone: 0800 731 0122 for a claim form. If you qualify, your claim will be backdated to the date of your phone call.

To Apply for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) ring the **Personal Independence Payment claim line** for a claim form.

Telephone: 0800 917 2222

Once you have your claim form ring Citizens Advice or Age UK for assistance in filling it out with you.

News from Friends House Moscow

Mary Morris

Christmas greetings from Friends House Moscow. Here is a link to our latest newsletter, now available on our website:

Newsletter Winter 2024 – Friends House Moscow

To read it, click on the "DOWNLOAD" button. From here you can save a copy, or print it, or just read it online.

We are currently operating in Russia, Ukraine, and Estonia. We support work for alternatives to violence, help for orphan children and young adults, and help for refugee children and their parents.

We also conduct Quaker outreach, online and in print, in the Russian language. This work, of course, is for Russian speakers everywhere regardless of which country they live in.