Malvern Quaker Meeting





Newsletter June/July 2026

Items for the next issue of the Newsletter (in Word format please) will need to reach me by ***31st July 2026****. 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

Visiting Sidcot (Quaker) School near Cheddar — Jill Etheridge

For the past two years, it has been my privilege to attend the General Meeting at Sidcot School, with the knowledge of Area Meeting, which no longer appoints an official representative. The campus is quite extensive, and the facilities offered are exceptional, and often shared with the local area. (My grand-daughter Amy had swimming lessons there when quite young!) Whatever may be one's views about private education – and I have mixed feelings about it myself – I have been deeply impressed by what I have learned of this school. At the General Meeting, all ages of the school give presentations about aspects of school life. It is interesting to hear from an 'Elder' who is about 12! The systems for pastoral care and peer mentoring are quite wonderful and have been in place for a long time. What moved me most on my recent attendance was a video of the very youngest pupils (primary age) saying what 'Peace' meant to them; but above all the image I mentioned recently in our own Meeting for Worship. The sight of every single member of the school holding hands in a giant circle on the playing field on International Peace Day is for ever etched on my mind.

Advices & Queries No 41

Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength. Do not be persuaded into buying what you do not need or cannot afford. Do you keep yourself informed about the effects your style of living is having on the global economy and environment?

Marking the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations

Melanie Jameson

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. Chris Louise, a former UN employee, who worships at St Josephs Catholic Church, has been considering how to mark this landmark. I am a friend of Chris's wife, and she has put me in touch with her husband, knowing our Quaker commitment to peace work. At the last business meeting I was asked to find out more about this initiative, so Chris and I arranged a phone call. He is proposing a two-part event on Sat October 24th: firstly, a service at the Priory (which will be based on the UN thanksgiving service in London) to be followed by a panel discussion in the Lyttelton Rooms.
Chris has been disappointed at the response of Churches Together in Malvern, but I felt that individuals could be approached to make up the planning group he needs of at least five people. I have asked Connie Booth from the Priory who is happy to become involved and, through this article, I am asking if there is anyone else from Quakers who can join us.

Special Collections

The Special Collection for June was in aid of ShelterBox - provides shelter, essential items and technical assistance to help some of the world's most vulnerable people recover and rebuild their homes after disaster. See https://shelterbox.org/ Information on the amount collected will appear in our next issue.

The Special Collection for July is in aid of **Arcos** www.arcos.org.uk A Malvern charity working to improve the lives of children and adults who have communication, eating, drinking and/or swallowing difficulties, and who require physical rehabilitation. These conditions are often complex and can last their whole lives. Several of their clients are told that there is nothing, or nothing more, that can be done for them. Arcos does not agree. It provides realistic, practical, and objective help from their skilled and experienced team working together to provide long-term support that improves lives.

The Salter Lecture 2026 – The Middle East: A Moral Catastrophe?

Elizabeth Rolph



It was good with others to listen to this lecture. Rachel Shabi, a leading British Israeli journalist, took us back to the roots of the Middle East conflict and explained how the conflicts in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, and the part our country had played in them, had torn up established rules, creating what she described as a kind of "permission architecture" for further abuses.

It was not easy listening, hearing about the atrocities that have been going on for so long. She finished on a more positive note - universal values still endure and she pointed to individuals and movements continuing to defend human rights, and encouraging steady, principled action, drawing on Quaker traditions of peace and justice.

In the discussion afterwards we picked up on this, commenting how much we value the work Melanie and others do. We should do what we can, however small the action is, and hold others in the light who are doing such valuable work.

I had just received an email from EAPPI, urging us to call on the UK government to act to end all support for Israel's occupation of Palestine. After the talk in April, how many of us had signed up to receive these emails, but done nothing? I was one of these, part of the excuse being 'what difference will writing to my Conservative MP make?' But I have now done this and joined the campaign; if enough of us take small actions, it will make a difference.

"From the heart of the Holy Land, we see daily the profound longing for a peace rooted in true justice, equality, and the restoration of human dignity for all. The Time to Act campaign calls the global Church to move beyond passive observation and into meaningful, prayerful solidarity with those who suffer. I warmly encourage all Christians to join this vital movement, acting together to build a future where every child of God in our region can live in safety, freedom, and peace."

https://justpeacecoalition.com/

Swarthmore Lecture - Navigating the Complex Legacy of Early Quakers

We will be showing this at the Dell House on **Monday 20th July, at 3.15**, refreshments from 3. This lecture explores the mix of characteristics of the early Quaker movement and the tensions this has created. It argues that engaging with these issues can help Friends better appreciate the diversity present within the global Quaker family and enable them to discern how to respond to these dilemmas today. The showing will be followed by some discussion.

Making Your Home More Accessible — Richard Bartholomew

As we grow older, the things that we used to do easily become more difficult; this is when it may be useful to know about the Worcestershire Home Adaptations Service see https://www.whas.org.uk/

This service works on behalf of all the District Councils in the county or in Herefordshire see https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/family-support/help-at-home/home-improvement-and-adaptations/

Both councils can provide both help with repairs and grants for work to make your home more accessible through statutory Disabled Facilities Grants.

Once you have had work done you may also be eligible to apply for Council Tax Reductions (this is not means-tested but based on the level of disability) see https://www.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts-for-disabled-people

This might work out to your Council Tax band being lowered if you need:

- an extra bathroom, kitchen or other room that you need for the disabled person
- extra space inside the property for using a wheelchair

There is also a possible Council Tax (CT) reduction for someone who is "severely mentally impaired", which should cover those who have a dementia-type illness or other type of severe mental impairment, be it a learning disability or another form of mental illness. This means that the mentally impaired person is due for a CT reduction of 100% if you live on your own or with other mentally impaired people or students. You will need to get a letter from your doctor to confirm this. There'll be a 50% discount on the council tax bill if everyone else in your household is 'disregarded'.

In addition, anyone living with and supporting/caring for such a person is then due for a 25% CT reduction.

NB This is not charity it is **the law,** and if you think you might qualify for any of these things then it is your responsibility to apply and not to suffer in silence.

Welcoming Former Prisoners into Faith Communities, Locally and Beyond

Melanie Jameson

At the last business meeting, I was given permission to register our Meeting with the Welcome Directory, a database of worshiping groups who are prepared to welcome former prisoners. We shall shortly be entered into the Quaker section, along with at least 20 Meetings. What does this commitment imply? Well, the easiest way to understand is to take a look at the booklet, 'Welcoming All', discerned over 12 months by Quakers in Criminal Justice, which explains the background, the process, issues that may arise and sources of support. https://www.qicj.org/doc/WelcomingAll.pdf

You will see that this is written as a developing dialogue between QICJ and the (potentially) receiving Meeting. Of course, we would only know if someone had been released from prison if they disclosed this themselves or were under the supervision of probation, necessitating the drawing up of a contract, agreed by all parties.

Last month a couple of us introduced the Welcoming All initiative to our Area Meeting and outlined how we see the issues involved. Following that session an Immam came forward and asked if there could be a version for Muslim former prisoners; this seemed very appropriate – there are a large number of Muslims at Long Lartin, for example (the prison I know best). In fact, I had already started thinking how to adapt the Welcoming All booklet for the C of E and Catholic churches.

The initial approach to non-Quaker groups will be via the letter below. I am including it here because it serves as an introduction to readers of this newsletter who are new to what ensues when a Meeting is approached by the authorities or a Quaker prison chaplain in order to explore whether a released prisoner can worship with them. Note the importance of safeguarding; having a robust safeguarding policy is one of the prerequisites for registration with the Welcome Directory.

DRAFT LETTER to regional church leaders

We are contacting you about an initiative by Quakers in Criminal Justice, a charity and recognised group within Quakers in Britain. Our concern is that people who have come to

faith in prison often encounter barriers to accessing worshipping groups in their community on release.

Our 'Welcoming All' booklet focuses primarily on former prisoners under the supervision of probation who have been released with licence conditions. Fundamental to any consideration of integration is the need for robust safeguarding provisions to be in place and adhered to. https://www.qicj.org/doc/WelcomingAll.pdf

When a former prisoner with licence restrictions wishes to join a Church/Quaker Meeting/Mosque, a process is initiated which leads to a contract being drawn up between the authorities (the police/probation MAPPA - multi agency public protection arrangements), representatives of the church and the former prisoner.

'Welcoming All' refers to two key sources of support: the church safeguarding agency, 31:8 and the Welcome Directory both of which provide training and resources. Our booklet is composed as a dialogue between Quakers in Criminal Justice and a worshipping community who are initially reluctant to accept someone who has been in prison. The ensuing questions and responses draw on actual reactions we received when developing this piece of work and take the reader through the various issues. It concludes with a much-treasured quotation from our mini-book of guidance: Advices & Queries [18].

We are aware that sometimes it is simply not possible to accept a former prisoner, but the starting point of 'Welcoming All' is the presumption of acceptance rather than exclusion. It is our experience that most difficulties can be overcome with care and creativity, whilst always adhering to safeguarding requirements. An important consideration is that former prisoners can feel quite disorientated and exposed on release, missing the support of their prison fellowship and chaplain. Exclusion from society and ongoing isolation could lead to mental ill health and even re-offending and further victims.

It is worth mentioning that the Swarthmore Lecture 2024 by Ben Jarman focused on the effects of exclusion from society when people are released from prison into the community but are unable to find a way of integrating themselves. For those that have come to faith in prison, it is an expression of answering God/the good in everyone if we do what we can to enable someone to continue their faith journey with us. Advices & Queries 18, which concludes Welcoming All, opens as follows: How can we make the Meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured, and strangers welcome?

Do email me with any queries on this matter: melanie-jameson@outlook.com

Bird of Paradise Plant at the Dell House

Elizabeth Rolph

This plant has finally produced lots of blooms this year and they are so spectacular that we thought you might like to see them.



A poem that arose out of our discussion after MfW, 28th June "Are Quakers Christian?"

Raphael Bate

Quaker Silence is the thing

Most see silence as a waste of time
And baulk at no talk
A fear of non-existence if
I persist in resisting yada yada.
I must fill the gaping maw of emptiness
Even a yawn fills a place in the
race to prove my existence.
Look I'm over here, me!
Most see silence as just stuff to keep *thing*s apart.
For us silence is the *thing*.
Let go the figure and embrace the ground
The zen secret is one hand clapping
One wave lapping, one bird flapping
One wind in the pines, one step for ever,
One complete embrace of now
That's how the show endlessly
Opens opens opens

The thing is
This is it
Now and for ever more.
Amen
Om
Mani
Padme
So Hum