

Report from Hope Valley Meeting for 2018 for Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting

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Hope Valley Local Meeting Sunday Meeting for Worship generally has a lovely depth of gathered spirituality: this is what many Friends have said about it. This is valued enormously by Friends, Attenders and many visitors. It is enhanced by the practice of Afterword, in which Friends contribute in a more conversational way for a period afterwords either picking up threads from the Meeting for Worship, or sharing hitherto unexpressed inspirations.

A vibrant monthly discussion group further enables the spiritual life of the Meeting to be deepened. Themes are suggested and very briefly introduced by a Friend. The meeting then opens out to a reflective space for Friends to contribute thoughts, ideas, inspirations, feelings, discernments and concerns into the shared silence. The meetings are confidential and unreported to give Friends confidence to speak their hearts and minds.

Advices and Queries are read out in either Meeting or Afterword from time to time, chosen by individual Friends as moved.

Hope Valley Meeting hosted a well-attended and warmly received Memorial for Ursula Adler, who is much missed. This was followed by a shared tea.

Our main outreach has been from personal contacts or the noticeboard outside the community which a lot of walkers and riders pass by. Many then also pick up leaflets and some occasionally speak with community members if around at the time.

Hope Valley Friends are involved in many ways concerning our testimonies. One had travelled to the Antipodes without flying to meet Friends there. Other examples are:

Mark Adams continued his progress towards teaching Hun Yuan qigong professionally with the help of funding from Area Meeting. He is now living in Buxton and hopes to continue this there.

A Friend is involved in assisting asylum seekers and refugees, this year helping a Community Sponsorship Scheme for Syrian Refugees which has recently succeeded in resettling a family of six in South Wales. And supporting and volunteering in providing assistance and support for refugees.

Several members of the meeting take part in local group called *What's Left in the Hope Valley*, set up by a Hope Valley Friend. The group provides a forum for discussion of political matters with a focus on the local Hope Valley community. Its members, who live in the Valley, are active in local councils, pressure groups and political organisations and the discussions of the group reflect upon and inform those activities. It provides an opportunity for conversation free from the objectives of any particular political organisation, while exploring a range of progressive approaches to political issues.

Many members are involved in living in the Quaker Community which offers a space for individuals, Quaker meetings and other groups to stay for rest, retreat or for courses. This has contributed much to the Meeting and we hope our Meeting has inspired them.

As the year ends we are again wondering about our capacity to fulfil the roles and responsibilities laid upon us as a Local Meeting. The oversight circle was not functioning as well as we had hoped and Norman had to step back from actively being an Elder following a stroke. We are exploring options and possibilities for us to remain a Local Meeting with minimal responsibilities and we have the support of the Area Meeting clerks in this discernment. We remain hopeful.

Once again we give thanks for all who attend Hope Valley Meeting and who contribute to its life in whatever way. We look forward to another year of living adventurously in the Spirit.

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