

## REPORT TO SHEFFIELD AND BALBY AREA MEETING

### QUAKER CHAPLAINCY AT HMP MOORLAND

I have been going in to HMP Moorland for approximately two years on a monthly basis. Initially this was at the request from the Managing Chaplain to Area Meeting in order to be able to meet with one Quaker prisoner. On checking the roll of prisoners and their religious registration the Managing Chaplain found that there was a second man in residence. I therefore began to meet with the two individuals in January 2018.

The older man had served part of his life sentence in HMP Full Sutton and had known the Quaker Chaplain there although he had not engaged fully with her. The younger man had served time in several establishments for several years and is a birthright Quaker whose mother had many Quaker friends, some of whom regularly visit and keep in touch with him. During the time I have been at HMP Moorland this man was transferred to another prison, but then returned and has established a pattern of rather erratic engagement, although I always try to seek him out if only for a few minutes.

In October 2019 a third prisoner who had attended Quaker worship at his previous prison arrived at Moorland, so I now see the three men together.

In some ways, this is really positive as we are able to hold Meeting for Worship and follow up with general conversation over tea and biscuits. However, the older man is a naturally shy and rather private person and misses the individual meetings that he and I had for a few months. It is therefore very nice that a Friend from Sheffield LM now writes regularly to him and he greatly values this contact.

It is good to report that we have been able to hold a Meeting for Worship in October which was attended by three Friends from Sheffield and Balby AM, one of whom has begun a correspondence with the most recently arrived prisoner, and this he values. A further MfW is planned for January and we have agreed to hold these every three months. This is of great importance to the men as it helps them to feel a sense of inclusion with the outside community and lessens the negation which prisoners often feel, especially those serving long sentences who know that they might very well die in prison. Our oldest Friend is in his late 80s. The newest 'arrival' is working towards a release date in Spring 2020 and I am communicating with his Probation Officer and the LM in his destination town in order to try and smooth the way for his transfer and acceptance by the Quaker community.

Martin Batstone was appointed as Managing Chaplain in March/April 2019 and his efforts to facilitate my visits are hugely appreciated. He even writes notes to the men which he delivers personally to their cells reminding them of my visit.

As Friends of this Area Meeting know I am also Quaker Chaplain at HMP Wakefield and serve on the Quaker Prison Chaplains Committee. We meet at Friends House four times per year and take on responsibility for training and support for Quaker Prison Chaplains. This includes planning and running the annual Conference at Woodbrooke which this year tackled the problem of drug use in prisons and how best to support prisoners.

I am very happy to continue with my role at HMP Moorland but it would be preferable to find and nominate someone from Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting. Should there be any interest I would be happy to spend time with any Friend/s and would also suggest they look at the training which we offer.

Diana Luther-Powell  
Quaker Prison Chaplain