

**Reporting on the responsibilities of Balby (Doncaster) Local Meeting  
Year ending 31 December 2017**

- We have continued to hold regular Meetings for Worship. Our numbers had been declining recently but seem to have levelled out, and we have been able to welcome both new members and new attenders during the year.
- We continue to maintain a Midweek Meeting on a Wednesday at 1.00
- Our Advices and Queries have been regularly used either in personal vocal ministry or as a foundation for our Worship Sharing. We display the individual Advices and Queries in sequence in the entrance hall. We have begun a series of discussions after Meeting about Advices and Queries and how they affect us individually.
- We have maintained spiritual and pastoral care of our Meeting and its members and attenders. Our elders and overseers meet regularly and we have maintained a series of discussion groups and social events which have enhanced the life of the Meeting. We have continued our regular 'End of Life' sessions. We have continued our consideration of how the spirituality of the Meeting might be further developed, and have continued to keep under consideration the format of our worship sharing sessions, which take place on the last Sunday of the month. We responded to the request from the Friends Fellowship of Healing to support them by holding a longer Meeting for Worship, which was appreciated by those who attended.

Although Meeting for Worship is central to our Meeting, we continue to pursue other means of "getting to know one another in the things that are eternal", including an active programme of visits to the CAST Theatre and other events. We book an annual long weekend at Barmoor on the North Yorkshire Moors, which provides us with an opportunity to spend time in each other's company and also to renew acquaintance with those who have moved on from our Meeting.

- We do not have a demand for a Children's Meeting at present.
- We hold regular Meetings for Business each month and have been able to send representatives to all this year's Area Meetings and have hosted it on two occasions. We seek to uphold the Area Meeting clerks by whatever means we can, and are happy to host Area Meetings when required. Members of the Meeting participate in Area Meeting activities. We have sought to send representatives to Quakers in Yorkshire when possible.

- We have given consideration to our patterns of giving, in order to satisfy ourselves that we are giving our money to appropriate Quaker causes. We have altered our arrangements for charitable collections so as to ensure that we give a right proportion of our money to Britain Yearly Meeting, and we are keeping this under review. Our accounts will be audited in line with our usual annual practice
- Tabular details and statistical details have been returned when required.
- Our Meeting House has a full-time presence during the day from Monday to Wednesday, and frequently on Friday. On Thursdays the Doncaster Conversation Club (see below) is in occupation and supervises building use, and thanks to their own improved funding they are now able to pay a full rent for the use of the building. Our website continues to be well used, and it provides a quick and easy method of communication with the Meeting by enquirers, especially now that our Lettings Officer has direct access to it.

The building itself continues to be used by a variety of groups, including representatives of several other faiths, and we continue to look at ways in which we can improve outreach to those who use it and to others. We continue to use the building for events and to publicise these locally. The income from hire of the building is a valuable contribution to our income.

- Correspondents are appointed to the main Quaker services and we hope during 2018 to complete the process of reviewing the stock of our library and putting in place a system for encouraging Friends to borrow and read the books which we have.
- Doncaster Conversation Club (DCC), a resource for asylum seekers and refugees, which was in part an initiative of Friends, continues to engage the attention of several of our Friends, as well as numerous other volunteers, and to provide a valuable service on Thursdays to asylum seekers and refugees in the town, especially at a time when members of these communities are being put under significant personal and financial pressure. Friends in our Meeting continue to provide active, as well as financial, support to DCC. The average weekly attendance is up to 150 from 100 last year. Volunteers do not simply provide conversation, but also practical help and support, including the provision of material goods for those who need them, the weekly supply of food by way of unwanted supermarket food which reaches us through the club's close links with the Fare Share organisation, English classes, practical help with the claiming of benefits, help at a variety of levels by incoming advisers, support with asylum applications, the preparation of medical reports for Freedom from Torture, and social events. DCC continues its regular series of walks and outings, which are enthusiastically supported by Friends in our Meeting. This is sometimes not

without its problems, in view of the large number of people attending and having to be transported!

The loss of the Northern Refugee Centre in 2016 had given cause for considerable concern, but various other forms of help continue to be available. As noted last year, three volunteers had applied to OISC (Office of Immigration Services Commissioner) to become registered at the basic Level 1 for Asylum and Protection advisers, under which they cannot give any immigration advice, but can complete travel documents and do other non immigration work. Their applications were successful.

- We have become a Sanctuary Meeting following the initiative by Friends House whose Forced Migration worker, Tim Gee, visited us during the year.
- We continue to work with Doncaster Museum in their work on the centenary of the First World War, and will participate in an exhibition which they are hoping to hold in 2018. This will enable us to say something of how the peace work of former Quaker adherents has been carried forward into our work for peace today.
- We were pleased to be able to arrange for a group of Friends to visit the DESI Arms Fair in London in September. We provided a minibus to the “No Faith in War” event on the Tuesday of the Week of Action and participated in the activities designed to draw attention to the Arms Trade and its effects. On the Saturday of the same week, Friends also attended independently to join in the Day of Action, and took part in the Quaker Meeting for Worship held in the road giving access to the site.
- We have put on two plays during the year at the Meeting House. The first, Pericles – All at Sea, was held during Refugee Week in June, and the Multi Story Theatre Company joined us to relate a story of shipwreck in the Mediterranean, a subject close to the hearts of many people who use our building. During Quaker Week in October, we entertained the Journeymen Theatre Company who put on their play “The Bundle”, about a refugee from Chechnya. Both plays were well received, both having echoes of the existing concerns of many Friends, and we hope to continue with this process during 2018.
- We have hosted a workshop led by Jane Laxton on behalf of Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture, which is also a subject which concerns many Friends, and we are considering how best we can support this group in future.
- We have begun a discussion group around the New Economy, starting with the materials produced by Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and developing our

own knowledge as well as seeking ways in which pressure may be brought to make changes to our unfair economic system.