

**Reporting on the responsibilities of Balby (Doncaster) Local Meeting  
Year ending 31 December 2019**

We have continued to hold regular Meetings for Worship, on Sunday morning and on Wednesday at 1.00. There have been few attenders at the midweek meeting, but numbers for Sunday meeting are stable.

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 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 consideration of how the spirituality of the Meeting might be further developed, and we have instituted a different method of worship sharing on the last Sunday of every month, in order to enhance and encourage our spiritual understanding and exploration, both as individuals and collectively as a Meeting. This has proved a success as we consider ways in which we as Quakers react to different situations.

We continue to visit the CAST theatre as a group from time to time, and on occasion we have been able to go out for lunch at a local restaurant after Sunday meeting. 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.

Area Meeting hosted a "Woodbrooke on the Road" event in February, presented by Stuart Masters, and a number of Friends were able to attend what was a very inspiring and informative event.

We do not have a demand for a Children's Meeting at present.

We hold regular Meetings for Business in each alternate month and we continue to try to send representatives to all Area Meetings, although this is proving more difficult as members of the meeting pursue their own various activities. We have hosted Area Meeting 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 and are appointed to committees of the Area Meeting. We have sought to send representatives to Quakers in Yorkshire when possible.

We continue to support our own individual giving to Britain Yearly Meeting by making all of our weekly collections a contribution to the work of BYM, with the addition of occasional special collections, for example for the Doncaster floods.

Our accounts will be audited in line with our usual annual practice.

Tabular details and statistical details have been returned when required.

Correspondents are appointed to the main Quaker services and our library is now in better order and good use is made of it.

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. We are seeking ways of developing our presence on line, by using Twitter, by reviewing our website, and by developing a presence on Facebook.

The building itself continues to be used by a variety of groups, including representatives of other faiths. We continue to look at ways in which we can improve outreach to those who use the building and to others. We continue to use the building for events and to publicise these locally, in particular by the production of plays with a Quaker theme. In November we hosted the last performance of Ian Sharp's play "Conchies", about the Lincolnshire pacifist community during the second world war, and were pleased to welcome Don Sutherland, the last survivor of the group and a member of Lincoln Meeting.

The income from hire of the building is a valuable contribution to our income.

Doncaster Conversation Club (DCC) is a resource for asylum seekers and refugees, based at the Meeting House, and with close connections with our Meeting, although it is an independent organisation. Several Friends are involved in its running and organisation, together with numerous non-Quaker volunteers. The meeting itself, and individual Friends, continue to provide financial support.

The average weekly attendance at DCC is in the region of 150. 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 and with navigating the NHS, 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 willingly supported by Friends in our Meeting. There are regular and enthusiastic football sessions, and occasionally the Meeting House fills up with bikes for distribution. Various

Friends have parts of their houses and garages given over to furniture, clothing and bedding, also for distribution in due course. DCC also works with other local organisations; CAST Theatre is now a Theatre of Sanctuary,

DCC cannot give full immigration advice, but three volunteers are accredited with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner and are allowed to give level one advice. It can be difficult to keep advice to that level in view of the almost endless demand for help and support which DCC receives, which is in itself a result of the general policy of the Government towards those coming to the UK.

Our Friend Paul FitzPatrick provides an excellent and well-read DCC newsletter every month.

The Meeting is a Sanctuary Meeting and is associated with the central Quaker work of joining local initiatives to build a culture of welcome, building alliances with groups opposing racism, and working with others to change the laws on destitution, detention, deportations and removals. In January 2019, we held an event for other local faith groups at which we used the concept of the World Café to explore the concept of sanctuary. The Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) AGM took place at Doncaster this year.

We continue to work with Doncaster Museum in their work on the centenary of the First World War, in order to maintain awareness of conscientious objection as a part of our remembering of that time.

We have a reading and discussion group on the New Economy, which is building on the material sent out by Friends House. We have appointed a small group to look at how we can campaign against poverty, and how we can address the issue of a basic income which is of interest to several of us. During the year, as part of our Area Meeting activities, Annie Miller from West of Scotland joined us to present a day workshop on basic income, which was well received and found useful, and as the year ends we will be holding a discussion group on the relationship between mental health and austerity.

The Book of Members says that Balby (Doncaster) has eighteen members. No fewer than nine of them (with a number of attenders) signed up to join with other Quakers in the "Roots of Resistance" movement to address the issue of the arms trade by having a physical presence at the DESI Arms Fair in London in September. In the event three of the nine were prevented, but we are proud of the size of representation that we were able to provide. If all Meetings provided a 50% turnout at the Arms Fair, the effect would be even more dramatic. We were encouraged and supported throughout by the Roots of Resistance group, to whom we extend our thanks and support, and we were pleased to work closely with our Friends in the other local meetings within our Area Meeting.

One of the ways in which we seek to carry out outreach work is with the displays in our Meeting House. We now have a roll-up banner on Quakers and their work, which is displayed when other groups are using the building, and we have a permanent display on Quakers and peace, sanctuary and torture. We hope now to produce two more displays; one on our work towards a zero carbon future, and one on our peace work with particular reference to our work concerning the arms trade.