

Duties and Responsibilities 2019

This report is offered to the Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 12th January 2020, by **Sheffield Central Local Meeting**.

We believe that we have met all of our responsibilities throughout 2019, in accordance with Quaker Faith & Practice, section 4.33.

We have nurtured and sustained the spiritual life of the meeting with regular meetings for worship and church affairs, including preparation for Area Meeting business, and the pastoral care of those associated with the meeting through our Elders and Overseers; we are attentive to local outreach, have welcomed newcomers and sought to help enquirers to explore and understand the Society.

Elders' Report – 2019

We started the year by outlining our focus for the year, continuing to use information from the spiritual review which was carried out the year before last. We chose to focus on:

- building our community;
- helping people find out about centring down in Meeting for Worship; and
- creating a range of opportunities for people to reflect on vocal ministry.

Between January and July, we held six Inner Quest sessions mainly concerned with Quaker Basics. Inner Quest was then laid down, after seven years.

In February we held the 'Woodbrooke on the Road' event on 'Exploring Quaker Spirituality' which was very successful and well attended by Friends from all Meetings in our Area.

We have been thinking about how to create a more settled start and finish to our Meeting for Worship. We asked groups within the Meeting to consider this and let us know their feelings about it. After receiving these we took the matter to our local business Meeting and have now put some ideas into practice.

After Meeting one Sunday, we held a brief consultation about which learning opportunities Friends had found helpful. This led us to think about arranging another 'Woodbrooke on the Road' day and we have started this process.

Overseers' Report – 2019

Newcomers both young and older have been welcomed, as have new members. We have met with the Elders and have shared their Minutes.

One way in which we have helped to develop a sense of community is to provide a light lunch once a month on a Singing Sunday for about twenty people.

We have discussed arrangements for the 30th Birthday activities; questions about the climate change and ecological emergency; support for Friends involved in Extinction Rebellion; and choices for a future 'Woodbrooke on the Road'.

We all give of our time and energy and in doing so, we each gain in return, getting to know others in depth and love.

Children and Young People's Work Committee Report – 2019

We have had a most rewarding year with our children and young people with many varied activities and the innovation of a Play Worker running sessions for the youngest children so that eventually their parents may feel able to go into Meeting.

There are currently forty-nine children and young people on the list, although some are seen only occasionally. Some of our

young people have been coming less frequently on a Sunday morning but more pre-school children have joined us over the past year.

Activities for the school-age children and young people have ranged through philosophy, cooking, art, drama and games, reflecting the Quaker way from different perspectives. Quaker history has played a part, including a drama session using the John Woolman puppets.

Helen Hall, our Play Worker, started work in September, having come to Meeting in July so as to get to know us and look at resources. Helen's sessions are made up of games, creativity, singing and stories. The children clearly feel very comfortable with her, although most parents are still staying with their children at present.

There have been two Meetings held for Community Worship, one in March on the theme *Our Future Together* and in October there was a celebration of thirty years in this Meeting House, with the theme *Past-Present-Future*.

As well as life on Sundays mornings, the annual Hathersage social was much enjoyed by all, and eight of our young people much enjoyed a week at Yorkshire Friends' Holiday School. Our two representatives at Junior Yearly Meeting gave a thoughtful and perceptive report to Area Meeting.

The Youth Worker project continues to bring our young people together for social evenings, which also provide a space for them to become more actively involved in relevant social justice issues.