

The Living Witness Project is a growing network of Quaker meetings and groups in Britain, exploring our corporate witness to sustainable living.

Living Witness Project

Project news

Twenty Friends attended the Link Group gathering at Bilberry Hill in October. The weekend focused on experiences of working with non-Quaker groups, including other faith groups and our local communities. Some of our meetings' activities are summarised overleaf. On the Sunday the business session considered the new centre for sustainability being set up in Oxford FMH (see Newsletter 15). We produced the following minute:

"We, the Living Witness Project Link Group, meeting on 27th-29th October 2006, agree to the Management Group of the proposed Oxford centre undertaking necessary steps including appointing trustees, to set up a charitable trust known as the Living Witness Project. This charitable trust will set up a centre in Oxford for the Living Witness Project. The existing Living Witness Project will continue to function nationally in its present form and members will be consulted on any future changes. We agree in principle that at a future national Link Group meeting, probably in March 2007, a Meeting for Worship for business will consider a way forward for developing the Living Witness Project charitable trust into a charitable body which will enable Quaker witness for sustainable living to be further developed."

Plans for the centre are coming together. We are putting together the application for charitable registration and we have received funding offers amounting to about two thirds of our 2007 budget.

March Link Group Meeting

Do put the 29-31 March 2007 Link Group gathering in your diary, and ask your meeting to support your attendance! Three Friends (Anne Brewer, Gwen Prince and Martin Quick) are developing the agenda so please send them your ideas.

Northern Meetings

The gathering for Friends from northern meetings will take place at Swarthmoor Hall on 1-3 December. The cost of the weekend is £70. If you can't

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manage the whole weekend, you're welcome to attend for the day on Saturday.

We will hold another event in 2007 somewhere more central in the north, perhaps just for one day. Would you like to host it?

Website

Please do take a look at the website (www.livingwitness.org.uk) and make your suggestions for improvement. It

would be really good to have at least a paragraph about what each meeting is doing, if not a link to your own website. Contributions to Laurie.

News from meetings

Marlborough

Friends in Marlborough have plans to do *Be the Change* in January. Meanwhile we are focusing our energy on the Marlborough Climate Pledge (<http://mcp.editme.com>). Earlier this year with a burst of publicity a group of 45 local green activists organised a launch meeting in Marlborough Town Hall. Michael Meacher was the guest speaker. The town hall was packed, standing room only, as Meacher spoke passionately about issues that are close to our hearts. We were then invited to take a 4 page A5 booklet which listed actions simple and more demanding we as individuals could take to: reduce energy use; reduce CO₂ emissions; save ourselves money; and improve the quality of our lives. We were each asked to commit ourselves, preferably that evening, to four pledges we would undertake so that our thoughts were converted to practical action.

This meeting was followed up with an interactive newsletter and bimonthly meetings where a smaller group come together to exchange ideas.

Now a subgroup is working on evaluating the pledges and further initiatives are being planned. At the initial meeting our Mayor committed himself to making Marlborough a Fair Trade town.

Rachel Rosedale

Dorking

I was very pleased that another Dorking Friend wanted to come with me to the recent Link Group weekend in Birmingham and what's more I plucked up courage to ask if the Meeting would contribute towards the

Forthcoming Events

Contact Laurie (details overleaf) for more information on any of these

2006

1-3 December, LWP Northern Meetings gathering at Swarthmoor Hall. Cost £70.

2007

29-31 January, Climate Change: Our Quaker Response, conference at Woodbrooke. Cost £140.

29-31 March, LWP Link Group meeting at Woodbrooke. Cost £140.

4-7 May: Britain Yearly Meeting at Friends House in London. QGA will have a display table and run a special interest group.

8-10 June, The Science and Politics of Climate Change, Friendly Science conference at Woodbrooke.

21-28 July: Summer Gathering at University of Stirling. We expect to have a QGA presence.

7-9 September: Sustainability and the Quaker Testimonies. Course at Woodbrooke.

2-4 November: Responding to Climate Change. Conference at Woodbrooke following publication of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment.

cost. They readily agreed! Inspired by the weekend Sarah and I asked for a slot in November PM and gave a brief report and offered to run a discussion group to help the Meeting explore its witness to sustainability and whether it wanted to develop this further. This was agreed and the discussion fixed for December 8th. There certainly seems to be a groundswell of concern - 13 members of our Meeting were on the Climate march, with over 20 altogether from our Monthly Meeting.

Anne Brewer

Llanidloes Energy Solutions

We were disappointed that our bid for a large European grant for innovative renewable energy projects was not successful, but we are hoping to go ahead with many of them with funding from other sources.

We have started to conduct an Energy Survey of the entire town to find out how much is used, and to advise people on how to reduce their carbon footprint and their bills, and to promote switching to green electricity. It is heartening how much awareness there is about the need to cut energy use. We trained a team of volunteers to use a special computer programme and go out with a laptop to collect the information. Inspired by ideas from the last LWP weekend, We contacted the local churches and they have been promoting the exercise to their congregations. (The fact that LLES is a Quaker initiative helped in this).

The project will take about two years, but we aim to have 250 surveys done by the end of November.

Gwen Prince

Other meetings – in brief

Pete Redwood (Scarborough PM) went to an eco-footprinting workshop at CAT and wanted to combine this with EcoTeams. He has been working with the Methodist Church in Scarborough and has developed five study group sessions (available from Laurie by e-mail).

The EcoTeam in Ludlow Meeting was successful, though the group hasn't met since July. They want to develop an environmental policy and display it in the FMH. The meeting has regular Wednesday gatherings, of which two have been used for LWP presentations. Most of the discussions have been about food-miles. Several Friends are involved in the Methodist fair-trade café. Ludlow is also a Slow Town.

Bedford Friends have installed water butts and are considering running an EcoTeam programme. One Friend is involved in a Bedford renewable energy project – they had Michael Meacher to speak, which

was very successful. They also had a viewing of Al Gore's film, *An Inconvenient Truth*.

The Huddersfield LWP group has gained members from Bradford and Scholes, and is working to raise the profile in local meetings. They have held a day event in Huddersfield and were very active in the meeting, but elders recently felt the group was taking up too many shared lunches. A lot of work has been done on accessibility in the MH. There are plans for a green fair in February 2007.

Two Friends from Muswell Hill Meeting attended the Link Group meeting. There is some interest in greening the meeting and there was a lunchtime discussion group recently, but practical changes to the building are in the hands of Six Weeks Meeting.

Climate change events at Woodbrooke

Three conferences are being planned on climate change at Woodbrooke in 2007.

Quaker Green Action is organising a conference on 29-31 January on "Climate Change: Our Quaker Response". This conference aims to strengthen and connect the witness of Quaker **organisations**. We are bringing together Friends involved in local meetings, the centrally managed work of Britain Yearly Meeting, and other Quaker bodies. We will hear about each other's activities and initiatives, explore our shared values, visions and spiritual sources, identify needs and opportunities for strengthening our witness, and make practical plans for the future.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will be finalising and releasing the various parts of its Fourth Assessment throughout 2007. There will be two events to help us digest the emerging messages:

- On June 8-10 the Friendly Science Conference is on *The Science and Politics of Climate Change*. Contributors will include prominent experts Joanna Haigh (on the science) and Michael Grubb (on the policies and politics).
- On 2-4 November, a second linked event on *Climate Change: Our Spirited Response* will explore what Quaker experience, faith and practice has to offer the world in its search for an effective response to climate change.

For more information or to get involved in the Living Witness Project, please get in touch with:

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Meetings represented and involved in LWP:

Ackworth PM, Bedford PM, Bournemouth & Swanage MM, Bristol & Frenchay MM, Chepstow PM, Chesterfield PM, Colchester PM, Cotteridge PM, Dorking PM, Exeter PM, Gloucester & Nailsworth MM, Hartington Grove PM (Cambridge), Huddersfield PM, Ilkley PM, Lancaster PM, Leicester PM, Llanidloes PM, Ludlow PM, Machynlleth RM, Manchester Mount Street PM, Muswell Hill PM, Newcastle PM, Northampton PM, Norwich & Lynn MM, Oxford PM, Preston PM, Reading MM, Scarborough PM, Settle PM/MM, Southampton PM, South Wales MM, Stafford PM, Taunton PM, Warwick PM, Wellington PM, Wolverhampton PM, Young Friends General Meeting