

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

www.livingwitness.org.uk

News from meetings Taunton

We are running the "Be the Change" course for Taunton, Wellington and Spicelands. We are a very small group: 5 in all (one member from Spicelands dropped out). However, a few meeting is better than none and I feel the course is providing a good structure to help us share our various concerns and, hopefully, discern a

unified focus for action, which others might feel drawn to join over time. The main thing is that we've started. We also, several of us, went to a talk by Satish Kumar, which was hosted by the Watchet Forum 21 group who seem a good group to have links with. They have been going for some time and are up to some useful stuff e.g. wood recycling, trying to get a car pool off the ground etc.

Fran Hicks

Project news

There is a growing momentum among British Friends in developing our testimony on sustainability, in particular in responding to climate change. It is increasingly clear that we need a national focus for our Quaker voice and to support activities. Since our last Newsletter (November 2006) there have been some major changes in the Living Witness Project to enable us to provide that focus.

We now have a group of six trustees: Alan Allport, Anne Brewer, Graham Davey, Martin Quick, Rachel Strachan and Bridget Walker. They held their first full meeting in March 2007.

Our application for charitable registration went off to the Charity Commission in April. And we are establishing a centre in Oxford Friends Meeting House. At the moment, the most likely title is: **Oxford Eco-Centre: Quakers Working for Sustainability** but this has still to be confirmed by the trustees.

We aim to obtain £60,000 in funding commitments this year to enable us to employ staff. If you haven't received an appeal leaflet to take to your meeting, please see www.livingwitness.org.uk or contact Laurie – details overleaf.

The Link Group met at Woodbrooke on 29-31 March. It agreed to hold annual gatherings at Woodbrooke, with the next on 11-13 April 2008. We also hope to hold more day and weekend events around Britain. It is up to you when and where these happen. **Please let Laurie know if you'd like a meeting in your area**, and we'll work with you to organise it.

Forthcoming Events

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

4-7 May Yearly Meeting at Friends House. QGA will have a display table and a special interest meeting to discuss the draft Climate Change Bill – time to be confirmed on QGA Website, but hopefully Saturday afternoon.

14 May Meeting to develop Quaker Response to draft Climate Change Bill. Oxford FMH, 11 to 4.

8-10 June *The Science and Politics of Climate Change*, Friendly Science conference at Woodbrooke digesting the IPCC reports.

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

7-9 Sept *Living in the end times?* Sustainability and the Quaker testimonies. Woodbrooke.

14-16 Sept *Fork to Fork: growing, cooking and eating organic food*. Woodbrooke.

27-30 Sept QGA Annual Gathering at "Barmoor", Hutton-le-Hole, North Yorkshire. Details and booking form: Pete Redwood, 41 West Bank, Scarborough, North Yorks, YO12 4DX, 01723 353640 or predwood@phoncoop.coop

Sat 29 Sept Annual QGA members' meeting at Barmoor.

2-4 Nov *Climate Change: Our Spirited Response*. Woodbrooke

Milton Keynes

Early this year we worked through the *Be the Change* study pack. These sessions were well supported with 10 -12 F/friends at each one, including some from Leighton Buzzard Meeting. We have now divided into three small groups – clusters - to focus on particular issues:

1. raising awareness
2. information and communication
3. policy and practice.

Whole group sessions will help us stay in touch with all aspects, and continue the support for action, which we have found a vital part of our meeting together.

We also went on an outing, with other interested members of Meeting, to our local recycling plant. Material to be recycled comes in from Oxford, Northampton and Cambridge as well as the local area. The Waste Education Officer was enthusiastic and knowledgeable and explained the many

challenges of recycling a city's waste. At present M K recycles 36% of its rubbish. The current target is for less than 30% of household rubbish to go to landfill. Composting is particularly important, and our shredded documents are better disposed of in the compost bin, than in the paper waste. A trial of food waste recycling is being carried out in one locality and as it has been successful, we hope it will be extended soon.

Sue George

Mount Street, Manchester

The Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly group continues. It's small but is making things happen here and there:

- Battery recycling has been arranged at Mount Street
- I floated a piece of action research on Electricity Suppliers. Have over 30 questionnaires back from Mount Street and I am going to provide a commentary for the Meeting's weekend away, Friday evening session and some material in writing ... I haven't done the analysis yet but it's clear both that only a minority have changed so far; but that some have already been inspired to make a change just by responding.
- The MM discussion on Air Travel has been reworked to spread into the PMs. Mount Street today took it on board and has asked for Social Justice Group to prepare an Exhibition with some factual and other material; this will be followed by an event on Sunday afternoon - lunch plus discussion, probably in the Autumn.
- Social Justice Group also asked Mount Street Elders to consider showing the Al Gore video after Meeting/ lunch, and this is agreed for June 17th
- MM continues its Tree Planting event with Penny Eastwood, this coming autumn for the fifth or sixth year I think.

Meanwhile, the Walk Cheerfully Group is raising the issue of what stance friends should have towards the motoring lobby. As a Media Officer, this is of concern to me as I think there are things Friends should be saying ... but it's early days and I don't know where this one will go.

I hope that gives you a flavour of what is going on ... and we are trying to get the audit of the Monthly Meeting finalised as well ... we overloaded Management Committee's structures in a relatively small space of time and communication just broke down; but it's being re-established.

Jonathan Dale

Exeter

Our Meeting House is now on 100% renewably sourced electricity from Good Energy.

The Wholefood Coop we set up after 'Be the Change' has now made its fifth order with Essential Trading in Bristol. As well as making it affordable for us to eat more organic and wholefoods, bulk buying helps those without cars. We have to watch the 'use by' dates, though, and swap goods from multi-packs before they deteriorate.

The Churches Together in Central Exeter Lenten Housegroups are discussing planet-loving lifestyles. The resource pack 'What on Earth are we doing?' has weekly themes of Consumerism, Water, Food, Transport, and Energy, and several members of Exeter Meeting are involved in running and attending housegroups.

Ella Young

Dorking

Our PM appointed a Climate Change Committee in February but the 4 of us on it are calling ourselves The Green Team!

Our remit is to arrange meetings for both Friends and the citizens of Dorking on Climate Change issues, to provide regular green tips in the Meetings monthly newsletter and to lobby the local Council in appropriate areas.

We have already arranged a presentation by a speaker from the Climate Change Speakers network in May and a talk on Climate Change and your Gardens in July.

We've discovered our Council have signed the Nottingham Declaration and are arranging a Meeting with sympathetic Lib Dem Councillors to see how we can make use of this to work with the Council to get more energy saving activities going in the local area.

Finally our wild flower meadow in the Meeting House grounds is taking shape.

Anne Brewer

For more information or to get involved in LWP, please see

www.livingwitness.org.uk

or get in touch with:

Laurie Michaelis, Friends Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW
E-mail: laurie@livingwitness.org.uk
Telephone: 01865 725 244