

Living Witness Project

Quakers for sustainability

Annual Report and Accounts

Year to 31 December 2009

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Quakers for Sustainability

Annual Report 2009

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction..... | 3 |
| Providing printed and internet resources..... | 4 |
| Developing the Quaker network..... | 5 |
| National LWP Events..... | 5 |
| Resource People..... | 5 |
| Working with Quaker bodies in Britain Yearly Meeting..... | 6 |
| QCEA Sustainable Energy Security project..... | 6 |
| Plans for the future..... | 8 |
| People and governance..... | 8 |
| Trustees..... | 8 |
| Staff..... | 9 |
| Review of finances in 2009..... | 10 |
| Report on Financial Activities..... | 11 |

Introduction

Living Witness Project (LWP) supports the development of spirit-led approaches to sustainable living among Quakers and in the wider society. Its aims are:

- 1) education on the many dimensions of the sustainability challenge,
- 2) encouraging and informing practical action for sustainability, and
- 3) deepening Quaker faith and practice as it relates to sustainable living.

In support of these aims, its main activities are:

- providing advice, study guides and resources for spiritually-grounded action, in person, in print and on the Internet
- speaking to groups and running courses and workshops
- supporting spiritual exploration and grounding, learning and action in networks of individuals and groups developing their own approaches to sustainability

Living Witness Project was initially funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (2002-2005). It built up a network of 24 Quaker groups around England and Wales. They participated in regular “link group” gatherings and experimented with activities and approaches in their meetings to develop as spiritual communities working for sustainability. The network has grown steadily and the work is now funded from a mix of sources including grants, donations, subscriptions and fees for event participation. In December 2006 we set up a charitable trust to carry out the work, with six Quaker trustees drawn from around Britain. Living Witness Project was registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales in July 2007. In 2008 it merged with Quaker Green Action, the group of British Friends concerned with our sustainability witness since 1986. In 2009 we continued to broaden the work within and beyond Britain. By the end of the year our network had grown to about 100 groups and 280 individual members.

Living Witness Project is co-ordinated and supported on a day-to-day basis by Laurie Michaelis, based at the Quaker Community in Bamford, Derbyshire. Much of the work is done by volunteers – including editing, printing and distributing our newsletter. In 2008 we established a community of volunteer Resource People who take on most of the facilitation and speaking to groups. For most of 2009 the RPs were co-ordinated by Jill Fisher, a member of Leicester Meeting. In early 2010 we appointed a new RP Co-ordinator, Jasmine Piercy, and an Administrator, Dee Stayce.

We have found that it is important for people's motivation and sense of effectiveness to bring together different kinds of action: changes in their own lives; developing a community of shared values taking action together; and engaging with the wider world of politics and markets.

Our work in 2009 sought to support these different kinds of action and fell into four main areas:

1. **Providing printed and Internet resources.**
2. **Developing our network of individual Friends and Quaker meetings.**
3. **Working with other bodies within Britain Yearly Meeting.**
4. **Working with the Quaker Council for European Affairs on its Sustainable Energy Security project.**

These are described in the following pages.

Providing printed and internet resources

Our range of publications includes newsletters, practical guidance for individuals and organisations on environmental and sustainability issues, guides for study groups, policy briefings, and occasional reports. All are available to download from our website, www.livingwitness.org.uk.

Publications in 2009 included:

- Our quarterly newsletter, *earthQuaker*, which includes project news and articles from our members and participating groups, and is edited by our clerk of Trustees, Anne Brewer. The circulation for the paper edition of *earthQuaker* is about 300. It is also distributed by e-mail to about 500 people.
- A revised and updated edition of our greenhouse footprint sheet, *Your contribution to climate change*. It is available on our website, along with a background paper explaining where the figures come from. The latest update takes account of research published in 2009 which find that CO₂ emissions embodied in trade have grown considerably in recent years.

We saw a continuing demand for advice from local Quaker meetings, especially on carrying out environmental audits. Our sheet on working out the greenhouse gas emissions from a meeting can also be used for other kinds of small organisation. Our booklet on *Carrying out an environmental audit of your meeting* particularly encourages Friends to undertake audits as a collective process, to build understanding and the sense of community in the meeting, and to make use of their business meetings in making difficult decisions.

Laurie Michaelis continued to act as environment editor/correspondent for *The Friend*, contributing articles on a number of sustainability-related themes.

Developing the Quaker network

In 2009 we continued to support and develop our Quaker network through events, publications, and responding to requests for advice and information. The network grew during the year to include about 100 Quaker groups and meetings.

National LWP Events

We held two Link Group meetings at the Bilberry Hill Centre in Rednal, Birmingham, in May and November. These events continue as our main focus for sharing our experience, spiritual roots and vision, building the LWP community, and for empowerment, learning and evaluation within the project. Twenty five Friends participated in the Link Group gathering on 22-25 May, including the late May bank holiday. Having an extra day helped build a stronger sense of community but in evaluations many Friends said it was too tiring. The Saturday was focused on climate change and Copenhagen, the Sunday on the theme of community. Resource people provided several of the sessions. There was considerable interest in and energy for initiatives related to Copenhagen.

The Link Group weekend in November focused further on the Copenhagen talks and on the contribution that could be made by Quakers who were planning to go. However the gathering found relatively little sense that Friends would be able to make a difference at the talks. There was a strong feeling that Quakers in Britain would benefit from spending more time in worship considering how we are led to act on climate change – asking ‘what God wants us to do’.

In August we organised a five day Summer School at Swarthmoor Hall in the Lake District. Fifteen Friends participated and spent much of the week developing and exploring scenarios – alternative possible futures – and the place that Quakers might have in them.

Resource People

In 2008 we established a group of volunteer Resource People (RPs) to form the core of our LWP community. Elements of the RP-based approach, which we began to implement during 2009, include:

- **RPs** who make long term commitments to work with us, in particular speaking at and facilitating events for Quaker and other groups and organisations.
- An **RP co-ordinator** responsible for RP recruitment, training and support
- **Twice-yearly RP gatherings** to share experiences and new approaches and provide mutual support.
- **A regular newsletter** circulated by the RP Co-ordinator.
- **A curriculum** of core texts and background reading for the use of RPs and others, developed by staff and RPs (still to be developed).

- **Resources** including workshop agendas and learning materials for use by RPs and others.

We expect the new programme to enable a major expansion of our capacity to work with Quakers and others around Britain.

We provided about 15 events for Quaker groups around Britain with a variety of themes and approaches (“LWP on the road”). Most of these were facilitated day or weekend workshops in response to requests from local, area and regional meetings.

Working with Quaker bodies in Britain Yearly Meeting

Within Britain Yearly Meeting our main relationships are with Woodbrooke and Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW).

In April 2008 Woodbrooke began to develop a new teaching programme on sustainable living called “Good Lives”. The programme aims to support Friends in developing practical and spiritual responses to Peak Oil and climate change, and the initial focus has been a series of courses entitled “World Without Oil”.

Until 2008 QPSW focused its environment-related work on human security issues, carrying out case studies in Bangladesh and Uganda on environment-conflict links. In 2008/2009 QPSW prepared briefings for Quakers on climate change in the run-up to the Copenhagen talks. In mid-2009 a statement on climate change was issued by Meeting for Sufferings and it was later endorsed by Britain Yearly Meeting. QPSW is developing a new programme on *Sustainability and Peace*; the new programme officer was appointed in early 2010.

Collaboration is developing among Living Witness Project, QPSW and Woodbrooke.

QCEA Sustainable Energy Security project

Living Witness Project is working with the Quaker Council for European Affairs on their project on Sustainable Energy Security. This work has four main elements:

1. Developing LWP-Europe. We have agreed to provide up to four events per year in continental Europe, potentially including sessions at yearly meetings and one or more international gathering.
2. A study on the EU Sustainable Production and Consumption Action Plan. This plan is a proposal from the European Commission for a range of policies. The study, completed in late 2009, evaluates the action plan in terms of its own objectives, and also with respect to Quaker values and priorities.

3. A study, also completed in late 2009, on the potential role of Quaker listening processes and spirituality in developing approaches to sustainable energy security.
4. Support to QCEA in developing a series of ethical consumption factsheets. These have addressed subjects including vegetarianism, solar power generation, air travel and car scrappage schemes.

Further work is being considered for 2010 and beyond.

Plans for the future

In 2010 the Trustees hope to place more emphasis on work beyond Britain Yearly Meeting. This includes offering workshops, talks and advice to non-Quaker groups. Some of our Resource People already do a considerable amount of such work.

With two new staff members, Jasmine Piercy and Dee Sayce, we hope to bring a more professional touch to our publications, leaflets and website, as well as to our volunteer management, administration and communication with our membership.

Quaker meetings continue to ask us for advice on practical, technical matters and we are beginning to develop a list of Resource People able to respond to these requests.

We expect to do more research and analysis, and generate more briefing materials, on UK and European policies related to climate change and sustainable living. This may include follow-up work with the Quaker Council for European Affairs and collaboration with the new Quaker Peace and Social Witness programme on Sustainability and Peace.

During 2010 Laurie Michaelis is acting as an “expert” for the European Economic and Social Committee, which is preparing a position paper on sustainable consumption. EESC is part of the European Union structure, bringing together representatives of employers, trade unions and NGOs to comment on EU policy.

People and governance

Trustees

Living Witness Project is a charitable trust. It has a group of six Quaker trustees who meet quarterly using Quaker Business Method. The first group of trustees were nominated by the management group and they met and signed a declaration of trust on 21 December 2006. This was revised and the current governing document is a declaration of trust dated 11 June 2007. New trustee appointments are agreed by the trustees themselves. The trustees during 2009 were:

Alan Allport, Oxford Meeting (appointed to 31 December 2009). Alan is an emeritus professor of experimental psychology in Oxford University, and was formerly Vice Principal of St Anne’s College. He convened Oxford Friends’ Group on Sustainable Living (GOSLings) for five years.

Rachel Boyd, a lifelong Friend (appointed to 31 December 2011), studied Environmental Science at the University of East Anglia and has had a varied

career including youth work and bookkeeping. She is currently studying Charity Finance and Accounting and is the Finance Worker for Zaytoun CIC.

Anne Brewer, Dorking Meeting (released May 2009). Anne was formerly membership secretary and treasurer of Quaker Green Action and was the first clerk of Trustees for Living Witness Project. Following her release as a trustee she continues to edit the LWP newsletter, earthQuaker. Anne has a chemistry background and has worked on industrial air pollution.

Graham Davey, Bedminster Meeting (appointed to 31 December 2009). He was formerly chair of Quaker Green Action and is treasurer and organiser of the summer school for the Gandhi Foundation. Graham has a background in engineering.

Martin Quick, Stroud Meeting (appointed to 31 December 2009). Martin has an engineering background, and has worked especially on energy and climate change issues. He is on the co-ordinating committee of Scientists for Global Responsibility.

Anne Wheldon, Reading Meeting (appointed to 31 December 2010). Anne is Technical Director of the Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy and was formerly a lecturer at the University of Reading, running the MSc on Renewable Energy.

Marion Winslow, Reading Meeting (appointed to 31 December 2011). Marion is a psychotherapist and counsellor. She has a particular interest in the psychological impacts of climate change the Joanna Macey approach to group work. She also runs a non-violent communication group.

The trustees appointed Graham Davey as their clerk (chair) in May 2009 following Anne Brewer's release.

Martin Quick retired as a trustee at the end of 2009 and has been replaced by Rachel Berger. Rachel attends both Bradford-upon-Avon and Warwick Meetings and works for the appropriate technology charity, Practical Action.

Staff

Laurie Michaelis. Laurie acts as secretary to the trustees. He has worked on energy, climate change and other environmental policy and education for over 25 years. Since completing his PhD in energy studies in 1986, he has worked as a policy analyst at the UK Energy Technology Support Unit, the International Energy Agency and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; he was a Lead Author or Convening Lead Author for several reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; from 1999 to 2002 he was Director of Research for the Oxford Commission on Sustainable Consumption; and since 2002 has been running the Living Witness Project.

Jill Fisher. Jill was appointed as Resource People Co-ordinator in February 2009. Jill is a member of Leicester Meeting and a life-long Quaker. At the time of her appointment she was working on her MSc in Climate Change and Sustainable Development at De Montfort University, with a particular interest in government policy on sustainable development and behavioural change around sustainability issues. She resigned but continued to provide the essential

elements of the RP Co-ordinator role when she began a PhD studentship in October 2009.

Two new staff members started work in March 2010:

Jasmine Piercy is the new RP Co-ordinator. Her background is in education and she is an associate tutor for Woodbrooke. She co-ordinates and facilitates the working retreats programme for Quaker Voluntary Action. She has volunteered with BTCV and the Groundwork Trust including tree-planting on the foothills of Pendle Hill and served as warden of the Othona Community and of Selly Oak Meeting.

Dee Sayce is the new Administrator. She lives in the Quaker Community at Bamford and has a part time job in the local school/public library. A couple of years ago she completed a Multimedia and Communications Design degree course and looks forward to using her skills to revamp the LWP website. She has a strong awareness of human environmental impacts and takes an interest in and participates in local initiatives relating to environmental and sustainable issues.

Review of finances in 2009

At the end of 2009, our balance of £20,000 represented roughly ten months' operating costs, a level of reserve that trustees aim to sustain and increase in the long term towards eleven months.

Our main grant donors in 2008 were the Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation and the Ian Mactaggart Trust, with total grants amounting to £6,000. Donations and subscriptions from meetings and individuals provided a further £7,000, and fees for event participation a further £6,000. Meetings are also increasingly making payments to cover our staff costs when we provide facilitated events.

Staff salaries and contract staff formed the largest part (nearly 70%) of our expenditure, the second largest item (about 17%) being accommodation and catering for events. However, participant fees more than covered the latter cost.

We are confident of sustaining funding for our current level of activity, and in 2010 a high priority will be to secure income to enable us to expand, strengthen and deepen our work.

Summary of Financial Activities 2009 Payments and Receipts

| | 2008 total | 2009 total | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| RECEIPTS | | | | | | |
| Fees for events | 5,870.20 | 4,507.45 | 528.65 | 1,485.00 | 1,627.50 | 866.30 |
| Sales of publications | 476.72 | 102.93 | 10.00 | 45.24 | 17.00 | 30.69 |
| Contributions from Meetings | 4,362.78 | 3,954.95 | 102.00 | 855.90 | 1,387.07 | 1,609.98 |
| Donations from Friends | 2,073.06 | 1,646.15 | 437.10 | 482.05 | 129.00 | 598.00 |
| Individual membership fees | 695.00 | 1,179.00 | 135.00 | 341.00 | 120.00 | 583.00 |
| Consultancy fees | 0.00 | 3,375.00 | 3,375.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Grants | 16,000.00 | 6,000.00 | 5,000.00 | 1,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Bank interest | 171.39 | 20.86 | 4.65 | 5.68 | 5.66 | 4.87 |
| TOTAL | 29,649.15 | 20,786.34 | 9,592.40 | 4,214.87 | 3,286.23 | 3,692.84 |
| PAYMENTS | | | | | | |
| Salaries & NI | 14,832.31 | 10,580.17 | 2,652.03 | 2,698.62 | 2,537.21 | 2,692.31 |
| Recruitment | 0.00 | 181.10 | 181.10 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Fees for contract work | 864.10 | 3,114.42 | 200.00 | 918.78 | 1,135.50 | 860.14 |
| Office rent & electricity | 1,750.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Telephone, IT services | 243.98 | 235.49 | 0.00 | 140.93 | 94.56 | 0.00 |
| Equipment (incl. literature & software) | 118.21 | 8.00 | 0.00 | 8.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Stationery | 280.81 | 148.58 | 0.00 | 69.32 | 79.26 | 0.00 |
| Printing, publicity & postage | 980.18 | 841.50 | 0.00 | 297.01 | 234.52 | 309.97 |
| Staff travel | 777.70 | 1,073.10 | 169.70 | 417.95 | 435.50 | 49.95 |
| Staff training | 81.20 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Trustees expenses | 352.23 | 136.80 | 24.75 | 39.60 | 15.00 | 57.45 |
| Event venues, catering | 5,138.19 | 3,325.45 | 52.48 | 1,423.45 | 277.96 | 1,571.56 |
| Insurance | 403.28 | 515.54 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 515.54 |
| Misc & contingencies | 556.67 | 10.00 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| TOTAL | 26,378.86 | 20,170.15 | 3,280.06 | 6,023.66 | 4,809.51 | 6,056.92 |
| Excess receipts over payments | 3,270.29 | 616.19 | 6,312.34 | -1,808.79 | -1,523.28 | -2,364.08 |
| Balance at start of Quarter | 9,261.40 | 12,485.29 | 12,485.29 | 18,797.63 | 16,988.84 | 15,465.56 |
| Closing Fund balance | 12,531.69 | 13,101.48 | 18,797.63 | 16,988.84 | 15,465.56 | 13,101.48 |
| Balance in LWP Co-operative Bank Account | 10,731.69 | 13101.48 | | | | |
| QGA Triodos Account Plus creditors minus debtors (unrepresented cheques, unpaid invoices) | 7,281.40 | 7,385.97 | | | | |
| | 1,800.00 | - | | | | |
| Total | 18,013.09 | 20,487.45 | | | | |