

Overseers Report 2017 to Friargate Local Meeting for Business

Appointed Overseers are responsible for the more practical aspects of pastoral care, however each one of us in Friargate plays a part in the creation of a caring, loving Quaker community. We are reminded in Quaker Faith and Practice, "Every conversation with another Friend, every business meeting, every discussion group, and every meeting for worship can increase our loving and caring and our knowledge of each other."(QFP 12.01)

Overseers serving in 2017 were as follows: Ruth Corry, Chris Hughes, Ian Goodwill, Ros Batchelor, Sylvia Carter, Richard Safhill, Janet Dean- Knight, Bone Jones, Kathy Bailey, Chris Love, Jo Reilly, Camilla Wimberley, Alison Ralph and Cathy Holman. We were an established group of overseers and it was lovely to welcome our new member Camilla in 2017. Cathy Holman co-convened with Alison Ralph for the first 6 months and then with Chris Love for the remainder of the year. In addition, we were assisted by Richard Safhill, who will take over co-convening with Chris Love in 2018.

Overseers met monthly (apart from August) at Friargate and two of our meetings were joint with Elders. These meetings, in March and November, were a valuable time to talk and get to know one another in things that are eternal. In March we looked at our vision for Friargate focusing on:

- How we welcome newcomers,
- How we see Meeting developing and
- How we nurture and enhance the spiritual heart of our Quaker community.

In November we watched together a recording of Tim Gee's lecture on "Movement Building" which was followed by a thoughtful and insightful discussion.

We value all the joint working we do with Elders, such as holding Meeting for Worship at Lamel Beeches and in friend's homes and assisting with funerals, memorial meetings and weddings. Together with Elders we developed the processes and a flow chart for "what to do following the death of a Friend".

Overseers were involved in the two Area Meeting Overseers and Elders meetings in April at Thirsk and October at Acomb and gained much from these. Two overseers attended the Overseers Course at Woodbrooke in 2017 and shared their experience with us.

During our meetings throughout the year Overseers worked together managing the routine tasks of oversight: keeping the list up to date, ensuring every member and attender at Friargate has an overseer, welcoming each Sunday at Friargate Meeting for Worship and being aware of newcomers, ensuring a presence at Lamel Beeches Meeting, the pastoral care of those on our list and sharing and supporting one another to manage this. Some of the overseers organised tea/coffee "get togethers" for those they oversee, others encouraged attendance at courses or helped organise applications for financial support and all tried to be available when needed.

Our other work during 2017 included: a coffee and cake welcoming for newcomers in July, the organisation of badges for overseers welcoming on

the door, the new Overseers photo board (many thanks to Barbara Webb and Simon Palmour for their help with this) and completing the mental health survey for Friends House to name but a few. We spent time and energy working on our inactive members list and ensuring that our list of members and Attenders is as up to date as possible. We are grateful to a small working group who helped us do this work with discernment, as this is an issue that needs to be dealt with sensitively. In addition we worked to ensure the Friargate list was accurate for inclusion in the Quakers in Yorkshire list that is being published this year

We spent time in our Meetings getting to know one another looking at topics such as “what is God to me”, “how do we welcome newcomers”, “how do we uphold Quaker discipline in our Overseers meeting?” and what does “the Light mean for me”. In an introductory exercise we even described our self as a sweet to our fellow Overseers, as we chose a sweet to eat; so we had fun too! Our December meeting was shorter on business and longer on fun, with a shared supper and a game organised by Ruth Corry, where the winner had to do the washing up.

Its no easy task being a group of people responsible for oversight in a Meeting as large as Friargate but we do not do this alone but within a caring community with our Elders as partners and it is rewarding work.

With sadness and thanks we said goodbye to Chris Hughes, Ruth Corry and Alison Ralph at the end of 2017: we are grateful for their service.

Cathy Holman
08.01.18