

## **Children and Young People's Committee Report 2018**

*Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring. Remember that the meeting as a whole shares a responsibility for every child in its care.*

*From A&Q 19*

Our year started with a new convenor – Bronwen Gray – and saying goodbye to our previous convenor – Chris Holman. Chris had steered us through the previous six years and we are very grateful for his steadfast commitment to our work.

There were other comings and goings amongst our group, and we were delighted to welcome a new family, and some occasional visitors. We missed some families that are no longer attending, or only able to attend sporadically.

We have a noticeably larger group of very young children and have appreciated having volunteers regularly providing a crèche, organised and supported by Madeleine Kay. We rejoice in the number of younger children and have enjoyed starting to build relationships with them. We note that some of the older children have been attending less often and realise that an all-age group may not be so attractive for them. This is something we are changing in 2019, and have recently started making the crèche a more distinct group so that they older group can do more age-appropriate activities.

We worked hard in 2018 to provide sessions that were structured and could contain the differing needs of the children in our care. This has at times not been easy but we rose to the challenges and as a result have given a lot more careful thought to how we plan our sessions. We covered a range of themes, including stories, animals and the natural world. We appreciated a visit from a trainee guide dog to one of our sessions.

In 2018 we updated our leaflet for parents entitled 'Bringing children to Quaker meeting'. We also brought a series of cloth bags back into use, containing a soft toy and picture book for very young children's use in meeting. These now hang on pegs in the anteroom adjacent to the main meeting room.

On a practical level, we gave thought in 2018 to changes we would like to see in Fox Room and passed these on to the relevant committee. We are pleased to hear that changes will be made in April and hope that they will enhance our children's experience of the meeting. We under spent on our budget during 2018 but are glad to have the same budget for 2019 and plan to spend money on refreshing our resources following the upgrade to the room. Our main

spend during 2018 was on some books for our children's library, following a thorough sort-out when a substantial quantity of dated books were given away.

Our children's group was involved in making 'testimony-themed' decorations for the meeting house during December. We appreciated this involvement in a Meeting initiative. Twice during 2018 the children came into the meeting at 11.15 am and offered a semi-programmed time of shared worship. For harvest one of our children read a story and we shared apple pieces together. At Christmas we hung paper doves, hearts and candles on strings hung in the meeting room and together sang a song of peace, love and hope. We look forward to sharing more worship of this nature during 2019 and being creative about nurturing and building our community.

*Bronwen Gray, Convenor, March 2018*