

Report to York Area Meeting

Name of course	Quaker chaplain's retreat and an extra couple of days for some time to myself.
Date and place of course	1 st -3 rd March 2017 at Woodbrooke.
Your name	Helen Warwick
Your Meeting	Thirsk
Why did you apply?	I have a retreat for myself each year. I work at Holy Rood House in Thirsk, giving out to many, and a retreat space is important to me and encouraged at Holy Rood. This was a good way to meet other Quaker chaplains as well as have time to reflect.
Who ran the course?	2 Quaker Chaplain's from York meeting.
What was its purpose?	To allow for rest, discussion, support and meeting others. My own retreat was to reflect and listen.
How was it structured?	The retreat had input from the course leaders and also space for our own retreat. The leaders had tables filled with some suggestions to help with our reflections, from quotes, to pictures, to play materials.
What did you learn?	I had an interesting experience as my sister had some terrible news the Monday before I came to Woodbrooke so I was comforting her. She came with me to Woodbrooke and we had our retreat together. As I was up in the night with her we focused on activities that were gentle and nurturing such as colouring, jigsaws and helpful podcasts. We made one corner of the room a prayer corner filling it with art we created and helpful quotes. We both found that Woodbrooke provided a wonderful restorative space. The daily quotes seemed very relevant. The silences were a holding place for pain and tears. Fellow Quakers were supportive and did not intrude, but we were often in conversations that were helpful. I am still reflecting on what I learnt as it was a very different retreat from what I expected. Coming alongside a loved one in their pain in a retreat setting has given me a special experience, one that feels very valuable.
What can the Area Meeting learn?	I thought I was going to have to cancel my retreat at one point, but going ahead and bringing with me my sister (who has never experienced Quaker

	<p>worship) was the right thing to do. We have both deepened our relationship with each other and God. In one of the Quaker worship times I had a sense of it being a healing balm to the wound my sister was carrying. The following Sunday I shared that the worship times seem to have a sense of anointing – an anointing from God and an anointing that we bring to one another in the silence.</p>
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