

Friargate Overseers' report to Local Meeting February 6th 2017

In Friargate Local meeting, the following Friends worked together as Overseers in 2016: Kathy Bailey, Ros Batchelor, Sylvia Carter, Ruth Corry, Janet Dean, Cathy Holman (co-convener), Chris Hughes, Ian Goodwill, Bone Jones (co-convener), Chris Love, Alison Ralph, Jo Reilly, Richard Saffhill, Huw Still

We are reminded when considering caring for one another as Quakers that this is not the sole responsibility of appointed Overseers. Quaker Faith and Practice 12.18 says *'Nor would we wish to limit the performance of these duties to those who occupy such stations: we are all to watch over one another for good and to be mutually interested one for another, being united together as lively stones in the spiritual building of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone.'* (London Yearly Meeting 1851.)

Friargate Overseers met 11 times during 2016 and continue to work to ensure Friargate Meeting is a welcoming safe and sustaining environment for all newcomers, attenders and members.

Special efforts have been made to ensure Overseers are conspicuous to all at Meeting for Worship by continuing the practice of welcoming all at the main doors to the Meeting House each Sunday throughout the year. In addition two special events were organised: a 'Postcode Sunday' on the 12th June during which people living in the same areas of York were encouraged to meet each other after meeting, and a soup and cake lunch on 20th November where a shared lunch was enjoyed.

We continue to provide envelopes of useful introductory information for newcomers. We also keep a box folder of resources useful to Overseers in the Fox Room.

Overseers have been actively involved with supporting individuals living at Lamel Beeches and other care locations by personal visits, the distribution of our monthly newsletter Quakevine and attending regular Meetings for Worship at Lamel Beeches. In addition Overseers, with Elders, have held Meetings for Worship in a small number of Friends' homes.

We have learnt about the 'Boom Box' which can be bought from York Blind and Partially Sighted Society and which is useful for playing audio files of Quakevine (and other materials) to people who can no longer read.

Considerable time and effort at each meeting is paid to ensuring that the List of Members and Attenders at Friargate is up to date and complies with the Data Protection Act. Attenders and new members have been allocated Overseers and contact details updated as necessary.

We also attempt each month to review developments in people's lives: children's achievements; illnesses; comings and goings; doing our best to respect each person's need for confidentiality and our shared responsibility to care for each other.

A major topic for the year is contacting the large number (over 40) of Inactive Friends who are associated with Friargate Meeting. About half live in the area, others have moved to other parts of the country, but when last contacted wished still to be associated with Friargate. We have emailed or written letters to all and received replies from about a quarter. We anticipate that this matter will continue to occupy some of our time in 2017.

Other matters we have considered include making Friargate Meeting House more Dementia Friendly and ensuring that we are aware of the most recent guidance for Safeguarding Adults by hearing from the Area Meeting Safeguarding Co-ordinators. We were reminded that people have a right to make unwise decisions and central to this matter is the capacity of the person to make decisions.

We have liaised with Nominations Committee over the recruitment of new Overseers and updated

the Induction Pack for Overseers.

Friargate Overseers met with Area Meeting Elders and Overseers and we also have considered guidance for First Aid in Meeting for Worship produced by Friargate Elders.

In June we agreed to give all Friargate young people who reach the age of 16 a copy of 'Living Our Beliefs, advices and queries for young people', a book developed by our Friend Graham Ralph.

Over the year we have distributed our modest budget (£700) with care to ensure people can attend Quaker events, courses and other occasions.

One of the highlights of Overseers' meetings has been the wide ranging variety of introductory activities we do early on in each meeting. These provide opportunities to know each other more deeply and to reflect on all aspects of life at Friargate.

In May, we were encouraged to think about what we as individuals think we do well and what opportunities there may be for us to become involved with improving life at Friargate. At the risk of appearing self satisfied here is a summary:

- We loved: the diversity of Friargate Meeting and its friendliness, fellowship and inclusivity;
- the support we give to friends having a difficult time in a gentle way;
- the welcome we give newcomers;
- the work we do and the fun we have with the children who come to meeting;
- the changes to the building, and our staff, who are a great asset.

Some of the opportunities for improvement identified included:

- more facilities for children outside;
- a formalised system for offering practical help;
- space and time to discuss bigger issues for Friends;
- finding ways to reach all types of people from all walks of life;
- and how might we become more involved with teenagers and young children.

We hope this report presents the meeting with a clear account of the main topics that Overseers have considered and the tasks we have accomplished during 2016. We are all aware that our job is challenging and that each one of us knows there is more we could do, both individually and collectively.

Bone Jones on behalf of Overseers
5/2/2017