

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

Part 2

THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

SEAQM Study Day 8/2/20

Eastbourne Meeting House

Led by Lesley Grahame from QPSW

After a short period of silent worship, the workshop began with brief personal introductions from the 21 Friends present and the work done by QPSW.

We were then shown a power point presentation (prepared by Olivia Hanks, programme manager for the QPSW economics and sustainability team) entitled *Quakers and Climate Action: An Introduction*. Interspersed with the slides (wording shown in **bold**) from this, Lesley posed thought-provoking questions and provided pertinent information points.

One of the main ideas from the beginning of the power point presentation was the statement:

‘The climate crisis affects us all... But it does not affect us all equally.’

Climate justice means:

- **we must acknowledge that climate breakdown is a result of our unjust global economic system**
- **rich nations must do the most to tackle the crisis**
- **we must not only cut greenhouse gas emissions, but build more just economies – locally, nationally and globally**
- **the rights and voices of poor and marginalised people must come first in the transition to zero carbon.**

Factors that affect our ability to deal with the impacts of the climate crisis:

- **Wealth**
- **Where we live**
- **Support networks – family, community**
- **Collective voice/ability to influence decision making**
- **Position in society – part of a dominant or marginalised group**

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

- **Other demands on our attention (work, caring, etc)**
- **Security – financial, social, emotional**
- **Education**

Q. Why are the poorest hit first?

- They cannot afford to move and leave adverse conditions (eg flooding)
- The poorest are mainly subsistence farmers. No crops = no food or ability to earn a living
- Are more likely to live on small islands vulnerable to flooding and more exposed to hurricane force winds
- Poorer health and lower immune system function mean the poorest among us are less able to cope when disease or epidemics strike
- Less able to cope with extreme heat
- Are more likely to live near busy roads or factories where air quality is a major issue

The climate crisis is a crisis of inequality:

- **The richest 10% globally (that almost certainly includes everyone in this room) are responsible for almost 50% of emissions.**
- **Someone in the richest one percent of the world's population uses 175 times more carbon on average than someone from the bottom 10 percent. (Oxfam, 2015)**
- **Emissions are higher in countries where wealth is concentrated in fewer hands.**
- **To tackle climate change, we must challenge extreme wealth.**

Q. Why do we have to challenge extreme wealth?

- The wealthy are more likely to live in the countryside away from pollution etc and do not witness extreme poverty

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

- Most likely belonging to people in power insulated from the poorest in society who make ill-informed decisions
- They own bigger houses and have a bigger carbon footprint (higher use of electricity and more cars per family).
- More money to invest in making a profit rather than helping those who need it the most
- In a more equal society, there is much less ‘wanting to keep up with the Jones’s’ and therefore buying unnecessary things ceases to be so attractive
- Sense of common interest reduces the need for the point above
- Amazon/Google/Facebook should pay more tax on their huge income which should be put to specific use
- Consumerism leads to the production of greater waste because greater aspiration leads to more throwing away and buying new rather than recycling or re-using (an ‘extractivist economy’)
- Wearing/buying second-hand clothes is one small thing that would help in all sorts of ways
- Expert advice has been ignored by governments and the undermining of academia is the first step on the way to fascism
- Danger of alienation with extreme views on both left and right
- All this acts as a distraction from the climate emergency

What QPSW is calling for...

- **Policy changes in line with the UK’s new net-zero emissions target and the Paris agreement**
- **A ‘just transition’ approach which addresses inequality and demonstrates solidarity with the global South**

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

As a starting point:

- **End fossil fuel subsidies including tax breaks, in the UK and overseas**
- **Support wind and solar power through subsidies and planning policy**
- **End airport expansion and invest in buses, walking and cycling**
- **Reinstate the zero carbon homes standard and extend this to older homes.**

Information point:

- QPSW have met with various government departments regarding many climate-related issues
- Retro-fitting existing homes to become zero carbon as well as building carbon zero new homes
- The formation of a National Climate Service (a bit like the NHS) able to give advice and practical help on greener transport systems, housing and food

Preparing for COP26

- **This year's UN climate negotiations (26th Conference of the Parties, or COP26) are taking place in Glasgow in November**
- **Quaker UN Office already has official observer status, and Britain Yearly Meeting has applied for this**
- **Large mobilisation expected during the event Scottish Quakers working to support delegates and activists from the global South**
- **Event planned for Friends House Resources to support Friends' advocacy and activism**

Information point:

- Events at Friends House bringing Friends together
- Plans for Area Meetings to get together

What Quakers are doing...

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

- **No Faith in Fracking** (e.g. monthly vigils at Preston New Road fracking site with other faith traditions).
- **Divestment from fossil fuels**
- **School strikes**
- **Extinction Rebellion**
- **Local authority climate plans**
- **Talking to MPs** (many MPs not knowledgeable on climate; working with Hope for the Future on how to lobby your MP).
- **Breaking the silence**
- **Building the alternative – New Economy Project** (available as a series of booklets)

Q. What can be done?

- ‘Living Witness’ calculator can be used for individuals and Meeting Houses
- Energy efficiency needs to be higher on the agenda
- Perceptions need to change and government subsidies altered to fit greener considerations
- QPSW is very keen to help people move from reflection to activation

Q. Has your local council declared a climate emergency?

- Councils declare a climate emergency and then do nothing – e.g. they still fell trees to build houses
- Cuts in government funding to local councils hamper work on tackling climate change
- Councils seem to want to support work on mitigating climate change but only if it doesn’t cost them anything!
- Disinvesting in fossil fuels is difficult for local councils as they are obliged to get the best ‘deal’ for their council-tax payers

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

- There is an EcoAction network in Hastings which seems to be working well
- Q. Should all AMs and LMs be with the same electricity supplier?
A. BYM has a scheme with Good Energy which could be applied to all LM houses. One of the SEAM Trustees is reporting on this in the April Trustees meeting

After lunch, we looked at three considerations for action, dividing into groups to discuss:

1. Political action
2. Personal action
3. Direct (non-violent) action

before coming back together and sharing our thoughts on the spectrum of individual and communal action, looking at the ‘dream’ action, the experience of action, the barriers to action and the how to seek the support that might allow you to take the action you would like.

Political action

- Write to your MP/the Prime Minister/Environment minister/local councillors
- Badger local political parties; become a member if necessary
- Local councillors can be influenced and if they are receptive, it gives an indication of who people should vote for
- Opposition MPs as they want to oppose the government of the day
- Questions can be effective (“What are you going to do when...?”)

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

- Friends of the Earth have produced a leaflet about the questions to ask
- People's Assemblies (“What are your priorities ecologically?”)
- Every small thing can make a difference (e.g. pushing for a new local cycle path)
- Improvement in rural bus services (to provide the necessary subsidies)
- The creation of a sustainable integrated community travel system
- Encourage the use of solar panels/wind/tide power

Personal action

- Reduce (don't buy it!), share, re-use, re-purpose, repair, recycle
- Strengthening connections/networking
- Reduce car journeys
- Cycle or use public transport whenever practicable
- Use biodegradable washing up liquid/washing powder/compost vegetable matter etc
- Search out trusted information (‘Ecosia’ is an environmentally friendly alternative internet search engine to Google) as to the best way to reduce the ‘bad’ and increase the ‘good’

Direct Action

- Contact XR to find out what they do to dramatise their cause, how they organise themselves
- Their three demands are: 1. People's Assembly 2. Tell the truth 3. Act now
- Join XR if you feel that is for you

Next Steps

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

- Speed and scale up your response and ask where to you want to get to?

Outcome

- Get local councillors to transform their approach to the climate emergency (e.g. Norfolk where it is embedded across all their activities)
- Politicians have to acknowledge the climate emergency in reality not just pay lip-service to it
- Climate should be the number one priority in all future elections
- Influential landowners and the wealthy should have a different investment strategy that supports a just transition to a greener economy
- The carbon measurement system needs to be re-calibrated
- Flourishing humanity should be at the centre of the just transition to a greener economy
- Climate policy should run through all government departments, local and national
- Local councils should have an environmental strategy
- Each AM should have a sustainability group
- It was suggested during discussions at the end of the session that SEAM should consider setting up a sub-committee to look at how we as an AM are dealing with the Climate Emergency.

After a short period of silence, the Study Day came to an end.

Many thanks to Eastbourne LM for hosting this event and to Lesley Grahame for informative and challenging sessions.

Sally Aviss, Rye LM

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

For further information, please contact the QPSW Economics & Sustainability team:

Olivia Hanks, Programme Manager.

020 7663 1055 or oliviah@quaker.org.uk.

Works on policy & advocacy, general programme oversight.

Rebecca Woo, Campaigns & Advocacy Coordinator.

020 7663 1107 or rebeccaw@quaker.org.uk.

Works on workshop bookings, requests for resources, support with MP/local authority engagement, general enquiries.

Chris Walker, Programme Manager.

020 7663 1052 or chrisw@quaker.org.uk.

Works on: COP26, interfaith engagement.

Oonagh Ryder, Activism Support Coordinator.

020 7663 1046 or oonaghr@quaker.org.uk.

Works on sustainability & new economy grants, support for local climate/economic justice projects, general support for Quaker activists.

www.quaker.org.uk

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

SEAQM FRIENDS' NEWS IN BRIEF

Some news from Rye LM to start the ball rolling...

Actor-in-residence and Clerk of Rye LM, Martin Wimbush, has recently had a leading role in the play *The Maestro's Last Words* at the OSO Arts Centre in Barnes, London, as well as appearing in an episode of *Call the Midwife* (as a very learned judge) and *The Crown* (as Margaret's physician). Martin is also to be seen in an advert with Usain Bolt. Watch this space for further roles!

Musicians-in-residence Sally and Peter Aviss (also of Rye LM and the latter being AM Clerk, of course) have recently returned from the annual Quaker Chamber Music and Choral Weekend organised by Quaker Music Network (of which they are both committee members and Sally is Co-Clerk). The venues alternate between the north and south of the country to enable F(f)riends from both locations to take part. This time it was held at High Leigh, a Christian Conference Centre in Hertfordshire. Quaker music-making is always incredibly special and this course was no exception!

If any budding singers or experienced instrumentalists wish to take part in future courses, please ask either Peter or Sally at the next AM and we can provide details...

And, finally, for future editions of *Quiet Ways*, please send in your articles, Ffriends News in Brief, and anything else you may wish to submit for publication, to the Editor (sally.aviss@btinternet.com) who would be delighted to hear from you!

Dates for your diary: [N.B. these events may be subject to cancellation because of COVID-19 guidelines, so please check beforehand that they are still taking place]

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

Regional Meeting: Eastbourne FMH, Saturday, 28th March 10.30 – 16.00
Simpler Meetings – Practicalities and Philosophy led by Jonathan Carmichael and Carrie Comfort.

Next Area Meeting: Lewes FMH, Saturday, 16th May. Elders and Overseers 09:30 – 10.30. Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs 10:45 until 13:00.

New Insights for Changing Times: A day of exploration and discussion on Thursday 30th April at Bexhill FMH, 10.30 – 4.30pm. To book a place, please contact Marie Miller 01424 214327. Please bring your own packed lunch.

Spiritual Peace-making and Quaker Approach to Mental Health are events taking place in April. More details from Alex Francis.

Britain Yearly Gathering 1 – 7 August 2020. Booking is now open for BYG, and funds are available if a bursary is needed for Friends and Attenders.

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION

Sussex East Area Meeting: Local Meetings for Worship

| | | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Bexhill LM | Sundays at 10.45am | 15a Albert Road Bexhill-on-Sea TN40 1DG |
| Eastbourne LM | Sundays at 10.30am | 17 Wish Road Eastbourne BN21 4 NX |
| Hastings LM | Sundays at 10.30am | 5 South Terrace Hastings TN34 1SA |
| Herstmonceux LM | 10.45am on 1 st and 3 rd Sundays of the month only | West End, Herstmonceux BN27 4 NR |
| Lewes LM | Sundays at 10.30am and Wednesdays at 12.30am | Friars' Walk Lewes BN7 2LE |
| Polegate LM | Sundays at 10.45am and 2 nd and 4 th Wednesdays of the month at 3.30pm | Bernhard Baron Cottage Homes Lewes Road Polegate BN26 5HB |
| Rye LM | Sundays at 10.30am | Tilling Green Community Centre Mason Road Rye TN31 7BE |
| Seaford LM | Sundays at 10.30am | The Little Theatre 4 Steyne Road Seaford BN25 1EU |
| Uckfield LM | Sundays at 10.30am | The Luxford Centre Library Way Uckfield TN22 1AR |

QUIET WAYS

SPRING 2020 EDITION