

Lewes Quaker Meeting Newsletter

November 2023

“True worship may be experienced at any time; in any place - alone on the hills or in the busy daily life - we may find God, in whom we live and move and have our being. But this individual experience is



not sufficient, and in a meeting held in the Spirit there is a giving and receiving between its members, one helping another with or without words. So there may come a wider vision and a deeper experience.”

Quaker faith & practice 2.11

Sunday morning Meetings for Worship

10:30 a.m. start. A blended meeting, in person at the Meeting House and on Zoom. Zoom link available from the clerks on request; it is the same week to week.

Please do not enter any part of the meeting house apart from the meeting room, until building works are complete. There is a port-a-loo in the garden. ~ Two parking spaces are available on Sundays. Please give priority to those with mobility difficulties.

Wednesday lunchtime Meetings for Worship

At The Open Door, 32 Church Twitten, Lewes. 12:30 p.m. Enter through the door marked “Thebes” and up the stairs to the first floor meeting room. Please bring your own drinks / refreshments. All are welcome.

Children’s Meeting

... is held on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, at The Open Door (32 Church Twitten). Start time 10:30 a.m. Children and young people join Friends at the meeting house for the last five minutes of meeting for worship. Please email Sara at saralucytodd@yahoo.co.uk for details.

Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs (Business Meeting):

Sunday, 5th November - 12:30 p.m. at the meeting house. Please bring your own lunch and drinks, as the kitchen is not open. The agenda will include updates from the Finance & Property Hub and the business plan working group. ~ Business meetings are held on the first Sunday in each month, in the afternoon after meeting for worship. All Friends are welcome, but attenders should speak to a clerk beforehand if they plan to attend.



Lewes Friends **gather at The Depot** on Friday mornings at 10:30 a.m. for coffee and a chat. No need to book; just turn up and join in fellowship

with Friends.

Area Meeting will be held on Saturday, 18 November, 10 a.m. - 12 noon on Zoom. All Friends are welcome to attend and the agenda and a Zoom link will be circulated in advance of the meeting.

Christ Church Thinktank: 15 November, 7.30 - 9 pm. Cllr Janet Baah: “**Adult and adolescent education in Ghana**” Janet is a policy advisor, consultant, researcher, politician, campaigner, trainer and trustee. She holds a PhD in Education & Development from the University of Sussex. In 2018, she became the first ethnic minority mayor of Lewes. Her talk will address the importance of empowering young people, especially girls, to build a more equitable and prosperous society. Ghana is a case study where UNICEF and other partners have implemented initiatives to improve access to education. Janet will speak about best practice in successful development projects. ~ Thinktanks are held in person at Christ Church and simultaneously on Zoom. Please email David Smith if you wish to attend: j.d.smith@sussex.ac.uk.

Woodbrooke, the Quaker Study Centre, provides a number of **online meetings for worship** each week, throughout the week. These are freely available for anyone to join. For the link, and details, visit this web page: [Worship - Woodbrooke](#) . All are welcome.



You are cordially invited . . .

To join us for tea, coffee, cakes and more on Saturday, 25 November, at 6 Southover High Street, Lewes. Drop in any time between 10 a.m.

and 1pm. There will be a chance to stock up on unusual Christmas presents at our gift stall, which includes African and other crafts. We are fundraising for two African projects close to our hearts:

Money for Madagascar which funds many, often small, projects managed by local development partners in areas such as conservation, sustainable development, and supporting vulnerable children and young people.

Green Olive Trust which provides bursaries for orphans and other vulnerable young people from a rural area of Kakamega district in Western Kenya, to attend high school and university.

Offers of cakes or items for the gift stall are welcome. Please contact Anna or Bronwyn to arrange delivery or collection on 24 November: Anna Milner-Gulland mgsouthover@gmail.com or Bronwyn Harwood bronharwood@yahoo.co.uk. We hope to see you there, Friends!

The **Good Cause** for November is **Toilet Twinning with Tear Fund**, chosen by Needlemakers / Wealden Circle.

When we move back into our Meeting House we shall have three new toilets, including one that's especially accessible - aren't we lucky! Toilet Twinning is a project run by Tear Fund to ensure people have access to clean water, learn about the importance of building and maintaining a latrine, and learn about hygiene such as hand-washing. Water, sanitation and hygiene education work together to prevent the spread of disease. Children are healthier, and able to go to school; parents are well enough to work their land and grow enough food to feed their family. With better health, men and women discover the potential that lies within them to bring transformation.

For each £60 we raise we can twin one of our toilets. Tear Fund will send a certificate which includes a photograph of the overseas toilet and GPS coordinates so we can look up its location on Google Maps. For this appeal, please bring cash to Meeting for Worship. Or, if you'd like to

twin your own toilet, go to [TOILET TWINNING LINK](#)

Friends who serve the meeting . . .



Lewes Meeting could not function without the

ongoing support, volunteer service and prayerful upholding of all members of our community.

If you would like to participate more actively in the life of the meeting, please speak to your circle convenor or a member of the Pastoral Care & Eldership Team (PaCET), who would be happy to discuss options with you.

In addition, Nominations Committee would be delighted to hear from any Friend with website editing or project management skills, experience working in or helping to run a community centre (or similar), or an interest in serving as a Trustee. If you have free time, relevant skills and a leading to serve, please speak to the convenor of Nominations.

Contact details are listed on the final page of this newsletter.

Welfare Benefits Helpline

Did you know that each year about £2.4 billion of Pension Credit and Housing Benefit goes unclaimed by older people? This statistic (provided by Age UK, July 2022) indicates how many people might want to look again at what benefits or additional benefits they are entitled to, particularly in the current cost of living crisis. ~ The Welfare Benefits Helpline in East Sussex can be reached on telephone 0333 3440681 or by emailing benefitseastsussex@harcuk.com. It

offers free, confidential advice and support to those struggling to pay bills, who need help with benefit issues, or are concerned about growing debt. Telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. You or someone you know might appreciate this support, so please feel free to circulate this information widely.



Asylum and Refugee Network - QARN

How to talk to your MP about asylum issues: Quaker Asylum & Refugee Network (QARN) has produced a leaflet that Friends can use to reach out to MPs and party candidates on immigration issues. It highlights positive policies that could be adopted to create a fairer, more humane and supportive environment. More information can be found on the QARN website: [QARN Leaflets: Download them here](#)

QARN works to change the way refugees and asylum seekers are treated, with justice and compassion as the guiding principles. It assists Britain Yearly Meeting to work effectively for justice and compassion in the UK asylum and immigration system.

Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity?

If you have an hour or two to spare each week, you might want to help **Lewes Community Fridge** reduce food waste by sharing fresh produce with the people of Lewes. You could assist in running the Fridge on a Saturday morning (1-2 hours) or, if you have a car, you could collect surplus food from supermarkets on Friday evenings. If you would like to help, just drop in to the Community Fridge on Saturday about 11 a.m. for a chat or email lewescommunityfridge@gmail.com. Lewes Community Fridge is located at 2 Fisher Street, Lewes.



Lewes Meeting has a **WhatsApp group** that you can join. This is an informal, friendly, supportive social media group that operates sporadically but is a

good addition to our communication channels. WhatsApp is a messaging app that runs on smart phones and you can download it from your App Store for free. You can send messages to the group and share photos. No commitment to the group is required, you can “mute” the conversation or leave the group easily. We’ve been active for a few years now and it has been a positive addition, with the sharing of uplifting messages, notices of events, etc. If you would like to join the group, please contact Theresa on 07747 800609 with your phone number.



Continuing Explorers

This group is for anyone new or relatively new to Quakers,

and aims to answer questions and share experiences of Quaker faith and worship. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 15 November, at 7.15pm at Maggie Pollard’s house, the subject being how Britain Yearly Meeting works to advance Quaker testimonies, and how we as individuals respond to the testimonies. If you plan to attend, please let John Ashcroft know by emailing johnashcroft57@gmail.com.

“**Quiet Ways**”: Contributions to the Sussex East Area Meeting newsletter are welcome at any time. Please email any items of interest to: editorquietways@gmail.com

***“One piece of ministry that we felt spoke to our theme was Gandhi’s quote ... ‘be the change you wish to see in the world’.* “**

- from *Junior Gathering Epistle 2023*

Click here to read the whole Junior Gathering Epistle: [JG-Epistle-2023](#)

Report from Junior Gathering

This summer, my sister Charlotte (14) and I attended Quaker Junior Gathering for 11-14 year-olds. From 19th - 26th August we took part in a fun week of activities all based around the theme “Quakers in the past and present from around the world”. This included speaker sessions from Quaker visitors (including a grandad of one of the young people) who talked about their personal experiences and answered questions that we had.

We also had daily Meeting for Worship in the morning and a quiet Epilogue in the evening. We found Meeting for Worship was very similar to our regular Lewes meeting, but Epilogue was different giving us a chance to reflect on our days quietly sometimes with music and/or candles. On our last night, we had the pleasure of having Epilogue outside under the stars.

Everyday we would take part in a morning activity in groups of the young people. These included drawing, domino toppling, running and even photography which gave us the chance to try new experiences. We also got to talk more with people and were able to make new friends.

Then, in the afternoon we would all meet up for a group activity such as a fete, tower building and even a trip to the nearby small gardens

where we spent a lovely sunny afternoon. Also, before Epilogue we would have an evening activity like a fictional character disco, a quiz and a barn dance!

On Wednesday we had the amazing opportunity to travel by coach to Oxford! We met up with senior conference (15-18 year olds) and attended a Meeting for Worship in the lovely Oxford Meeting House. After that, we got into small groups of 5 or 6 and went off to explore around the town.

Overall, it has taught us lots about Quakers and we both really enjoyed our week. We hope to attend Senior Conference and Junior Gathering next year and are really looking forward to it. A huge thank you to Lewes Meeting and Area Meeting for making it possible for us to go. We hope this article might even inspire new people to attend next year and if you do, we are looking forward to sharing the experience with you.

In friendship,
Martha, age 12



Winter Sun, by Liz Brooks



Friends World Committee for Consultation
World Office

Friends might like to read an article written by Tim Gee, General Secretary of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), published in Premier Christianity to mark **World Quaker Day**. The title is "*I am because we are*". Just click on the link below:

[‘I am because we are’ - Premier Christianity](#)



WOODBROOKE

Many Woodbrooke courses are now available online. Below is a small sample of courses starting in November:

- *Being a Quaker at work: dilemmas and opportunities* - 5 November - 3 December
- *Talking Peace* - 6 November - 11 December
- *World Quaker Voices* - 6 November - 1 December
- *Building kinder ground in politics* - 16 and / or 23 November
- *The meaning of silence* - 16 November
- *Quakers & the holy spirit* - 28 November
- *Living our peace testimony in complex times* - 29 November

For these and other options, visit the website: [Our Courses - Woodbrooke](#) or ring 0121 7282360 for details.

Some, but not all, courses at Woodbrooke are available on a “pay as led” basis. Woodbrooke wants to enable any Friend who wishes to participate in a course to be able to do so, regardless of financial circumstances. Therefore bursaries are available; click on the link here for details and application: [Woodbrooke Bursaries - Woodbrooke](#)

Sussex & Surrey Regional Meeting will be held on Saturday, 25th November, from 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at Dorking Meeting House, Butter Hill, South Street, Dorking, Surrey RH4 2LE. All Friends, both members and attenders, are invited. The meeting will include a workshop on “Quaker Truth & Integrity Group: what? why? how?”, led by Anne Wilkinson and Gerald Hewitson, two Friends acting under concern. Registration is required, so if you plan to attend in person or on Zoom, please ring 01323 890210 to book a place and receive further details.

More information on QTIG can be found on this website: [Home | Quaker Truth & Integrity Group](#)



Dorking Meeting House on Butter Hill in Dorking was built in 1846, replacing an earlier

18th century meeting house located in West Street. The designer of the building is not known, nor has it been possible to trace the engineer responsible for the unusual bi-parting pine screen that separates the large from the small meeting rooms (pictured above).

This distinctive screen parts in the middle, each half balancing the other. When the screen parts, the top half is raised into the roof space and the lower into a deep pit beneath the building. Once lowered, eleven hinged wooden blocks below the floorboards can be swung into position to cover the gap in the floor and eliminate trip hazards. The screen can be raised or lowered by one person. More details can

be found via this link: [Dorking Quakers - Screen](#)

In the past Dorking held an annual “raising of the screen” event, inviting members of the public as well as Friends from other meetings, and serving tea, coffee and cakes. I don’t know if Dorking Friends still do as part of their outreach, but if local Friends attend regional meeting in November, that would be an interesting question to ask.

Dorking Friends can confirm that the meeting house on Butter Hill was constructed at a cost of £1,541, including space for burial grounds. Such was life in the 19th century!

Liz Brooks

Safeguarding update

If you have any concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult who may have suffered abuse or exploitation, please contact the local safeguarding coordinator. At present local meeting clerks fill this role, so please contact David Martin on 07421 829069 or Quakerclerkslewes@gmail.com

“Where do you stand?”

A poem by Alinah Azadeh

*Where do you stand?
Do you stand with us
Or do you stand with them
Are you with us
Or against us
We need to position you
Declare yourself!
Came the silent cry from many sides*

*Where do I stand?
I stand where we all stand,
On shifting sands beneath us
on the edge
of black rock cracking open
to reveal fire and toxic steam
Into which burning bodies, olive trees, broken
dreams and twisted ideologies
are cast or fall*

*throw in a small stone
and it will fall so far that no sound can be heard
on impact*

there is no solid ground

all humans born equal (we were told...)
all die alone
some are forgotten too soon
others raised in glory

The only flags I see
are those of pure crimson
with no insignia
for the blood and life lost
amid these power plays
designed as global divide and rule at its most
grotesque
without the people's consent

I refuse to stand divided
from other human beings
I will not stand in hate

but I will stand for justice
against war, genocide, massacre, ethnic
cleansing
against the valuing of one type of human over
the other
or one gender over another
against the taking and making of land so unholy

I will stand for peace
I will stand for love

And I am moved
as a mother, as a child I once was
by those parents from both sides¹
who unite and stand together still

at their shoulders, the spirits of their beloved
children
killed at each other's people's hands
yet
they come together
in grief, in discomfort

an eye for an eye it is said
but they know that going blind is no longer an
option

if they can stand together
beholding each other's humanity

listening to those with whom they disagree
nestling compassion
working still for reconciliation and dialogue
loosening the ties that bind and strangle each
other's communities

if they can stand together
for closing this widening chasm by just a fraction
that those in power
constantly profit from

then I can stand
in that groundless place too

even as the apocalypse unfolds
we can stand
with the living, with the unborn

we can stay

we can stay
stay standing

*This poem appears with permission of the author, **Alinah Azadeh**, a Sussex writer, artist, performer and cultural activist of British / Iranian heritage. More information about her work can be found here: [AA Artist, writer, performer, cultural activist](#)*

Meeting House Development Update: End of October 2023



Photo: Helen reviews progress in the foyer.

Progress with the building work: The new front door was

installed mid-month (see photo below) - a significant moment as it makes working inside the building easier. Much of the work has been in the foyer and under the gallery. The skills of the plasterer, plumber, carpenter, brick-layer

and electrician have all been needed. In the foyer, the walls and ceiling are now finished, apart from decorating. The accessible toilet has walls.



Work in the twitten end on the new toilets and corner room is going well, the ceiling has had acoustic lining inserted and finished with wooden boarding,

specially made to match the previous style. Another heritage touch is that skirting boards in that area will be made from old floor boards.

Preparations in the kitchen for a new sink and units are well underway. The water company had to be called in urgently to repair the main stopcock which had jammed up completely.

An upstairs window in the gallery has been found to need major repairs; this is the main additional cost of late, though somewhat balanced by the cost of new window blinds being under budget.

Repainting of the main meeting room and its foyer is complete, with the electricity being reconnected just in time for the heaters to be welcome.



Work to resurface the outer wall of the meeting room uncovered the wonderful wood framing made by the 18th century builders, as can be seen in this photo. This has now been covered by a new surface for sound

proofing, insulation and preservation, but photos were taken so that a permanent display can be made in due course.

Outside, repaving of the path is finished and initial landscaping of the area outside the community room is underway, as can be seen when walking up Styles Field. The best way to provide outside lighting for this area is under consideration, along with a location for cycle stands in the car park.

The Hub (co-coordinating group for the whole project) has met and discussed what will be needed once the building is handed back to Lewes Meeting at the end of January. A number of items will need to be retrieved from storage and the kitchen, library, corner room and children's area set up. We know that several hirers are keen to book and use rooms as soon as they are available. These aspects will be part of the report from the project group to the Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs on November 5th.

Fundraising: There are some specific items that need to be purchased and Friends have started to offer to buy some of these. This is a great help. When we have a list of items still required, we will make this available in case other Friends would like to contribute in this way. Several Friends have also made loans to the project fund, to allow bills to be paid as we complete the project. ~ If you would like to contribute you can find ways of giving at www.lewesquakers.org.uk or www.justgiving.com/campaign/LewesMH . If you have ideas for fundraising you can discuss them with Patricia on 01273 474884 or David on 01892 663522.

Britain Yearly Meeting, alongside other Quaker organisations, has called for a ceasefire in Gaza

The statement reads in part: *“Further military action will not bring peace. We know this as Quakers ... and as students of history. That is why we are calling for an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian access, and action to address the ... inequalities underlying this situation in the long term.”* For full details, click on this link: [Quakers call for a ceasefire](#)



Lewes Meeting Contacts

Clerks: John Ashcroft, Liz Brooks & David Martin at quakerclerksl Lewes@gmail.com

Pastoral Care & Eldership Team [PaCET]: Tim Pitt-Payne (convenor), David Hitchin, Chris Lawson, Caroline Pybus, Theresa Samms, Nancy Wall

Nominations: Helen Thomas at helen.thomas62@btinternet.com

Website: www.lewesquakers.org.uk

Website editor: Drew Fisher at ajfscorpio@hotmail.com

Children's meeting: Sara at saralucytodd@yahoo.co.uk

Convenors of circles for pastoral care & support:

Cliffe - Berta Busby
Friars - Vervan Greenwood & Anna Milner-Gulland
Needlemakers - Geoff Halsey
Wallands - Bronwyn Harwood

Sussex East Area Meeting Clerk: Sally Aviss at sally.aviss@btinternet.com

In November, Needlemakers Circle will promote the **Good Cause**. Rota for the following months:

Wallands - December
Cliffe - January
Friars - February

If you have an idea for a good cause that the meeting might support, please speak to your circle convenor.

From other traditions . . .



Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights begins on 12th November. To celebrate the triumph of light over darkness, communities light candles, oil lamps

and lanterns, and enjoy firework displays, feasts and other ways to mark this traditional five-day festival.

Diwali is associated with Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity and beauty, and Ganesha, the god of wisdom and “remover of obstacles”.

Although primarily a Hindu festival, Diwali is also celebrated by adherents of other faiths originating in the Indian sub-continent, such as Sikhism and Jainism. Singing, dancing and feasting are traditional, with families and entire communities gathering together to light the candles and lanterns that are the main feature of this holiday.

Deadline for December newsletter

Please send news, articles, photos and other items of interest for the **December** newsletter to Liz at realgirltribe@gmail.com by **28th November**.

Please note the **January** newsletter will be a short edition, circulated on 10th January, as the editor plans to take a proper break over the holidays! 😊