

# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

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*Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.*

*George Fox, 1656*

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### Editorial

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2024 edition of *Quiet Ways*, the magazine/newsletter of Sussex East Area Quaker Meeting.

For various reasons, on this occasion, I am combining the Spring and Summer editions of *Quiet Ways*. As I write this editorial, we are approaching the latter part of Spring and are on the cusp of Summer (although you wouldn't have known it from the weather!). It is a joyous time with nature beginning to blossom and flourish in all its glory. It's wonderful to wake up in the morning and hear the birds singing (even the seagulls!) and be able to smell the scent of lilac and hawthorn in the garden and in the hedgerows.

The fecundity of spring and early summer gives us hope and inspiration for the future. Some Friends express great pessimism – there is so much happening in the world today that makes our future seem bleak and unpalatable – while others retain a sense of optimism both in their own lives and in the world around them. They see all that is good in humanity as hope in, and for, the future; an inspiration for us to do whatever we can to effect change for the wider good, whether it is coming together with others or our own individual efforts.

Hope can be both personal and communal – a strong, resilient community can enhance, support and transform the lives of the individuals within. Hope in adversity; light overcoming darkness.

This, of course, is the subject of the SEAM Study Day on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> May at Lewes MH. Do come (even if you haven't booked) and discover what makes a Quaker community resilient, hopeful and vibrant!

In this edition there is an article on the differences between religion and spirituality; spring and summer photos and two articles on how others see us as Quakers. There are two posters, one from Woodbrook with information about the AM Study Day and one designed by Sonia Relf of Rye Meeting as well as all the latest news from our Local Meetings..

Go well, Friends. *Sally Aviss, Editor Quiet Ways.*

# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

### Contents:

### Page:

Poster: Area Meeting 11 <sup>th</sup> May at Lewes MH.....	3
Difference Between Religion and Spirituality.....	4
How Others See Us (1).....	6
How Others See Us (2).....	9
Poster: Quakers in Turbulent Times Find Peace.....	10
LM News & Views.....	11
Who's Who Serving SEAM.....	12

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of *Quiet Ways*. Articles for the next *Quiet Ways* (coming out September 2024) are always welcome – be it something light-hearted, deeply personal or of universal significance. Items should be sent to [editorquietways@gmail.com](mailto:editorquietways@gmail.com). Closing date for submissions: Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024.

### **\*\*DATES FOR YOUR DIARY\*\***

#### SEAM Programme for 2023/24

Day	Day and Month	Subject	Venue	Time
Saturday	11 <sup>th</sup> MAY	Area Meeting Short MfWfB + Study Day on <i>Being a Quaker Community: Finding Resilience</i>	Lewes MH	10.15 – 1045 short MfWfB, 11.00 – 4.00 Study Day (+ tea at 4.30)
Sunday	9 <sup>th</sup> JUNE	Area Meeting MfWfB + Study Session on <i>Forgiveness and Connectedness</i>	Herstmonceux MH	1.30 – 4.30 (including tea)
Sunday	1 <sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER	Area Meeting MfWfB + Study Session on <i>Importance of Diversity</i>	Hosted and led by Seaford LM	1.30 – 4.30 (including tea)
Saturday	16 <sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER	Area Meeting MfWfB	On Zoom	10.00 – 12.00pm

**Regional Meetings in 2024:** **Sat. 22<sup>nd</sup> June** at Brighton MH 1030 – 1530 in person and 1045 – 15.30 on Zoom. The meeting is titled *George Fox in his Own Words*, exploring 4 well-known passages written by George Fox. (Poster to be sent out with AM Minutes after 11<sup>th</sup> May). **Sat. 28<sup>th</sup> September** and **Sat. 23<sup>rd</sup> November** – venues and topics to be announced.

## QUIET WAYS

### SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION



Working with  
Sussex East AM

## Being a Quaker Community: Finding Resilience

with **Rachael Swancott**

A day of exploring how we build and sustain a resilient Quaker community. How can we be a gathered people, and a community of transformation?

Using a variety of activities, we will reflect together on being a vibrant, Spirit-led and resilient community.

**Saturday 11 May 2024, 11:00am - 4:00pm**  
**Lewes Friends Meeting House, Friars Walk, Lewes, BN7 2LE and Online**

This event is free and open to all members and attenders from Sussex East Area Meeting.

To register your place, please contact your Local Meeting Clerk by Wednesday 1 May 2024.

# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

### Differences between Spirituality and Religion

(Source Unknown)

A learned man was once asked to explain the difference between Religion and Spirituality. His response was profound:

- Religion is not just one, there are many.
- Spirituality is one.
- Religion is for those who sleep.
- Spirituality is for those who are awake.
- Religion is for those who need someone to tell them what to do and want to be guided.
- Spirituality is for those who pay attention to their inner voice.
- Religion has a set of dogmatic rules.
- Spirituality invites us to reason about everything, to question everything.
- Religion threatens and frightens.
- Spirituality gives inner peace.
- Religion speaks of sin and guilt.
- Spirituality says, "learn from an error".
- Religion represses everything which is false.
- Spirituality transcends everything, it brings you closer to your truth!
- Religion speaks of a God; It is not God.
- Spirituality is everything and therefore, it is in God.
- Religion invents.
- Spirituality finds.
- Religion does not tolerate any question.
- Spirituality questions everything.
- Religion is human. It is an organization with rules made by men.
- Spirituality is Divine, without human rules.
- Religion is the cause of divisions.
- Spirituality unites.
- Religion is looking for you to believe.
- Spirituality you have to look for it to believe.
- Religion follows the concepts of a sacred book.
- Spirituality seeks the sacred in all books.
- Religion feeds on fear.
- Spirituality feeds on trust and faith.
- Religion lives in thought.
- Spirituality lives in Inner Consciousness.

# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

- Religion deals with performing rituals.
- Spirituality has to do with the Inner Self.
- Religion feeds the ego.
- Spirituality drives to transcend beyond.
- Religion makes us renounce the world to follow a God.
- Spirituality makes us live in God, without renouncing our existing lives.
- Religion is a cult.
- Spirituality is inner meditation.
- Religion fills us with dreams of glory in paradise.
- Spirituality makes us live the glory and paradise on earth.
- Religion lives in the past and in the future.
- Spirituality lives in the present.
- Religion creates cloisters in our memory.
- Spirituality liberates our Consciousness.
- Religion makes us believe in eternal life.
- Spirituality makes us aware of Eternal Life.
- Religion promises life after death.
- Spirituality is to find God in our interior during the current life before death.

*We are not human beings, who go through a spiritual experience, we are spiritual beings, who go through a human experience.*



Verbena blossoms

Photo © Sally Aviss 2024

# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

### How others see us (1)

#### **A visit and participation in a Quaker Meeting by Mike Dean.**

*Introduction by Keith Harcourt.*

Mike Dean lives along the road from us and is preparing for ministry as a Deacon in the Roman Catholic Church. He is doing a Foundation Degree in Pastoral Ministry at St Mary's University in London which is sponsored by the Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. One of the segments of the course is entitled Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations and as a part of that he was asked to visit and take part in an act of worship with another denomination and write a short description. He asked me if he could come to a MfW. There was little time to prepare him, but we did our best, I gave him Advices and Queries and afterwards, we talked and he borrowed Faith and Practice.

I think that the piece below, which he later submitted as a part of his course was an excellent opportunity for us to be able to "see ourselves as others see us."

#### **Portfolio Task – A visit and participation in a Quaker Meeting.**

I was aware that my neighbours were active Quaker members and approached them in light of this portfolio task to see if I could attend one of their meetings. They were delighted to invite me, and it transpired that as well as their usual Sunday meetings, which clashed with our Parish Mass, they had a meeting on Friday. This meeting is held monthly in the old Catholic Chapel at Holy Cross Priory. The attendance is mainly residents of the adjacent Care Home with approximately twelve regular attendees. We therefore agreed that I would attend to experience their act of worship.

#### The Meeting

As we prepared to leave for the meeting my neighbour provided me with a small booklet entitled "Quakers Advices and Queries." This booklet forms Chapter one of "Quaker faith and Practice"<sup>i</sup>

On arrival, the old Chapel, now used as a meeting room, was empty except for a circle of twelve chairs. As previously indicated it is a small meeting and it transpired that four of the usual participants had sent their apologies, so we were left with a group of six including myself. An initial introduction and small talk began the meeting as everyone sat down.

I had little knowledge of a Quaker meeting. My limited understanding of Quaker was that they have no hierarchy and all "Friends" are equal. In the booklet "Advices and Queries" the Introduction begins with "As Friends, we commit ourselves to a way of worship which allows God to teach and transform us"<sup>ii</sup>. The BBC website also states that "Quakers do not ...have clergy."<sup>iii</sup> However, I was expecting someone to take some lead at least to indicate the start of the worship. In the event there just seemed to be a mutual understanding and everyone fell into silence. No prayer was said to start. I was not sure when the meeting opened. As the silence continued, I glanced round and realised that all the other attendees had closed their eyes and appeared to be meditating and or silently praying.

The silence continued. It did bring to mind Holy Hour. However, there was no focal point. No symbols, icons, or books to use as inspiration to an aide to prayer. In a Catholic situation we

# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

may have the blessed sacrament or at least a crucifix. Despite this, it did feel reflective and there was an atmosphere of calm and reflection. After the initial confusion I found myself comfortably able to pray and feel God's presence.

Approximately 20 minutes passed. My neighbour then rose from his chair. Beginning by addressing everyone "Friends" he read a short passage by George Fox who was the founder of the Quaker movement. He read in a slow meditative manner, and everyone listened intently. He then sat down. I expected some follow-up to this reading, as we might respond after the Gospel reading in *Lectio Divina*. Again, though, everyone resumed their own reflective silence. It felt very much that the participants were finding "a way into silence which allows our awareness of the divine and to find the inward source of our strength."<sup>iv</sup> Everyone sat in their chairs in a relaxed manner. No kneeling or sitting up straight with head bowed and hands together. Everyone was dressed in casual wear. There were no vestments or religious jewellery or clothing.

After approximately 45 minutes, one said very softly "Thank you, friends" which seemed to conclude the meeting. Although, again, this was not totally clear, and a few words were then spoken about the reading. These however were along the lines of not having read or heard anything from George Fox for a while, rather than a reflection on what he had written.

The "formal" meeting ended as tea and biscuits were offered! During the discussions that followed arrangements were made for the next meeting. The attendees also discussed various friends and contacts who needed help and support. From this I gathered a powerful sense of charity both within their followers and to all humankind.

### Conclusion

This was the first Quaker meeting I had attended. It was clear from the little I knew that there were distinct and fundamental differences in doctrine and discipline. The Quaker movement "do not have elaborate religious ceremonies and rituals. They regard these as unnecessary; they sometimes call them *empty forms*."<sup>v</sup> They also believe that Faith is individual, and every individual finds their own path in their journey. Even in the booklet used as a guide to meetings the opening quote states "these things we do not lay on you as rule or form to walk by"<sup>vi</sup> but are to be used to be "fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter...but the Spirit giveth life."<sup>vii</sup>

Despite these significant differences to the Catholic Faith, it felt clear that the 'Friends' were making every attempt to live a life of Grace. In their own way, they were attempting to seek the path to friendship with God.

Therefore, despite the clear differences, with the faith, hope, and charity demonstrated, it is clear that they are recognisable as sisters and brothers in the Lord.

<sup>1</sup> Quakers in Britain, *Quaker Faith, and Practice: The Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*, Quaker Books, 2005

<sup>1</sup> Quakers in Britain, *Advices and Queries*, Quaker Books 2008

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/quakers\\_1.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/quakers_1.shtml)

<sup>1</sup> Quakers in Britain, *Advices and Queries*, Quaker Books 2008

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/quakers\\_1.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/quakers_1.shtml)

<sup>1</sup> Quakers in Britain, *Advices and Queries*, Quaker Books 2008

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# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION



Apple Blossoms

Photos © Peter Aviss 2024



# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

### How others see us (2)

#### Doorstep Query

By Kenneth Bird

Returning home the other day, I found a couple at my doorstep. They were reading a poster placed in our window and were looking puzzled. It reads “Quakers in turbulent times find Equality Simplicity Peace” and gave the ‘how to find us’ website address.

“What are Quakers?” asked the man in a foreign accent, clearly one of the many visitors to Rye.

“Well”, I began, “we believe that there is that of God in everyone and we meet regularly on a Sunday and sit in silence waiting on the divine spirit.”

That baffled them completely and they moved away without further ado. On reflection, I realised how inadequate was my response. Clearly this was no occasion for inviting them in for a cup of English tea. However, the advice of St Peter might have come in handy: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3.15). I had been taken by surprise and not been prepared.

So, What are Quakers or Who are we? Are we a religious society? That sounds a bit odd these days, a bit secretive perhaps. Are we a denomination of an established church, a religious sect? That’s not getting us near the mark either.

I would say now that we are a religious movement; this carries a certain dynamic of witness and action and opens the way to a conversation if the opportunity presents itself. To continue: we are in training to become aware of the life within, the life without; the immanent and the transcendent.

Hang on a bit, who’s going to buy all that? Keep it simple. So, we come back now to our testimonies to be peacemakers, to speak the truth, to live simply and to respect all, because all are equally the children of God.

Do we wait on our doorstep for the next passer-by to show interest? To mix two parables of Jesus: if we have found a pearl of great price, what do we do with our

## QUIET WAYS

### SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

talents? St Matthew was given the answer: “You are the light of the world .... who must shed light among your fellows.” (Matthew 5.15)



**QUAKERS**  
In turbulent  
times find  
Equality  
Simplicity  
Peace

Find out more at [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)  
email - [ryequakers@gmail.com](mailto:ryequakers@gmail.com)

We meet on Sundays 10.30 - 12.00  
at Tilling Green Community Centre

Poster Design © Sonia Relf 2024

# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

### Local Meetings News and Views

Eastbourne Meeting continues to grow with a gentle rising in numbers. There is a real sense of community and participation and a good feeling within the group. The Thursday meeting (plus lunch) session is open to all, Quakers or not, and is doing well, drawing in a diverse range of people. The premises committee is presently deciding what can be done to ‘revamp’ the kitchen, which is in need of improvement and repair.

Hastings Meeting is also experiencing a lovely feeling of calm in meetings. Sharing Groups meet once a month, with different Friends involved both in leading and attending. A rescue dog had been coming into MfW but after an ‘incident’, is now happily (for both dog and Friends) out in the garden during this time! Meetings grow and shrink and grow again over time and Friends have to have faith that things will get better – as they have at Hastings MH, which is now completely back to normal after the flood, and growing as a community.

Around 10 members of Hastings LM marched under a banner of the *Hastings and Rye Palestine Solidarity Campaign* along with other local groups are hoping that this is something that can be built on.

Lewes Meeting has held together despite the upheaval of the work that has been done on the refurbishment with the changes having taken place over such a long time. People have worked hard to make it a success, giving generously of their time and many Friends are feeling tired as a result. There is to be an event on 10<sup>th</sup> May to celebrate the official re-opening of the Meeting House and to say thank you to all those who have contributed and have done the work itself.

Lewes Friends are settling into the building now and MfW each Sunday has upwards of 40 people attending. The Wednesday mid-week meeting is also going well, with around half that number coming regularly. The garden is looking especially beautiful at the moment.

Planning sessions are being held to find ways to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of George Fox – with studies needing to be both basic, for those who know very little, and advanced, for those who are very knowledgeable.

Lewes LM is looking forward to hosting Area Meeting for the Study Day on 11<sup>th</sup> May. A folk singer has been booked (independently by Lewes LM and not connected with SEAM) for that day and will be performing in the evening. Hopefully both ventures will be well supported.

Rye Meeting continues to have between 8 – 12 each week at MfW and also has a new attender. Rye Friends are very involved in AM roles and have a positive representation on Churches Together. On 5<sup>th</sup> May, Rye Meeting held a discussion session after MfW on the topic of ‘Seeds of Hope’. It is hoped that this idea could be opened up to the public as a series of discussions

## QUIET WAYS

### SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

on ethical issues, but with no political dispute or cultural war, but as a place where people can come together to explore what is important to them; in effect creating ‘spiritual hospitality’. ‘Seeds of Hope’ could also become a subject for a SEAM Study Session next year.

Seaford Meeting has been growing. Since putting an article in the local Seaford magazine, more people have been coming to discover what Quakers are all about, and some have been returning each week. Friends have also been involved in Churches Together. The Meeting is now considering how to encourage children – one Attender has a young child but cannot come often because of childcare.

In June, members of the Meeting will be returning to Blue Idol to see where they are going as a meeting and progress made from the ideas learned. Last year’s session was found to be very powerful.

One of their members has now settled in Bernhard Baron – and really enjoying MfW there with lots of comfy chairs and a warm room!

The Mayor of Seaford is a Member of Seaford Meeting and has introduced a different way of looking at things in council meetings – including real silences!

Finally, Uckfield Meeting have settled in well to their new venue, finding it a warm place to worship. There have been a couple of well-presented and appreciated discussion sessions on a variety of themes. Bexhill Meeting is small but ‘perfectly formed’ and is presently considering the future of the meeting house. Sadly, members of Polegate Meeting have been isolating indoors because of another outbreak of Covid. However, the good news is, that they are on the mend once again.

(How different our Meetings look today compared to this illustration below.....! (Ed))



# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

### Who's Who' serving Sussex East Area Quaker Meeting

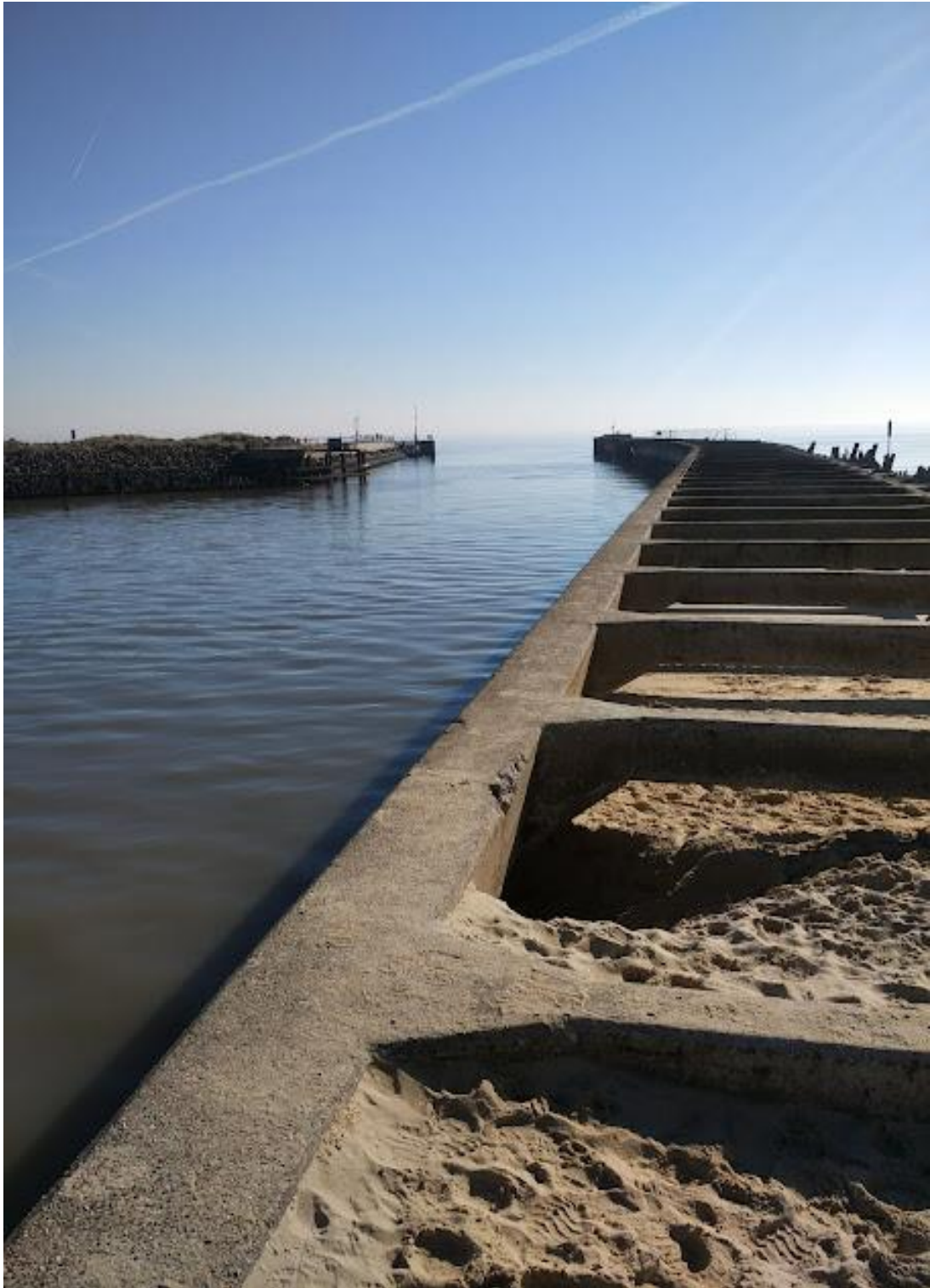
<b>Clerk</b>	Sally Aviss (Rye LM)
<b>Clerk of Trustees</b>	Patricia Sear (Eastbourne LM)
<b>Membership Clerk</b>	Peter Bolwell (Hastings LM)
<b>Treasurer</b>	John Ashcroft (Lewes LM)
<b>Assistant Treasurer(s)</b>	Alex Francis & Phil Cooper (Hastings LM), Tim Reynolds (Bexhill LM)
<b>Clerk of Nominations</b>	Mary Elliott (Bexhill LM)
<b>Safeguarding Co-ordinator</b>	Patricia Sear (Eastbourne LM)
<b>Convener of Elders &amp; Pastoral Friends</b>	Sally Aviss (Rye LM)
<b>Meeting For Sufferings Rep.</b>	Peter Aviss (Rye LM)
<b>Alternate for MfS</b>	Mary Elliott (Bexhill LM) (appt. July 2024)
<b>Sustainability Group</b>	Jean Farebrother (Herstmonceux LM), Graham Ellis & Sonia Relf (Rye LM)
<b>Prison Chaplains</b>	Julie Sleightholme and Medhina (Lewes LM)
<b>QCCIR representative</b>	Kim Ashcroft (Lewes LM)
<b>QSPW correspondent</b>	Antony Webster (Seaford LM)
<b>Funerals and Cremations</b>	Tessa Brown (Lewes LM)
<b>Registrar of Marriages</b>	Tessa Brown (Lewes LM)
<b>Quaker Life Council representative</b>	Jacky Jarvis (Herstmonceux LM)
<b>Alternate QLC Rep</b>	Peter Aviss (Rye LM)
<b>Quarterly Newsletter Editor</b>	Sally Aviss (Rye LM)
<b>Local Development Worker</b>	Ruth Audus (for Kent, Sussex and Surrey)

**Trustees** John Ashcroft (Lewes LM), Alex Francis (Hastings LM), Patricia Sear (Eastbourne LM), Sonia Relf (Rye LM), Wendy Clark and Tony Biggin (Herstmonceux LM), Ailen Grist (Eastbourne LM). **Nominations** Mary Elliott (Clerk – Bexhill LM), Alex Francis (Hastings LM), Peter Aviss (Rye LM), Veryan Greenwood and Geoff Halsey (Lewes LM), Aileen Grist (Eastbourne LM), Jean Farebrother (Herstmonceux LM).

**Local Meeting Clerks:** **Bexhill:** Mary Elliott **Eastbourne:** Alan West **Hastings:** Alex Francis **Herstmonceux:** Jean Farebrother & Wendy Taylor (co-clerks) **Lewes:** John Ashcroft, Liz Brooks, David Martin (co-clerks) **Polegate:** Roy Payne **Rye:** Sally Aviss **Seaford:** Ruth Whitelaw **Uckfield:** Theresa Buss, Deirdre Palmer (co-clerks).

# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION



**Summer in Southwold**

**Photo © Sally Avis**

# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION

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