

Meeting House Matters notes (ongoing)

An ongoing record of the notes taken at online Meeting House Matters meetings.



Date

17 January 2024 – Looking back and planning ahead

Page

2

Archive of notes

- [Notes from discussions in 2020](#)
- [Notes from discussions in 2021](#)
- [Notes from discussions in 2022](#)
- [Notes from discussions in 2023](#)

Oliver Waterhouse

oliverw@quaker.org.uk | www.quaker.org.uk/employers | [020 7663 1007](tel:02076631007)

17 January 2024 – Looking back and planning ahead

This time we had a session thinking about what had happened over the last 12 months and recognising what went well and what had been difficult.

We then spent some time thinking about what we have that is already planned in 2024 in our work and in the life of our Quaker communities. We thought about things that we know about or that we think might make our work more difficult that we have planned. And we looked at what is giving us joy in our work in 2024.

The next online Meeting House Matters session will be on Tuesday, 13 February 11am. The topic is yet to be confirmed. The joining details are below and will be sent around a few days before the meeting.

- Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://quaker.zoom.us/j/81586087624?pwd=aYxukeWCrw0Z80E9OuxluJuZvXr8do.1>
- Meeting ID: 815 8608 7624
- Passcode: MHM-online

In person events in 2024

The days for the in person events in 2024 are as follows:

- Tuesday, 16 April at Bradford on Avon LM
- Tuesday, 25 June at Lancaster LM
- Tuesday, 19 November at a venue in South East England, to be confirmed

The booking form for the events is now available and there will be an update about the final venue in plenty of time before the events take place. Use the link to the booking form below to register.

<https://forms.quaker.org.uk/mhm-24/>

Notes

Looking backwards

What have we done over the past year? What were the joys? What were the challenges?

Joys

- For most income from lettings has recovered and in a few cases is above the level than it was pre-pandemic.
- In some places finding there are other venues closing and the MH has picked up new business.
- Building works have been completed, such as a new side door at Bradford on Avon LM. This has sorted drafts and problems that there were with flooding.
- Opening new rooms in the building.
- Many children come through the building on a weekly basis which is a good outreach opportunity.
- Some thinking has started on how the building can serve the community better/more than it currently does.

- Have found that some hirer groups cross over and so they do things to help each other.
- Trying new things out to try to bring new business to the meeting house.

Challenges

- There are still pockets of the country where recovery is slow or not coming back to where things were before 2020. One person said that hire levels are still only at 50% of what they were.
- Challenges around room bookings as a response to the Israel-Gaza War with organisations whose values may not align fully with Quakers.

Looking forward

Joys

- Having great kit in the meeting house for hirers and Quakers. Now set up so that the kit is plug-and-play with users laptops.
- Wifi access points now throughout the building strengthening the signal.
- Café at Central Edinburgh Meeting House.
- Have some children back in the meeting but realised the space is quite dull. Have done some work to make the space more exciting for them.
- Local artist has done a mural to cover a very dull space at one side of the meeting house. (In some areas where there is a regeneration schemes as these might provide financial opportunities)
- Got a school come in and it was lovely and they were very interested and attentive and they had a mini meeting for worship.

Challenges

- Keeping room hire charges equitable and in line with similar venues in the locality.
- Keeping up with tech changes both for worship and hirers. Ensuring that hirers and Quakers have what is needed for their activities!
- Meeting Houses are often good for either hirers of Quakers. How can that balance be changed so that our buildings work well for all who use them?
- Working on upgrading the accessibility of the meeting house.
- Can the main space be made brighter and more inviting. Necessary for encouraging hirers to come into the space?
- Trying to get solar panel onto the roof, practical issues are mounting and a big challenge.

Other topics

Solar panels

- Is your building in a conservation area or listed? There are rules on panels but they are allowed and have just been changed a bit. See, <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/news/climate-change-historic-building-adaptation-consultation/>
- Businesses have different rules about the number of panels than domestic properties do, but you can apply to have more panels through planning.

Schools

- Invited a school to come and gave a guided tour of the building with a walk round the garden which included a brief talk about Quakers.
- Held a short meeting for worship and invited one child to elder with a local Friend.
- Afterwards the teacher sent a powerpoint presentation about what they had learned.
- Peer mediation training happens at Horfield LM bringing lots of young people to the venue! Great for outreach.
- Visits with a quiz about Quakers and chocolate have often been popular.
- Engaging with Schools pack from BYM is available from BYM, <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/engagingschoolsforweb>.
- Other education resources can be found on the website, <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/peace-education>.

George Fox 400

- BYM has advertised a short-term post to find ways to celebrate GF 400, <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/jobs/jobs>.
- George Fox birthday party celebration at Yearly Meeting and at a Quaker meeting house near you.
- Goerge Fox paper doll available from Bunhill Fields Mtg, <https://bunhillquakers.org.uk/history>.
- Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) has activities on its website, <https://fwcc.world/fox>.

General election

- Big issues are ones other than ones that Quakers might like to have the election more focused around.
- Elections guidance for meetings, <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/guidance-for-quakers-uk-general-election-2024>.
- And the BYM Political Engagement webpage, <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/politicalengagement>.
- Try to bring the issues that are important to Quakers to the fore.
- <https://mindfulbusinessservices.com/political-policies>