

2016 report from Hope Valley Local Meeting to Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting

Meetings for worship

These are held at the Quaker Community in Bamford. As well as Community members and retreatants we have regular attenders from the Hope Valley and beyond, and support from several members of other Local Meetings. We tend not to read out extracts from Advices and Queries or Quaker Faith and Practice in a pre-planned way, but they do feature frequently, and the depth of the silence and the variety of ministry and after-words is much valued.

Outreach and links with other churches

The Quaker notice board and leaflets outside the Community are read by many passers-by, some of whom have started attending our Meeting for Worship. Friends also participated in the Women's World Day of Prayer and have regularly attended the weekly prayer group and other ecumenical events in Bamford. Outreach is also in the retreats and other events run by the Quaker Community, which bring in a wide range of Friends and introduce many non-Friends to Quakerism.

Eldership and Oversight

The circle for pastoral and spiritual care in our Meeting has not yet been updated, and there has been talk of perhaps having named Elders and Overseers now there are more people in the Meeting. During the first half of the year well attended monthly evening sessions were held to share thinking and discernment of different chapters in Quaker Faith and Practice. This has fallen by the wayside somewhat since the summer break, but we plan to resume these as a regular event.

Meetings for Worship for Business

These used to be held bi-monthly after worship on a Sunday, and were generally well attended. However, partly due to weekends being heavily booked at the Community with retreats and other groups, in 2016 we tried holding M4W4B on a quarterly basis, with any urgent items to be circulated and taken forward as appropriate between meetings. Unfortunately, we have managed to hold only one quorate business meeting this year. The others, though announced both by email and in notices after Meeting for Worship, failed to attract more than 2 or 3 people in total. We will be looking at this at our next M4W4B in 2017- if quorate.

Roles within the Meeting

Friends attend, enjoy and report back from Area Meeting. However, with Community members being tied up with running the retreats and other events, we continue to struggle to find people able and willing to take on specific roles for our own Meeting. This includes someone to work with our current co-clerk, who will be moving to Sheffield before the end of the year but plans to continue attending and doing his part of the clerking role here. The planned review of our library, which includes many items donated by members and visitors, has not yet been done; more importantly we have had no book-keeper, Treasurer, or Trustee, during the year, and were grateful to be rescued by the Area Meeting Treasurer to get the 2015 accounts done.

To summarise, the practice, spirit and heart of the Meeting is in good shape, but the administration and responsibilities are a problem and are being severely, if not totally, neglected. In the light of all this, it has been suggested that we look at whether becoming a Worshipping Group might be more appropriate, and more manageable, than trying to continue as a Local Meeting. We hope to explore this further with support from Area Meeting.

Hope Valley Meeting for Worship for Business
4th December 2016