

# Abingdon Quaker Meeting Newsletter

June 2026

No. 436

## Meetings for Worship

Every Sunday 10:15am at the Abingdon Community Support Service (Abbey Centre), Crabtree Place, off Audlett Drive.

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 7:30pm in the Garden Room, St Ethelwold's, 30 East St Helen Street.

Woodbrooke offers online meetings for worship on Zoom at various times during week. For a timetable and the link to the Zoom room, visit <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/worship/>.

## Other Forthcoming Meetings

Further information about these meetings is on the inside pages of this issue.

Saturday 6th June	1—5pm	Nurturing Children's Spirituality, Oxford Meeting House
Thursday 11th June	6—8pm	Oxford Interfaith Friendship Walk
Friday 19th June	7:30pm	) Becoming Friends: session 2, Dorothea's Room,
Saturday 20th June	2:30pm	) St Ethelwold's House
Sunday 28th June	After MfW	Business Meeting
Saturday 11th July	10:30—3:30	Area Meeting preceded by AGM, Burford MH
Saturday 18th July	All day	Yearly Meeting, Kings House, Manchester, and online

## Annual Appeal for Giving to Abingdon Meeting: 'Lighting the Way'

*From the Treasurer:*

'Lighting the Way: Quaker Witness in Troubled Times' is the strapline for this year's appeal for contributions to Britain Yearly Meeting and to our local meetings. At the national and international levels, Quakers have responded to a range of crises, from peace education in British classrooms to civic reconciliation in Burundi. Locally, Friends have been active, for example, in witnessing against the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, and in hosting asylum seekers and refugees.

This year's appeal for contributions to support Abingdon Meeting will be sent out later this month. Fortunately, the running costs of our Meeting are relatively low; our biggest outgoing is rent for the use of the Abingdon Community Support Service, followed by our annual contribution to support the work of Britain Yearly Meeting. Last year, contributions from the Meeting's members enabled us to send £4,500 to BYM, representing just over £90 for each Friend in the list of members (some people also send individual contributions directly to BYM). It would be wonderful to increase this figure to £5,000 (or more!) in 2026.



In his letter accompanying the 2026 contribution pack, the BYM Treasurer, Paul Whitehouse, reminds us that 'giving is not only a financial act, but a spiritual one.' He quotes a BYM Trustee minute from 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2025:

'Giving is a joyful act of trust — a way to divest ourselves of excess and invest in the future of our community. It is also a corporate responsibility: our meetings are called to share their wealth with sister Quaker structures and to nurture a culture of generosity among Friends and attenders.'

In making our annual appeal to Abingdon Friends for 2026 we are ever mindful that some have more capacity to give than others. Yet even small amounts help. The appeal letter will explain the different options for contributing. As always, our overarching message is that Friends should not feel under pressure to contribute financially to the running of our Meeting. There are also practical ways to support us!

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## Abingdon Quaker Matters

### Business Meeting: Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June

The next Business Meeting will be held on the earlier date of **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June** after Meeting for Worship. Please let Jenny Carr have any items for the agenda by Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June: [abingdonquakers@gmail.com](mailto:abingdonquakers@gmail.com).

### Monthly Appeal: Money for Madagascar

*From Chris Sewell:*

MfM is an international charity which was set up by Swansea Quakers. It has grown from an initial base in the co-ordinator's garage in a small Welsh village to an office in Lancaster and a headquarters in Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, for its Malagasy Director and staff. This transformation marks the achievement of MfM's goal to empower Malagasy staff to lead its operations.



Madagascar is the world's fourth-poorest country. Eighty percent of Malagasy people rely on farming – in many cases subsistence farming or day labour – to obtain their food. An equal percentage survives on just £1.73 per day or less (the global poverty baseline). MfM's programmes address the key issues facing the country today: food insecurity, loss of bio-diversity, malnutrition, extreme poverty, inadequate education and poor health provision. It also responds to emergencies, from cyclone and famine relief to providing food and shelter for street kids and their families.

More than a million Malagasy people experience acute food insecurity (one level above famine). This means they lack sufficient food to meet their basic needs, threatening their ability to work and even their lives. Many more experience hunger every day, missing at least one meal: 50% of Malagasy children suffer stunting due to malnutrition and one child in ten does not reach their tenth birthday.

Simultaneously the Malagasy rainforest is under serious pressure. The country has the world's fourth highest rate of deforestation. It has already lost 80% of its natural areas and loses around 200,000 hectares to deforestation annually. At the current rate Madagascar's forests will be

completely gone within 40 years. More than 3,900 species of flora and fauna are classed as 'Threatened', and 600 are on the 'Endangered' list.

Money for Madagascar meets these challenges by:

- Funding reforestation and environmental education projects in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Working with partners to promote sustainable agriculture, to help Malagasy people escape poverty and hunger, and protect and expand the Malagasy rainforest and its flora and fauna.
- Operating micro-finance – community 'savings and loans' groups – models to help Malagasy people develop and operate new livelihoods and income-improving initiatives.
- Helping children and their communities realise their potential by building schools; investing in solar power, teacher training and teaching resources; and combating hunger with school kitchen gardens and canteens.
- Paying for wells, latrines and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) training to improve health and reduce preventable illness.
- Funding centres for homeless and abandoned children and works with them and their families.
- Sponsoring vocational training and makes small grants to help destitute and homeless people escape poverty.

You can donate in these ways:

- **Cash** when the appeal is made after Meeting for Worship. Gift Aid forms should be available if you are a UK taxpayer.
- **Online** at <https://moneyformadagascar.org/>. You can make a donation to general funds (click 'Donate' on the home page). Alternatively, you can choose a specific project to receive your contribution (on the 'Shop' page).
- **Cheque** payable to Money for Madagascar. Send it to Money for Madagascar, Halton Mill Cooperative, Mill Lane, Halton, Lancaster, LA2 6ND.

Thank you.

Money for Madagascar is a Registered Charity no. 1001420.

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## From the Wider Quaker Community

### Yearly Meeting

#### Materials from the May Meeting

The epistle, minutes and other documents relating to the Yearly Meeting held in May are now available on the Quakers in Britain website at <https://quaker.org.uk/ym/documents>. You can also find on the page a link to the YouTube playlist videos from Yearly Meeting, including the Woodbrooke and Salter lectures, and the impromptu singing of 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind' during a technical issue with the sound for online participants.

## Day Meeting in Manchester: Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July

In keeping with the new pattern of Yearly Meetings four times a year, the next gathering will be on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July at Kings House, Manchester, and online. The agenda is still being finalised, but you can book to attend now at

<https://quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/updates/welcome-to-yearly-meeting-18-july-2026> (closing date 29<sup>th</sup> June).

## Understanding the Changes to Yearly Meeting: A Woodbrooke Session

*Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June or Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June or Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July, all 7—9pm, online.*

This session, to run three times on the dates above, will offer a helpful introduction for Friends who want to understand what these changes will mean in practice. It will be particularly relevant to those appointed as a Yearly Meeting representative.

Sarah Donaldson, Senior Change Leader: Quaker Governance for Britain Yearly Meeting, will explain what is changing and why, and how these developments will shape participation in future Yearly Meeting sessions. She will explore, among other things, the new process and pattern of meetings across the year, the evolving rhythm of discernment, and how agendas will be brought forward and shaped.

Places are filling fast, so secure your chosen date soon:

- Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June: <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/britain-yearly-meeting-whats-changing-and-why-1/>
- Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June: <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/britain-yearly-meeting-whats-changing-and-why-2/>
- Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July: <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/britain-yearly-meeting-whats-changing-and-why-3/>

## Silent Walking Vigil for Peace

*Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 12—4pm, Central London.*

A rallying call for Quakers in Britain: a ‘loud silence’ witnessing for peace and showing solidarity and care for everyone impacted by violence, conflict and war. The vigil is being organised by a group of Quakers from across the UK, supported by the Faith in Action team at Quakers in Britain, and by Quaker Local Development Workers. The team welcomes support with planning and organisation, including practical help (e.g. stewarding) on the day of the vigil.

For further information, and to register your interest, visit <http://quakervigilforpeace.org/>.

## Reflections on the New Book of Discipline

Craig Barnett, who writes the *Quaker Renewal* blog, has spent six months editing the first draft of the new book of Quaker discipline, which has the working title *Our Quaker Way*. He writes:

Quakers in Britain have developed a tradition of rewriting our core text each generation, to include new insights, experience and practices. This reflects an important insight of the earliest Friends, that the language of faith can never be fixed in a specific set of words. ...

Our record of God’s work within and through the Quaker community is constantly remade afresh, as a testimony that faith can never be pinned down in an unchanging text. It is a living reality that grows from our own encounter with the principle of Life within. ...

I think the draft text offers the basis for a book that is spiritually and theologically rich, that makes much clearer how Quaker practice is rooted in our spiritual experience, and also represents the full range of Quaker spirituality from Friends of all ages and backgrounds from the 1650s right up to the 2020s.

You can read Craig's reflections in full at <https://quakerrenewal.substack.com/p/new-light>.

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## Local Events of Quaker Interest

### 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Oxford Peace and Friendship Walk of Faiths

*Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 6—8pm, starting at the Oxford Jewish Centre, Richmond Road.*

Join the Oxford Council of Faiths for a walk through the city centre with people of many faiths as we commit ourselves to peace and justice. We will begin our journey from the synagogue in North Oxford via St Giles Church and then on to the University Church in Radcliffe Square before ending our journey at the Stanley Road Madina Mosque. This is a great community celebration and everyone is very welcome to join us.

*(From the Oxford Council of Faiths website: <https://oxcof.org.uk/>)*



### Abingdon Carbon Cutters

#### Repair Cafés

*Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June, Unit 25, Bury Street.*

- Sewing repair: 10.30–12.30
- Household repair and sharpening: 1–4pm

#### ‘Wear It Out’: A Celebration of Sustainable Fashion, Upcycling and Repair Culture

*Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June 10—4, Guildhall.*

As part of Great Big Green Week, enjoy a day of hands-on activities, demonstrations and exhibitions, including crochet and knitting circles, yarn-making from old garments, a pre-loved clothing sale, and local makers and craft stalls.

A sustainable fashion show will be held from 2—3pm in the Guildhall, for which tickets are required.

For further information, visit the event page on the One Planet Abingdon website:

<https://oneplanetabingdon.org/etn/wear-it-out/>.

Carbon Cutters AGM and Social



YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED TO  
ABINGDON CARBON CUTTERS'

# AGM & SUMMER SOCIAL

**Weds June 17th at 7.30PM**

IN ST ETHELWOLD'S GARDEN,  
30 EAST ST HELEN ST, OX14 5EB  
( IN THE HEARTH IF WET )

**Come & enjoy a drink & cake in the  
wonderful St Eth's garden, meet other ACC  
people and find out how to get involved!**

## Among Abingdon Friends

### Poem of the Month

*From the Poetry Group*

We were busy watching and looking at our May meeting. We initially chose Roger Baker's poem 'A Magical Dawn' as our poem of the month, but Roger later pointed out that an earlier version of it had featured as 'PotM' in February, 2025. Instead, we offer you WH Davies' salutary 'Leisure', which many of us will recall reading — if not learning by heart — at school:

*Leisure*

What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare? —

No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows:

No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:

No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance:

No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began?

A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

*WH Davies*

### And Finally...

In 1897 the artist Sir William Nicholson produced *An Alphabet*, a delightful set of woodcuts illustrating the full range of British society, from aristocrats to beggars, and occupations ranging from scientists to ostlers. The Quaker is the only representative of a faith group, but Nicholson seems to have made him rather dour.

(Photographed at an exhibition of Nicholson's work at the Pallant House Gallery, Chichester.)



## Opening Up at the Abbey Centre: June Rota

7th	Auriel	Sally
14th	Jenny	Laura
21st	Eryl	Judy
28th	Alan	Clark

On standby: Anne, Chris, Richard, Rosie

### Next Month...

Please send your contributions for the July issue (in words and/or pictures) to the editors by **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June.**



*A tranquil morning on the Nantes-Brest Canal, Brittany.*

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### Abingdon Local Quaker Meeting

<https://abingdonquakers.org.uk> | <https://www.facebook.com/AbingdonQuakers/>

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*Image credits: Pages 1 (the contributions box at Malton Meeting House), 7 & 8: Liz Matthews.*

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