Abingdon Quaker Meeting Newsletter

November 2026 No. 446

Meetings for Worship

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

Thursday 5th November 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 7th November	10:30—3	Area Meeting, Swindon Meeting House
	2—4:30	Forest Foxes, Hill End
Sunday 15th November	After MfW	Learning Sunday and bring-&-share lunch
Friday 20th November	7:30pm	) Becoming Friends: session 6, Dorothea's Room,
Saturday 21st November	2:30pm	) St Ethelwold's House
	9:30—4:30	Continuing Yearly Meeting

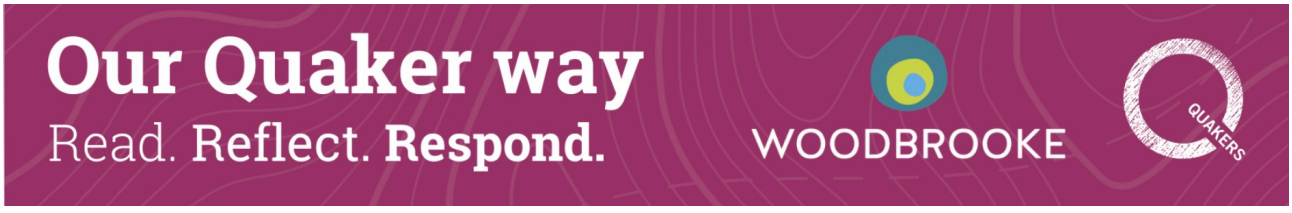
'Our Quaker Way': Read, Reflect, Respond

The draft of our new book of discipline, with the working title *Our Quaker Way*, will be launched at a presentation at Yearly Meeting on 21st November (see page 5). Friends will then have about six months to read, reflect on and respond to the draft ahead of Yearly Meeting in July 2027.

Here's a short introductory video on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/shorts/GA1V83yn2AY.

This is a significant moment for British Quakers, and so Woodbrooke is offering a range of resources to help individuals and groups. These resources include online materials, online and in-person events and support from local development workers. You can find out more on the Woodbrooke website: https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/learn/learning-for-communities/read-reflect-respond/.

For Friends who engage with social media, there will also be opportunities to share your thoughts on Facebook and Instagram:
https://www.facebook.com/ourquakerway/
https://www.instagram.com/our_quaker_way/ (The words are separated by _)



Judith Baker adds:

Quaker communities are asked to respond to the draft together in this manner:

We hope your responses will focus on broad-brush aspects of the draft, rather than detailed textual points. You might ask yourself key questions such as:

- What am I glad to see in the first draft text?
- Is my Quaker experience, and that of others and my Quaker community, reflected in the draft? Is there Quaker experience that is not reflected?
- How does the draft as a whole feel to me as a reader?
- Does anything stand out – either as jarring, or as most important?
- Is the draft good enough?
- What questions am I left with after reading the draft?

To help enable Abingdon Meeting's response to the draft, SPCG has decided to devote a Learning Sunday in March 2027 to our views. Before then, our reading groups will begin reading the new draft together.

Abingdon Quaker Matters

Learning Sunday and Bring-&-Share Lunch

Sunday 15th November 12–2:30

Susan Williams from Dementia Friendly Abingdon will lead a one-hour session. The intention is to increase people's understanding of dementia and inspire them to take small actions to support those affected by the condition in their communities.

For more about Dementia Friendly Abingdon, visit https://www.healthyabingdon.org.uk/associates/dementia-friendly-abingdon.htm. The group also has a Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/dementiafriendlyabingdon/, which gives information about dementia-friendly activities in the area including 'Singing for the Brain' sessions, supportive cafés and even a monthly dementia disco.

The session will be followed by a bring and share lunch.

Seasonal Events

All-Age Christmas Meeting

Our next semi-programmed all-age Meeting for Worship will be our Christmas Meeting on Sunday 20th December. Planning is already under way.

New Year Party

Following the success of this year's party, we are holding another one to welcome 2027. It will take place on Sunday 10th January after Meeting for Worship and comprise a bring-&-share lunch followed by games. The organising group will be in touch soon with requests for help and contributions. Ideas for games are particularly welcome!

Monthly Appeal: Ramallah Friends School and Brummana High School

From Liz Matthews:

This month we are making a combined appeal for the two Quaker-supported schools in beleaguered parts of the Middle East.

Ramallah Friends School (RFS) is a fee-paying co-educational school in the occupied Palestinian West Bank in the care of Friends United Meeting in the USA. It was formed in 1990 by the merger of two single-sex schools founded more than a century ago. RFS offers young people an academically rigorous, balanced, engaging and inclusive learning environment and inspires them to become a living expression of a spiritual life, and be in constant search for God in all human situations.

Despite prolonged political unrest, Israeli military occupation and economic hardships, RFS has continued to demonstrate the resilience and patience of the Palestinian community, keeping alive the hope and vision of a better future.

Brummana High School (BHS) in Lebanon was founded in 1873 as two separate single-sex schools by Theophilus Waldmeier, a German-Swiss missionary. In 1874 he visited England to raise money for the schools from the Society of Friends and became a Quaker himself. By 1902 the two schools had merged into one co-educational establishment, which was very unusual for the time.

Apart from a brief interruption during World War I, BHS has remained open despite Lebanon's political vicissitudes and tragic history of violence. It continues to nurture the Quaker values of simplicity, peaceful resolution, tolerance, equality, justice, respect and sustainability in its students. Today, BHS is under the stewardship of its Board of Governors and a UK-based charity, Quaker International Education Trust (QuIET).

When we last made an appeal for the two schools, in June 2025, RFS had been affected by the suspension of funding from USAID for the school's 'Foundation for Tomorrow' initiative, while students at BHS were living with nightly disturbances from military activity and some parents no longer felt in a financial situation to pay the school fees. In August 2025 the Israeli army carried out an incursion near the gates of RFS; no-one in the school was injured, but the children were very shaken.

Yet, despite all these challenges, education continues and the students have opportunities to flourish. At the start of the new academic year Ranya Ma'ayeh, head of RFS, wrote in the school newsletter:

> Every morning, we open our school gates and welcome our students and staff with a sense of normalcy, even when very little around us feels normal. Each day brings its challenges, and each day also carries hope for a better future. About 30 of our staff members and around 110 of our students travel through checkpoints and roadblocks every day to reach school. Still, our students arrive, and our teachers show up. I am deeply proud of how this community comes together, supports one another, and keeps learning at the heart of everything we do.
>
> … A group of students traveled to Istanbul, Turkey, for a Model United Nations conference, where they won Best Delegate and Best Position Paper awards. … About 28 students also

traveled to Amman, Jordan, for a leadership program. Despite the challenges, we remain committed to engaging our students locally and internationally, giving them opportunities to grow, lead, and represent their country and school with confidence.'

A post from the BHS Facebook page tells how

'extracurricular activities can merge learning with fun in the great outdoors. On 10 October, 35 of our students (Grade 9 to 12) and 6 teachers led by Mr Angus Brown enjoyed an unforgettable 22-kilometre hike through Lebanon's beautiful mountains from Faraya to Afqa Falls over approximately five hours. They walk[ed] a trail through mountain passes, amongst apple and pear orchards, past herds of goats and sheep, and reached their destination by the late afternoon to discover the waterfall was dry. Everyone had a great time, and for many, that was the farthest they had ever walked in their lives. The trip was a wonderful opportunity to connect, strengthen teamwork, embrace challenges, and create lasting memories beyond the classroom!'

To find out more, visit the schools' websites: https://www.rfs.edu.ps and https://bhs.edu.lb/.

How to Donate

- In **cash** when the appeal is made after Meeting for Worship on 8th and 29th November. The treasurer will divide the money collected equally between the two schools. Gift Aid forms will be available.
- By **credit card, online banking** or **cheque**, visit https://quietcharity.org.uk/Donate/. You make a separate donation to each school but in both cases you can add Gift Aid. When giving to BHS you can also choose how your donation will be used.

Thank you.

Quaker International Educational Trust is a charity registered in England, charity number 1072250. It is a Quaker recognised body.

From the Area and Beyond

Area Meeting

Saturday 7th November 2026, 10:30—3, Swindon Meeting House.

Meeting for Business will take place in the morning. The afternoon's Spiritual Nurture session will be on the theme 'Reconciliation of disputes' and will be led by Melvyn Lyons, an experienced mediator. Refreshments will be provided but, as is customary, please bring your own lunch.

Forest Foxes

Saturday 7th November 2—4:30, Hill End Outdoor Education Centre OX2 9NJ.

All 11–16 year olds are welcome to join Quaker-led woodland adventures, friendship and fire. To book, please contact JuliaD@quaker.org.uk.

Adult Friends are welcome to help: please let Julia know if you are interested.

Continuing Yearly Meeting

Saturday 21st November 9:30—4:30, Friends House and online.

Everyone is welcome to attend Yearly Meeting; you don't need to be a member. The programme has yet to be published, but it will include ministry and discernment arising from the reparation conference that took place on 23rd October and the launch of the new draft book of discipline.

If you haven't yet attended a Yearly Meeting session this year (i.e. in May and/or July), you first need to register by Wednesday 11th November. Once you have registered, you can then book to attend the session itself. The deadline for on-site attendance is Sunday 15th November; if attending online you can book after that date. For guidance, visit https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/bookings.

You can find the documents relating to Yearly Meeting at https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents.

A dedicated programme of activities will be provided for children aged from 0 to 18: https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/0-18s.

Local Events of Quaker Interest

Abingdon Peace Group

White Poppies

White poppies are often worn alongside red poppies. They stand for three things:

- Remembrance of all victims of war, including both civilians and members of the armed forces. We remember people of all nationalities. We remember those killed in wars happening now, as well as in the past. We also remember those who are often excluded from the mainstream, such as refugees and victims of colonial conflicts.
- Challenging war and militarism, as well as any attempt to glorify or celebrate war. White poppies encourage us to question the way war is normalised and justified. They remind us of the need to resist war and its causes today.
- A commitment to peace and to seeking nonviolent solutions to conflict. By drawing attention to the devastating human cost of war, white poppies highlight the urgency of our ongoing struggle for peace.

You can get your white poppy at Meeting or at:

- 35 Ock Street (open Monday—Thursday 10:30–2, Friday & Saturday 10:30—12:30)
- The Climate Emergency Café under the museum (open Thursday—Sunday 10—4pm)

Read more about the white poppy at https://www.ppu.org.uk/remembrance-white-poppies.

Movement for the Abolition of War: Annual Remembrance Lecture

Sunday 8th November 3pm, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9BB.

The lecture, entitled 'The Changing Face of War – Thoughts on the Erosion of Ethics', will be given by Rowan Williams, Chair of Academi Heddwch Cymru (Wales's peace institute) and former Archbishop of Canterbury. 3—4:30pm, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9BB.

For more information, and to book a free place, visit https://abolishwar.net/remembrance-lecture-2026/.

Abingdon Carbon Cutters

Repair Café

Saturday 7th November, Unit 25, Bury Street.

10—1: Sewing Repair
1.30—-4.30: Household Repair.

Tree Planting



Saturday 14th November 10—12, Rye Farm Meadow.

We are expecting 108 new little saplings to arrive shortly. Can you help plant them on Rye Farm Meadow? Please let us know at Carbon.cutters@gmail.com if you think you can come, and give a mobile number and email address for last-minute changes of plan. Type 'Tree Planting' in the subject line.

November Meeting: Stock-Free Farming

Wednesday 18th November 7.30pm, Abingdon Baptist Church, 35 Ock Street.

Laurence Candy, of Northwood Farm in Dorset, took over his father's dairy farm and has been converting it to stock-free farming (growing food without any animal inputs) since 2019. Come and hear him speak about the road map to a kinder and more sustainable food system.

International Development in a Contested World: A Panel Discussion

Friday 13th November 6pm, University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford.

The University Church is the place where the OXFAM was founded, and many members of the congregation are actively involved in international development.

In recent years, there has been a dramatic reduction in government funding and support. In this panel discussion, Anneliese Dodds MP, a local MP and a former Secretary of State for International Development, will be in conversation with leading figures from OXFAM, Christian Aid, the Anglican Alliance and Caritas International. What can we do to support international development in the current climate?

This event is free to the public, and tickets can be reserved via Eventbrite: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-case-for-international-development-in-a-contested-world-tickets-2003816863179.

Among Abingdon Friends

Clark's Needlework in Abingdon Museum

Sally Reynolds writes:

Have you had a chance to visit the current exhibition, 'Wild Life: Abingdon in a Changing Climate' in the County Hall Museum yet? Small but perfectly formed, and open until 23rd December when the museum is open (Tuesday—Sunday 10–4), it's a compelling reason to climb those stone stairs if you can!

Consisting mostly of extraordinary photos of local animals, insects and birds by Abingdon's naturalists and photographers, the exhibition is really lifted and given profound meaning by Clark's

dramatic wall-hanging (right). Titled ‘Slow Choke’, referring to the process of de-oxygenation in water, Clark’s is a piece of appliqué needlework dominated by a dying catfish (the species apparently most tolerant of polluted water), surrounded by fish skeletons and detritus.



The other fabric piece hanging next to Clark’s is by Clare Frampton, Richard Smart’s stepdaughter, who had her own exhibition in the museum earlier this year. Both are beautifully worked and repay close study. Well done Clark and Clare!

Poem of the Month

From the Poetry Group

The Poetry Group met for a second time in September to reprise the theme of ‘Love’. The poem chosen to share with you was brought to the meeting by Iain Strachan.

African Elegy

We are the miracles that God made
To taste the bitter fruit of Time.
We are precious.
And one day our suffering
Will turn into the wonders of the earth.

There are things that burn me now
Which turn golden when I am happy.
Do you see the mystery of our pain?
That we bear poverty
And are able to sing and dream sweet things

And that we never curse the air when it is warm
Or the fruit when it tastes so good
Or the lights that bounce gently on the waters?
We bless things even in our pain.
We bless them in silence.

That is why our music is so sweet.
It makes the air remember.
There are secret miracles at work
That only Time will bring forth.
I too have heard the dead singing.

And they tell me that
This life is good
They tell me to live it gently
With fire, and always with hope.
There is wonder here

And there is surprise
In everything the unseen moves.

The ocean is full of songs.
The sky is not an enemy.
Destiny is our friend.
Ben Okri

Opening Up at the Abbey Centre: November Rota



1st	Auriel	Esther
8th	Alan	Richard
15th	Laura	Rosie
22nd	Anne	Clark
29th	Chris	Sally

Next Month…

Please send your contributions for the December issue (in words and/or pictures) to the editors by **Wednesday 25th November**.



Abingdon Local Quaker Meeting
https://abingdonquakers.org.uk | https://www.facebook.com/AbingdonQuakers/

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