

Among Friends

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COP26 and our testimony to sustainability

I'm writing this on a train as I travel from Birmingham to Brussels, remembering the joys of international train travel and meeting with Friends in person. As I write, the COP26 negotiations in Glasgow are fresh in my mind. Many Friends were present there upholding the process and trying to influence the outcomes, and many other Friends joined in from afar by upholding those present, joining online worship and other events with people in Glasgow and of course by taking part in marches and demonstrations around the Section - and in other parts of the world - on Saturday 6th November. There were some positive outcomes of the talks but many Quakers may feel they did not go far enough. You can read about some of the Quaker activity during the two weeks of COP26 in the pages of this edition of Among Friends.

This is a good opportunity for me to mention the EMES draft Sustainable Travel, Events and Communications Policy which we are currently consulting our representatives and constituent meetings about - we would love to hear what you think. The meetings in Glasgow are a timely reminder of why we need to change our behaviour. We want to try to find a balance between bringing people together, which we feel still has a place in our work, and the use of online meetings and other ways of staying connected such as social media and email. We're thinking hard about this and we know many of you are too!

We have received several responses from meetings and



FWCC and QUNO at COP26 Image: QUNO

individuals ranging from telling us that we're on the right track to saying that our draft policy does not go nearly far enough. Our draft policy includes an affirmation that we plan to continue holding in person events bringing people together from around our Section, whilst at the same time acknowledging that there is a cost to this and that we should consider the implications of these activities. We want to create a more sustainable organisation in the future; this may mean some journeys will take longer but we believe this is a price worth paying for a more sustainable future. You can read our draft policy here: bit.ly/emes-draft-policy and the consultation is still open, so if you, or others in your meeting have more to tell us please get in touch with me: michael@fwccemes.org.

Although we are all still living with Covid and its consequences, we are really hoping to be able to hold our annual meeting next year in person in Paris (with an option to join via Zoom). As you may know, this is the third winter we have gone into whilst planning this meeting in Paris. See page 2 for a bit more information.

During the past couple of years we have established a number of regular online meetings, which we plan to continue into 2022: monthly Peace & Service Consultation gatherings, monthly Youthgroup gatherings for 14-18 year olds, monthly gatherings for EMES Representatives & Roleholders and twice yearly gatherings for International Members in EMES. I look forward to seeing you at one of these!

Michael Eccles, Executive Secretary FWCC-EMES

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News from around the Section

Quaker in Europe Course

Over 30 people in 18 countries participated in a new run of the newly updated Quaker in Europe course this summer. The course was developed over ten years ago to enable meetings and groups to offer a resource to newcomers in their own language. The original version was translated into over 10 languages. “*What is the Quaker meaning of life?*” was a question asked by one of several Ukrainian enquirers in the very first session this summer. After the flurry of introductions and posts in the first couple of weeks, the temporary community that grew among the participants explored various Quaker topics in worship sharing and other online sessions. As well as being for newcomers to Quakers, the course, which was redeveloped by Jasmine Piercy, was also for people who might be interested in translating material and running the course in other languages.

An updated French language version of the Quaker in Europe course has recently begun with more than 40 participants from countries as diverse as France, Canada and Congo.

Another run of the English language course is planned for 2022.

A run in French, for people connected to France Yearly Meeting, is already planned, as is another run of the course in English in 2022.

Quakers at the COP26 talks in Glasgow

Many Quakers and Quaker organisations spent some - or all - of the first two weeks of November in Glasgow at the COP26 talks. Some of them have written reports which you can read in the pages of this edition of Among Friends.

Ireland YM appoints new Youth Co-ordinator

Alex Collins, a member of Enniscorthy meeting in County Wexford, has been appointed as the Ireland YM Youth Co-ordinator. During the first lockdown he started a regular games night with some fellow young Friends online, which helped them keep up connections. He plans to bring more young Friends between the ages of 11 and 18 online and connect them across the whole island, keeping them updated about relevant and interesting upcoming events. In addition, he will be organising a programme for young people at IYM.

You can get in touch with him here: Youthsupport@quakers.ie or on Twitter @YouthIym.

EMES Annual Meeting 2022 in Paris

We are beginning to plan for the EMES annual meeting which is scheduled to be held at L'Enclos Rey in Paris on the 20-23 May. We are hoping this will be third time lucky as we had hoped to meet in Paris in May 2020, and then again in May 2021! More details will be sent to Representatives in the new year.

Our Friends and Other Animals: Woodbrooke 2021 Eva Koch Scholarship research survey

Jasmine Piercy tells us that she is carrying out some research focussed on engaging Friends in considering our relationship with animals from a variety of angles. She is exploring how we might extend our Quaker testimony and witness to all species. The environmental emergency has prompted Jasmine to grapple with this challenging theme and she invites you to take part in the survey, which will help her get a sense of Friends' thinking, in relation to animal issues.

Here is the link to the research survey: <https://forms.gle/EywTGFAMCGrQxPREA>

NFPB at COP

Northern Friends Peace Board brings together Friends from across the North of Britain. For many years we have worked to promote policies and action for peace and security that have roots in justice for people and planet rather than through military power. In relation to the COP26 climate conference we have been pulling together information about events and resources from a wide range of organisations and groups, Quaker and non-Quaker, and publicising these as widely as possible (for example: <https://bit.ly/3GWuGvU>).

We are a small organisation and often work together with other groups in the wider peace movement. One project we support is the UK group of the Global Campaign on Military Spending (GCOMS); we have had funding for a paid worker to develop work in relation to COP and climate issues – see <https://demilitarize.org.uk/climate>.

We are also involved in the work of Rethinking Security (<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/>).

At a time when the UK government has increased its nuclear arsenal and military spending more generally, Rethinking Security brings together activists, academics and a range of organisations to develop and promote

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Stop Fuelling War (Sfw) Exhibition

Sans Armes Citoyen.ne.s (Without Weapons, Citizens!) is an exhibition created by Stop Fuelling War. Our aim was to reach out to activists already engaged in areas such as climate, social causes, and policing - as well as the general public - to explain in a lively way how the arms trade affects so many aspects of our lives. The exhibition took place in two Paris venues in October.

Working in France has led us to discover that perhaps more than in some other cultures, French people are primarily driven by the personal angle – they are most likely to protest and act if they are directly affected. It is always difficult to interest people in the arms trade, perhaps because its insidious influence remains murky and seemingly remote from daily life. Although it's now clear that armaments represent the nexus of so many important issues, we had to concentrate on the most urgent topics – police militarisation, the arms trade and climate emergency, social rights (employment and health), democracy, the Eurosatory arms fair in Paris, and Universal National Service (a new French youth conscription) and, of course, presenting alternatives to militarisation. We were pleased that the colourful displays, with their artwork, videos, cartoons, photographs and images, attracted many to peer through the window!

We tried to make the information accessible, interesting and interactive; most visitors stayed between 15 minutes and half an hour to read the texts and watch the videos.

One successful try-out were two wheels of fortune which participants were invited to spin to 'predict'



Karina Knight Spencer, Director of Stop Fuelling War in front of art work by Erik Dries

their future; one based on probable outcomes linked to continuing militarisation; the other giving glimpses of a better future offered by rethinking 'security'.

The exhibition is designed as a travelling 'pop up'; we have had enquiries from various groups to show the exhibition in other locations. Enquiries and donations gratefully received!!



Photo by Marc Javierre-Kohan

Further details at:

www.stopfuellingwar.org

FWCC World Office and COP26

Susanna Mattingly, Acting General Secretary, FWCC World Office writes:

Many Quakers around the world are using the global focus on COP26 to call on governments to commit to essential climate targets and to place justice at the heart of solutions to climate breakdown, and protect life on Earth. The Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) works under the name of FWCC at the UNFCCC climate negotiations, representing Friends at the global level and offering Quakers the chance to contribute to world affairs.

Over the past year the FWCC World Office has taken part in Faith and Science: Towards COP26, a series of online meetings of religious leaders and scientists organised by the British and the Italian Embassies together with the Holy See, setting out a vision for tackling the climate crisis and building momentum for COP26. On 4 October 2021, Gretchen Castle represented FWCC and Quakers worldwide as faith leaders met at the Vatican to share their appeal to the political leaders attending COP26. Their message

was clear: “Faith and science are essential pillars of human civilisation, with shared principles and complementarities. Together, we must address the threats facing our common home.”

The FWCC World Office has also been working with Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) to connect Quakers around the world as pen pals, to learn more about the human impacts of the climate crisis. In correspondence with one another, over 100 Friends have been discussing the commitments they would like to see governments make at COP26 and beyond, as well as exploring how Quakers can call on governments to do this. Through this project we aimed to help bring the experiences and voices of those at the forefront of the climate crisis to COP26, and to Quaker climate action in the years ahead.

Whatever the outcome of the COP26 conference, we continue to hold our politicians and negotiators in the Light, to do what is right and stand up for justice and peace.



Gretchen Castle speaking on behalf of Quakers at the Faith and Science: Towards COP26 event at the Vatican on 4 October 2021. Photo: FWCC World Office

QUNO at COP26

The QUNO team to COP26 included Lindsey Fielder Cook (Climate Change), Joachim Monkelbaan (Sustainable and Just Economic Systems - SJES) and Andres Naranjo (Programme Assistant for both these programmes).

QUNO's work for the COP26 has been building throughout the past two years, including 5 quiet diplomacy meetings with climate negotiators, multiple presentations to Quaker, interfaith and other civil society and grassroots efforts. We have worked hard to support the wider Quaker community for this UK based COP, the most intense COP for Quaker engagement since our climate change work began in 2013. During the COP, our main focus is on progress in the negotiations, and for this COP, for greater ambition on Nationally Determined Contributions, and completion of the Paris Agreement Rulebook with rights-based language integration. Within this advocacy is a multitude of concerns/positions which cut across our work at the UNFCCC, the IPCC and the Human Rights Council.

Throughout the COP, Lindsey and Andres focussed on sitting in negotiation rooms to follow progress on completing the Paris Agreement Rulebook for Implementation. We used these spaces to speak one-on-one with negotiators on progress/shared voices across political divides, and identify political progress or challenges which may define quiet diplomacy needs in the coming year. We also attended negotiator discussions concerning the latest IPCC report, to observe country positions on the findings. We also attended side events, and were often at the Glasgow Quaker Meeting House.

For SJES, Joachim and Andres focussed more specifically on linkages between trade and climate change (scale effects by boosting economic activity and growth), composition effects (carbon intensive industries may move to countries with lower environmental standards), technique effects (trade can diffuse low-carbon technologies but also carbon-intensive technologies), and direct effects (resulting from transport that is needed for trade), as well as discussions relating to the reform of fossil fuel subsidies, including "response measures". Finally, Joachim and Andres participated in the Climate Law & Governance Conference during COP 26, and also in the World Climate Summit (to monitor the intentions of the private sector regarding climate action and its alignment with justice, equity, and



Lindsey Fielder Cook asking a question at the COP26 plenary. Photo by Lindsey Fielder Cook

environmental integrity concerns).

We took paper copies of QUNO publications to distribute including the 2021 Government Official's Toolkit, and How to Be A Hero to All Our Children (in English, French and Spanish). In addition, Lindsey spoke at the following events: 31 October Inter-faith Meeting (facilitating a Talanoa Dialogue on IPCC Science, in addition to Paul Parker on the panel), on 1 November (as a speaker for the opening Event of the Geneva Peace Platform, zooming in from the COP), at Glasgow Meeting House on 6 November with Livvy Hanks, on 9 November for a Chatham House event on peace, conflict and climate change, and on Ethics and Human Rights at the People's Climate Summit, on 10 November for human rights and climate change at the People's Summit, and coordinating the QUNO, QEW, FWCC, QPSW, and Act Alliance side event on 11 November, titled, A moral call to conscience – fair share in finance for people affected by loss and damage. Livvy Hanks of QPSW was one of the speakers.

Lindsey also wrote a prayer for the UNFCCC inter-faith community, which was shared in services throughout the two weeks in Glasgow. The prayer is available online here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FB9j70UZvZEKOyJDSXzFu-mRvKc6q02J/view>

Walking with Amal and Witness for the Humanity of People Crossing Borders

Laurel Townhead, QUNO, writes:

From July to November Little Amal (<https://www.walkwithamal.org/>) crossed many borders as she travelled 8,000 miles across Europe. Little Amal is not little (she is a 3.5m tall puppet of a Syrian girl) and nor was her impact. Her journey included many stops where she was welcomed along the way, on the beaches in Greece and Italy, in Geneva at the gates of the UN, in Brussels in Parc Maximilien, in Calais, in Dover. In places so many Friends from across Europe have acted on their concern for the humanity, dignity and safety of people crossing borders. Amongst the many things Amal was representing – hope, heart, creativity – I also appreciated the sense of connection with those friends, Friends and family who also met with her at other points along her route.

In a Quaker statement on migration (<https://quno.org/quaker-statement-migration>) that we issued with Quaker Council for European Affairs, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, American Friends Service Committee and Friends Committee for National Legislation last December we stated our shared heartbreak at migration policy that dehumanises some members of our human family on the basis of where they come from. We spoke of how faith calls us to work alone and with others for migration justice. This statement is about a common connection in our Quaker grounded work and witness.

Amal's journey showed the warmth and welcome and desire to honour people's humanity that many of us feel and which I see reflected in the concern of many Friends and their witness for welcome, compassion and humanity.

In the Quaker UN Office's Human Rights and Refugees programme (<https://quno.org/areas-of-work/migration-and-displacement>) this translates as work to use international law and multilateral processes to uphold the inherent worth (that of God/light/spirit) in all of us regardless of borders crossed or why. Less spectacular than an 8,000 mile journey, less colourful than the arts projects along Amal's route, but something we believe firmly in the value of nonetheless.

Currently we are focussing on two upcoming events and would welcome the input of Friends in our work



towards both of these (contact details at the end of the article):

- A UN Human Rights Council discussion on human rights of migrants in situations of vulnerability
- The first International Migration Review Forum

The Human Rights Council discussion specifically emphasises the importance of hearing from migrants on their own experiences and expertise (something we advocated for). We would welcome information and suggestions from Friends about migrant led advocacy, activism and services that you are aware of or involved with.

The International Migration Review Forum in May 2022 will review progress on implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and set the tone for discussion and action at the UN on migration for the next four years. Some States are beginning to consider what pledges they could make; we will work for these to be concrete commitments to uphold the



Motivated by Quaker faith and inspired by the creativity and hope and heart shown on Amal's journey we continue to work for a world where no one is discriminated against because of the borders they have crossed. And where everyone who needs protection in another country receives it.

Laurel Townhead is Representative, Human Rights and Refugees, at the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva. ltownhead@quno.ch

To sign up to the Quaker Statement on Migration mentioned above please email Human Rights and Refugees Programme Assistant, Marisa León Gómez Sonet mleongomez@quno.ch

rights and dignity of people on the move. We would like to hear from Friends what pledges you would like your governments to make separately or together, what pledges would you want to see from the EU and other institutions?

The situations and experiences highlighted by Amal's journey and by daily news stories about border violence show how much we need significant systemic changes and urgent humanitarian response. We are working with others to find ways to ensure that the International Migration Review Forum is not "four days of talk in New York" and does not only catalogue what governments self-select as progress. We will continue to work with migrant groups, NGOs, diplomats, UN officials, local authorities, national human rights institutions and others to build towards a Forum that addresses, head on, the unconscionable continued loss of life, harm and hurt at borders.



*All photos of Little Amal by Laurel Townhead,
QUNO*

A Way to Open

Jane Rose, Finland YM, writes:

This is a short account of what can open up, through even a limited amount of contact with another group of Friends.

Finland YM received an exploratory invitation in the spring to ask if we would like to join Glasgow Friends as part of a potentially new dimension to their 2021 study circles, leading up to COP26.

... This year we're planning sessions on the theme of our individual approach to the climate emergency. Most of us agree on the nature of the climate crisis and what needs to be done and many are activists in one way or another. Nonetheless, we've found it difficult to change our own ways of living at a deep level and are not always clear how we get that deep change within ourselves, our Quaker community and wider society. So we're thinking of using this year's sessions to listen to each other, our concerns and our ways of approach to the crisis, to see if we can find ways forward for ourselves and our Quaker community. We feel talking to Friends from different countries will sharpen and expand our listening and understanding.

Some Friends within FYM were keen, and as the idea of holding a study circle has been mooted for some time we decided to invite a Friend from Glasgow to a special on-line session of FYM held in April to hear what might be possible and to learn something about how Glasgow Friends have generally arranged their study circles. With all the on-line possibilities currently in use, making this kind of learning connection seemed a definite opening; both for setting up within-YM groups for learning as well as joining what others have set up.

We decided to follow the same summer program as Glasgow Friends for our discussions, which would give a bit more freedom for Friends to use Finnish as well as English. The framework was suggested by the Glasgow planning group and centred on three specific Swarthmore lectures:



Image by Erik Dries

- 2011 Lecture *Costing not less than everything: Sustainability and spirituality in challenging times* by Pam Lunn.
- 2014 Lecture *Open for transformation – Being Quaker* by Ben Pink Dandelion
- 2019 Lecture *On Earth as it is in Heaven; The Kingdom of God and the yearning of Creation* by Eden Grace

The first lecture sets out the situation the Earth is in.

The second is not about sustainability directly, but about what it means to be Quaker and how we are transformed as individuals and community – which we need to be to deal with the climate situation.

The third one was difficult for British Friends as it uses religious language that is much more familiar to many American Friends. But it is demanding to our thought and that may be a 'way in' to the issues.

We asked participating Finnish Friends to listen to each lecture beforehand and then we had discussion in worship sharing mode on what had arisen for us from the lecture. Those involved found the process extremely fruitful. In September we were invited to join a feedback session on Zoom with Friends in Glasgow about what had arisen from the different study circles with the promise of a further meeting in December. Friends in Finland have decided to keep meeting monthly in any case, at least until December. We are grateful for the connection with Glasgow Friends (even though it has been looser than first anticipated) and we await to see where this may lead in the future.

The Central European Gathering decarbonisation Epistle – a challenge for us all

Liz Coling, CEG Co-clerk, writes:

In her farsighted 2011 Swarthmore Lecture, author Pam Lunn said:

What would it mean for Quakers in Britain to be truly a low carbon community?

I don't know how British Quakers responded to this, but 10 years later at the September 2021 annual meeting of the Central European Gathering (CEG), in Litomyšl in the Czech Republic, our theme was also the climate crisis. This had been chosen at our last pre-Covid meeting, and was given added relevance because of EMES's request for groups to comment on their draft Sustainability policy.

One of our members, Arne Springorum, a long time Quaker and a climate activist, has a leading to put this crisis at the top of almost any agenda. In Litomyšl, Friends, having agreed that the EMES draft policy is too weak, then heard Arne's presentation on the climate crisis and we discussed our approach into the evening.

From our debate, questioning and silence, a draft Epistle was drawn up by Arne. It was put before Friends at our closing session on Monday morning. Other changes were proposed by the gathered community. The wording needed to be accurate about who is responsible for the state of the world, about what our relationship is to other life on this planet. At last it seemed right, and a slightly adapted version was also produced for future use with the press. Such was the energy that one Friend decided there and then to sell her car and another to become vegetarian.

Decarbonisation workshops

And the passion is still with us. We have twice monthly decarbonisation workshops where we are calculating our carbon footprints and then it will be up to each of us to decide if and how to change. We share information. We have grappled with the question of whether all green electricity is really green. (The short answer is no). We looked briefly at the background to the crisis, hearing that the oil industry was warned of the melting of ice caps back in 1959.

Personally, I find the workshops and the knowledge that Friends are in this together, inspiring. I may be unlikely to glue myself to buildings or roads but recently I spoke with a colleague about the carbon footprint of the hospital where I work and about the difficulties facing public organisations which wish to improve. And, motivated to research, I found that although the company I insure my house with has a policy of divesting from fossil fuels, they are underwriting some of the dirtiest coal mines in the Czech Republic, which, without this support would probably have been decommissioned. Now what should I do?

My actions are tiny given the scale of the crisis and, of course, governments should be taking the lead, giving right direction, with banking and industry following close behind, but until this happens, it's up to individuals to do what we can.

Spreading the word – or not?

The Epistle promotes a two-pronged approach; both personal learning and responsibility, and taking our example further afield. This second step is a different level of challenge. Considering this in our October Meeting, some Prague Friends wondered if CEG had been carried away, not by the spirit, but by one Friend's enthusiasm for their favourite theme.

We therefore used part of the first November decarbonisation workshop to review our plan, checking that everyone had been sufficiently on board in Litomyšl, especially those who are less fluent in English. Do we, a tiny group of Friends, feel ready to introduce the Epistle to faith groups, to the press, to speak truth to power in our respective countries?

In only a few weeks, the Epistle has gone to EMES, and to Meetings in Austria, England, Germany and Scotland. CEG groups will now decide if a period of seasoning is needed before spreading it beyond the Quaker world and, in the meantime, as Meetings and as individuals, we will each take the steps which feel right. Maybe we will be led to act outside our comfort zone.

Quaker Voluntary Action

Simon Watkins, Quaker Voluntary Action, Working Retreats Co-ordinator, writes

Dear Friends

*'God for us is a god of justice and compassion,
not a god of vengeance and exclusivity.'*

Jean Zaru

In the past two years of constraints and changing parameters, QVA have continued to ask the question 'What is our unique offering to the Quaker movement and society in general?' It's a similar question to that faced by every organisation and is just as relevant as the Covid-19 pandemic changes from an imminent crisis into a part of the background scenery of our everyday lives.

As the situation evolves, so does our answer. This year our series of online retreats have enabled participants to connect, engage with some of the key issues of our time and reflect on the part individuals can play in the ever-necessary reconstruction of peace and justice in our world.

In the most recent of these, 'Encounters with Peacemakers: Waging Peace', speakers Hanna Barag of Machsom Watch and Jean Zaru of Ramallah Friends Meeting spoke of their own experiences of living with the occupation. Jean's perspective as a lifelong advocate of liberation for both oppressed and oppressor and Hanna's as a tireless campaigner against her own society's occupation of another both spoke powerfully of the potential for humanity and courage within each of us. We are now planning the next QVA encounter-based retreat in Israel and Palestine for October 2022 and look forward to meeting Jean and Hanna in person,

Continued from page 2

security based on justice, cooperation and sustainability.

They are launching an Alternative Security Review to engage people across the country to articulate their visions, fears and hopes, with climate security at the heart of this.

Throughout the period leading up to and including COP26, NFPB members and Friends generally have continued to work together to take practical, visionary,



Quakers in action Photo: QVA

along with many others from different communities and backgrounds in both countries.

Meanwhile our last online event of the year, 'Refugee Journeys' begins on 2nd November. Led by facilitators Eirlys Evans and Christie Coho, this series includes talks and interactive reflections on the topic of refugees' experience of migration, entering the UK and settling here. The sessions aim to inform and connect participants with an issue of great concern to Friends in the UK as our government continues to increase pressure on asylum seekers through policies restricting their right to asylum based on the routes they take to arrive here.

Finally, the exciting news is that our programme of working retreats is back! Look out for details of a 3-Saturday non-residential retreat at Horton Community Farm in Bradford starting February, a return to Borgo Basino Ecovillage, Italy in March and a stint at the Refugee Community Kitchen in Calais in the spring.

To stay in touch with our plans, or to invite QVA to run a working retreat near you, contact us via retreats@qva.org.uk or visit <https://qva.org.uk>.

prayerful and political action to promote positive and urgent action. We have also been pleased to connect, through FWCC, with Friends around the world in this united Quaker concern. And on January 29th we shall be collaborating with QCEA in hosting a session on climate and peace concerns (<https://bit.ly/2ZOPWD8>). Whatever the outcome of the conference in Glasgow, there will be more to be done and these concerns will continue to be central in our work.

News from Woodbrooke

Much has changed for Woodbrooke over the last eighteen months. The coronavirus pandemic presented challenges but also opportunities that have reshaped the work of our Learning & Research Team.

We continue to live in uncertain times and as we move forward, we plan to continue exploring and experimenting. Our strategy, agreed by Trustees in 2019, was to move to offering more learning online and in Quaker communities and this has been accelerated by the pandemic. Although we will intend to offer in person events in future, we don't envisage going back to running a large number of courses at Woodbrooke's Centre. Instead our learning will be a mix of online and in person, in a greater number of places, which we hope will continue to reach Friends wherever they are across the world. In particular we have recently reviewed and developed our Woodbrooke Where You Are (formerly Woodbrooke on the Road) offer, so there are now more workshops ready to deliver for your meeting or Quaker groups, including as online or blended workshops. We hope that we will also be able to offer in-person workshops across Europe in the months to come as travel becomes easier.

In response to the changes we have experienced, including some staff changes, over the summer we undertook a review of the team which included a consultation on the skills and gifts of staff and the needs of the organisation. We have created two new roles within the team: Deputy Head of Learning & Research and Head of Communications. These roles replaced a temporary role and an existing role. Following an internal application and interview process, these roles will be filled by Alison Richards and Jon Martin.

Alison joined us on a temporary contract as Programme Development Manager earlier this year to help support us in managing the changes in our work. She brings a wealth of experience in adult education, quality assurance, and senior leadership. Jon has been Woodbrooke's Communications Manager for the last 2 years. He brings a depth of expertise in communications, particularly within a Quaker context, and has played a key role in developing our response to the pandemic. Both Alison and Jon will form part of the Learning & Research management team alongside the Director,



Head of Learning & Research and Head of Finance & Compliance.

As of 1 November 2021, these are the new roles within the Learning & Research Team at Woodbrooke:

- *Timothy Ashworth* – Programme Tutor
- *Beccy Berridge* – Learning & Research Administration Manager
- *Sandra Berry* – Director
- *Simon Best* – Head of Learning & Research
- *Ben Pink Dandelion* – Programme Leader – Research
- *Rhiannon Grant* – Deputy Programme Leader – Research
- *Jon Martin* – Head of Communications
- *Tracey Martin* – Programme Coordinator – Peace and Social Justice & Climate Crisis
- *Stuart Masters* – Programme Coordinator – History & Theology
- *Carl Philip* – Learning & Research Administrator
- *Alison Richards* – Deputy Head of Learning & Research
- *Mark Russ* – Programme Coordinator – Worship & Spirituality
- *Lynda Scotson* – Learning & Research Administrator
- *Kevin Smith* – Head of Finance & Compliance
- *Rachael Swancott* – Programme Coordinator – Community

In addition to these staffing changes, Woodbrooke Trustees have also created a new Learning & Research Committee to better link with staff in the Learning & Research Team. This will help to shape our learning and research work so that it remains effective and continues to meet the needs of Friends.

We hope that Friends can appreciate the amount of change that Woodbrooke is undergoing, and we hope you will uphold us as we move forward. It may take time for people to establish their new roles and we may need to temporarily reduce our activity at the start of 2022 in order to do this and to ensure the wellbeing of our staff.

So much has changed and continues to change and we are actively working on how we can best work together. We are confident though, that these changes will help us to better reflect the learning needs of Friends and the challenges within the wider world, enabling our Learning & Research Team to continue our mission to foster the vital ministry of Friends worldwide.

Diary Dates 2022

More dates are available on the website: www.fwccemes.org/calendar. Please send items for inclusion in the diary to emes@fwccemes.org

Woodbrooke & EMES offer several weekly virtual Meetings for Worship. Extra meetings have been added due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Please check the Woodbrooke website for the latest information: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/worship

EMES now runs regular online events:

Peace & Service Consultation

Monthly gatherings for people involved in peace and service work are held on the second Thursday of each month. More details: fwccemes.org/emes/peace-and-service-consultation. Contact jez@fwccemes.org for more information.

EMES Youthgroup

Monthly gatherings for those aged 14-18 are held on Saturday mornings. More details: fwccemes.org/emes/quaker-youth-programmes. Contact michael@fwccemes.org for more information.

We also hold **monthly gatherings for EMES Representatives and Roleholders** in the first week of each month. In January and July we run online gatherings for International Members in the Section. Contact michael@fwccemes.org for more information about both of these events.

Other Events

At the time of printing, these events were still scheduled to go ahead in the format listed below however please check the EMES website for up to date information.

2022

26 - 27 February 2022: Русскоязычное собрание/ Russian speaking gathering, Online michael@fwccemes.org

1 - 3 March 2022: German Speaking Border Meeting, Sankt Peter, Germany kevinschiefer@gmx.de or d.vosseler@bluewin.ch

20 - 23 May 2022: EMES Annual Meeting, Paris & Online michael@fwccemes.org

27 - 30 May 2022: Britain Yearly Meeting, London ym@quaker.org.uk

30 June - 3 July 2022 Nordic Yearly Meeting, Kungälv, Sweden au@kvakare.se

11-14 August 2022: Ireland Yearly Meeting, Belfast office@quakers.ie

9 - 11 September 2022: Border Meeting, Strasbourg, France border.meeting@gmail.com

2 October 2022: World Quaker Day www.worldquakerday.org/

Among Friends is the newsletter of Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation. We want Among Friends to reflect the diversity of Quaker life and experience across the Section and welcome articles, photos and news of forthcoming events.

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