



Forty-Three Newsletter

Number 553

May 2025

Oxford Friends Meeting

43 St Giles', Oxford OX1 3LW

+44 (0)1865 557373

office@oxfordquakers.org



Vigil held outside 43 St Giles in support of same outside New Scotland Yard 03/04/25

Jill Green

On 27th March police raided Westminster MH. They broke the door down, forcing entry, with no warning and no ringing of the bell. They had no warrant and indeed did not need one, in view of the Act passed under Boris Johnson's Tory government in 2023 to amend the Public Order Act of 2003.

This Act gave police powers to arrest and detain people intending to disrupt normal activities of civilians in their daily rounds or to attach themselves to buildings or parts of buildings with the intent to disrupt activity while protesting. In their pre-election manifesto the Labour Party stated their intention to repeal these changes to the Public Order Act. Far from doing this they have introduced a new Crime and Policing bill 2024-5 which merely brings in new offences such as desecrating places of commemoration or climbing onto war memorials and does nothing about amending or repealing the 2023 Act.

Following this shocking "break in" to Westminster MH, clearly a place of worship, the police then searched the entire premises and eventually arrested 6 young women who had hired a room from Westminster Quakers in order to discuss organising a peaceful protest against genocide in

Gaza and climate inaction by our government. The group is called Youth Demand. The women were all eventually released **without charge**, although one of them was detained for 16 hours while her flat was searched. During the entire time she was not given access to her phone to inform friends or family that she had been arrested or to call a solicitor.

The following day the Recording Clerk of Quakers in Britain (Paul Parker) made a statement on our behalf which reflected our outrage and alarm felt by Quakers about the raid and the police behaviour. The whole matter was reported in a front-page headline in the *Sunday Times* on 30.03.25.

There was then a spontaneous call to Quakers to gather in worship outside New Scotland Yard on Thursday 03/04/25 from 12 md -1pm in protest at this police action. Apparently approximately 400 Friends turned up for this, with a sprinkling of Friends from Oxford. Sandra Figgess and Jill Green talked about going, decided it was not possible for them, and put out a call on to the General Circulation List of Oxford Meeting to ask Friends to gather outside 43 St Giles for a vigil, also at 12md on the same day, in support of the

gathering outside New Scotland Yard. 40 people stood together, some of them passersby who joined us in support of the vigil. The community police came along, telling us that they were present to protect us from the public. We politely asked them to leave as we were protesting about the police rather than asking for their support, and they left, returning at the end to check that all was well. We have heard that 25 other local meetings around the country also took similar action to ours. Subsequently Jill was interviewed by Channel 7 (incidentally the only local TV news

station now since the BBC started closing local TV around the country) on 07.04.25 about the reasons for calling the vigil. * Westminster Meeting have hosted Youth Demand again since the raid; elders and members stayed in the kitchen for the period of their meeting to lend their support if needed.

*Friends can see the video here:

<https://x.com/TTVOxfordshire/status/1909878953923272711> [Eds.]



Photo by Tany Alexander

I've always wondered...? Garden Room Discussion Meetings starting on 20th May

Tany Alexander
Caro Humphries

The police raid on Westminster Meeting House on 27th March drew widespread attention in the [national and international news](#) from the Middle Eastern Eye to the New York Times support from

many, and discussion across the political spectrum from the Sun and the Daily Telegraph to the Morning Star and the Guardian (there is an impressive list of the coverage on the 'news' page of Friends website:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/media-coverage-of-westminster-meeting-house-police-raid>

Churches Together in England (Bishop Mike Royal) wrote letter of protest to Met Police Commissioner Mark Rowley, Home Secretary

Yvette Cooper and Mayor of London Sadiq Kahn. There were even cartoons in Private Eye and elsewhere.

Friends and supporters responded creatively with a meeting for workshop outside New Scotland Yard in London and many local areas including our Meeting (see photographs) and an excellent short video calling for the repeal of The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023.

Friends nationally are relatively few in number – but the reaction to the raid shows that what we stand for is well known, and respected.

If you would like the chance to understand more about how each of us understands the peace testimony or other aspects of Quakerism in a friendly, discussion based format, we would be delighted to welcome you to one or more of the Tuesday Night in the Garden Room discussion meetings we have planned. They will be held on 20th May; 24th June and 29th July. Everyone is welcome, whether you know a little or a lot.

After the first meeting, topics will be decided by the group:

- The Testimonies – what they are and how we use them (this will be the focus of the first meeting on 20th May)
- What do you do in a Quaker Meeting?
- Are Quakers Christians and does it matter?
- What about God?
- Quaker ways including Meetings for Clearness, Discernment, Marriage, Ministry, Meeting for Worship for Business, plain speaking...

Please let us know at caro128@hotmail.com if you would like to come, and what topics (whether they are on this list or not) you are most interested in.

We look forward to welcoming you.



Photograph by Sarah Lasenby

Oxfordshire Artweeks 2025

Rupert Booth

Oxfordshire Artweeks 2025 begins in May and the Oxford meeting is contributing (see illustration giving opening times) under the banner of Quaker Makers, where over two dozen works, by half a dozen artists and makers, will be on display in the meeting house.

The full range can be viewed during the meeting for worship on Sunday May 4th. The works will comprise both two- and three-dimensional work and the garden will be presented as a living artform that has a spiritual dimension of renewal and harmony.



The objectives are varied – to encourage public interest in a therapeutic activity, to showcase the creativity within the Oxford meeting, and to encourage visits to 43 as a form of outreach.

Those who are not exhibiting can also join in by invigilating the works when the public has access, and to respond to questions about Quakerism.

Those interested should contact Rupert Booth.

Celebrating Alan and Virginia Allport

Josie Welsh

On Sunday 27 April a special send off for Alan and Virginia Allport took place at the bring and share lunch.

The weather was kind, the garden beautiful and the tributes from both Ursula and Sue were befitting for a truly wonderful couple. Singing was performed of a song specially composed for them to the enjoyment of us all - young and old.

Here are some photos for those of you who could not be there.



Tea, Cake and Play

Sally Lawson

Playgroup Support Worker

playgroupsupport@oxfordquaker.org.uk

I wanted to take this opportunity to share a little taster of what is happening at Tea, Cake & Play, our weekly group for babies, toddlers, their parents, carers and grandparents.

The group runs every Tuesday 10 am-12 pm and provides a warm welcome to everyone who comes along to the Friends Meeting House.

The space is quickly transformed into a delightful, child friendly space with a good selection of toys to engage the children. There are trikes to try out, lots of colourful duplo, cars and transporters, a dolls house with lots of family members from babies to grandparents to play with, and a playdough table.



Children are offered fresh fruit snacks, usually grapes and their grownups are always offered a welcome warm drink on arrival and a bite-sized piece of cake!

The group is run by a dedicated team of Quaker volunteers which is intergenerational. Everyone who arrives is warmly greeted by a volunteer which sets the tone of the session. There is a lovely, warm and positive energy about the space.

There is a core group of regular attendees as well as a steady trickle of new arrivals, either new to Oxford or with their first child/children. Word has been spreading across Oxford as parents and carers attend other groups and hear about this lovely group at the Friends Meeting House.

We provide an opportunity to meet other parents, and to find out about what other child friendly activities and places are worth exploring in the area – some of our parents are great sources of information!

I thought it would be interesting to hear directly from our volunteers and their thoughts about volunteering at Tea, Cake & Play.

Here are some thoughts shared by our volunteers:

“What do I enjoy most? Well, it’s quite hard to say.... The children, like all children, are fascinating. They grow and change so quickly! But the parents and grandparents are fascinating too: from so many different countries – Australia, New Zealand, the States, Canada, France, Sweden... And they like to talk.

It makes us realize how testing life is for young parents: for example, Mum may be on a short-term university post, so Dad has had to abandon his/her job career and find some part-time job that fits in with being a carer.

Most of them are bemused by the Meeting House and our lovely garden. ‘What is this place?’ is a frequent question. And then come questions about Quakerism and about religion in general. ‘What is

religion?’ was one of the questions... So, not a ‘rest-cure’ but a couple of hours of fun and challenge – and wonderful outreach for our Meeting.”

Another volunteer comments: “My involvement with the kids has partly been because young children at play are hugely inspiring and fun to be around. Sharing the pleasure of play is hugely infectious. But I won’t deny it’s also a CV win for my job seeking effort.”

Another volunteer shares: “I feel lucky to be part of the team, to meet and talk with the adults who bring the children, be they parents, grandparents, other family or nannies, and to watch or play with the children. For the children who come regularly and over a time seeing them change and grow is a real treat. Most of all I feel grateful to have had the chance to be involved with this.”

We need volunteers to help this wonderful group to flourish. So if you are wondering if you might be able to offer something, please do get in contact and maybe arrange to visit us one Tuesday morning.

It really is the highlight of my week!



Child pushing grandmother on plastic tricycle, Wikimedia Commons. [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic](#)

May Charity Appeal Children Heard and Seen

Children Heard and Seen is a charity (1157879) dedicated to helping children, young people, and families affected by parental imprisonment.

We are committed to addressing their needs, listening to their concerns, and ensuring their voices are heard.

We offer tailored one-on-one support from trained practitioners, assistance for parents/carers, peer support groups for both children and carers, engaging online activities, fun-filled activity days and residentials, as well as practical support such as legal advice and guidance on financial well-being.

Established in 2014, Children Heard and Seen (CHAS) was founded to fill the gap in support for children impacted by parental imprisonment. With over 1,200 children and their families already supported, we stand as the only charity dedicated to serving children within their communities. Our commitment is to meet their needs, lend an ear to their concerns, and advocate for their voices to be heard and valued in policy decisions.

Children Heard and Seen embraces a holistic, whole-family approach, extending support to those who care for the child while keeping the child at the centre of the support.

Our core values:

1. Children with a parent in prison are supported during an incredibly difficult period in their life.
2. Learning is formalised surrounding the experience of the children to build a solid evidence base for research-led policy that results in the implementation of a national framework of good practice around identification and support.

3. Awareness is raised regarding the experiences of children with a parent in prison to influence social attitudes and reduce feelings of stigma, shame and social isolation.

"Two months ago I found this fantastic charity after 14 months of suffering alone with my 3 boys. I now have a **support network of friends** who are all in the same position as us, and the mentors for the children are the most caring understanding people. Thank you!"

- Lucy, mother of four children.

"I love our sessions because I just feel free to talk. Sometimes at school I have to hold back on what I am saying, or I can't say things because dad is in prison and everything. I know that when I talk to you and tell you things, you're not going to go and tell people. I don't have to think too much."

- Ellie, aged eight.

Since we do not receive statutory funding, we are solely reliant on grants, fundraising and donations to ensure that we are able to offer our support to families who take the brave step of getting in touch with us. You can donate to us via our website

<https://childrenheardandseen.co.uk/support-us/>

or by bank transfer:

Bank: Lloyds Bank

Account Name: Children Heard and Seen

Account Number: 34048860

Sort Code: 30-80-45

Registered Charity Number 1157879

Notices

OSAM Clerking Team - could you be involved?

Elspeth Wollen, Clerk to Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting, is standing down in July after many years of faithful service. Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting is the essential core of our Quaker charity, and our legal status as a church.

Elspeth is appealing for Friends across OSAM to be involved in a clerking team to replace her. The details of the role are below. Please consider whether you could take on some part of this role.

Elspeth will be fully involved in supporting a new Clerk, or clerking team, as it develops. Elspeth is happy to talk with any Friend who has questions, or might like to become involved. (Tel: 01793 845625)

Diary

Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM)

(National meeting of Young Adult Friends age 18-35): 2nd-5th May, Redland Friends' Meeting House, 126 Hampton Rd, Redland, Bristol BS6 6JE

<https://yfgm.quaker.org.uk/event/yfgm-may-2025-bristol/>

Forest Foxes (adventure in the woods, around a fire, for friendship and fun for young people age 10-12): 3 May 2025. Contact juliad@quaker.org.uk for details and to book.

Local Meeting for Worship for Business: 4th May, Meeting House

Friday with Friends on the 9th May. 7 for 7.30pm: Zen life, Quaker life. An evening exploring the links between the practice of Zen meditation and a Quaker Meeting for Worship. With Barbara Jikai Gabrys, Zen Master and Teacher, in conversation with Chris White. The evening will include spending some time being guided by Barbara in Zen meditation, before

leading on to more general discussion and worship sharing.

Everyone welcome from 7.00 for a 7.30 start.

Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting (Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs in the morning; spiritual nurture session in the afternoon). 10th May, 10:30am-3:00pm. Faringdon Friends' Meeting House, 4 Lechlade Road, Faringdon SN7 8AQ

<https://osamquakers.org.uk/about-osam/>

International Conscientious Objectors Day:

Event to honour those who seek another path in place of violence and war, with readings and songs. 16th May, 1pm, Bonn Square, Oxford

Conversations about Contemporary

Quakerism (for Friends from East Midlands, Thames Valley, Northamptonshire, Luton, Leighton, Hertford and Hitchin) 15 May, 12-1pm, on Zoom.

Register:

<https://quaker.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEkdEYurjwJGNfKs5QT2MoSeBaSnJ1ySTa0#/registration>

Britain Yearly Meeting (including children's programmes and Junior Yearly Meeting): 23-26 May, Friends House (London), and online.

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym>

Swarthmore Lecture on theme '*The Meaning of Quaker Community*' by Emily Provance will explore how God calls us to live in community. 25 May 2025. Livestreamed on Woodbrooke's YouTube channel:

<https://youtube.com/@woodbrookeorguk>

Bring and Share Lunch (food and fellowship for our whole community): 25 May, 12:15, Garden Room

Annual Gathering of Christ-Centred Friends 31 May, York. Register Mark Dibben:

QuakersinChrist@gmail.com

‘The Child as our Teacher’ (The second of three sessions to explore the gifts and challenges of all-age community in our meeting). Sunday 1 June, 12:00-1:15, Meeting House, followed by shared lunch.

Memorial Meeting for Worship to celebrate the life of Marieke Faber Clarke, 14th June, 2pm, Meeting House

Regular Events

Beansprouts Children's Meeting (for children under 4): Every Sunday, 10:30 on first Sunday of the month, 11:00 on other Sundays, Long Room

<https://oxfordquakers.org/cyp/beansprouts/>

Sunflowers Children's Meeting (worship for school-age children). Theme for May is **equality**. Every Sunday, 10:30 on first Sunday of the month, 11:00 on other Sundays, Long Room

<https://oxfordquakers.org/cyp/sunflowers/>

Tea Cake and Play (weekly chat and fun session for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups): Every Tuesday 10:00-12:00, Meeting House.

playgroupsupport@oxfordquakers.org

<https://oxfordquakers.org/cyp/baby-and-toddler-group/>



Photo by Caroline Worth

Looking further ahead

Oxford and Swindon Area Meeting (OSAM).and Annual General Meeting of OSAM charity (AGM and Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs in the morning; spiritual nurture session in the afternoon). 12th July 10:30am-3:00pm. Burford Friends' Meeting House, Pytts Lane, Burford OX18 4SJ

<https://osamquakers.org.uk/about-osam/>

Junior Gathering (for young people aged 11 to 14) and **Senior Conference** (for young people aged 15-18) are Quaker residential gatherings for young people from across the South of England. 23rd-30th August 2025

<https://fsse.org.uk>

World Quaker Day Theme: *Love Your Neighbour* (Galatians 5:14). Sunday 5th October 2025

<https://fwcc.world/worldquakerday/>

Berks and Oxon Regional Meeting Theme: *The heart of the Quaker Way*. Speaker: Ben Pink Dandelion, Honorary Professor of Quaker Studies and Director of the Centre for Postgraduate Quaker Studies, University of Birmingham. 18th October 2025, Swindon Friends' Meeting House

Volunteer service opportunities

Children's Meeting Volunteer Helpers needed to support either the Beansprouts (under 4s) or Sunflowers (over 4s) Children's Meetings during the Sunday 11:00 meetings. Please speak to a member of CYPC to find out more. We will need to organise an Enhanced DBS check and take up references before you can volunteer to work with children.

Tea Cake and Play volunteer helpers needed for our popular Tuesday morning Stay and Play sessions for preschool children and their grown

ups. Contact Sally Lawson
(playgroupsupport@oxfordquakers.org) for
details.

Welcomers are needed for 11.00 meetings for
worship on Sundays. If you are willing to
volunteer, please contact Paul Fine
(paul.fine@lshtm.ac.uk or 07854 618146)

Quaker Video (Podcast) of the Month

Roadmap to the Apocalypse

<https://quakerpodcast.com/roadmap-to-the-apocalypse-with-doug-gwyn/> 38 minutes



Are we living through apocalyptic times? If so, how can we navigate this time of turmoil and come out on the other end with a society more whole, more just, and more guided by love? Quakers may have (part of) the answer.

Quaker author and retired pastor, Doug Gwyn joins Jon Watts to explore how the “apocalyptic spirituality” of early Friends offers profound wisdom for navigating our own era of upheaval. From the nonviolent “Lamb’s War” of the 1650s to the direct action of the 1960s, and right up until today, he leads us to a vision of a grassroots spiritual and cultural revolution against alienation and injustice.

From Quaker Faith & Practice 23.01

Social Responsibility: Faith and Action

Remember your responsibility as citizens for the government of your town and country, and do not shirk the effort and time this may demand. Do not be content to accept things as they are but keep an alert and questioning mind. Seek to discover the causes of social unrest, injustice and fear; try to discern the new growing-points in social and economic life. Work for an order of society which will allow men and women to develop their capacities and will foster their desire to serve.

from the 1964 revision of the Advices

May 2025

Many meetings and events are held via Zoom. Link for all Oxford Meetings for Worship:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383304611?pwd=VkkyYzZweVVRZjRmOE1JVDBFdTdwUT09>

Please contact the Office for more details:

Email: office@oxfordquakers.org Telephone: +44 (0)1865 557373

OXFORD MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Meetings for worship are in person. Zoom connections are available only when indicated.

For more information, contact the Office at
office@oxfordquakers.org +44 (0)1865 557373

First Sunday of each month:

Meeting for Worship 10:30-11:30 (in person & Zoom)
MfW for Business 12:15 (in person & Zoom)

All other Sundays:

Meetings for Worship 09:30-10:15 (in person and Zoom)
11:00-12:00 (in person and Zoom)

Monday:

Young Adult Friends 19:00-21:00 (in person and Zoom)

Tuesday:

Meeting for Worship followed by breakfast 07:30-08:00

Wednesday:

Meeting for Worship followed by lunch 11:45-12:30

Thursday:

Meeting for Worship followed by breakfast 07:30-08:00



Spring Photo by Caroline Worth

Forty-Three is available online at

<https://oxfordquaker.com/newsletter/>

and on the Oxford Quakers website,

<https://oxfordquaker.com/>

The views expressed in **Forty-Three** do not necessarily reflect those of the editors.

Editorial Team

Tasha Alden

Sally Bayley

Michael Hughey

Jimin Kang

HEADINGTON MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Headington Meeting meets each Sunday at 10:00
at Old Headington Village Hall,
Dunstan Road, Headington, OX3 9BY

For full details see

<https://headington.quakermeeting.org/>

Copyright 2025, Oxford Quakers.

All Rights Reserved.

Please send newsletter contributions by the 15th of the month, the submission deadline.

Contributions, preferably of 500 words or fewer, can be emailed to newsletter@oxfordquakers.org or a paper copy can be left in the office pigeonhole of any editor.

For more information: tel. +44 (0)1865 557373 or visit www.oxfordquakers.org.