

In QAN's December Newsletter: An invitation to a threshing session around QAN's potential merger with the Leaveners, and a call to participate in a writing project.

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This newsletter comes to you with best wishes for a warm and happy holiday season and a wonderful new year, from all of us on the QAN organising committee! Please remember to check QAN's website and calendar at quakerarts.net for exciting events and opportunities coming up in 2016, and to add your own.

(Image: Ellyn Stokes, 2014) Want to see your artwork in this space? Please email a high-quality .jpg image (at least 600 x 800 pixels) to quakerartsuk@gmail.com, including your name and contact information, as well as any facts about the piece you'd like to share with QAN members.

You're invited to a threshing session!

QAN will host a threshing meeting on Saturday, 6 February 2016, in Room 2 at Friends House, from 1:30-4:00 p.m, to consider our future. This will be an important meeting, at which all QAN members are invited to participate in a worship-sharing discussion about what next steps we should take in our consideration of the offer that we have received from the Leavers, which we first brought to your attention in our Autumn newsletter. Outlined below please find the key points of this offer, as well as some questions to consider in preparation for the meeting. We hope to see many of you there!

Briefing Notes for Threshing Session

The Leavers have offered to “house” the Quaker Arts Network, so that we can continue to operate as QAN, but under the Leavers umbrella. This threshing meeting is to discern the way forward for QAN.

1. Legal & Administrative Issues

At present, QAN is a listed informal group (LIG) within BYM. BYM is currently proposing changes that will require LIGs to apply to become "Quaker-recognised bodies." The Leavers are currently a registered charity, and they are applying to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Therefore part of the reason why "merging" QAN under the Leavers' umbrella might be a good way forward is that this would save QAN needing to separately go through the process of applying for "Quaker-recognised body" status.

The Leavers have recently widened their objectives (under a new constitution) to: “The advancement of education, religion and the arts, by enabling participatory arts activities for and by Quakers, and others.” They have a number of staff who would be more than able to take on most of the administrative tasks currently undertaken by volunteers from QAN (appointed at our AGM). To date there has been some reluctance on the part of our membership to volunteer to assist with the necessary administrative processes of QAN as a LIG, so this assistance would be very helpful and indeed will become necessary if QAN is to continue to grow.

QAN’s aims are:

- To develop a community of Friends interested in the arts.
- To encourage and support the use of arts for Quaker outreach and spiritual growth.
- To provide a forum for Quakers to share insights about how the creative arts feed into their spiritual wellbeing.
- To explore the expression of Quakerism through the arts.
- To celebrate, publicise and document the diverse work of Quaker artists.

Therefore, a question to consider for the threshing session is: Do QAN’s aims sit comfortably

within the Leaveners' objectives?

2. QAN Programme & Activities

To date, QAN has sought to do the following on a regular basis:

- Organise networking events for members to meet each other and share their experiences.
- Hold creative workshops at Woodbrooke and Swarthmore Hall.
- Facilitate exhibitions at Friends House, selected through an open process
- Communicate with the membership via a quarterly email newsletter

QAN maintains a website that is updated with news and where members can list their events. In the past it has also:

- Published a calendar in 2014 with Quaker art work (Inspired by Worship)
- Held AGMs during BYM and Yearly Meeting and been represented at the Groups Fair.
- There have been some attempts at forming cluster groups.

What QAN is able to do is dependent upon volunteers taking on responsibility for each activity. It has no paid staff.

Another question to consider: What should be the priorities for QAN's 2016 programme?

3. Governance

QAN's members appoint a committee at each AGM. Currently the committee's roles and members are:

Clerk: Fiona Meadley

Assistant Clerk: Jill Green

Treasurer: June Buffery

Membership Secretary: Ellyn Stokes

Correspondence Clerk: (this role was vacant at the time of the last AGM, and is temporarily filled by Ellyn Stokes)

Committee members: Penny Robbins, Anne McNeill

Other QAN volunteers include:

Exhibitions Committee: Fiona Meadley, Jill Green, Penny Robbins, Chris Macallan

Exhibition Selection Panel: Mike Tooby, Alec Davison, Deborah Arrowsmith

Web Designer: Jean Chettle

Under their offer, the Leaveners would be able to absorb many of QAN's administrative functions so that the following roles could be laid down: Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, and Web Designer. The Leaveners would like for QAN members to continue to be involved in planning the programme, with a representative from QAN serving in a voluntary advisory/representative role at least for a transitional period, and with a Leaveners representative serving on QAN's Exhibitions Committee. The present QAN committee have indicated they are willing to serve for a short period following QAN's upcoming AGM (in the event that this plan is approved there), to ensure a smooth transition.

What are the roles that need to be filled for the QAN programme to continue within the Leavers?

Should a nominations committee be set up with responsibility for finding volunteers for these roles?

4. Finances

At present QAN has approximately £3,000 in its bank account. Upon merging, these funds would be transferred to the Leavers, for the restricted purpose of supporting the QAN programme. Past QAN events have been paid for by participants, so that costs are covered. The budget for exhibitions is between £250-500 per exhibition. Some of this is recouped by donations and a 20% commission on exhibition sales.

5. Communicating with Membership

QAN keeps a membership database (our Networking List), in accordance with the Data Protection Act. If we decide to go ahead with the proposed merger, this membership list could be merged with the Leavers membership list. Emails are sent out to members every quarter with QAN news.

The Leavers are planning to distribute their own quarterly email newsletters (at present these are biannual and include printed newsletters).

How should QAN members receive future communications and news updates?

We hope you will join us in February to consider these questions and any others which may arise. If you have questions about the process or the meeting in the meantime, please email QAN at quakerartsuk@gmail.com.

In Friendship,
Fiona Meadley, *QAN Clerk (Ellyn Stokes ed.)*



Call for participants

QAN member Christine Macallan is seeking artists to contribute to a writing project. Here's her request:

"I am currently writing a series of three pieces on creativity and the place of worship.

The first, focusing on the history of the arts in the context of worship, has been done and can be emailed to anyone interested.

The focus of the second piece is on the experience of the arts in the context of worship.

With this in mind, I would appreciate your responses which could reference any personal experiences. Obviously, names will not be included unless you wish.

I look forward to reading your responses. Thanks, Chris"

Please email your responses to Chris at chrismacallan@btinternet.com

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