

Quaker Arts Network

Annual Report 2020-2021



Meetings

The Coronavirus pandemic overshadowed QAN's activities this year. We had to abandon plans for a day at Worthing Meeting House in April, in favour of holding an AGM on Zoom, in May. While it was very disappointing not to see one another in the flesh and to sing with Worthing Friends and Friends in Tune, a positive aspect was that many Friends were able to join us online from all over Britain, without having to travel far.

Our committee meetings have also been held by Zoom. This has enabled us to meet more frequently, if for shorter meetings, at shorter notice, and with a lower carbon footprint. We anticipate that such meetings will be the norm, even after the pandemic finishes, and that this may enable wider participation in our service.

Experiments with online performance events (theatre and video) went well, but audience numbers were low, perhaps because they were in the summer time.

What can we say?

Sharing experience of arts and spiritual growth and witness.

We were pleased to welcome Simon Gray, a member of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee to our AGM, when he told us a little about the Committee's initial work. Friends are encouraged to submit submissions - artistic and other - through the submissions process <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qfp-idea/>, so that the Revision Committee has plenty of material to help it design a book reflecting Friends' use of the arts for spiritual nurture, witness and outreach. Sharing our spiritual experience is a central part of Quaker practice, and the arts can be of key value in this.



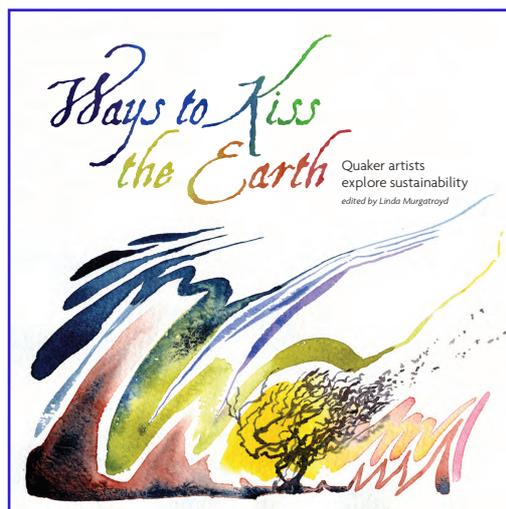
Kate Green led two online events about dance and spirituality which enabled some deep sharing of experience. They were well attended including by some members of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee. We hope in future to hold similar events exploring our experience of different art forms and how they connect (or otherwise) with our spirituality. These are valuable in their own right, enabling Friends to make deeper connections, and may also perhaps encourage a few suitable submissions to the BoD Revision Committee.

Witness to earthcare and sustainable living has also been a major theme of our activities, and in particular, those involved in Ways to Kiss the Earth and the Loving Earth Project have been very mindful of the resources used in our art-making and of the spiritual roots of these projects.

Ways to Kiss the Earth

Publication of this illustrated book, arising out of our 2019 *Seeking Routes* exhibition at Swarthmoor Hall was delayed by COVID, but it was finally published in September with a reduced print run in the light of due to the closure of the Quaker Book Centre and the cancelling of the Yearly Meeting Gathering. Feedback has been very complimentary.

This is the first book we know of featuring art works by a group of contemporary Quaker Artists. The statements by two dozen participating artists (plus the makers of a dozen the Loving Earth textile panels) make clear the links with their spiritual lives and witness.



Ways to Kiss the Earth is available for purchase via the Loving Earth Project website.

Loving Earth Project

This community textile project, aims to help people engage more deeply with climate and sustainability issues. Simple queries about what people love that is at risk from the climate crisis and how our own actions can help are at the core of the project. Creative and activities, including making textile panels, has provided space for deeper exploration in mindful, prayerful or playful spirit, and the resulting panels are inspiring further conversations and actions. This process works well not only for Friends, but also for those from other spiritual traditions and none, and has been adapted for different groups and ages.

Early in 2020 we set up a project with Woodbrooke to take this forward. Woodbrooke is doing this as part of the wider 'Climate Crisis: Spiritual Nurture & Learning' project which is commissioned and funded by Quakers in Britain. A steering group is overseeing this project, comprising Linda Murgatroyd and Sue Tyldesly for QAN, two members of staff from Woodbrooke, and a couple of others. Woodbrooke has run courses designed for Quakers, as part its work on 'Climate Crisis: Spiritual Nurture & Learning' commissioned by Quakers in Britain, and QAN is responsible for the wider outreach and exhibition elements. A Memorandum of Understanding between QAN and Woodbrooke outlines the arrangements in detail. We have also worked with a growing diversity of non-Quaker groups and individuals. QAN has welcomed donations from Friends, Meetings and others towards costs associated with the exhibitions, and is seeking further funding for this element of the project.

The lovingearth-project.uk website includes a gallery of panels, and a wide range of resources to support those wishing to participate in the project. QAN has also run regular workshops and conversations to support panel-makers and enable them to share experience: some of these have been in partnership with other community groups. Most have been online but a few in-person workshops were also held as the pandemic allowed. At the time of writing, over 160 panels had been produced and the project continues to spread.

Unfortunately a number of planned exhibitions were postponed or cancelled due to COVID . However a very successful online discussion evening centred on Loving Earth panels event was hosted by Riverhouse Barn Arts Centre in Walton-on-Thames. As Covid restrictions ease, new displays are in the pipeline and we hope to take the exhibition to Glasgow for COP 26 in autumn 2021 and touring for a couple of years thereafter; invitations are welcome. A range of possible further developments is also emerging.



Two sets of beautiful greetings cards (blank inside) are available for sale in aid of the project, and to promote it. Details are at <https://lovingearth-project.uk/resources/>.

Safeguarding

The Committee approved the following formal safeguarding policy:

While we welcome people of all ages to our events, we do not take responsibility for children and young people who participate. This is the responsibility of their parents/guardians, or of another responsible adult appointed by them. We have been reminded of the needs of vulnerable adults and will address them in our planning where appropriate.

Foundation Stones event

QAN collaborated with the Holocaust Memorial Trust in holding an online event in a spirit of worship on May 12th, to share stories behind painted stones participants had created, honouring holocaust victims. The intention is that these will eventually be included in the National Holocaust Memorial in Westminster.

Friends in Tune

It was agreed with Friends in Tune that it was no longer appropriate for FIT to remain a project of QAN, since it was now a Quaker Recognised body in its own right. We are pleased continue to collaborate with FIT on an ad hoc basis.

Membership, Communications and Appointments

Committee members during 2020-21 were :

Linda Murgatroyd (clerk)

Kate Green (Assistant Clerk)

June Buffery (Treasurer until 31.1.2020)

John Lampen Assisant Treasurer; Treasurer from 1 January 2021

Elena Krumgold (Website and newsletter manager)

Rosi Robinson

Nessa Grimes.

June Buffery And Caroline Coode stood down from the Committee at our 2020 AGM, having been active members since QAN was set up in 2013, with June remaining as trea-

sure till the end of 2020. Her Treasurer's Report is attached. Covid affected the availability of Friends to serve and Rosi Robinson and Nessa Grimes (who had been newly appointed) were released during the year. Our activities in the coming year will depend in part on Friends' willingness to help organise and publicise events to help us diversify and support a wider range of Quaker arts and life in the coming years.

Online communications have been of increasing importance since the start of the pandemic. Our mailing list has around 320 subscribers; we know that more than half of them open the newsletters (a very high rate for Mailchimp), but some are dormant. Most are in the UK, but 16% are overseas Friends, mostly in the USA.

A Quaker Arts Network's Facebook group was set up early in the pandemic has enabled many Friends to share artworks, news and views with one another (but not the general public). The group now has 160 members and the (public) @quakerarts Facebook page has over 550 subscribers. We also have over 280 followers on Instagram.

Future events and priorities

The committee has not been able to oversee internet and social media communications as actively as we would wish. Volunteers to help with our social media this would be welcome. We would love to use these technologies to share Quaker witness and spirituality more widely and to more diverse communities, through the arts.

Similarly, it has not proved possible to set up further online events or projects such as spiritual explorations or an online art exhibition, despite the enthusiasm of Friends, except at the forthcoming Yearly Meeting Gathering. These could offer opportunities to publicise a wide range of Friends' art works, to support artists many of whose incomes have been dramatically affected by the pandemic, and for our Quaker witness to reach out in this way. The further development of the Loving Earth Project also depends on volunteer and financial support from Friends and others. Please get in touch with us if you would like to help.

The Treasurer's report for 2020 is attached. An update will be given at our AGM. QAN welcomes financial donations as well as prayerful support. Details of how to give are at <http://quakerarts.net/contact/joining-and-supporting-us/>.

Linda Murgatroyd
Clerk
June 2021

Annex: Quaker Arts Network Treasurer's report and accounts 2020

Income

We received £100 for general support of QAN work, and £350 in support of the Loving Earth Project (LEP). Sales of 'Ways to Kiss the Earth' (WTKE) books formed the largest part of our income but these have not yet covered costs.

Expenses

The largest expenditure was for the production of WTKE books. Expenses for the Loving Earth Project at this stage was minimal.

We have increased the frequency of advertising in *the Friend*, hence the increased costs.

Due to Covid 19 restrictions, our meetings were all by Zoom. This means we did not have any room rentals and travelling expenses.

Summary

General donations to Quaker Arts Network are still only trickling in, but some donations to support the Loving Earth Project (our main priority for 2021) have been received.

The accounts have been examined by Barry Mercer.

June Buffery

Treasurer to QAN

Quaker Arts Network (QAN) – 2020 accounts

Opening balance on Jan 1st 2020	£4961.74
Receipts	£1915.24
Expenses	£3100.64
Closing balance on 31st Dec 2020	£3776.34

Breakdown of receipts and payments

Receipts

Donations		£100.00
Sales of 'Ways To Kiss the Earth (WTKE) books		£1427.23
Donations to 'Loving Earth Project' (LEP)		£350.00
Sales from LEP		£38.00
Paypal (return of 1 penny from set up)		£0.01
Receipts total		£1915.24

Expenses

Advertising		£768.00
Flyers for AGM in Worthing		£52.63
Domain name		£21.59
Examination of accounts		£20.00
Expenses for WTKE books		
Book design and composition (DB)	£500.00	
Production manager (EL)	£200.00	
Printing	£1069.58	
Postage and packaging	£203.01	
Advertising specifically for WTKE book	£225.00	
Total expenses for WTKE		£2197.59
Expenses for LEP		
Material for panel display labels	8.03	
Postage	2.80	
Flyers and postcards	30.00	
Total expenses for LEP		40.83
Total expenses for the year		3100.64