



# Quaker Arts Network

## Annual Report 2023

### Quaker Arts Activities

#### Overview

Poetry was a growing theme this year. January saw the first of two online poetry writing workshops led by Tracey Martin, inspired by the Loving Earth Project, and an online discussion for poets and readers of poetry. The poetry theme developed through the year, with the setting up of a new creative writing group and the publication of a Loving Earth poetry book.

We were privileged that accompanying our online AGM in March, we were able to hear from three Quakers engaged in music or dance: Mark Waistell (Singer/songwriter), Kate Green (Dancer/Choreographer), and Sally Beamish (Composer), on the theme of “Nourishing the Imagination”.



A scene from  
*The Mistake* by Michael  
Mears.

Our website Events page was very full this year; we have been able to publicise a wide variety of Quaker arts events, both in-person and online. These included events organised with individual Quaker Meetings, Woodbrooke, Pendle Hill (Philadelphia), Friends House (Euston, London), The Quaker Tapestry Museum, Maison Quaker (Congénies) and other Quaker groups. Individual Friends' work was also publicised in this way, including Michael Mears' award-winning play, 'The Mistake' about the Hiroshima nuclear bomb, and a presentation by Isa Levy (Artist/Actor/Author/Arts Psychotherapist) about her recently-published memoir. Details of these and many others are at <https://quakerarts.net/events>, where Friends are welcome to add further events themselves.



Poetry reading in the Library at Friends House to launch the publication of “Out of Excuses” poetry book.

## Projects

The Loving Earth Project, which started in 2019, continued to evolve during 2023 and two new QAN projects were initiated.

### Loving Earth Project

This project went from strength to strength during the year despite our expectations that it would wind down by the end of 2023. Exhibitions were held in a wide variety of locations in Britain, including Portcullis House at the Westminster Parliament, and also in California, France and Belgium. The attractiveness and diversity of the panels has been widely appreciated, and visitors to exhibitions have found them very thought provoking.

Quaker Arts Network published two further books arising from the Loving Earth Project:

- *Out of Excuses, A Loving Earth Poetry Book* (ISBN 978-1-7391405-2-6) and
- *Caring for the World We Love: A Loving Earth Book for Kids (of all ages)* , (ISBN 978-1-7391405-3-3)

Sales of all our books and cards have continued well.

The Steering Group decided to review the impact of the project in terms of its overall aim, which had been to help people engage more deeply with the environmental crisis without being overwhelmed. Early indications have been positive, and that the combination of imagination, beauty, practical craft work and discussion have helped most people in this respect. It has been pleasing to notice that the project has been helpful in addressing climate anxiety, including for children, by helping them understand the issues a little better, and to find actions they can take to help.

The Steering Group decided to continue to exhibit a little longer, owing to popular demand, and a number of exhibitions are in the pipeline for 2024. We have agreed to lend the French Protestant Church a group of panels for two years. They plan to develop French language materials to use along with exhibitions and events around France.



*Loving Earth Project banner created by Friends in Northumbria advertises the exhibition at Friends House.*

The Steering Group comprised : Rici Marshall Cross (Clerk), Tracey Martin, Linda Murgatroyd (QAN), Sue Tyldesley, and Matt Rosen.

A full report is at Annex 2.

## Creative Writing Group

Nearly 100 Friends attended the Zoom launch of the Creative Writing Group in October, and over 200 signed up to our ongoing mailing list. Friends shared ideas about what they would like from the group. Workshops, Networking/Buddying and Presentations were the popular, common themes.

After this meeting we started a regular programme of meetings. The first writing workshops were run by Sylvia Clare and Saskia Stenson in November 2023 and were greatly appreciated. This was followed with a variety of further online events, ranging from informal poetry networking opportunities, an expressive writing workshop, and a talk about writing for young people. Plans for 2024 include experimenting with further networking/buddying sessions and more writing workshops. Information about the group can be found at <https://quakerarts.net/projects/creative-writing-group/> and workshops are listed at <https://quakerarts.net/events/>.

The committee running this project consisted of Amanda Jones (clerk), Sylvia Clare, Cherry Simpkin, Saskia Stenson, Peter Street, Maya Pieris, and Josiane Smith.

## Fox@400

Quaker Arts Network, initiated a project, supported by the Children's and Young People's Committee of Quaker Life, are inviting Friends to create a variety of short films to celebrate 400 years since the birth of George Fox. This has been widely publicised among Friends, with guidance and support offered via our website, and by the end of the year a few films had already been made and others were in the pipeline. We plan to show these during 2024.



## Charitable Status and Trustees

We were pleased that our application to the Charity Commission for registration as an unincorporated charitable body, was accepted during the year, and we are now charity number 1202268.

The following trustees served during 2022: Sylvia Clare, Kate Green (clerk), Sean Jacke, Amanda Jones, John Lampen, Linda Murgatroyd, Cherry Simpkin (Treasurer) .

It was good to welcome some new trustees this year. Other Friends willing to contribute to organising QAN activities are invited to make themselves known and to participate in trustees' discernment, and trustees welcome further offers of service and suggestions.



Some of our trustees are feeling the need to stand back after several years' service, and we hope to make some new appointments at our next AGM.

## Membership and communications

At the start of 2023 there were about 370 subscribers to our newsletter. A year later, the number had grown to around 440, partly due to the newly-established creative writing group . As reported last year, about 200 of these had not responded to enquiries or been in touch in other ways, so these cannot be considered to be active members. As we don't charge a membership fee we have not removed people from the mailing list unless they request this, we hear of their death, or the email address is no longer valid.

The QAN communications team managed the website, email, social media and



advertising of events. These are a crucial to the effective functioning of the network, enabling a wide range of events and initiatives to be publicised easily. Our social media (Facebook and Instagram) have been very active this year, and our Facebook group has enabled Friends' sharing of news, views and small art works. We continue to be surprised, however, at how many Friends interested in the arts still don't know of our existence! By early 2024 our Facebook group had over 300 members and our Instagram following had risen to 500. We will be reviewing these roles in 2024 and would be pleased to hear from any Friends willing to help maintain the Wordpress website and other communications.

## Finance

The 2023 accounts and independent examiner's report are attached to this report at Annexe 1. The accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

The trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has sufficient funds to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The majority of income received in 2023 related to sales of the Loving Earth Project (LEP) books, cards etc. Most of the expenses also related to the LEP project. LEP expenses (shown in the accounts as restricted funds) were covered by grants given in previous years specifically for that purpose. Given this use of reserves, although there is an overall deficit of £(1286), in terms of actual income and expenditure during the year there is a surplus of £1,554. However, by the end of 2023 almost all the grant money received for that project had been spent and is expected to be used up early in 2024.

QAN will be seeking new ways to help finance remaining LEP costs and any future projects, as well as routine running costs which continue to rise in the current financial climate. QAN's new status as a registered charity should give opportunities for raising funds through donations (including gift aid) and grants as appropriate.

Fortunately, owing to a generous past legacy, QAN currently has healthy reserves of just under £13500 in unrestricted funds. This is enabling us to follow up new opportunities in 2024, while seeking new sources of finance.

The charity has no long-term liabilities.

All funds are held in cash to ensure liquidity and smooth cashflow. QAN has now transferred its accounts to the Charities Aid Foundation Bank.

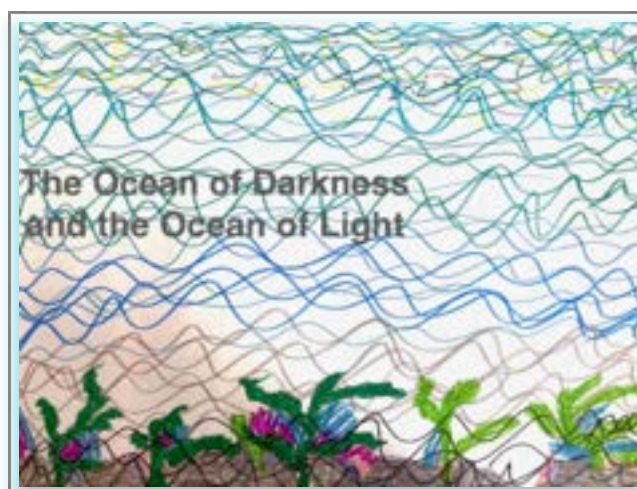
## Looking forward

2024 started well, with all three projects mentioned above in full swing. We plan further in-person events including a day-long event in Birmingham on 1 June when we will hold our AGM. We are also exploring the possibility of a presence at Greenbelt festival of faith and arts, and of producing another arts calendar for 2025.

Plenty of other activities using the arts to further Quaker spiritual growth, witness and outreach are in the pipeline, and we welcome future initiatives. We are glad to be working in partnership with a number of Quaker groups and others. However, some of our trustees are expected to retire before long, so we welcome further offers of service from Friends to enable Quaker Arts to be developed and publicised without placing too much burden on particular individuals in future.



Kate Green (Clerk)



## ANNEXE 1: Quaker Arts Network

### Accounts for the Year ended 31 December 2023

<b>QUAKER ARTS NETWORK</b>				
Year ended 31 December 2023				
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>
		<b>General</b>	<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>INCOME</b>				
Donations	3,900	251	0	251
Fees	0	0	0	0
Sales	5,000	5,284	0	5,284
	<b>8,900</b>	<b>5,535</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,535</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>				
Book design and ISBNs	358	0	525	525
Book and cards production	5,089	2,371	0	2,371
Advertising and leaflets	1,070	237	135	372
LEP Exhibition costs	816	0	962	962
LEP Honoraria	1,755	0	500	500
Zoom subscription, Dropbox	347	288	0	288
Bank charges	69	118	0	118
Postage & office expenses	114	696	718	1,415
Conferences		270		270
	<b>9,619</b>	<b>3,981</b>	<b>2,840</b>	<b>6,821</b>
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	(719)	1,555	(2840)	(1286)
<b>Funds</b>				
Brought forward	15,892	11,943	3,230	15,173
Income	8,900	5,535	0	5,535
Expenditure	(9619)	(3981)	(2840)	(6821)
<b>Carried forward</b>	<b>15,173</b>	<b>13,497</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>13,887</b>
<b>BANK AND PAYPAL SUMMARY</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>		
BANK	14,579	12,159		
PAYPAL	594	1,728		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,173</b>	<b>13,887</b>		
<b>LOVING EARTH PROJECT</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>		
<b>Restricted fund</b>				
Brought forward start of year	3,771	3,230		
Donations	3,400	0		
less outgoings	(3941)	(2840)		
<b>Carried forward end of year</b>	<b>3,230</b>	<b>390</b>		

## **REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER ON QUAKER ARTS NETWORK ACCOUNTS FOR 2023**

I have examined the accounts for Quaker Arts Network for 2023 and found them to be in satisfactory order.

In connection with my examination nothing has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that the requirements to:

- keep proper accounting records and
- to prepare the accounts in accordance with the accounting records

have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Matthew Male

April 2024

## ANNEXE 2 : Loving Earth Project Report of Activity in 2023

### Introduction

2023 was a busy year for the Loving Earth Project. It was expected that the project would finish at the end of the year, but by the middle of 2023 we already had requests for loans of panels for 2024 and 2025, so we agreed to continue, albeit in simpler form. Two further successful publications have enabled the project to reach people in different ways. The amount of enthusiasm for the project to continue, together with a brief review of participants' experiences, suggests that the project has largely been successful in its aims of helping people to engage more deeply with the environmental crisis, without being overwhelmed.

This is the final stand-alone report on the project; we expect only to report via the Quaker Arts Network's annual reports, in future.

### Exhibitions and events

By the end of the year over 500 textile art panels had been made and exhibited somewhere. Most of these have also been included in our online gallery, though photos or texts are not available for all of them. A list of exhibitions during



*One of the participants in a workshop at the exhibition in the Protestant church at Le Havre, France, shows her work-in-progress to the group.*



*The Speaker of the House of Commons discusses panels in the Loving Earth exhibition on display in Westminster Parliament's Portcullis House with Linda Murgatroyd.*

2023 is attached at annexe 3.

Highlights included an exhibition in Portcullis House at Westminster Parliament, which gained coverage on the BBC "Sunday" radio programme, and two series of exhibitions abroad, in California and in Northern France and Belgium. Other exhibitions around England, from the North-East to the South-West and many places between, culminated in three large exhibitions in London, at the end of the year, which were partly concurrent. Exhibitions were held in a variety of venues, from museums, arts centres, theatres civic halls, to churches and Quaker Meeting Houses, and garden or nature centres, so they will have been seen by a wide variety of people. We are aware that a number of other exhibitions and events have been held, by groups who have used Loving Earth materials and developed their own events and



exhibitions but have not sent us details.

Many venues also held other events. Workshops to make textile panels were made ahead of exhibitions or during them. A series of online poetry workshops yielded a rich variety of poems inspired by Loving Earth panels some of which were presented at an in-person poetry reading. Talks, book launches and exhibition launch events also offered opportunities for reflection and discussion.



*Children from the local school discuss what they can do to help protect and care for the environment, inspired by the exhibition in a local church and the Loving Earth questions.*

## Publications

Two further books were published in 2023, building on the success of our earlier books



*Tracy Martin launches the Out of Excuses poetry book at a poetry reading at Friends House, London*

*Out of Excuses, A Loving Earth Poetry Book* (ISBN 978-1-7391405-2-6) featured poems by 17 different authors. *Caring for the World We Love: A Loving Earth Book for Kids (for all ages)*, (ISBN 978-1-7391405-3-3) introduced the Loving Earth project in a way that could be used with children (and adults) of different ages, together with links to the other resources on our website. These have sold well, and the children's book is being taken into a number of schools and libraries, and shared with interfaith groups. Each of the books featured many colour illustrations of Loving Earth panels, together with general information about the project and encouragement to readers to explore the Loving Earth questions themselves.



## Finances

The Loving Earth Project is formally a project of the Quaker Arts Network<sup>1</sup>, and our funds have been administered by its treasurer and accounted for in its accounts. Annex 2 summarises the financial position for 2023.

We have been grateful that this project has been supported financially by the Southall Trust, the Edith M Ellis Trust and Westhill, as well as the Quaker Arts Network. This support, along with a huge amount of time from volunteers and groups with whom we have worked, has enabled the project to reach far beyond our initial expectations. By the end of 2023, the grants donated to fund this project along with other donations to Quaker Arts Network had largely been spent. Some expenditures had not been paid by the end of the year and so didn't feature in the 2023 accounts. The small amount of remaining funds will be transferred to the QAN general account, and used to maintain the online database of panels, website and other infrastructure during 2024. The Quaker Arts Network continues to fund some other expenses associated with the project, sharing exhibition costs with those hosting exhibitions.

## Reviewing the impact of the project

The underlying aim of this project was to help people engage more deeply with the environmental crisis, and to take actions inspired by love and without being overwhelmed. The Steering Group wanted to try and gain some indication of whether this had succeeded, and invited responses to a quick and simple survey late in 2023.



Responses to the survey were very few, and it was not a group representative of those who had been involved with the project - let alone those who had seen exhibitions or the

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<sup>1</sup> QAN is, a Quaker Recognised Body accountable to Quakers in Britain. Its accounts and annual reports are available at <http://quakerarts.net/documents>. In 2023 it registered as a Charity in its own right: Charity number 1202268.



books. Indeed, most respondents to the survey said they already had longstanding concerns about environmental change.

However, their responses, together with other comments and reports, suggested that most people who had engaged with the project had indeed taken some further action or changed their behaviour as a result. This included changes in their personal lifestyles, more engagement with campaigning groups, and/or further learning or exploration. Some people said that the project had had an influence on major decisions such as moving house; others mentioned engagement with community groups or campaigns. Many said they were more aware of the impact of their spending or how they cared for their surroundings, and changed some habit accordingly. Some people had surprised themselves by the changes they made, though not everyone found themselves able to carry through their intended action.

In general, people found the project encouraging, validating, and they came away with a stronger commitment to action on environmental issues. The combination of art/craft and

texts or conversations about the substantial issues was particularly appreciated, engaging people at different levels. Using beauty and imagination helped make it more enjoyable for people to explore some challenging issues and encouraged them to do so.



*Loving Earth exhibition at the Museum of science and Curiosity in Sacramento,*

People tended to get involved with this project either because they were attracted by the craft element of making a panel, the local community involvement of mounting an exhibition or event, as well as the opportunity for raising awareness of the issues more widely. Workshops also offered opportunities for conversation both about textile matters and the environment, especially for groups that met several times with time in between for needlework and/or research. A number of people were grateful for the gentle learning they had done, whether in the process of making panels or in viewing exhibitions. Exhibitions in churches or Quaker meeting houses which were off the beaten track were sometimes less effective at outreach than those in more public building or events, but many good conversations were held nonetheless.

Although no children or young people responded to the survey directly, we know from other sources that the project has been valuable for them, and that it has been used successfully with schools and Quaker or church groups of all ages. Indeed children often seemed to have the clearest views of the issues, and the need for action, and were particularly pleased to discover that they could take some actions themselves, which helped reduce their own anxiety.

A number of people used the project to reach out in their own community, with workshops for groups in schools, churches Quaker events, or with other community groups such as refugees or vulnerable adults. Such projects were often used either in association with exhibitions of panels, or using one of our books or videos as a starting point. The resources on our website were highly praised.

### **The Future of the Project**

Owing to popular demand, the Steering Group decided to continue with the project for another year or two beyond the end of 2023, our initial end date. However due to limited volunteer time and other resources, we are simplifying our offering and our structure, for example the <http://www.quakerarts.net/> website and social media will be the main sources of publicity. We continue to encourage others to use the resources from our websites and books, and to develop their own versions, perhaps adapting them for the increased urgency of action. We will no longer offer our own workshops (though some of us may do so as individuals) and we shan't accept new panels for the travelling exhibition. Photos of new panels and texts will continue to be added to online gallery at <http://lovingearth-project.uk/test-gallery/> .

A reduced number of groups of panels will continue to be available for exhibition, but without flexibility as to which panels are available in particular places. Exhibitions planned for 2024 include some at the National Needlework Archive (Newbury), in South West England (Devon, Somerset, Hampshire ), in South Wales, and in Cheltenham and Norfolk.

A group of 50 panels has also been loaned to the Protestant church in France (Eglise Protestante Unifiée de France) for two years, and they plan to develop their own French language materials for the project, including for children, and to hold exhibitions and events around France.



*Part of a wall of responses on postcards made by visitors to a Loving Earth exhibition. Over 2000 such postcards have been printed*

The Quaker Arts Network intends to produce a Loving Earth art calendar for 2025, illustrated with photos of Loving Earth panels, and QAN continues to oversee the project and to take financial responsibility. Future developments will be reported via the QAN communications and annual reports, available at <https://quakerarts.net/>.

March 2024



## Annexe 1 : Loving Earth Project Steering Group 2023

The following were members of the LEP Steering Group members during 2023:

Rici Marshall Cross (Clerk )  
 Tracey Martin  
 Linda Murgatroyd (QAN)  
 Sue Tyldesley  
 Matt Rosen

## Annexe 2 : Financial Report 2023

### Loving Earth Project income and expenditure 2023

<b>Expenses</b>	
Book design and ISBNs	£525
Advertising and leaflets	£135
LEP Exhibition costs	£962
Honoraria	£500
Postage & office expenses	£718
<b>Total expenses 2023</b>	<b>£2,840</b>
<b>Income</b>	£0
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>	<b>-£2,840</b>
<b>Funds</b>	
Brought forward	£3,230
Income	£0
Expenditure	-£2,840
<b>Carried forward</b>	<b>£390</b>



## Annexe 3: Loving Earth exhibitions during 2023

<b>Bournemouth:</b> Central Library, followed by other local libraries	January and February, with other exhibitions later in the
<b>Westminster Parliament</b> - Portcullis House	February and March
<b>Salford University</b>	February and March
<b>Richmond, Yorkshire:</b> The Station	March and April
<b>Ashburton Devon :</b> Arts Centre, Quaker Meeting House	April
<b>Sacramento, California :</b> Sacramento Museum of Science and Curiosity, Atrium 916, Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento, Effie Yeaw Nature Center, St. Anthony Catholic Parish Church, Sacramento Earth Day 2023	April and May
<b>Ludlow</b> Methodist Church	April and May
<b>Northumberland:</b> Alnwick Playhouse	June and July
<b>Devon and Somerset:</b> Totnes, Quaker Meeting House, South Brent Sustainability Hub, RHS Rosemoor, Taunton, Minehead, Wincanton, Street, Sherborne Abbey, Ilminster	May to August
<b>Gloucestershire:</b> Nailsworth, Cheltenham	August
<b>Sussex:</b> Chichester. Bognor, Worthing.	June and July
<b>Brussels:</b> Maison Quaker	August to September
<b>Normandy (76) , France :</b> Bénouville, Etretat, Le Havre	May to September
<b>Hertfordshire:</b> Tring Library, St Peter and St Paul's church, Tring	September
<b>London:</b> Friends House , Applecart Arts, St John's Church, Waterloo . Merton Libraries	September to December

