

KINGSTON & WANDSWORTH AREA QUAKER MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2025



Photos from our Quaker Walk and Talk events in 2025.

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In this report the trustees of Kingston & Wandsworth Area Quaker Meeting (KWAM) invite friends to read about our many and varied activities, achievements and how we looked after our resources as an Area Meeting during 2025.

Strengthening the life and witness of our Area Meetings

Meeting for Worship - our principal activity

There are five Local Meetings in our Area Meeting - Esher, Kingston, Richmond, Wimbledon and Wandsworth. Our principal activity is holding Meetings for Worship. We share information about our Meetings for Worship on our Quakers in South West London website: <https://quakersinswlondon.org/find-a-meeting/> and our individual local meeting websites. Everyone is welcome to join in Meeting for Worship, which is held at 10:30 every Sunday.

We also hold weekday Meetings for Worship at Kingston (first and third Wednesdays at 18.15) at Wandsworth on second Tuesdays and on Zoom on fourth Tuesdays at 12:30.

Wandsworth hold a Children's Meeting each week and a Junior Meeting for those aged 11+ on the first Sunday of each month.

Area Meeting in Session – our primary meeting for church affairs

We held six Area Meetings in 2025, rotating between our Local Meetings. We considered many different topics including:

- Membership
- Nominations and appointments
- Our finances
- Outreach, including new initiatives and the use of legacy money to support activities
- Premises issues at each of our meeting houses
- LQPT's Better Homes for our Meetings strategy
- Proposals for a London Area Meeting
- Preparation for Britain Yearly Meeting

Inreach - providing spiritual and pastoral care to members and regular attenders

Each of our meetings held spiritually nourishing Meetings for Learning covering a broad range of topics:

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| • Deepening our Worship | • Human rights monitoring in the Middle East |
| • Quaker Ministry and Discipline | • Defence technology in liberal democracies |
| • Membership | • The Quaker values of Richard Nixon |
| • Pacifism | • Quakers and Education: Schools and More |
| • A conversation with BYM Recording Clerk Paul Parker | • The experiences and witness of individual Friends |
| • Reflecting on texts from Advices & Queries and Quaker Faith & Practice | • Evaluating and improving the spiritual health of Wandsworth local meeting |
| • Preparation for Britain Yearly Meeting | • Modern Quaker beliefs |
| • Ecumenical accompaniment in Palestine | |

Wandsworth's lively Children's Meeting explored the history of Quakers, peace, our relationship with animals, weather/climate, and read stories from the Bible.

'Afterwords' are held at Esher after the close of Meeting for Worship on the first Sunday and Spiritual Exploration at Kingston on the fourth Sunday. A "mini Meeting for Learning" is occasionally held at Wandsworth - during 2025 topics included Quaker study and retreat opportunities, nominations process and simplicity.

We held other meetings and events to help us grow spiritually and feel more connected as Quakers, including:

- A series of evening discussion sessions (held at Wandsworth) to explore Advices & Queries, with different Friends introducing an A&Q at each session
- A course for newcomers held at Wimbledon meeting house over four evenings with support from friends across the Area. Some of the content has been captured and will be used in future courses of this kind.
- Shared lunches at Kingston and at Wandsworth after Meeting for Worship on the first Sunday in each month and at Richmond and Wimbledon in December
- A weekend away at Truleigh Hill youth hostel in the South Downs, where 40 friends aged from 1 to 70 plus two dogs enjoyed fun, frolics, friendship and worship, and joined Worthing Quakers for Meeting for Worship
- Wandsworth's Prayer Group which met month to hold friends in difficulty in the light, and the Bible Study Group which meets fortnightly on Zoom
- Wimbledon's meditation group which met fortnightly on Zoom and their singing group following meeting for worship on the first Sunday of each month. Wimbledon's book group met several times, reading *Daniel Deronda* by George Eliot, *The Glassmaker* by Tracy Chevalier, *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, and *Deceived with Kindness* by Angelica Garnett
- Social gatherings at Wandsworth in January and July, the annual summer picnic at Canizarro Park for Wimbledon Friends and 'Christmas Sings' at Wandsworth and Wimbledon

Friends from Kingston & Wandsworth, South East London and South London Area Meetings joined together for 'Growing South', a weekend filled with fellowship, discussion and worship held at the High Leigh Conference Centre in November. 86 friends, including 23 children, participated, of whom 22 adults and 6 children were from KWAM. The weekend was subsidised from KWAM funds.

Two Richmond friends participated in Conference on the Future of Quakerism and shared feedback with the AM.

Outreach – increasing the visibility of Quakers in South West London and welcoming visitors

Our AM Outreach Committee continued to make our Quaker meetings in South West London more visible and accessible, providing information to make it easy for seekers to sample a meeting and working with other friends in the AM to welcome visitors to our meetings, help them on their spiritual journey, and encourage them to stay.

Activities initiated by the Outreach Committee included:

- displaying attractive new posters outside Kingston, Wandsworth and Wimbledon meeting houses, giving the time of our meetings for worship and inviting people to join us
- publishing *An Introduction to Quakers in South West London* booklet providing easy to digest information to visitors about Quakerism and explain some of our terms and unwritten 'rules'
- refreshing the outreach website quakersinswondon.org with pithier copy and brighter imagery
- developing and researching the response of non-Quakers to a suite of advertising posters which will be used in 2026
- being interviewed on BBC Radio London (Interviews now total nine)
- introducing a 'Walk and Talk' programme to encourage new friends to get to know us better. Three events were held in 2025
- supporting individual friends across the country, BYM and Discovering Quakers with ideas and practical help

Friends also developed local outreach activity:

- Esher friends set up a table in Esher High Street and Wimbledon invited their neighbours to a vegetarian lunch during Quaker Week (27th September to 5th October)
- Wandsworth meeting house hosted an art exhibition called '*Picturing Quakers*' as part of the Wandsworth Artists Open House event (4th to 12th October). The exhibition featured artwork exploring different aspects of Quaker experience, submitted by Quakers from across London. James Priestman (known as James Pendle on stage) gave a poetry recital inspired by some of the artworks, and an evening meeting for worship was held on Sunday 5th October. More than 150 people visited the exhibition
- Wandsworth friends hosted visits to the meeting house by students from three local schools

A welcome consequence of our outreach work has been a real strengthening of the ties between our local meetings and between individual friends from different meetings.

Charitable and Community Activity

Our meetings actively support charitable and community causes both locally and further afield and friends continued to be active in various concerns including the climate crisis, peace work and Interfaith activities.

Esher friends no longer organise a monthly appeals as they donate to charities on a personal basis but the meeting has renewed its connection with the Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum .

Richmond friends supported SEEN, a Twickenham based charity providing a safe space to those facing unplanned pregnancy or pregnancy loss.

Kingston Meeting focused its charitable effort on Wandsworth Prison Welfare Trust, The Quaker Congo Partnership, Refugee Action Kingston and Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness, and held an event to raise funds for the work of American Friends Service Committee in Gaza.

Wandsworth friends supported Quaker and non-Quaker charitable causes through monthly special collections: the Peninsular School Feeding Association, MIND, Newman Holiday Trust, Widowed and Young, Prisoners' Education Trust, Smalls for All, Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group, Quaker Action on Alcohol & Drugs (QAAD), South London Refugee Association, Wandsworth Prison Welfare Trust, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and Regenerate-RISE.

Wandsworth Meeting also made donations of £200 to ~~XX~~ Quaker charities. @Mike do you have a list of these, please.

Wimbledon Meeting supported the Merton Night Shelter.

Sustainability

Each of our meetings has identified a 'lead' to take forward Eco Church during 2026.

Communication within the Area Meeting

Each of our local meetings has its own website giving dates and times of Meeting for Worship and information about events and facilities for hire. Our outreach website, quakersinswLondon.org, provides an overview of activities across the AM and beyond that may be of interest to friends.

The Penn, the Area Meeting's Google Group, continues to be our main channel of communication. Friends are encouraged to sign up to this group and to local meeting media: Kingston's monthly newsletter and group email list; Richmond's WhatsApp group and monthly newsletter circulation; Wimbledon's WhatsApp group and email list; and Wandsworth's Google Group.

Our KWAM Quarterly magazine featured interesting and thought provoking material on a wide variety of topics from friends from each of our meetings. Previous editions can be read on our Quakers in South West London website.

People

Membership

At the end of 2025 membership of KWAM had increased by two to 149. We welcomed five new members, one friend transferred to another London AM and two members died. The number of attenders recorded was 112.

The number of members in KWAM declined by 25% between 2017 and 2025 (from 198 to 149). Whilst the rate of decline has slowed this demonstrates the need for continued focus outreach and community building work.

In 2024 KWAM produced a short booklet titled '*Have you thought of applying for membership?*' to encourage attenders to apply for membership. The booklet, which explains what membership of the Society means and the process of becoming a member, remains relevant and is displayed in each of our meetings.

We were delighted to welcome Richard Waller of Esher local meeting and Emma Charlesworth and Susan Walker, both of Wandsworth local meeting, into membership at our May Area Meeting, and Philip Hall of

Kingston local meeting and John Shaw of Richmond local meeting into membership at our September Area Meeting.

Service

Oli Griffiths served as clerk to the Area Meetings, with Joan Bulmer and Mary Russell as assistant clerks. Mike Stanger continued to serve as Treasurer and Kate Bone continued as our registering officer.

Virginia Ford continued as Centre Manager at Kingston Quaker Centre.

Gillian Ashmore and Keith Walton continued to serve as KWAM representatives to the London Area Meeting Development Group. Oli Griffiths served as KWAM representative on the London Area Meeting Clerks' Group until this group was laid down.

Births, marriages, deaths

We were greatly saddened by the deaths of Friends Reg Watkins of Wimbledon local meeting on 18th March 2025 and of Eric Bramsted of Wimbledon local meeting who died on 11th September 2025. Wimbledon friends prepared a testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Eric Bramsted with contributions from across the Area Meeting.

We also grieved for Lawrence Williams and Bridget Andrews, attenders at Wandsworth local meeting, who died on 27th March and 20th April 2025.

Premises

The sale of Esher Meeting House to a private buyer for £730,000 was concluded successfully at the end of October. The purchaser has agreed to a covenant not to alter the burial ground nor the Quaker signage for the next 50 years. Esher friends captured what they had learned from the experience of the sale and leaving the meeting house, and shared the article with LQPT and with friends from other meetings considering leaving their meeting houses. They held a lunch in June to mark the first anniversary of the move to rented accommodation.

Premises management and hirings at Wimbledon Meeting are outsourced to Mindful Business Services. Wimbledon friends produced a simple leaflet to attract hirers which has been distributed strategically around the town. The meeting house was 'smartened up' by Wimbledon friends ahead of the Newcomers course which they hosted in the autumn

Planned Periodic Maintenance was carried out to Kingston Quaker Centre.

Progress was made on the development of Wandsworth meeting house. LQPT included the project in their work plans for 2027 noting that *'Wandsworth Meeting House fits the LQPT criteria for development - a meeting house that can serve friends in Wandsworth and beyond, generate hiring income, and that has a vibrant worshipping community. We hope that Wandsworth will be able to accommodate up to 140 Friends and host some LAM meetings, and we hope that it will be available to Friends across London to hold gatherings such as weddings and memorials.'* Wandsworth Local Meeting, KWAM and Kingston Friends Trust have committed £604,000 to the costs of the project and LQPT have committed a further £600,000 (from the pooled funds to which KWAM annually contributes via the quota).

The tenant vacated the basement flat to Richmond meeting house and the flat has been fully refurbished.

Safeguarding

There were no reported safeguarding incidents in 2025. Our safeguarding co-ordinator, Keith Walton, reminded AM elders and pastoral friends of our safeguarding policies and procedures at their meeting in January.

Our legal obligations – the dry but indispensable element of this report

Constitution, purpose and structure

Kingston & Wandsworth Area Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends is an unincorporated association. Its constitution is set out in a governing document which was last amended on 22 May 2022. It is a religious charity, but is not registered with the Charity Commission, being excepted from the requirement to be registered pursuant to the Charities (Exception from Registration) Regulations 1996 (as amended).

The object of the Area Meeting is the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends in the area of the Area Meeting and beyond. The members of the Area Meeting are all those persons whose names are for the time being recorded in the official register maintained in accordance with Quaker Faith and Practice. The trustees are appointed by the Area Meeting in session to serve for a period of three years. Trustees may be reappointed twice, serving the AM for a maximum of nine years.

The role of trustees is to keep the Area Meeting financially watertight, legally compliant and safe, complying with the duties laid out in the Charities Acts and having due regard to the Public Benefit Guidance published by the Charity Commission. We believe we delivered this during 2025.

Trustees and officers

AREA MEETING TRUSTEES Carol Griffiths (clerk) David Harries Peter Maple Susanna Riviere Caroline Squire	CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE Friends Trusts Limited Friends House 173-177 Euston Road London NW1 2BJ
AREA MEETING CLERKS AND TREASURER Clerk: Oli Griffiths Assistant clerks: Joan Bulmer and Mary Russell Treasurer: Michael Stanger	BANKERS CAF Bank Limited 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ
PRINCIPAL ADDRESS Kingston Quaker Centre Fairfield East Kingston upon Thames KT1 2PT	EXAMINER John Steward MA FCA 5 East Lane London SE16 4UD

Area Meeting trustees met six times during 2025. Meetings were held according to the Quaker business method. We considered the following matters and reported on them to the AM in session:

- AM finance, budgets, controls policy and procedures
- Safeguarding
- Proposals for a single London-wide Area Meeting
- Premises, building projects and the AM's relationship with LQPT

- Area Meeting Charitable Objects and donations to non-Quaker organisations
- Data protection
- Risk register and mitigating action
- Staffing issues
- Sustainability
- Outreach

We continued to follow good practice laid out in the Charity Governance Code whilst waiting for an updated code and interactive website to be launched.

As requested by BYM trustees confirmed that our charity had the following policies and procedures or guidance in place (many of which are incorporated into our Staff Handbook rather than held as separate documents):

- internal charity financial controls policy and procedures
- safeguarding policy and procedures
- financial reserves policy and procedures
- complaint's policy and procedures
- serious incident reporting policy and procedures
- internal risk management policy and procedures
- trustee expenses policy and procedures
- trustee conflicts of interest policy and procedures
- investing charity funds policy and procedures
- campaigns and political activity policy and procedures
- bullying and harassment policy and procedures
- data protection

The only areas for which trustees do not have policies in place are engaging external speakers at charity events and social media. Engagement of external speakers is a matter for discernment by local business meetings or by the Area Meeting. Social media operates under the aegis of the two Administrators appointed by the Area Meeting Outreach Committee. There are two rules for social media - no posting of political messages, no promotion of a business or service with prior consultation; and one principle – that friends to post under their own name rather than anonymously.