



The Association of Talking Friends

Registered Charity no. 299656

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31:12:2015

The purpose of the Trustees' Annual Report is to highlight the activities of the charity in accordance with the aims and objectives in the Constitution.

Trustees and Committee Members

The Constitution of the Association requires that there shall be not less than 3 Trustees:

(a) Trustees shall be appointed by Dorking and Horsham Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), (or by any body to which its functions are transferred in whole or part from time to time), from amongst persons who are and remain Members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).[Note 1]

Note 1. The responsibility for appointing Trustees was transferred from Dorking and Horsham to Central England Area Quaker Meeting in 2007.

(b) A Trustee shall automatically resign on ceasing to be a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

(c) Persons appointed as Trustees may retire at any time of their own volition or at the request of the Appointing Body for the time being.

The following served as Trustees during 2015:

Gill Coffin	appointed 17:07:2007 to 06:2015
Anne Austin	appointed 11:11:2012 to 12:2018
Jane Beale	appointed 08:06:2013 to 07:2016
Sue Thompson	appointed 01:07:2015 to 08:2018

All subscribers and readers are members of the Association of Talking Friends. Committee members are appointed annually at its AGM, and may be re-appointed subject to their consent at the following AGM. The following served as Committee members during 2015:

Anne Austin	appointed 17:07:2007	
Gillian Bryan	appointed 15:05: 2010;	Treasurer 2014 - 2017 [Note 2]
Alan Johnson	appointed 17:07: 2007;	Clerk of Committee 2014 – 2017 [Note 2]
William Waddilove	appointed 17:07: 2007;	Website Administrator

Note 2. The Clerk and Treasurer are appointed for three years at the first meeting of the Committee following an AGM.

The Trustees meet with Committee members at least four times each year. Trustees and Committee members have a wide range of relevant qualifications and experience; the Committee includes, as required by the Constitution, one member who is visually impaired.

Objectives and Activities

The object of the Association is

‘to relieve the blind, or the partially sighted, or those labouring under some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability which makes reading a strain, by provision of equipment, materials and facilities all of whatsoever nature or description to provide for audible reproduction of printed or spoken material and music or tactile reading matter’.

Members of Talking Friends may subscribe to any or all of *The Friend*, *Quaker Voices*, *Friends Quarterly* and *Towards Wholeness*. All subscribers receive an audio version of Quaker News. New subscribers also receive an audio copy of Advices and Queries.

During 2015, the Association continued to record these publications. The Royal Mail ‘Articles for the Blind’ free postage concession continued to be used for delivery.

In addition, subscribers can now receive an audio version of a number of Quaker Books that have been recorded, by sending a memory stick to the Clerk. The list of books available can be found on the website: www.talkingfriends.org.uk

Review of the purpose and activities of Talking Friends

The numbers of subscribers that had been falling for several years have stabilised during 2015 and in the case of *The Friend* have increased slightly. At the end of 2015 the total number of subscribers was 25. For those who subscribe there is a perceived preference for recordings of the real voice. The use of memory sticks and Sovereign players continue to be an acceptable way of receiving the recordings.

Arrangements for copying and distributing the recordings have changed this year. The volunteer who has the responsibility is co-operative and has a professional attitude. A second volunteer has been appointed, who comes weekly. The arrangement appears to be working well. This means that recordings of *The Friend* in particular arrive without too great a delay. The duplicator has been less reliable, needing repairs on more than one occasion. The Committee agreed that a second duplicator with greater capacity should be purchased (replaced in February 2016).

Service Agreement with Friends House

The agreement with Friends House continues, whereby Quaker Life delegates one or two volunteers each week to copy and distribute recorded material.

Redesign of the Website

The Committee has agreed that an update and redesign of the Talking Friends website would be timely, a useful way of publicising our services and providing information to subscribers and others. We have asked Matthew Banwell of Apt to advise us about this. Matthew has advised and supported the redesign of the website of Central England Area Quaker Meeting.

Suggestion to Quaker Life that CDs of Advices and Queries should be distributed to all LMs

Trustees and the Committee have asked Quaker Life Central Committee that a copy of Advices and Queries on CD be sent to every Local Meeting. We hope that this will remind Local Meetings of the necessity to include anyone who attends.

Governance

Alan Johnson reported to Central England Area Quaker Meeting, who appoint the Association's Trustees, at May Area Meeting.

Thanks are due to:

The readers without whose support the charity would not be able to function.

Stella Brinzeamu, staff member at Quaker Life

The staff in *The Friend* Office