



# The Association of Talking Friends

Registered Charity no. 299656

## Trustees' Report for the year ended 31:12:2017

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) The responsibility for appointing Trustees was transferred from Dorking and Horsham Monthly Meeting to Central England Area Quaker Meeting in 2007. Trustees shall be appointed from amongst persons who are and remain Members of the Religious Society of Friends.

(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 2017:

Anne Austin	appointed 11:11:2012 to 12:2018
Sue Thompson	appointed 01:07:2015 to 08:2018
Diana Lampen	appointed 01:06:2016 to 07:2019

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 2017:

Anne Austin	appointed 17:07: 2007
Gillian Bryan	appointed 15:05: 2010; Treasurer 2018 - 2021
Alan Johnson	appointed 17:07: 2007; Clerk of Committee 2018 – 2019

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

Sue Thompson	appointed 07: 2017
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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 also receive an audio version of Quaker News. New subscribers receive an audio copy of Advices and Queries.

During 2017, 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](http://www.talkingfriends.org.uk)

### **Review of the activities of Talking Friends in 2017**

A major development taking place this year has been the redesign of the Talking Friends website. Brian Homer has produced a clear and updated design, using Wordpress, a Content Management system which can have information added to or deleted easily. The website can be navigated without difficulty and the type and page layout are attractive and easy to read. We hope this will help increase interest in *Talking Friends*.

An appeal in *The Friend* for funds to maintain our service and continue to meet the needs of blind and visually impaired Friends has been generously supported. We are very grateful to all those who have contributed and have received an amount of over £2,500.

We have been able to fund a flyer, circulated with the Clerks’ monthly mailing, publicising our service and asking overseers and pastoral carers in particular, to bring the information to the attention of Friends in their Meeting who may wish to subscribe to the service offered by *Talking Friends*. This was sent out with the Clerks’ March mailing and has had some response.

We also plan a survey to identify the profile of potential subscribers in order to develop the service to individuals and groups we may not have reached thus far.

Among other activities, we took part in the Groups Fair at Yearly Meeting Gathering with a photographic display and leaflets, helped by James Johnson. Alan Johnson reported to Area Meeting in December on the Association’s activities. We also applied for and were granted Quaker Registered Body status at Meeting for Sufferings in December.

Alan and Hilary Johnson have spent time braille-labelling part of the audio-visual section of the Woodbrooke Library, to assist blind and visually impaired Friends to access the AV publications. There will also be a printed list of the publications that have been braille-labelled.

Our readers continue to support the Association faithfully as do the volunteers at Friends House. We thank them, Stella Brinzeamu - staff member at Quaker Life and the staff in *The Friend* office.