



The Association of Talking Friends

Registered Charity no. 299656

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31:12:2019

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) Central England Area Quaker Meeting continues to be responsible for appointing Trustees. Trustees are people 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) People 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 2019:

Sue Thompson appointed 01:08:2018 to 30:09:2021

Diana Lampen appointed 01:06:2016 to 31:05:2020

Nick Tulley appointed 01:06:2019 to 30:06:2022

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 2019:

Alan Johnson appointed 17:07:2007; Clerk of Committee 2018 - 2020

Gillian Bryan appointed 15:05:2010; Treasurer 2018 - 2021

Sue Thompson appointed 01:07:2017; to oversee Website

The Clerk and Treasurer are normally 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, sometimes by video conferencing. 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.

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*, *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 2019, 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 receive an audio version of a number of Quaker Books that have been recorded, by sending a USB to the Clerk. The list of books available can be found on the website: www.talkingfriends.org.uk

Review of the activities of Talking Friends in 2019

The Association of Talking Friends continues to supply visually impaired Friends with audio versions of current periodicals. There has been a small increase in the number of subscribers in 2019.

The Association commissioned a survey to try and find out why subscriber numbers had been decreasing: the results of a pilot survey were presented in 2019. The main finding was that Overseers in the target Meetings were well aware of Talking Friends, and confident to give people information about it. Several Overseers did not know of any eligible Friends. It was recommended that that we continue to ask Overseers to keep Talking Friends in mind.

There is a braille index of audio-visual publications in the Library at Woodbrooke, derived from the braille labelling of audio-visual publications which Alan and Hilary completed last year. They have had positive feedback about the index. Friends can access the information by sending a USB to the Library. There is more information to be found about this on the website.

The website continues to be updated periodically by a trustee. Technical issues are dealt with by the website's original designer, Brian Homer. The web address is: www.talkingfriends.org.uk.

The Association became a Quaker Registered Body in 2017. We have a link person at Friends House (currently Alastair Fuller), to whom a copy of the Annual Report and Accounts is sent.

We are grateful to all those who support the work of the Association in practical ways: the readers, whose efforts are particularly appreciated by the subscribers; the volunteers at Friends House who work faithfully duplicating and sending out the publications; Stella Brinzeamu, staff member at Quaker Life and the staff at *The Friend* office – we thank them all.

Signed