



The Association of Talking Friends

Registered Charity no. 299656

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31-12-2020

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:

Diana Lampen	appointed 01-06-2016 to 31-05-2020
Sue Thompson	appointed 01-08-2018 to 30-09-2021
Nick Tulley	appointed 01-06-2019 to 30-06-2022
Cathy Khurana	appointed 01-06-2020 to 31-05-2023 Clerk

The Committee comprises the Trustees, and people who volunteer as committee members who are then appointed annually at the AGM. During 2020 the Committee discussed the idea of all committee members being Trustees. However, we felt that the current system was working well and will continue with it for now. The following served as Committee members during 2020:

Alan Johnson	appointed 17-07-2007
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 Committee meets 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.

All subscribers and readers are members of the Association of Talking Friends

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'.

In normal times, members of Talking Friends may subscribe to any or all of *the Friend*, *Friends Quarterly* and *Towards Wholeness*. New subscribers receive an audio copy of *Advices and Queries*. The periodicals are recorded by volunteer readers and sent to Friends House. There more volunteers transfer the recordings to memory sticks which are sent to subscribers by the Royal Mail 'Articles for the Blind' free postage concession. Subscribers then play the recording by means of a Sovereign Player (a portable USB player, available on loan from Talking Friends).

During the pandemic in 2020 Friends House was closed, and no transfer onto memory sticks was possible. However, recordings of *the Friend* were still made available by a telephone service (see below)

In addition, subscribers can still 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

There were no new subscribers in 2020

Review of the activities of Talking Friends in 2020

Following a suggestion at the AGM in April 2020, we contacted Jonathan Horniblow of Talking Newspaper Services. Talking Friends has subscribed to his service which allows our subscribers to access recordings of *the Friend* by telephone. The recordings continue to be made by our volunteer readers and sent to Jonathan via Dropbox. At least 11 subscribers have accessed this service.

In addition, Joseph Jones, editor of *the Friend* has provided a user-name and password to *the Friend's* website so that those subscribers with internet access may use their computer reading software to keep up-to-date.

The Committee has agreed to reduce the TF subscription by £10 for 2021 for those who access the telephone service. Subscribers who have not been able to access *the Friend* at all during the pandemic will be offered a refund or a free 2021 subscription.

After Talking Friends' representations to the Britain Yearly Meeting Publications department, some BYM documents are now available in formats accessible to visually impaired people. This link gives more detail: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/accessible-documents>

The Talking Friends 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.

We are grateful to our readers, whose efforts are particularly appreciated by the subscribers, with special mention of Hilary Johnson who has organised the readers' rota for many years. When Friends House is open we are also grateful to the volunteers there who work faithfully duplicating and sending out the publications, to Stella Brinzeanu, staff member at Quaker Life and to the staff at *the Friend* office - we thank them all.