



The Association of Talking Friends

Registered Charity no. 299656

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31:12:2021

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.

1. Trustees and Committee Members

The Constitution of the Association requires that there shall be no fewer 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 2021:

Sue Thompson	appointed 01:08:2018 to 30:09:2021
Nicholas Tulley	appointed 01:06:2019 to 30:06:2022, to oversee website
Cathy Khurana	appointed 01:06:2020 to 31:05:2023, Convenor
Susan Steadman	appointed 01:07:2021 to 31:08:2022

The Committee comprises the Trustees, and people who volunteer as committee members who are then appointed annually at the AGM. The following served as Committee members during 2021:

Alan Johnson	appointed 17:07:2007
Gillian Bryan	appointed 15:05:2010; Treasurer 2010 - 2021

The Convenor 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, and in 2021 all committee meetings were held via video conferencing. Trustees and committee members have a range of relevant qualifications and experience; the Committee includes, as required by the Constitution, one member who is visually impaired.

All trustees, committee members, subscribers and readers are members of the Association of Talking Friends.

2. 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’. (ATF Constitution)

3. Review of the activities of Talking Friends in 2021

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*. These periodicals are recorded by volunteer readers and sent to Friends House, where other 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), or computer.

During the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, in 2021 Friends House remained closed to volunteers, but we were able to restore our memory stick service with the help of another organisation – 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 two new subscribers in 2021, making the total number 18 in 2021.

The committee met five times in 2021, including an extraordinary meeting held in March. At this meeting we gratefully accepted an offer from Birmingham Talking Newspapers for Blind and Visually Impaired to copy and distribute memory sticks to subscribers, on a temporary basis, until our normal service could be resumed. As this restored the preferred means of access for subscribers, we decided not to renew the telephone service contract with Talking Newspaper Services and this came to an end in July 2021.

Nicholas Tulley produced a perfect instruction sheet for readers to learn how to use WeTransfer to send the Friend files to Birmingham Talking Newspapers!

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 a special mention and thanks to Hilary Johnson who has organised the readers’ rota for many years; and to BTNBVI for enabling us to continue to provide the Talking Friend service.

Cathy Khurana, Clerk of Association of Talking Friends Committee