

Ettington Quaker Meeting Triennial Report 2023

Membership

Meeting for Worship continues to thrive in a spirit of joy and togetherness which is treasured by our growing gatherings on Sunday. This has been sustained by our engagement with online worship (thanks greatly to the ingenuity and generosity of Chris Wright) which has seen the return of several old Friends of the Meeting as well as providing options for Friends who are no longer local enough to find attending in person always a practical option.

New attenders (some with their dogs...) now can be numbered in double figures - all of who appear to cherish the quality of worship and return for more. We continue to have regular visits by our long-standing attenders, including Daniel and family.

We have been fortunate to welcome Friends Gill and David Grimshaw, who recently moved to the area from Warwick and now play a much-appreciated part in our reviving Area Meeting; we also look forward in due course to welcoming our newest Friend and long-term Attender, John Wade into Membership.

We have also lost several much-loved Friends, including John Schofield and John Harding – both who served as Elders to the last, before departing at a very advanced age. Friends also held a Memorial Meeting for Joan Gaze, a long-time Friend. The spirit of all our Friends remains very much with us as we meet to worship.

Spiritual development

The Meeting thrives. Our Clerk Ruth McFarlane continues to perform outstanding work as PM (as she did while a member of the AM team) and as a result our MfW for Business is both a popular and well-attended event! At the passing of our Elders, we asked Andy Fincham to follow the footsteps of our much-missed Johns. As Elder, he was invited to provide a last Friends 'farewell' to the former meeting house at Armscot (now to be converted into a dwelling).

All Friends have benefited from Chris Wright's efforts to manage our Zoom meetings online, not least when we hold our worship in the garden – complete with Avian ministry.

Outreach

We give thanks the work of Alma and John Harding whose Testimony has been included in Britain Yearly Meeting.

Noting the reassuring number of new visitors and attenders, we are encouraged that many of these are local to Ettington itself, where efforts by local Friends and Attenders at village events has enabled the nature of our worship at the Meeting House to become more widely appreciated.

Activities

In addition to participating in local events, Ettington Friends are always happy to see the Meeting House and Garden used by others. The Garden is open for visitors who appreciate our wild garlic as well as the peaceful surroundings, and perhaps the Cello group rehearsals.

Formal visits include some twenty Friends from Worcester Meeting who joined us for a visit to Armscot and the Historic Chapel Society (who learned we were a Meeting House); while local schools continue to visit us, as has a cycle tour. Friends have also revived the admirable display of Quaker History created by Iris Birch which tells the story of the Meeting House in context.

Friends and Attenders very much appreciated Sue Davies's and Robert's hospitality at Christmas, while Sue continues to serve as our Pastoral Friend on the Elders and Overseers committee ensuring that we keep in

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touch with Friends and Attenders appropriately. Very recently we have seen two publications in 'The Friend' by Andy Fincham in his capacity as an historian of early modern Quakerism.

Property matters

Chris Wright continues to overcome serious health issues to lead our work on property matters and ensure the fabric of our historic Grade II building remains sound. His barbeques are also an important incentive for labourers at the regular Garden Work Parties which have re-vamped and re-wilded our outside space.

The Meeting House has benefited from a thorough de-cluttering, and now stands as a monument to simplicity. This will not stop us repainting, and potentially refreshing of the annex space with a refurbishment to provide accommodation to increase both income and outreach.

Future plans

All who use the Meeting House are dedicated to preserving its delightful quality of vibrant continuity, and to share that spirit within Area Meeting and beyond. We particularly look forward to hosting our first wedding of the century in 2024.