



Earth and Economy



Economic Issues, Sustainability & Peace programmes from Quaker Peace & Social Witness

Summer 2017

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Investing in the new economy

Chris Walker, Sustainability & Peace Programme Manager, writes about Quaker action, solidarity and hope ahead of Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017, where discussion will focus on the theme of movement building.

Movements for social and political change are tricky. How they begin, are sustained, and ultimately succeed, can seem a mystery. We do know they are beset with tensions. Who speaks for whom? What exactly is the change sought? Feeling part of these movements can be exhilarating, but seeing them fail can sap our energy like little else.

In the past year, it feels like a small number of people with immense political power have become more confident about perpetuating injustices around climate change, war and poverty. So it's frightening to think that there is no single recipe for a successful, inspiring

movement that achieves deep and lasting change.

Yet perhaps our role as Quakers, activists and concerned citizens is to embrace this unknown. It's not our job to know how to build a perfect movement to realise Quaker testimony. Our role, perhaps, is both more humble yet more exciting: we can reach out to others, offering generosity, hope and creativity, sometimes leading, sometimes being led. This requires us to actively seek inspiration from those around us in service of collective radical change, being "open to new light, from whatever source it may come" (*Quaker faith & practice* 1.07).



Friends meet on Pendle Hill to protest fracking in the area. Credit: BYM

Somehow, like many Friends, I still feel hopeful that a broad-based social movement can change our world. Thinking about the themes of *Earth and Economy* and our own Quaker community, here are a few sparks of hope that I see.

More changemakers

Movements need people who recognise their own agency – their confidence in their skills, their ideas, and their actions. A few inspiring examples come to mind. This May, Pendle Hill Quakers invited Friends, local anti-fracking campaigners and the general public to join them in a meeting for witness against fracking in Lancashire. Stocksfield, Gloucestershire and North Wales Friends have joined others in delivering Footpaths to a Greener Life, a training programme that confronts emotional and practical challenges around low-impact lives. British Quakers have lobbied MPs on climate issues, committed to divest from fossil fuels, and joined direct actions to leave fossil fuels in the ground. We're seeing activists achieve change in different ways and in different places.

In solidarity

Movements need ordinary people to show solidarity. That means supporting others in their struggle, sharing their stories and amplifying their voices. In the UK, many Friends are part of the movement against harmful government cuts that push people into poverty. In April, Kendal & Sedbergh Quakers led 70 others in a four-day 50-mile pilgrimage from Sedbergh to the site of a former tax office in Barrow “to bear witness against the dismantling of the welfare state.”

When it comes to solidarity, I'm also inspired by the actions of Friends overseas. In the last year, many US Quakers have joined the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in resisting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Meetings made solidarity statements with the water protector activists, and individuals joined the #NoDAPL camps established at Standing Rock. Even as the pipeline progresses, the movement against it reflects movements around the world that link up protecting our Earth, demanding land rights and racial equality, and limiting corporate power. It's a protest against a pipeline, and a declaration of hope in the face of deeply worrying political forces.

Our many communities

Movements need connected communities. As Quakers, we are in a good position to support broad-based movements. Across the UK, we live in or work with diverse communities – rich and poor, monocultural or diverse in race, class and faith. We've worked with other faith groups to demand government action on climate change. Area meetings have joined public institutions, businesses, churches, and trade unions to divest from fossil fuels.

While the crises we face – of inequality, climate change, war – gather apace, perhaps so do the conditions that movements need in order to flourish. In seeing people come together into a movement that has more power than any one person, I feel hope; perhaps you do too. Speaking of hope, I'll finish with a quote from Rebecca Solnit, author of the seminal activist text *Hope in the Dark*.

“Hope is not about what we expect. It is an embrace of the essential unknowability of the world, of the breaks with the present, the surprises. Or perhaps studying the record more carefully leads us to expect miracles – not when and where we expect them, but to expect to be astonished, to expect that we don't know. And this is grounds to act.”

The Quaker anti-fracking movement builds momentum

On 6 May 2017 over 100 people gathered on the summit of Pendle Hill for worship for witness against fracking. Quakers from as far afield as Cornwall and Scotland travelled to join with local campaigners and members of the general public in worshipful silence. The gathering was organised by Pendle Hill Area Meeting, which worked hard to ensure that invitations to attend were widely heard in the months leading up to the day. Speaking on the way down the hill to BBC Radio Lancashire, Stephen Lee, of Clitheroe Quakers, and instigator of the worship for witness said “I have a deep concern about fracking and I wanted to do something about it. This is just the beginning – I am hoping each person today has got something from this and they'll move it forward in their own area.”

Over a quarter of Quaker meetings divest from fossil fuels

Sunniva Taylor, Sustainability & Peace Programme Manager, shares some good news.

More than a quarter of Quaker meetings in Britain have made a commitment to no longer invest in the fossil fuel industry. This announcement was made at the beginning of a ten-day Global Divestment Mobilisation, starting on 5 May, when people around the world called on churches, councils, universities, workplaces and elected representatives to cut their ties with the fossil fuel industry. The aim: to draw attention to the impact extracting and burning fossil fuels has on people and the planet.

Our Quaker contribution to this mobilisation was to take action to witness against fracking (see page 1) and to support area meetings that wished to divest from fossil fuels. In April, the UK fossil free movement celebrated 100 institutional divestment commitments, with Britain Yearly Meeting central funds being the first. Thanks to the work of 19 area meetings, in May we celebrated 119 institutional divestment commitments – and that won't be the end of it!

QPSW gathered this information from area meeting treasurers, who informed us that many more area meetings are also discussing how to invest ethically in light of climate change. Some area meetings got back to say that fossil fuel divestment wasn't possible as they had no investments in fossil fuels to start with. But we want to celebrate all meeting investments that are 'fossil free,' and it's this kind of knowledge-sharing that enables us to provide support where it's needed.

Two years after making a commitment to go fossil free, Huddersfield Quaker Meeting has cleaned its investments of fossil fuel companies. Meeting member Chayley Collis comments: "The process of divesting the meeting's investments was relatively easy, if a little time-consuming. We were surprised that many of the investments that we had thought were ethical were not already fossil free. We

would encourage other churches and faith groups to divest from fossil fuels and help send a signal that fossil fuels are no longer an ethical investment."

Learn more about the support available to meetings on page 9.

Support with divesting from fossil fuels:
www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/sustainability/fossil-fuel-divestment.

100 divestment announcements:
<https://gofossilfree.org/uk/onehundred>.



Photo credit: Flickr

Seven reflections on a year of the new economy

Cait Crosse reflects on what she learnt from working as the New Economy Project Coordinator in 2016.

In one year of working on the new economy project, I have had a number of epiphanies that affect my understanding of the economy – seven to be exact. I hope that they resonate with your own shifting perceptions on what our economy is, and could become.

Advanced capitalism is anti-competitive. Our economy is tending towards capital concentration – bigger and bigger businesses with more and more wealth and power. Huge profits are often evidence that competition in the marketplace has failed because it's bad for business – except those at the top. Even economist Adam Smith warned, centuries ago, that businesses need to be kept in check by the moral force of wider society.

Democracy is eroded by capital concentration

By the same token, it's in the interest of businesses to push for policies that maximise their profits. This has happened in the last 40 years as capital has thrown its weight behind elements of free-market economic theory and the politicians and media channels that espouse their interests. Billions is spent on lobbying in the UK each year and companies wouldn't bother if it didn't work.

Disengagement with political change is reasonable – but serves the status quo. 'Rational ignorance' describes the process of refraining from acquiring knowledge when the cost of educating oneself on an issue exceeds the potential benefit that the knowledge would provide. If you feel that you have very little power, and you have no hope that things can change, apathy is a rational response. But this serves those who benefit from the continued move towards economic inequality and the co-option of our democracy. We must resist the mood of hopelessness as best we can.

What's wrong with business?

Many enterprises that are run for profit successfully align with the values of owners

and workers. It's big, regulation-resistant corporations that present a problem.

To me, big businesses that pursue 'shareholder maximisation' (high profit at any cost) in our economy are like sharks in a swimming pool – it's not really a surprise if they do harm. It doesn't make them evil, it's just how they're built. Ultimately, it seems right to question whether the sharks of profit-seeking big business should be let loose in our economy, when their actions are not compatible with our values.

Revolution or reform?

Transformation through slower reform does feel possible. After all, if all enterprises were run with social and environmental objectives at their heart and owned co-operatively, we would not be living in capitalism as we know it. While revolution may not, in my opinion, be required, opportunism is – power is often reconfigured (for better or worse) in the wake of shocks to the system. When such shocks arise, we must make the changes we need.

Theory and practice

This project has revealed to me that the question 'What should we do to change our economy?' requires answers on different levels. On one level, practical policies that introduce immediate changes, like a living wage income, are important for credibility and those they affect.

But then there's also the answer that addresses what we would need to do to get decision makers to implement these changes. This is a skill in its own right, concerned with understanding power, social change and campaigning. To create the new economy we must concern ourselves with gaining understanding at both levels.

On expertise and economic change: how much do we need to know?

Our new economy booklets are written by people who are experts in their fields, but I am myself not a trained economist. I've experi-

enced self-doubt as I recognise the limits of my understanding in the face of genuine economic complexity. At the same time, much economic discourse is designed to exclude us, despite the fact that most economic decisions come down to value judgements that we're all capable of making. But even so, I've found myself craving the reassurance of experts to validate ideas.

So how much do we need to know about economics before we challenge the status quo? The new economy project exists because many Friends feel a properly discerned destination is helpful before embarking on action for economic change.

3,000 booklets later: new economy reading groups take off

Alison Prout, New Economy Project Manager, reviews the impact of the new economy booklets.

When QPSW began working on the new economy project, we hoped to help meetings to develop ideas around what a new, effective, alternative economy could be. We set about generating key principles for a new economy, a process that was exciting and extensive; all meetings were invited to contribute. The ten principles that emerged gave us topics to explore in seven detailed booklets, with questions for reflection and discussion.

Friends have received the project with energy and enthusiasm. As of April 2017 we have distributed 3,000 copies of the new economy booklets to 36 reading groups around the country.

Digital copies of the first four booklets are available on our website at www.quaker.org.uk/neweconomy. Details of how to request paper copies and session plans for the reading groups are also available there.

We are already hearing from reading groups about how concerns are developing through these new economy discussions. As groups develop and emerge we grow closer to devising powerful forms of witness around the new economy.

If your meeting is working through a concern around the new economy or another topic

As I step back, I look for campaigns and movements that create practical changes now but which I also feel are likely to prepare the ground for longer-term radical changes. For me, getting workers on corporate boards, local renewable energy projects, Local Exchange Trading Systems, and the Transition movements are all examples of such projects. However much we theorise about future possibilities, we will always be working in the realm of imagination and uncertainty. At some point we need to act.

After working for QPSW, Cait has been inspired to travel the UK to visit real examples of the new economy in action and write about her experiences.

raised through these groups, turn to page 9 to read about the various forms of support that QPSW can offer.

Feedback from Friends

"I think the first two booklets are excellent – the first one, in particular, couldn't be bettered. You have done an amazing job in summarising a gamut of complicated ideas and arguments."
Ivan Hutnik, Guildford Quaker Meeting

"I really appreciated the booklets. They were well written, the right size and very useful."
Eoin Mccarthy, Malvern Quaker Meeting

"The session plan [for the reading group] was really splendid. I needed hardly any time to prepare."
Luzie Wingen, Norwich Quaker Meeting

"The booklets reasonably condense the very complex topic without loss of essential detail. I admire the inclusion of ideas, examples and brave policy opinions. I'm not aware that there is anything like it. I'm going to use the material at a non-religious discussion that I go to, as some outreach."
Bob Rogers, Sutton Quaker Meeting

Now open: sustainability and new economy grants

Maya Williams, Economics, Sustainability & Peace (ESP) Network Coordinator, shares news of our latest round of project funding.

For some projects a little bit of money goes a long way. Every year the Economics, Sustainability & Peace subcommittee of Quaker Peace & Social Witness assigns sustainability grants to Quaker-run or Quaker-supported projects that support sustainability or the new economy. If you are thinking about applying for a grant get in touch, as I can work with you to develop your idea and make sure you include all the information needed ready for the committee.

Here are some of the projects that we funded this year to inspire you:

Footpaths for a greener life training
Members of each local meeting in Gloucestershire are getting trained to facilitate the 'Footpaths to a greener life' programme, a community carbon-reduction course initiated by Transition Leicester. Friends at Gloucestershire Area Meeting hope that, following the training, each local meeting will run the course again within their wider community.

Community-owned energy
Airton Quakers applied for a grant to enable local Quakers to connect with and support their local community energy project. The money was granted to support the project to reach and connect with the wider community through workshops, films and discussion.

Little Footsteps workshops
Central England Quakers have been part of the creation of 'Footsteps: Faiths for a low carbon future'. As part of Footsteps, a week of workshops was run in the summer of 2016 for 8- to 14-year-olds to explore how all faiths can help protect the environment.

The group has received a grant to build on the success of last year's workshops and to run another week of events later on this year.

Workshops on aligning business models to Quaker values

Malton Quaker Meeting supported one of their members to apply for a grant and run a series of workshops looking at the legal structures of different Quaker organisations. The workshops aim to meet the needs of Friends seeking a general interest in business, and Friends who are running or planning to run their own businesses.

Why do we have
food banks
in a **rich**
country?

An Initiative of Manchester & Warrington Social Justice Group



Find the application form and guidance notes online at quaker.org.uk/our-work/grant-making/sustainability-economy.

Application deadline: 3 October 2017.

Image: an example of how grants can be used to publicise your cause effectively.

Responding to climate change through faith and science

Sunniva Taylor, Sustainability & Peace Programme Manager, reports back from an interfaith conversation with Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scientists.

It will only take four more years for global temperature to go above the 1.5°C rise that countries agreed to “pursue efforts” to stay below in Paris negotiations last year – unless carbon emissions are rapidly reduced. That’s the conclusion of research by Carbon Brief, based on information from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). That 1.5°C rise in temperature translates into damage to people and ecosystems: disrupted seasons ruin crops, permafrost releases methane as it melts, and sea levels rise, washing away homes.

Keeping the promise of cutting emissions is central to ensuring a just response to climate change. The fact that missing the 1.5°C target seems likely does not make it inevitable. But facts alone are not enough to make the change necessary to keep temperature rise to this level. Data needs to be turned into action in our communities. This is why at the beginning of this year Britain Yearly Meeting and Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) hosted two lunch meetings between the IPCC and faith representatives in Britain.

The IPCC is the international body for assessing climate change science. Its reports provide the data that underlies UN Climate Conference negotiations, and government policies. While the IPCC collates research and highlights areas of well-established understanding, it does not do its own research, and nor does it advocate for particular outcomes. It is up to governments and others, including faith groups, to translate the analysis into real change. Yet governments may choose to ignore IPCC findings. For this reason, citizen action is critical to securing ambitious climate policies. Faith groups give voice to action with a moral call to conscience.

I attended these informal meetings as part of the Quaker representative delegation, and we found collective value in having conversations with scientists working for the IPCC, to better understand the science. These meetings were

also an opportunity for faith representatives to deepen our understanding about the role of faith groups in tackling the challenge that the science presents, and to discuss further collaborative actions. Consensus formed within the group: our faith groups bring strength to people, helping them to confront the fear that climate change can provoke, as well as in holding members of the community to account in taking appropriate action. Perhaps a useful thing we can do as Quaker meetings is connect with other local faith groups to talk about how we can collaborate on a community response to climate change.



BYM staff meet with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change interfaith group. Credit: BYM

“While technical fixes may address some symptoms, they may not address human behaviours at the root cause of climate change, behaviours often exacerbated by economic and political priorities. Faith communities offer an empowering voice of hope over fear, of compassion over indifference, and urgent and fair action as a moral obligation.”

Jonathan Woolley, QUNO Geneva Director

QUNO regularly attends global climate negotiations and engages in ‘quiet diplomacy’ work with a diverse group of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiators.

News from Holyrood

Mairi Campbell-Jack, Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer, reports on the work of Quakers in Scotland

This spring the Scottish Government ran a consultation on whether to continue its moratorium on fracking. Britain Yearly Meeting submitted a response that positively supports a ban on the practice, as did many Friends in Scotland. Once the consultation has been reviewed, a bill on the matter may be tabled in the Scottish Parliament. Meanwhile, Claudia Beamish MSP has tabled a member's bill that calls for a ban on fracking. This is expected to go through the same committee process as a government bill. Quakers in Scotland who are moved to support this anti-fracking legislative work will have opportunities to do so.

A number of websites have published reports on this anti-fracking work, including the *Clitheroe Advertiser and Times*. Friends of the Earth Scotland and Greenpeace mentioned it on social media, and prominent Quaker Ben Pink Dandelion was interviewed on the topic by BBC Radio Lancashire.

In October last year, the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group, a committee of General Meeting for Scotland, ran a successful event at Edinburgh's Radical and Independent Book Fair entitled 'Creating a Just Scotland'. Richard Murphy, Andy Wightman MSP and Leslie Riddoch spoke on land reform, tax and Scandinavian economic models.

In April the committee organised a follow-up seminar chaired by the head of Christian Aid Scotland, Sally Foster-Fulton, and attended by think tanks, academics and an MSP. Attendees discussed practical steps that could be taken to create a fairer taxation system in Scotland. Several exciting ideas came out of these discussions; these will be investigated further by the committee as it takes forward work on social and economic justice.

Contact me at mairic@quaker.org.uk if you would like to support Quaker work in Scotland.

Young Quakers experience sustainable living

Quakers aged 12 to 17 joined together for five days of communal living at Embercombe, a community-run retreat for leaders located in Devon. The stay, organised by the children and young people's work staff team at Friends House, was designed so that each task was purposeful and contributed to the community's sustainable living.

The 19 young Quakers chopped wood, tended to the allotments, and made pizzas for 60 people, including a group of refugees from North Africa who visited that day.

Each day began with meeting for worship and closed with an epilogue. Participants took each day's work as an opportunity to reflect on a different Quaker testimony and the person they want to be in the world. There was also plenty of space for play and laughter!

Learn more about the trip at the CYP website: yqspace.org.uk/embercombe-2017.



Embercombe in their own words:

"Since being at Embercombe I have decided to start my own vegetable garden."

"Embercombe was really inclusive and age didn't separate us. It was really helpful how we had worship every morning to think about the testimonies and epilogue to reflect. It was really powerful to worship with people around your age rather than old people."

"The intro to each testimony ... helped me to reflect on my spirituality and beliefs. I feel like I have developed in speaking and getting stuff done and think I can actually do things."

Many hands make light work

Friends who wish to take action but aren't sure where to start can get support from Maya Williams, our Economics, Sustainability & Peace (ESP) Network Coordinator. Here she writes about the help available.

Three years ago I joined the ESP team as Network Coordinator, and in that time a number of meetings have moved from identifying issues to developing concerns and enacting witness. In each case, I work to offer support specific to their needs. I come from a Quaker background, having grown up attending Swindon meeting, then Bradford when I went to university. Nowadays I am the resident Friend at Hampstead meeting. My varied experiences help me now as I assist different meetings in developing different paths towards climate and economic justice.

Friends come to us to develop concerns into witness, and help their actions resonate at a local and national level. It doesn't matter whether you are taking action as an individual Quaker or if your meeting has come to its own discernment. Either way, as Network Coordinator, I am here to offer support.

What we do

As a first point of contact for many Friends taking action on climate or economic justice, I can share news of how other groups have approached similar actions, and who else may be working on similar issues.

Friends who are interested in spreading the word about their actions to a wider Quaker network are often in touch to write articles for the 'Our Stories' section of the Quaker website. Once they're up we share these on social media and in our monthly emails. We have lots of information on our website that is specific to Economics & Sustainability – find out more at www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability and www.quaker.org.uk/economics. These pages set out the spiritual basis for the work, provide resources for action, and list opportunities for you or your meeting to get involved.



Maya Williams (left), taking a stance on Pendle Hill. Credit: BYM

Each month the ESP team sends out an email to everyone who has asked to be kept in touch with our work. These emails provide updates on different campaigns that staff or Friends are working on, stories from Friends, and opportunities for individuals or meetings to take action. We want it to be a platform for Friends, so if you would like us to share something please get in touch.

Our ability to network as a community strengthens us. For example, a Friend who is interested in the citizen's income recently got in touch, and she is now linked up with five or six other Friends who shared her passion for the topic.

Support can come through training that develops effective witness. Each year the

Economics, Sustainability & Peace team offers workshops to develop skills and knowledge, at local and area meetings, and also at Yearly Meeting. Alongside other Quaker Peace & Social Witness teams we also run the yearly Quaker Activist Gathering, creating a space for focus on tactics, skills and opportunities. The next Quaker Activist Gathering will be in London on Saturday 14 October. 'Like' the Sustainable Quakers Facebook page to get updates about the day: www.facebook.com/sustainablequakers.

What if I want to act, but need support?

Get started by trying one (or all!) of the following:

- get tailored advice. Contact me for advice that fits your context. We can email, speak on the phone, or I can even come and visit you and your meeting to help you navigate your way to making your desired activity happen.
- tell us your stories. Even if you don't need help, let us know what you're up to so we can share the news or connect you with others who are interested in the same topic.
- share resources with your meeting. Quaker Peace & Social Witness has created a series of printable toolkits that contain detailed tips to help with organising an effective action. Have a look online at www.quaker.org.uk/toolkit-for-action.

Those are the basics; support varies from case to case. Recently I have supported Pendle Hill Area Meeting with its anti-fracking worship for witness, and Friends from Kendal and Sedbergh with their walk for welfare for all. When individual Friends experience challenging circumstances – for example, being arrested for taking direct action – there are things I can do to help.

There is a huge amount of witness across the yearly meeting on economics and sustainability issues, and I am inspired by it every day. Get in touch with me, as a Friend or as a representative for your meeting. I would be privileged to help.

Email: mayaw@quaker.org.uk; telephone: 020 7663 1056.

On the next page are some examples of support I have provided to meetings.



Friends climbing Pendle Hill for a meeting for witness for worship against fracking. Credit: BYM

Quaker Equality Week in Manchester and Warrington

Friends in Manchester and Warrington wanted to support Friends across the country to witness to our testimony to equality, with a focus on economic equality. They hoped this would happen through vigils and similar events happening at a similar time.

Support given

Regular conversations to help refine plans and messages.

Distributing resources and getting posters produced.

Promoting the initiative through Britain Yearly Meeting's social media and newsletters.

'Breaking Up the Banks' with London Quakers

London Quakers held a day conference on the theme of 'Breaking up the Banks'. Since then they have been working on how to prioritise and take action on some of the ideas generated on the day.

Support given

Attending and helping out at meetings.

Helping organisers identify next steps and access resources.

Linking the group to the Turning the Tide Programme.

Campaigning for a Living Wage with Lancaster Quakers

Friends in Lancaster have been running the Quaker Living Wage campaign for two years, supporting area meetings and other Quaker organisations to become accredited living wage employers.

Support given

Connecting the project to other Quaker economic equality work.

Posting the 'Living Wage Pack' out to meetings.

Sharing campaign updates through newsletters and social media.

Messages from Pendle Hill

On the windy summit of Pendle Hill, we asked some of those in attendance to share a belief, or why they chose to attend.

Helen Drewery, Head of Witness & Worship



Others Friends share why they attended the Pendle Hill worship for witness:

“I was very pleased to be there. I was at a fracking site near Blackpool recently, which was a very sobering experience. Not least seeing the level of policing that was being employed, to suppress any kind of protest. Apart from anything else, what’s going on in Lancashire around fracking feels like an attack on democracy, in many ways.”
Phil Chandler, Lancaster Quakers

Stephen Lee, event organiser, Clitheroe Quaker Meeting



“I attend Friends House Local Meeting, and we were told some weeks ago that the government has licensed fracking in a variety of places including Pendle Hill and I was very moved. Part of testimony as Quakers of course is sustainability, and fracking, in my opinion, is very counter to that.”
Alex, Friends House Local Meeting.

Sign up to Earth and Economy monthly e-updates at bit.ly/earthandecconomy, or contact Maya Williams on 020 7663 1056 or at mayaw@quaker.org.uk. Find us on Facebook (SustainableQuakers) or on Twitter @EandEquaker.