



Quaker Peace  
& Social Witness

## QUAKERS IN BRITAIN AND THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

### BACKGROUND

In 1994 Yearly Meeting in Britain was seeking to rediscover the Quaker social testimony and to reapply the Quaker peace testimony in our own lives. The first National Lottery draw took place on Saturday 19 November 1994 and rapidly became an established fact of life in this country. It was being widely advertised to players and the public as a source of funds for 'good causes'. The amount of money from ticket sales used to pay the operating costs, provide prizes, and paid in tax to the Treasury, was given less publicity.

A widespread consultation was undertaken in the Yearly Meeting about the National Lottery. There was a clear and united sense in the minutes of Preparative and Monthly Meetings that long-term damage would be done to society through this state-sponsored promotion of gambling, and that the proper funding of public and charitable projects should not be dependent upon it.

Meeting for Sufferings recognised that many individual Friends would find themselves facing difficult decisions about whether or not to seek, or accept, National Lottery funding for work close to their hearts. The first public statement against the National Lottery was made by Meeting for Sufferings in 1995, together with Guidance to Friends prepared by Quaker Social Responsibility & Education (QSRE).

Minute 5 of Meeting for Sufferings, November 1995, reads in part: "We reaffirm our traditional position on gambling and confirm our opposition to the National Lottery. We confirm that we shall not seek any grants from the Lottery, and we ask the Recording Clerk to ensure that our committees and local meetings are informed of this position. We are pleased to hear that our shares in De La Rue, a member of Camelot, have been sold."

QSRE Central Committee became increasingly aware that many Friends found balancing the Quaker testimony as expressed in the original BYM Statement and the subsequent QSRE Guidance to Monthly and Preparative Meetings, was in conflict with their witness to other testimonies in areas of social action. It therefore set up a group to look at the impact of National Lottery Charities Board Funds upon Friends' lives and work in order to see whether there was need for new guidance to Friends struggling with the challenges NLCB funds present to living out their testimonies.

The result of this work was the publication *Role Over? National Lottery Funding and the Quaker testimony against gambling*.<sup>1</sup> The book includes the history of the Quaker testimony against gambling, other concerns about the National Lottery, and personal experiences of Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting trying to balance the Quaker testimony against gambling with the benefits of National Lottery funding for 'good causes'.

A second public statement was issued in 1996 and a revised version of the statements was made by Meeting for Sufferings in 2004 on the tenth anniversary of the creation of the National Lottery.

## **WHY QUAKERS OPPOSE THE NATIONAL LOTTERY**

Friends' testimony against gambling is rooted in concern for the moral and spiritual well-being of individuals and of society. From early days, gambling has been seen as inimical to this because it engenders greed, covetousness and sloth. It is also perceived as an example of a minority of people benefiting from the hopes and fears of a less well-off majority. This is at odds with Quaker notions of social justice and right sharing of resources.

Concern about the spread of gambling is not new: it was being referred to in Quaker writing as early as the 17th century. Friends were urged by Yearly Meeting not only to abstain from gambling themselves but actively to oppose it. Gambling was seen as one of a number of distractions from the spiritual journey, rather than something uniquely to be avoided. It was however equated with other forms of speculative dealing to the extent that such behaviour in business matters was a cause for 'disownment'.

Today's Book of Discipline (Quaker faith and practice, 5th edition) retains guidance on the matter of gambling. It arises specifically in '*Advices and Queries*' para. 39 and in the section on '*Gambling and speculation*' in chapter 20. Other paragraphs show the both the traditional linkage of gambling and other forms of speculation, and the impact of personal actions upon the community.

A particular reason for opposition to the National Lottery is its prevalence in society and the way it has institutionalised gambling. It is widely advertised, available in numerous places as well as on the Internet, and the weekly draws are given television, radio and newspaper coverage.

Distribution to 'good causes' of the money generated by sale of tickets is also widely publicised – but the amount of money from ticket sales used to pay the operating costs, provide prizes, and paid in tax to the Treasury is less well advertised. Money raised through gambling on the National Lottery now affects almost every area of our lives: charitable and community projects, arts in all its forms, sports, heritage buildings and sites and, via the Treasury, public services including health, education and the environment.

When the National Lottery was first proposed the government gave strong assurances that Lottery funding would not be a replacement for state funding. Indirectly, through the tax paid to the Treasury, and directly through grants made from the distribution bodies, National Lottery money is used to fund services, facilities and social provision many of us assume are paid for through the taxation system.

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<sup>1</sup> Published by Quaker Peace & Social Witness. February 2004.

# **FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT: QUAKER POSITION ON STATE-SPONSORED GAMBLING, 1995**

## **Introduction**

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain has today strongly affirmed their 350-year stand against games of chance and adopted this statement on the National Lottery and public life. It is the outcome of a widespread consultation amongst members which was set in motion nine months after the launch of the National Lottery.

## **Reasons for Opposition**

Quakers are totally opposed to the promotion of a large-scale lottery by government for the following reasons:

- It fosters the attitude that it is right to hope for something for nothing.
- It is a misuse of resources when many basic human needs are not fully met.
- It promotes an addiction to gambling, exacerbated by the addition of Instant Game Scratch cards to the Scheme.
- It increases the gross inequality between the majority of people and a small number of multimillionaires.
- It encourages the belief that fulfillment and happiness depend upon riches.

## **Quaker Action**

- Quakers will continue to press the government to fulfill its responsibilities for social and economic welfare through normal public institutions.
- The Religious Society of Friends will not itself seek any grants from the National Lottery.
- The Society is divesting itself of shares held in the member companies of Camelot.

## **Work with other Churches**

The Religious Society of Friends wishes to see the National Lottery ended. However, in the short term, Quakers will press, along with those of other Churches and organisations, for the following changes:

- Top prize limit to be £1 million.
- No roll-over payments. but an additional payment direct to the National Lottery Charities Board.
- Withdrawal of Scratch cards, at least until gambling effects are known.
- A ban on television advertising of the National Lottery, particularly as a safeguard against gambling by children and young people.

- Outlets confined to controlled premises to pre-empt deregulation pressures from other parts of the gaming industry.
- Establishment forthwith of a Gambling Research Council to provide facts on effects of present Scheme.
- Full support for those who seek to cure their addiction to National Lottery gambling, paid for from income to Camelot.
- Transfer of the licence to a not-for-profit organisation at the end of the Camelot contract.

Quakers, who have no priests, remind each other of their faith responsibilities by this Advice: '*Consider which of the ways to happiness offered by society are truly fulfilling and which are potentially corrupting and destructive... Resist the desire to acquire possessions or income through unethical investment. speculation or games of chance.*'

Janet Scott, Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings, November 1995

## **GUIDANCE TO MONTHLY AND PREPARATIVE MEETINGS REGARDING FUNDING FROM THE NATIONAL LOTTERY, 1995**

### **Rediscovering our social testimony**

Friends individually and in Meetings are asked to give serious consideration to Advices 38, 39 and 34 in relation to the National Lottery. Also to sections 20.61-63 In Quaker Faith & Practice.

The introduction and promotion of the National Lottery has come at a time when Britain Yearly Meeting is engaging with an exercise on rediscovering the Quaker social testimony and reapplying the Quaker peace testimony in our own lives. The impact of the National Lottery has provided a clear focus for re-testing traditional Quaker testimony on gambling, which has now been re-expressed for present times. There is more searching to be undertaken.

Two or three decades ago Friends felt they were working with the grain of society towards the Kingdom; now there is rightly an increasing sense that we have no option but to stand against the direction of change. We are being brought closer to the experience of early Friends with their consistent distinction between what the world suggested and the voice of the spirit of Christ. There are stirrings amongst us of a more prophetic response to the world as it is which may foster a conviction that we need a social testimony for present times. Our task now is to find ways of witnessing faithfully to it.

### **No applications for the Yearly Meeting's own work**

'We reaffirm our traditional position on gambling and confirm our opposition to the National Lottery. We confirm that we shall not seek any grants from the lottery, and we ask the Recording Clerk to ensure that our committees and local meetings are informed of this position.'

*Extract from Minute 5 of Meeting for Sufferings, November 1995*

## **Autonomous Quaker community projects**

Quaker community projects independent of the structures of the Society face very difficult decisions. They will want to be open to the force of our corporate rejection of the National Lottery as an institution; but, as Friends involved in non-Quaker community groups, they will also be aware of the pressing needs of the individuals and groups with whom they are working.

Some independent Quaker charities, including the Leaveners and Friends Therapeutic Community Trust (Glebe House), Cambridgeshire, have already come to a clear and bold position against the National Lottery, based on Quaker principles. On the other hand, the Elizabeth Fry Young Offenders Trustees (Acacia Hall) have become clear that the project's innovative approach is an expression of Quaker understanding on punishment and non-violence, and that an element of National Lottery money could enable timely pioneering work to be attempted.

Friends are asked to uphold and respect the decisions of all Quaker groups who have had to wrestle deeply, or will do so, with the dilemma of applying for National Lottery money, whether the outcome is to apply for or to reject such potential income. Both prayerful and practical support are required of us, the latter by increased giving to any independent Quaker charitable or voluntary organisation that has foregone National Lottery funding.

## **Working for non-Quaker organisations**

Many Friends work for non-Quaker organisations, in either a paid or voluntary capacity. If the question of applying for National Lottery Funds arises, are we able, if we think it is wrong to apply, to express our views calmly but cogently, while at the same time accepting that the group's decision will be made by people who may not share our views?

## **Our responsibilities to God and our neighbour may mean making an unpopular stand**

How do we seek to apply the Quaker testimonies on gambling and the right sharing of resources? Are we taking every opportunity to register our standpoint, with a willingness to work for alternative means of meeting human needs which are just and fair?

Many Monthly Meetings have affirmed that the National Lottery is an unacceptable substitute for responsible economic, fiscal and social policy: on its current huge scale, it gives powerful evidence that parliament is not taking seriously enough its responsibility for the corporate life of the nation. We must not shrink from the time and effort that citizenship requires of us.

## **Friends as Individuals**

We should be mindful of all that connects our lives to the nature and practice of the National Lottery. Many Friends participate in smaller-scale games of chance through charity or community fund-raising. The distinction of scale is significant. The motivation, however, may contain similarities as well as differences.

Through our insurance and pension funds and in other ways, most of us are connected to investments which are organised to increase as much as possible, and do regularly increase faster than either price or wage inflation. Windfall gains are becoming part of the financial scene. We need to honestly consider these realities and our motivations if we are to be 'clear' in our approaches to others on the National Lottery.

## **Heritage grants and historic meeting houses**

Grants from the National Heritage for repairs of Grades I and II listed historic Meeting Houses are intended to be separate from the National Lottery (equivalent Board is the National Heritage Memorial Fund). Meetings making application to National Heritage are asked to state, their position on the National Lottery money, requesting publicly-channelled funds only. This will help to ensure adherence to the government's expressed principle that National Lottery grants do not take the place of existing grants ("additionality").

## **Condemning the National Lottery, not the participants**

We should take care, in presenting our case against the National Lottery, not to be patronising or judgemental towards those who do participate. We need to emphasise that our concern is for the system as a whole, which embodies the lust for gain and promotes severe social injustice. The National Lottery mirrors the social system in those respects. So we should understand and sympathise with those living in poverty, who see in the National Lottery a hope of escaping from hardship; and with those who are fearful of future housing and/or job insecurity who see in Lottery prizes a hope of avoiding it.

## **A vital spiritual challenge**

The National Lottery presents us individually and corporately with difficult and searching issues. However necessary statements and guidance are, they can never encompass every valid emphasis Friends might wish to make. We should be encouraged, nevertheless, by the great sense of unity that has come through from the Minutes of Preparative and Monthly Meetings. It is clear that Friends see long-term damage to society through this state-sponsored promotion of gambling; and the proper funding of public and charitable projects should not be dependent on it. Here is a vital spiritual challenge.

If our Statements and Minutes are to mean what they say, we have to show in our lives that true fulfilment does not come from the pursuit of money, nor from material security or comfort as ends in themselves. As time passes and the National Lottery becomes ever more accepted as a normal part of people's lives, it becomes all the more important that we speak out against it and that we do so in the name of values other than the desire for financial gain. We must hope that, in time, more of our fellow citizens will come to share our viewpoint so that the National Lottery can be withdrawn.

Produced by Quaker Social Responsibility & Education Central Committee  
at the request of Meeting for Sufferings and sent to all Meetings.  
December 1995.

## **SECOND PUBLIC STATEMENT: THE NATIONAL LOTTERY, 1996**

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain has issued the following statement in response to two developments - the announcement of a second weekly draw and research findings about underage ticket sales.

The National Lottery offends our belief about loving our neighbours and sharing resources. We wish to stand together, as members of the Council of Churches in Britain & Ireland and with all who share our values, against the rush to become a gambling society. We consider our opposition to the promotion of the National Lottery to be part of our concern for truth and integrity in public affairs. Therefore, we are totally opposed to the promotion of a large-scale lottery by government and wish to see the National Lottery ended.

Meantime, we deplore the introduction of a National Lottery mid-week draw in addition to the existing Saturday draw. We are disturbed by the accelerating substitution of National Lottery funds for planned public funding of important social projects.

We see the National Lottery as promoting the illusion of wealth as the ultimate fulfilment. It concerns us that obtaining wealth through chance and without effort is becoming an acceptable norm for British society.

We welcome the fact that the National Lottery Regulator, Oflot, has undertaken and published its research findings on the incidence of under-age participation in the National Lottery, particularly the purchase of Scratch cards, and that more safeguards will be introduced by the licence-holder. We strongly urge Parliament to take the further step of raising the age of legal sales from 16 to 18 years.

Jane Chattell, Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings, December 1996

## **THIRD PUBLIC STATEMENT: THE NATIONAL LOTTERY, 2004**

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain has issued the following statement in response to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Lottery.

The National Lottery offends our belief about loving our neighbours and sharing resources. We wish to stand together, as members of Churches Together in Britain & Ireland (CTBI) and with all who share our values, against the rush to become a gambling society. We see the National Lottery as promoting the illusion that wealth is the ultimate fulfilment. It concerns us that obtaining wealth through chance and without effort is becoming an acceptable norm for British society.

The National Lottery increases the gross inequality between the majority of people and a small number of multimillionaires. It is a misuse of resources when many basic human needs are not fully met. We are disturbed by the accelerating substitution of National Lottery funds for planned public funding of social projects. Quakers will continue to press the government to fulfil its responsibilities for social and economic welfare through normal public institutions. We are totally opposed to the promotion of a large-scale lottery by government and wish to see the National Lottery ended.

Caroline Nursey Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings, September 2004

## POSTSCRIPT

There have been a number of factual changes since the Statements were first issued, including:

Responsibility for licensing and regulating the National Lottery is now with the National Lottery Commission. This is a non-departmental public body of the Department for Culture, Media & Sport which sets policy on matters such as the use of Lottery funds.

Money from the National Lottery directed towards 'good causes' is dealt with by National Lottery Distribution Fund. This in turn passes the money to distribution bodies.

There are currently twelve distributors of National Lottery funds:

- Arts Council England
- Big Lottery Fund
- British Film Institute
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Sport England
- UK Sport
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland
- Arts Council of Wales
- Creative Scotland
- Sport Northern Ireland
- Sport Scotland
- Sport Wales

Of these, the Big Lottery Fund distributes about 40% of all the money derived from the National Lottery, that being its sole function.

In 1994 Camelot Group plc was awarded the first licence to run the National Lottery for seven years; it received a second seven year licence in 2002; and in 2009 received the third licence which has been extended from ten to 14 years, running until 2023.

Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) replaced the department of Quaker Social Responsibility & Education (QSRE) in 2000.

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