

Wensleydale and Swaledale Quaker Trust

Two properties have become available to rent in Bainbridge, if you are interested please write in the first instance to the The Trustees, Wensleydale and Swaledale Quaker Trust, Friends Meeting House, 7 Grove Square, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 5AE.

Description of both properties that are under refurbishment:

The Barn, at the rear of the Bainbridge Meeting House is a one bedroom property.

Bainside West, Bainbridge is a two bed-roomed property.

Both properties will require a bond and references from any applicant.

The following report was not included in the March issue of the Reader so I have included it in this issue:

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS - 27 March, 2010

Having got to know each other in more depth during the residential meeting in January, we appreciated the opportunity to meet again in our home groups. We shared thoughts there and in plenary session on the question of what makes our meetings grow. We distinguished between that spiritual growth and growth in numbers, but realised that these aspects go hand in hand. A lot of discussion focused on our local meetings but there was recognition that our area meetings are central to our flourishing as Quaker communities. Smaller meetings can be helped by larger ones in the AM, which carries responsibility for membership and for governance, and the fragility of some area meetings was noted as a concern to be considered further. Ownership of a meeting house could be a blessing, but had also been a burden which some meetings had gladly given up. We were encouraged to be less hesitant in encouraging applications for membership.

The Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for 2009 was introduced and we heard that income had exceeded expenditure by some £200,000, and the Treasurer expressed appreciation of the late 'surge' in contributions which had allayed earlier fears of a shortfall. He reminded us that financial stringencies will continue and we will need more to pay our way, if the work is to continue. The Trustees have been looking at our committee structures and at the amount we spend on governance and have concluded that a major overhaul is needed. They are circulating a copy of the minute, which we are all encouraged to consider.

We agreed that BYM might use a secure web-based facility for the storage of membership information, subject to safeguards set out in the YM's data protection policy. We have asked for a clear statement of current policy to be prepared for our approval. This does not change in any way our practice of membership being held at AM level and it will not allow BYM to make any unsolicited fundraising requests.

Following earlier discussion and work done by QPSW we were able to approve a letter to be sent to Jack Straw on the detention of children who are subject to immigration control. There is a continuing campaign on this involving other churches and agencies, and I can provide more details for anyone interested.

And finally, during these weeks when politics have been to the fore, a reminder that we can make a difference! The Recording Clerk gave an upbeat report of how far we have managed to progress on the issue of same-sex marriage. The success of the amendments to the Equality Bill was welcomed as substantial progress in itself, and it was also pointed out that we have learned a lot about effective advocacy and working with others on issues of concern.

Janet Quilley, April 2010

Meeting for Sufferings, Saturday, 3 July 2010.

Friends, how do we best communicate with other meetings and with the national structures of our Yearly Meeting? Should that be the main rôle of Meeting for Sufferings representatives, now that we have a trustee body to look after governance and oversee operational matters? Or is communication and networking better done by other means, such as through the central committees and Communications Department at Friends House? Should MfS be a smaller body, more focused on discerning the vision of our Yearly Meeting and identifying the growing points for the future? The group appointed by YM in 2009 to review our new ways of working brought to MfS an interim report, which poses some searching questions about the rôles of MfS, the new BYM trustee body and the central committees. The report has also been sent to Meetings and we are all asked to consider it and send any responses to the Recording Clerk before the end of September, to help with the preparation of the final report.

We also had before us some questions arising from the new draft of *Quaker faith & practice* Chapter 16 on Quaker marriage. The whole chapter is available on the BYM website and we are all encouraged to look at the new wording. MfS will consider it in more detail in October. I am happy to receive comments on this.

You may remember that we have previously discussed a number of queries about how we use our resources. We received an interesting collation of meetings' comments and suggestions, which may give us useful ideas in our own local situation. I will provide a copy for each of our meetings.

We heard of work undertaken by QPSW on sustainability, as one of the priorities in our Long Term Framework, and especially with regard to what is being planned for the Yearly Meeting Gathering in Canterbury next year. I shall refer to this in my report about current action being taken by Friends on climate change issues.

Finally, in our regular slot devoted to minutes from Area Meetings, we received an interesting proposal from Staffordshire AM about a possible Quaker memorial at the National Arboretum, to commemorate the humanitarian work done in wartime by the Friends Ambulance Unit and the Friends Relief Service. I raised this at Leyburn LM and have been encouraged to bring it to AM. I hope this might be possible at a future AM.

Janet Quilley, 5 July, 2010.