

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

**West Wiltshire & East Somerset
Area Quaker Meeting**

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts 2021



West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting

Registered address:
Friends Meeting House
1 Whiteheads Lane
Bradford on Avon
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Trustees & custodian trustee

The Trustees serving in 2021 were:

- Robin Brookes (Devizes)
- Sally Harris (Bath), Clerk, appointed 1 October 2021
- Alison Hillis (Trowbridge), resigned 13 March 2022
- Elaine Hunter (Frome), Area Meeting Treasurer
- Angela Le Grice (Bradford on Avon)
- Kate Macdonald (Bath), Clerk, 28 June 2021 to 30 September 2021
- Debbie Nightingale (Chippenham)
- Jane Stephenson (Bath), Clerk, ended 27 June 2021

Unless otherwise indicated, Trustees remain in post at the date of adoption by the Trustees of this report.

Custodian Trustee:

- Friends Trust Limited, 173-177 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ

The term *Friend* refers to a Member of the Society. The term *Attender* refers to a person who is not a Member of the Society but who regularly attends its meetings for worship.

This report of the Trustees naturally speaks for our Area Meeting and its six constituent Local Meetings. *We* and *our* therefore generally mean those in that wider group, except in the appended reports from our Local Meetings where they generally mean those in the Meeting in question. Where appropriate, it is made clear that these plurals indicate the Trustees specifically.

Charitable object

The object of the Area Meeting is the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Society in the region of West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting and beyond.

These purposes are carried out in ways that bring public benefit, and we Trustees ensure that we have due regard to the Charity Commissioner's guidance in this respect.

Meeting together

The right holding of public meetings for worship (in our constituent Local Meetings) and regular meetings for church affairs (in all the constituent Local Meetings and for the Area Meeting as a whole) forms a key part of our role in providing a public benefit.

Meetings for worship

Public meetings for worship are normally held every Sunday. They take place in our meeting houses at Bradford on Avon and Devizes, and in rooms that are rented in places where our Meetings do not own their own meeting houses, in Bath, Chippenham, Frome, and Trowbridge. The arrangements are made by our six Local Meetings.

During 2021, four of the six meeting venues were closed for parts of the year due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic. Like many other religious bodies, our Local Meetings moved to worship online. In this, they continued to adapt to the circumstances with methods learned during earlier lockdowns in 2020. Joining details were made publicly available via our websites and other notices (such as in the doorways to our normal premises). Our Local Meetings found that some new faces joined in worship, and that there were more opportunities to attend worship with those from other Local Meetings from time to time.

Learning from experience, both meeting houses were equipped in 2020 to enable Friends and attenders at home to join in “blended” meetings. Such blended meetings continued throughout 2021 during those periods when meeting houses were open but some of us chose, or were obliged, to avoid gathering with others in person. Blended meetings proved impracticable in our existing rented premises but began to be part of our thinking for the future.

In addition, across the Area Meeting, meetings for worship were also held on various days and at various times. During the summer months, outdoor meetings for worship took place once a week in the early evening in Bath Meeting’s Burial Ground in Widcombe.

In these ways, while the pandemic prevented the holding of meetings for worship in the traditional manner, across the Area Meeting we adapted our practice. We learned that online meetings brought the opportunity to welcome those who might have been unable to attend in person in the past, and that we could worship with others who were in different locations.

Meetings for church affairs

At our meetings for church affairs, we gather in a spirit of worship to make practical decisions about running our meetings and, for those matters which require more consideration, to discern what is in right ordering. The unity we seek in a discipline of silent waiting depends on our willingness to seek the truth in what others say, and so to reach a sense of the right way forward that is different from the secular idea of consensus.

Several of our Local Meetings, for example, considered whether to attend their local remembrance ceremony to lay a white poppy wreath. They chose to do so, thereby bearing witness to our testimony to peace.

Decisions on how to spend our charitable funds are another example of matters requiring careful discernment. Trustees considered that the cost of providing a mains water supply to the Burial Ground was in right ordering as it would greatly help with maintenance and could increase the prospect of wider community use of our quiet garden.

Meetings for church affairs take place regularly in each of our six Local Meetings and at Area Meeting. As with meetings for worship, meetings for church affairs were also adapted to Covid-19 restrictions by holding them online or a blended format.

At Area Meetings, our practice is to appoint new clerks on each occasion from the host Local Meeting and for the hosts to invite a speaker for the second half of each meeting.

On one such occasion in 2021, we heard a joint presentation on racism from the Inclusion & Diversity Coordinator for Quakers in Britain and the Quaker Youth Worker, then participated in a workshop. Moved by Britain Yearly Meeting’s commitment to becoming an actively anti-racist faith community, some Friends set up a reading group to deepen our understanding of the issues raised.

At two consecutive Area Meetings, we started to learn about Britain Yearly Meeting’s “Simpler Meetings” project. First, we heard from the Head of the Ministry and Outreach team for Quakers in Britain about how the ways that we meet and work have changed, at Friends House in London as well as in Area and Local Meetings. We heard how some Quaker structures have not changed for centuries, even as the number of Quaker members has decreased.

The Simpler Meetings project grew out of this changing context. The project ran for three years, exploring how we could live and work together in simpler ways. At a second meeting, we gave further consideration to making our Meetings work in simpler and better ways and explored the questions: What is working well in our Meeting? What ideas do we have to make things simpler / better?

Each year we summarize the changes in the numbers of members and attenders in the constituent Local Meetings of our Area Meeting.

Year	Members	Attenders	Total
2013	174	131	305
2014	175	141	316
2015	181	120	301
2016	187	130	317
2017	190	131	321
2018	192	133	325
2019	189	124	313
2020	*186	117	*303
2021	179	124	303

* Under-reported by 2 in the Report for 2020 and now corrected here

The figures for 2021 are similar to those of 2013, though they have fallen again by almost 7% in four years from the high point in 2018. Considering the same issues,

Trustees noted, in the first part of their “Strategy Day”, that national membership records for the Society show a steadily declining line amounting to 13.9% from 2011 to 2020.

Charitable activities

Our charitable activities are grounded in worship together and follow from discernment, in our meetings for church affairs, of the actions we should take. They take place across the Area Meeting, often carried out in our Local Meetings. Separate reports from each of the Local Meetings are appended after the Trustees’ Report: these give a good flavour of the life and activities in our communities in 2021. Trustees receive updates at each of our scheduled meetings to keep us informed.

Local Meetings also make voluntary collections for Quaker, and other, charities. Opportunities for such collections after meetings for worship were fewer in 2021 because of premises being closed.

The Area Meeting owns two meeting houses. Both were open for hire by organisations serving the community during the periods in 2021 when public health restrictions allowed.

The Area Meeting also owns a Burial Ground in a residential area of Bath. Having reached its capacity for burials some time ago, this walled garden is being sensitively reconfigured as a quiet space for Friends and the community to enjoy. An agreement was made during the year for a local therapeutic group to use the garden from time to time in the warmer weather.

Young people in the Area Meeting have formed strong bonds with those in two neighbouring Area Meetings. Weekly get-togethers online became routine over the year, with others from Yorkshire and Gloucestershire joining in. All of this was supported by a Youth Development Worker employed by Britain Yearly Meeting to work on behalf of our Area Meeting in conjunction with two neighbouring Area Meetings. The three Meetings provide the funding for this employed worker, and we renewed a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the Meetings to manage the arrangement for a further three years.

The young people’s weekly online meetings for games, cooking and discussion continued through the autumn, alternating West of England gatherings and joint sessions with Sheffield/Yorkshire young people. As the Covid-19 risk declined, it was possible to resume monthly face-to-face sessions. The December meeting was hosted by Bath, using a room at Manvers Street Baptist Church: it was the first time in the life of the project that one of those in-person sessions had taken place somewhere other than Bristol, which had normally been the most convenient location. We were glad to pay back a little of the generous hospitality our young Friends and attenders have enjoyed.

Quakers in Britain have had a longstanding involvement with prison work and concern for matters relating to criminal justice. One of our members is a prison chaplain at HMP Erlestoke. Our Area Meeting provided the funding for her to attend the Prison Chaplains Conference.

Of course, many Friends and attenders in our meetings are also individually involved in other charitable and community activities that are not part of our Area Meeting. Often these are other examples of Quaker faith in action, and in many cases those Friends and attenders will be cared for and supported by others in our Meetings.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a concern for many Friends and attenders across the Area Meeting, and many are individually involved with the activities in their communities, with environmentally concerned groups including Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon, Sustainable Devizes, and Extinction Rebellion.

Two Friends from our Area Meeting went to Glasgow in November 2021 at the time of the COP26 (26th Conference of the Parties) negotiations to limit and reduce the effects of anthropogenic global warming. They joined the protests that sought to influence the policymakers, demanding real change to make a difference. Closer to home, two silent vigils were held in Devizes during the Conference upholding delegates as they made their pledges to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment.

Work has been carried out in recent years to reduce the carbon footprint of our two meeting houses. The solar panels at Devizes are continuing to function well. At Bradford on Avon, the records of annual fuel consumption showed a reduction compared with the previous year.

Many of our meetings and much of our business remained online during the year, to reduce the risks of catching and spreading Covid-19. Travelling less has reduced our carbon footprint and shown us a more sustainable way of being together. We will continue our new practice of holding blended Area Meetings where the technology makes it possible.

Work behind the scenes

Much of our work as Trustees is carried out behind the scenes. It involves caring for Friends and others to whom we have a duty of care, looking after property, checking on rental premises, and managing our finances.

We held six meetings of the Trustees in 2021. Five took place online, using Zoom, and one in-person (but socially distanced) meeting was held at Bradford on Avon Meeting House during a brief period of greater confidence in the state of public health.

Caring for Friends and others

Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM, the national Quaker charity) issued guidance on safeguarding policy and procedure in response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). BYM's Recording Clerk commented: "The report makes recommendations for improving safeguarding across religious organisations and settings. We look forward to considering the details and any implications for Quaker communities."

"All faith bodies," he said, "including Quakers, need to examine the organisational and cultural barriers which put children at risk of abuse." He went on "The Inquiry's findings are fair, clear and helpful. The Inquiry has prompted Quakers to make improvements, such as creating a new national case management database. Quakers in Britain now work much more closely with local Quaker groups to record and share information appropriately." Our Area Meeting considered and adopted the guidance during the year, in order to play our part in exercising particular care for children and vulnerable adults in our meetings. We appointed Alison Hillis as our Safeguarding Coordinator, and she started introducing the guidance to those who hold relevant roles in our Meetings. Like other parts of BYM, we have signed up with thirtyone:eight, the specialist safeguarding organisation (previously the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service known as CCPAS), to provide the necessary training.

We had no safeguarding incidents to report in 2021.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has been a further area where Trustees have been particularly conscious of needing to exercise due care themselves and to promote a coordinated approach across our Local Meetings. Throughout the year, Trustees checked risk assessments relating to their six venues and advised on how to reopen safely when public health restrictions on social mixing were eased. For the meeting houses, this duty of care included hirers as well as Friends and attenders.

We are responsible for looking after two employees: our Warden at Bradford on Avon, and our Meeting House Manager at Devizes. Both had regular meetings with the Area Meeting Supervisor of Employees. Such meetings provide an opportunity to raise both routine, and Covid-19-related, questions and for any matters of doubt or concern to be addressed.

Caring for Friends and attenders includes proper handling of the personal data held by Area Meeting and its six Local Meetings. This is a legal requirement under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We created a new role of Local Meeting Data Steward during the year to provide additional focus in this area.

No data breaches were recorded in 2021.

Looking after property

Public health restrictions continued to affect the running our meeting houses in Bradford on Avon and Devizes in 2021. Both were opened again for meetings for

worship and for hirers during periods when it was safe to do so. Such decisions were agreed with Trustees, based on careful risk assessments.

The two meeting houses have their own local premises committees to deal with routine matters, with the Trustees being responsible for ensuring that health and safety matters are properly handled. We carried out an audit of the systems and processes during the year and were satisfied that good care is being taken.

Trustees follow good practice in commissioning five-yearly surveys for each of the meeting houses. The quinquennial survey on Devizes Meeting House took place during the year and its report will inform plans for future maintenance.

The reconfiguration of Bath Meeting's Burial Ground continued throughout the year, led by its local committee and overseen by Trustees. Accessibility from the road outside has been improved, and a mains water connection was in train at the end of the year, with the aim of making management of the garden during dry weather much easier. Plans to erect a simple shelter are in progress.

The lease of Bath Meeting House to Topping & Company Booksellers Ltd began early in the year and continued at the year end. (It will finish when the sale is finally completed.) Trustees continued work on the legal aspects of the arrangements and were delighted to be invited to see the transformation of the building in a guided tour before the bookshop opening.

Checking on rental premises

Bath, Chippenham, Frome, and Trowbridge Local Meetings use rented rooms for their meetings. The Trustees check the risk assessments which are provided by the premises managers as part of our annual health and safety audit. During 2021, we also looked at particular risks associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Inadequate ventilation and insufficient room for Friends to be socially distanced meant that meetings for worship and for church affairs had to be moved online for much of the year.

Managing finance

Trustees are responsible for managing the finances of the Area Meeting and its six Local Meetings. At each Trustees' meeting, we receive an up-to-date report from the Bookkeeper and the Area Meeting Treasurer summarising the financial affairs across the Area Meeting.

We operate with centralised bank accounts such that all receipts and payments authorised by Local Meetings go through the Area Meeting bank accounts. Our Bookkeeper sends regular finance reports to Local Meeting treasurers so they can exercise control over their funds and take decisions on expenditure, within agreed financial parameters.

Annual accounts for 2021

The full accounts are set out on pages 13–20.

Trustees are pleased to report an overall surplus for the year of £32,093. This comprises £55,116 unrestricted surplus, less the distribution of £23,023 from the Bath Meeting House Appeal Fund. We ended the year with £180,535 of available reserves in our Unrestricted Fund.

All those who are part of the life of our Meetings are invited to make donations to support local, regional, and national Quaker work. Our income for the year includes £71,871 from such donations. We encourage donors to look beyond the local need for funds and are pleased to report that half of total donations in 2021 were allocated by Friends to support national work under the auspices of Britain Yearly Meeting.

2021 was the second year seriously affected by the global Covid-19 pandemic. While donations from Friends and attenders remained stable, our Meeting Houses at Bradford on Avon and Devizes suffered from lack of lettings income. However, this was offset by income at Bath, where Topping & Company Booksellers Ltd has leased the Meeting House in advance of their forthcoming purchase of the premises. Our employment costs were offset to some extent by receipts through the Government Job Retention Scheme, and we are glad that our Warden and Meeting House Manager are working to get the lettings back up to pre-Covid-19 levels.

Following the exchange of contracts with Topping & Company Booksellers Ltd in March 2021, work began in earnest to contact all donors to the restricted Bath Meeting House Appeal. Trustees are pleased to report that we have distributed all of the fund, according to the wishes of the original donors. One of the suggestions given to donors was to allow Bath Meeting to use their donation towards the refurbishment of the Burial Ground and £8,491 was redirected in this way.

Bradford on Avon received a legacy of £2,000 during the year. Trustees also note the bequeathed holding of shares in the Community Interest Company *Abolish Empty Office Buildings* (Reg No 32137R) which remain unrealised and are therefore not accounted for in the balance sheet.

Trustees recognise the need to hold cash reserves in our Unrestricted Fund, sufficient to meet the normal expenditure in the Area Meeting, areas flagged up in the quinquennial surveys, and any unforeseen special expenditure that might arise from our properties. Our policy was reviewed and revised this year with the help of our Finance Team. Trustees are satisfied that the reserves we hold continue to be at acceptable levels.

We supported those attending conferences and training this year. This included Trustee training, support for our Prison Chaplain, safeguarding awareness training, and a course to improve the delivery of blended meetings. All these courses help us to better serve Quaker work in our Area Meeting.

Governance, including bankers, insurers, examiner of accounts

Governing document

The charity was originally registered in 2010, constituted by the Governing Document of North Somerset & Wiltshire Area Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain (adopted 9 November 2008). On 5 June 2011, the Governing Document was amended to reflect the change of name to West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting, after a change in its constituent Local Meetings. On 27 June 2021, it was further amended to allow meetings for church affairs to be held solely online or combined with those attending in-person.

On 22 January 2020, West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting agreed a Scheme with the Charity Commission that clearly established the governance responsibilities of the Area Meeting for the three meeting houses (Bath, Bradford on Avon, and Devizes) and the Burial Ground in Widcombe. As the Area Meeting is not an incorporated charity, Friends Trusts Ltd is named in the Scheme as the Custodian Trustee for the Area Meeting and its assets. The title deeds to the properties are held by Friends Trusts Ltd.

Trustees' appointment and training

The Trustees are members of the Area Meeting, appointed by the Area Meeting following nomination by the constituent Local Meetings.

Before any nomination is made, the Clerk to the Trustees obtains two references with an emphasis on financial integrity, one from within the Religious Society of Friends and one from outside. The nominee completes the Charity Commission's pro-forma trustee declaration that they are a fit and proper person to oversee financial, governance and employment matters in the Area Meeting.

The Clerk to the Trustees ensures that new Trustees understand their terms of reference, have access to past Minutes and to key documents, in particular the Governing Document and the Handbook for Trustees of Quaker Meetings.

During the year, Trustees attended charity trustee training provided by a local firm of solicitors, and from thirtyone:eight on safeguarding. Trustees receive notice of any upcoming courses and are encouraged to attend.

Our bankers

- CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4JQ
- Triodos Bank, Deanery Road, Bristol BS1 5AS

Our insurers

- Congregational & General Insurance plc, Currer House, Currer Street, Bradford BD1 5BA

Examiner of accounts

- Michael J Wilcox ACMA. OCL Accountancy, 141 Englishcombe Lane, Bath, BA2 2EL.

Looking ahead

As Trustees, we look forward to close engagement with our Area Meeting in session, and our Local Meetings, as we hope to emerge from the constraints and unfamiliarities of the pandemic period. There is much that we can do together to learn from the recent past.

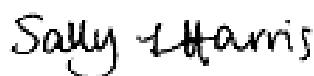
We are fortunate in many ways. Our overall financial position is good. We have now been joined by a new Local Development Worker who will be serving Area Meetings including ours across the region. The transfer, and progress towards the completion of the sale, of Bath's Meeting House to Topping & Company Booksellers Ltd has simplified our management of properties. It has also brought some temporary income that has more than offset reductions caused by the loss of rental income during the pandemic.

Our numbers remain relatively stable, while we have noted a significant decline in national membership records across the last decade. Perhaps we are also fortunate to be part of an area to which Friends like to retire.

Our experience of the pandemic has shown us that some Quaker practice can be varied with good effect for different circumstances. Putting this alongside the lessons of the Simpler Meetings project—disseminated in large part through online seminars and web-based information—it is plain that there is much to think about for our future. To have both the financial means to do this, and new regional staff to help us, means that Trustees and our Area and Local Meetings face a time of opportunity that can significantly counter the risks and threat of ageing and decline.

Quakers tend not to proselytize, but we know that outreach is welcomed by those who would embrace our community and our religious practice. As we return to our meetings in person—as well as maintaining some good new online practice both for worship and for business and community purposes—we must hope to find the means to speak to the conditions of those around us as well as those already within our communities.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 18 July 2022
and signed on their behalf by



Sally Harris, Clerk to the Trustees

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting (the Trust) for the year ended 31 December 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I confirm that there are no other matters to which your attention should be drawn to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Michael J Wilcox
OCL Accountancy
141 Englishcombe Lane
Bath, BA2 2EL



Date: 2/8/22

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31 December 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Funds £	2021 Total Funds £	2020 Total Funds £
Income and Endowments from					
Donations and legacies		86,521	-	86,521	74,080
Charitable activities					
Grants received for Quaker work		-	-	-	1,330
Investment income	3	54	10	64	433
Other income		82,614	-	82,614	36,522
Total income		169,188	10	169,198	112,365
Expenditure					
Charitable activities					
Quaker work		109,747	26,304	136,051	110,063
Other		1,055	-	1,055	1,406
Total expenditure		110,801	26,304	137,105	111,469
Net income		58,387	(26,294)	32,093	897
Transfers between funds		(3,271)	3,271	-	-
		55,116	(23,023)	32,093	897
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		1,178,583	42,564	1,221,147	1,220,250
Total funds carried forward		1,233,699	19,541	1,253,240	1,221,147

Continuing operations

All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Funds £	2021 Total Funds £	2020 Total Funds £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible assets	5	1,053,164	-	1,053,164	1,054,218
Current Assets					
Debtors	6	24,651	-	24,651	15,690
Cash at bank and in hand		170,843	19,541	190,384	170,772
		<u>195,494</u>	<u>19,541</u>	<u>215,035</u>	<u>186,462</u>
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	7	(14,959)	-	(14,959)	(19,533)
Net current assets					
		<u>180,535</u>	<u>19,541</u>	<u>200,076</u>	<u>166,929</u>
Total assets less current liabilities					
		<u>1,233,699</u>	<u>19,541</u>	<u>1,253,240</u>	<u>1,221,147</u>
Net Assets					
		<u>1,233,699</u>	<u>19,541</u>	<u>1,253,240</u>	<u>1,221,147</u>
Funds					
	8				
Unrestricted funds				1,233,699	1,178,583
Restricted funds				19,541	42,564
Total funds					
				<u>1,253,240</u>	<u>1,221,147</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 18th July 2022 and signed on its behalf by:

Elaine Hunter - Trustee

Elaine Hunter

Sally Harris - Trustee

Sally Harris

The notes form part of these financial statements

Notes to the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2021

1 Employees

The average number of employees during the year was 2.

2 Accounting policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefits entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) *Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (effective 1 January 2015)* and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is included on the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probably that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

Cash at Bank and In hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will normally result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided on plant & machinery at 25% on reducing balance in order to write off each of such assets over its estimated useful life.

The valuation of the meeting houses is subject to regular review. The Trustees consider that insured replacement cost is an unsuitable valuation basis because it does not reflect current values. Nor is the open market value considered appropriate for property held for Quaker-supported work. Recognition of underlying value at an average of £350,000 for the three meeting houses and burial ground gives a total of £1,050,000.

Going concern

In the opinion of the Trustees, the charity continues to be a going concern.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2021

	2021	2020
3 Investment income		
Deposit account income	£ 64	£ 433

4 Trustees' remuneration and benefits

During 2021 Trustee Debbie Nightingale acted as a self-employed bookkeeper for our Area Meeting. Her fees for the year totalled £3,420.

Trustee expenses

Trustee expenses of £474.63 (2020: £421.78) are included in Quaker Meeting activities.

The expenses, paid to 5 Trustees, cover training courses and reimbursement of incidental expenses.

5 Tangible fixed assets	Freehold property	Plant and machinery	Totals
Cost	£	£	£
At 1 January 2021 & 31 December 2021	1,050,000	31,601	1,081,601
Depreciation			
At 1 January 2021	-	27,383	27,383
Charge for year	-	1,055	1,055
At 31 December 2021	-	28,438	28,438
Net Book Value			
At 31 December 2021	1,050,000	3,164	1,053,164
At 31 December 2020	1,050,000	4,218	1,054,218

6 Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade debtors	24,139	15,337
Other debtors	512	353
	<u>24,651</u>	<u>15,690</u>

Following our insurance claim for loss of lettings income due to Covid-19 at Bradford on Avon and Devizes Meeting Houses, we have included a provision for an agreed amount totalling £16,704.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2021

7 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade creditors	13,294	18,196
Other creditors	1,664	1,337
	<u>14,959</u>	<u>19,533</u>

8 Movement in funds	At 1.1.21	Net movement in funds	Transfers between funds	At 31.12.21
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	1,178,583	58,387	(3,271)	1,233,699
Restricted funds		-		
Frome Building Fund	19,531	10	-	19,541
Bath Meeting House Appeal	23,033	(26,304)	3,271	-
	<u>42,564</u>	<u>(26,294)</u>	<u>3,271</u>	<u>19,541</u>
Total funds	<u>1,221,147</u>	<u>32,093</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,253,240</u>

Net movement in funds included in the above are as follows:	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Movement in funds
Unrestricted funds	£	£	£
General fund	169,188	(110,801)	58,387
Restricted funds			
Frome Building Fund	10	-	10
Bath Meeting House Appeal	(26,304)	-	(26,304)
	<u>(26,294)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(26,294)</u>
Total funds	<u>142,894</u>	<u>(110,801)</u>	<u>32,093</u>

Additional note on Fund Accounting

The Frome restricted fund represents an amount originally set aside by the Trustees for the purposes of purchasing a Meeting House in Frome.

Funds raised by Appeal for the refurbishment of Bath Meeting House were all dispensed according to the donors' instructions during the year and the bank account was closed at the end of 2021.

The remaining funds are the combined unrestricted funds of the constituent meetings which can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives, at the discretion of the Trustees. .

9 Related Party disclosures

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 December 2021.

Notes to the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2021

10 Contributions and grants

Accounts detailed statement (final pg)	
Individuals	There were no grants to individuals during 2021
Institutions	£
BYM annual giving via schedule	35,432 see note i) below
Repayment of Bath Meeting House Appeal funds	26,304 see note ii) below
Quaker charities (8 transactions)	<u>510</u>
	62,246
Non Quaker charities (2 transactions)	<u>100</u>
	<u>62,346</u>
i) BYM schedule contributions are included in our accounts as gift aid is claimed by WWESAM.	
ii) BMHA funds were dispensed according to the donors instructions and restricted fund closed.	
The number of transactions for other payments shows that none is materially significant to require individual disclosure.	

Acting as agent collections, not forming part of accounts	£
Quaker charities	
Non Quaker charities	<u>8</u>
	<u>8</u>
(2020: £546)	

11 Governance & Accounts remuneration	£
Bookkeeping services (per Note 4)	3,420
Payroll services/Furlough Claims (Blomfields)	674
Independent Examination Accounts (pt2020&2021)	1,134
Accreditation Fees/Software subscription	<u>464</u>
	<u>5,692</u>

12 Staff Costs	£
Staff remuneration:Warden & Lettings Manager	11,427
Council tax paid for Warden's flat	<u>1,053</u>
	<u>12,480</u>

We received Job Retention Scheme payments during 2021 of £3,264 (2020: £3,365)
There were no Employers National Insurance contributions due.
There were no other employee benefits.

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ending 31 December 2021**

	2021	2020	2019
	£	£	£
INCOME			
Voluntary Income			
Annual giving donations	71,871	70,478	63,556
Donations	12,650	1,602	5,970
Legacies	2,000	2,000	-
	<u>86,521</u>	<u>74,080</u>	<u>69,526</u>
Investment Income			
Deposit account interest	64	433	469
Charitable activities			
Grants		1,330	700
Other income			
From properties	79,350	23,157	46,976
From Local Authority Grants		10,000	
HMRC Job Retention Scheme	3,264	3,365	
Total income	<u>169,198</u>	<u>112,365</u>	<u>117,671</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Charitable activities			
Warden's & Manager's pay	12,480	12,633	12,900
Fees, rents, taxes & insurance	23,747	28,961	39,165
Meeting house improvements			10,262
Repairs & running costs	22,985	23,498	19,486
Life of the meeting	8,800	3,823	11,428
Grants to institutions	36,042	35,431	32,512
Grants to individuals			1,437
Repayment of Bath Meeting House Appeal	26,304		
	<u>130,358</u>	<u>104,346</u>	<u>127,190</u>
Other			
Depreciation of plant & machinery	1,055	1,406	1,875
Support costs			
Governance costs			
Examination & accountancy	5,692	5,717	1,665
Total resources expended	<u>137,105</u>	<u>111,469</u>	<u>130,730</u>
NET INCOME	<u>32,093</u>	<u>897</u>	<u>(13,059)</u>

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

Reports of the life of our Local Meetings in 2021

Bath

Our Zoom meetings for worship were so well received that we increased their duration from thirty to forty-five minutes each Sunday morning and continued to hold shorter evening meetings for worship via Zoom on Tuesday evenings. Many of us were in well-established fellowship groups, also meeting by Zoom, which enriched our lives. For some Friends and attenders who prefer not to meet by Zoom, our “technology-free” meetings for worship continued on Wednesday mornings for those worshipping in their own homes.

We were able to return to in-person meetings for worship for two months in the autumn and winter, in rooms at the Bath Central United Reformed Church (BCURC). However, we decided to pause again in December after another increase in the local and national Covid-19 infection rates. One in-person children’s meeting was held. Friends and attenders in Keynsham also resumed their twice-monthly meetings at The Chocolate Quarter retirement village.

In March, we finally said farewell to our Meeting House in York Street. Following the exchange of contracts with, and the completion of this first phase of the sale to, Topping & Company Booksellers Ltd we laid down our premises committee. The former appeal fund was closed and the money which had been donated was returned with thanks or redistributed according to the original donors’ wishes.

We began to consider where we might want to move to, and how we can accommodate Friends and attenders meeting both in person and remotely via Zoom—including the possibility of arranging “blended” meetings. This process was accelerated by the news, late in the year, that BCURC might move from its current premises.

We increased activity in our Burial Ground in Widcombe. We were prompted to consider building a simple shelter that might encourage use of this quiet space by a wider community—in particular by a local therapeutic charity—and facilitate more open-air meetings for worship in the summer months. We made an agreement with the charity to use the Burial Ground for its work. A pre-planning advice application for the shelter was considered favourably by the Council. We also arranged for a new mains water connection to the Burial Ground after the experience of a prolonged, very dry, summer period. With no further space for burials, we reviewed our policy on interring and scattering ashes, and determined to make a formal record of all those buried in the Burial Ground, those whose ashes had been scattered there, and those who were remembered there in other ways.

Those of us working with children in our Meeting began to update their training and, where necessary, checks with the Disclosure & Barring Service, in line with new guidelines for safeguarding.

We continued to support the Quaker Youth Project financially and with volunteers. We also made plans to send two Young Friends to Young Friends Gathering in spring 2022 with the help of our Quaker Youth Worker.

In March, we hosted Area Meeting and welcomed the Inclusion & Diversity Coordinator for Quakers in Britain to help us to think about contemporary racism.

One of our Friends attended the 26th Conference of the Parties to protest at the failure of governments, industry, international finance, and other parties to take effective action to halt or even to slow down climate change.

As the minutes from our business meetings show, we welcomed new names in the array of Friends giving their time and energies to keep the administration of our Meeting in good order, and we thanked those who had served us who were stepping down. For much of the year, we had to contend with some separations imposed by being able, or not, to meet in person or via Zoom, and to respect and accommodate as best we could individuals' limitations and choices. We were busy and productive in groups and worked hard to avoid forgetting or leaving anyone out. We looked forward to becoming one gathering again with a new place to hold our meetings in 2022.

We presented a wreath of white poppies at the annual commemoration of the war dead at the memorial in Victoria Park. We wired the wreath to the railings, but it was again taken a few days later.

We remembered two of our community who died in 2021 and two who died in 2020. We said a fond farewell to a long-standing Friend who moved to a new job in Devon. We welcomed a new member of the Meeting.

Bradford on Avon

Unlike many other meeting houses and churches, Bradford on Avon Meeting House remained open for worship on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings throughout the year. At the beginning of the year, a typical Sunday morning worship would bring together three or four of us, for whom joining on Zoom was not feasible, in the Meeting House, with the warden's laptop sitting in the corner to make the link with twenty-five or so on Zoom. A typical Sunday Meeting towards the end of the year would consist of one large circle of around twenty in the Meeting House, with eight to ten others joining over Zoom, clearly visible on a new large screen, with visibility in the other direction improved through a good quality wide angle camera. Sound quality in both directions also improved, and Friends commented that they felt more included.

Attendance on Wednesday evenings remained very low but steady.

Earlier in the year, we continued with the occasional all-age meeting for worship to include our children, who now range between about one and nine years old. Later, we resumed our monthly children's outdoor meetings in Frankleigh House garden. Following a couple of trial runs, weekly children's meetings in the Meeting House

restarted in October—except once a month, when the monthly outdoor meetings take place.

Our four fellowship groups met more regularly than in the past—mostly online to start with, then gradually shifting to in-person or “blended” meetings.

The Healing Group met regularly online.

During 2021, we were saddened by the deaths of five long-standing Friends. We were pleased to end the year on a high note by welcoming a new member of our Meeting.

The first significant event in 2021 was our annual social evening. This time it was held online on 6 February, with around forty attending, most wearing hats!

In April, we held an online event on “Our White Privilege: an exploratory discussion” that was well attended and thought provoking.

Our elders organised various “blended” events over the course of the year: a worship-sharing session on ministry; a session called “This I affirm”, on our beliefs and experiences; an informative presentation from Quaker Peace & Social Witness entitled “Quakers, climate justice, and COP26”; a highly participatory session on “How our Local Meeting works”; and finally, as part of Area Meeting in December, a session on the Simpler Meetings project.

Together with the local Amnesty group, we brought another Journeymen Theatre production to Bradford on Avon: “Back Door Parole” played in June to a socially distanced capacity audience of seventy in St Margaret’s Hall.

Rounding up our list of activities in the year, we had a successful give & take event in June, and our annual outdoor meeting for worship near the Tithe Barn in July.

One Friend raised over £7,000—by cycling twenty-two miles per day for fifty-one consecutive days—for providing computers and IT support to children in Tubas, in the West Bank. Others joined her for some days.

Chippenham

2021 was another strange year during which we met sometimes on Zoom, occasionally in a Friend’s barn, and latterly at our usual meeting place. Nonetheless, it was a year in which we saw our Meeting grow, with three new regular attenders and more Friends feeling able to meet in person, such that we are averaging ten present on most Sundays. At these meetings, we sometimes lit a candle in a wooden candle holder made by prisoners from HMP Long Larten. A beautiful piece of work, it reminded us to think of those held in custody.

We held several Bible study evenings in one of our homes.

Our increasing confidence in using technology was one positive outcome from the periods of lockdown and we held a regular monthly Zoom meeting which enabled

Friends and attenders from further away—or who are unable to get out—to join in worship.

We met once in the barn at one Friend's farm and appreciated the silence and peace it offered. With its earth floor and high roof, it felt like a place where early Quakers might have met.

Once again, we were able to lay a white poppy wreath at the war memorial on Remembrance Sunday. With sustainability in mind, we made our own wreath this year using willow for the base and stitching into it twenty-four white poppies surrounded by sprigs of bay picked from our gardens.

Our further efforts at improving our sustainability as a Meeting were more difficult. As many of us as possible walk or cycle to meeting on a Sunday, so although meeting by Zoom reduced our travel footprint a little it was not significant. We also meet in rented premises where we had no control over heating, lighting, *etc.* Individual Friends continued to try to adapt personal behaviour to reduce their carbon footprint by being environmentally thoughtful in running their households and encouraging family and friends to do likewise.

One Friend in our Meeting continued her work as a prison chaplain. She has now been a Quaker prison chaplain for five years and well remembers her first day and how daunting it was to go inside and walk around the prison. Now, with more experience and knowledge, she is more relaxed and feels that she is able to contribute in all areas of the prison community. Her work is varied and fulfilling, and she is supported by two Quaker volunteers who come into the prison once a month for Quaker meeting and meet her regularly to discuss her work there.

We looked forward to again being able to meet socially as well as at meeting for worship, and again to strengthening the Quaker ties that bind us.

Devizes

We had a mixed year with “blended” meetings beginning and then being interrupted as the omicron Covid-19 variant took hold. While still meeting only online, we hoped to be able to see each other in person soon. There were members we had not seen for a long while and we missed them—though some have kept in touch through friendship groups.

We had planned memorial meetings for two of our number, but they had to be postponed due to the pandemic. We hope to hold them as soon as possible.

We were saddened by the death of our last warden who had also served as an elder in our Meeting.

We were sorry to lose another from our community who left to move to New Earswick for family reasons. We wished her and her husband well in their new home.

We were able to let out our rooms in periods when that was permitted and were pleased to enable some groups to support their clients and members.

We asked hirers, Friends, and attenders to take great care when using the building and were pleased that they helped us by adhering to the precautions we asked them to follow. We were grateful for the support of our contract cleaner, who willingly adapted to the changes we had to make.

We continued to use the services of a local gardener on a weekly basis to keep the garden in order and others from our Meeting came along to help at work parties. The garden is much appreciated by hirers.

On 2 October, after much delay, we were pleased to welcome a member of Woodbrooke's staff to lead a workshop called "Exploring Quaker Spirituality". He gave us much food for thought and we plan to continue to discuss the ideas raised that day.

We held two silent vigils in the market place during the COP26 climate negotiations, supported by some from other Meetings and friends from Sustainable Devizes. Our aim was to uphold the delegates to the conference as they made their pledges to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment.

We laid a wreath of white poppies at the Devizes war memorial, remembering those who had died or suffered in war and conflict.

On 20 November, we held a Fairtrade coffee morning and were pleased to see friends from around the town. Some popular items were not available due to the transport problems during the pandemic, but we had sales of over £90. We recognized that producers in poorer parts of the world were encountering more difficulties due to the virus as well as climate change, and that they needed our help even more than usual.

Frome

Frome Friends continued to find ways to meet for worship, despite the Key Centre still being unavailable as our normal venue for meeting because of the pandemic. Those who were happy with technology met every Wednesday evening via Zoom, and we thanked our Friend who hosted these virtual meetings. Some Frome Friends worshipped via Zoom with Bath Friends on Sunday mornings. We were also able, on occasion, to hold in-person meetings for worship in Friends' gardens and in the Great Elm village hall. We were grateful to all who made this possible. Unfortunately, we were not able to hold any children's meetings in 2021.

We know that some have not been able to join in as they would have liked with these different ways of worship. Others miss the stability of a regular place to meet. We considered alternative places, but many venues were unavailable or unsuitable during the pandemic. Our pastoral care group worked hard in reviewing this, in the hope of finding a more permanent home. In December, they identified a possible long-term place for us to meet, so Frome Friends looked forward to meeting in Christchurch

Parish Hall, Park Road in the new year (2022). We thanked the group for their diligent work in seeking out this venue.

We held our first meeting in person in central Frome at the *Cheese and Grain* on 24 October and continued to do so throughout the winter—except for the first Sunday in the month when we gathered at Great Elm village hall. The wider life of our small Meeting has also been constrained by the pandemic, although we valued the opportunities for fellowship after Zoom meetings. We also held evening meetings online to hear and reflect on poems by George Herbert and Gillian Allnut. In the autumn, our small Light Group started to meet again once a month in a one of our homes.

The Area Meeting Safeguarding Coordinator held two Zoom meetings to update Frome Friends who hold particular responsibilities covered by the new safeguarding procedures.

We were joyful that two of our number held their commitment ceremony at Bradford on Avon meeting house on 1 October.

We held a meeting in the autumn that was open to all Area Meeting Friends. Introduced by the recently retired Director of the Prison Reform Trust, it considered the question of whether we can engage in peace building without directly addressing social and criminal justice.

We looked forward to resuming meeting for worship in person in Frome in 2022 while also being able to enjoy worship with the wider Quaker community through modern technology.

Trowbridge

Already a simple meeting, we became even simpler in 2021.

We were quieter. One Friend resigned and reported feeling better for it—quite humbling. Ministry was rare on Zoom, but we maintained our long tradition of reading at the start of worship from sources Quaker and beyond: we continue to find this a rich practice and circulating the readings by email is making them more widely accessible. The Seymour Community Hub, where we had met, became a fresh food bank and a team base for services for local young people, so we needed to disband our library and release our book trolley. The book trolley was greeted with joy by a nearby village playgroup with few resources. The books went to good homes, and to The Bookbarn near Radstock which recycles books without resorting to landfill. Thus we became paperless, except for *The Friend* and our own contact list. Thankfully, we are all on email and telephone, so keeping in touch is unaffected.

We were mostly in good spirits and managed two simultaneous but separate Zoom and in-person meetings before the omicron Covid-19 variant halted us for a few weeks.

Some of us were very appreciative of two other Area Meeting-wide Quaker groups on Zoom: our Quaker Youth Worker and young Quakers' anti-racist group, and more recently an anti-racist reading group facilitated by a Bath Friend. These both shifted consciousness and the capacity for finding both physical positioning and peaceful words to question and to create boundaries for moments when silence would be actively condoning inhumane behaviour and perspectives. We were deeply grateful to those organising and participating in these groups.

We were also grateful for those who, through their skills and work, upheld the Area Meeting and Britain Yearly Meeting, which makes it possible for us to continue being here as a Quaker meeting.

We looked forward to meeting again in the park for coffee and to resuming our meetings in person.