

Crynwyr



Quakers

Cyfarfod y Cyfeillion yng Nghymru

Meeting of Friends in Wales

**Annual Report**  
**2008**  
**Adroddiad Blynyddol**

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## 1. Object

The object of Meeting of Friends in Wales is the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain within Wales, and beyond.

## 2. Officers of the meeting in 2008

**Co- Clerks:** Catherine James, Deborah Rowlands    **Assistant Clerk:** David Utting

**Treasurer:** Jonathan Bell    **Examiner of accounts:** Alan Butterworth

## 3. Governance

Meeting of Friends in Wales (MFW) is part of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) and has national responsibilities on behalf of the yearly meeting within Wales. It consists of all Friends who are members in Wales. Its responsibilities are defined in 5.04/05 of *Quaker faith and practice*: -

- i Promoting the spiritual life and witness in Wales, facilitating contact between Friends of all ages, and opportunities for mutual support for those with special responsibilities;
- ii Representing Britain Yearly Meeting in Wales
- iii Communication with associated area meetings in Wales
- iv Responding to issues on living in a bilingual society and outreach in Wales;
- v Representing Wales to Britain Yearly Meeting

The work of the Meeting is carried out by Friends appointed to do so, including our employed administrator. Day meetings are normally held three times a year in locations throughout Wales, giving occasions for nurture, witness and fellowship as well as a time to make decisions together according to the Quaker business method as described in *Quaker faith and practice*. Dates and times of these meetings are published in the Book of Meetings and are circulated to all local and meetings within Wales and the borders. MFW also holds regular residential weekend gatherings and one-day events with specific focus.

## 4. Report of work carried out in 2008

### **I. Quaker Structures in Wales and the borders.**

One of the highlights of the year was the Half Yearly Meeting for Wales and the borders, held at Shrewsbury in June, by the Recording Clerk. We discussed what structures would best fit our purposes, and the issues for border meetings of the changes being considered within Wales. As a result of the Half Yearly Meeting, the current role for MFW to act on behalf of the yearly meeting within Wales is confirmed, and we expect it to be strengthened by renewed energy.

***The process of agreeing memoranda of understanding to clarify the relationship between MFW and area meetings has been started and will be completed during 2009.***

We have seen the value of small groups to help to involve more people and deepen experience of what it means to be a Quaker. Clerks of area meetings and others have found it useful to meet to share agendas and good practice, as part of our discussions about structures in Wales. We expect to continue to meet on a roughly yearly basis. A meeting of committee convenors, held in July, proved a useful gathering for ensuring good communication and maintaining a sense of momentum.

***During 2009 we will review the way in which subgroups are working.***

We looked at our relationship with Britain Yearly Meeting as a whole and felt that this was in good heart. There are clear lines of communication to relevant departments, and regular visits from senior staff. We were pleased to welcome the recording clerk, Gillian Ashmore, in March. She was able to tell us about progress on the long-term framework and to hear about concerns in Wales. The assistant recording clerk

paid a regular visit in October. We minuted *'The door is always open...When we have something to say we need to say it and say it effectively from a place of unity, through minutes to Meeting for Sufferings and in other ways. We have done this in the past when reporting on the Spiritual Hospitality Project and our discussions on structures.*

***We expect to spend parts of our meetings in 2009 preparing for the Yearly Meeting Gathering by considering some of the themes and by engaging with the Framework for Action.***

## **2. Outreach in Wales**

Guided by our Outreach, Exhibitions and Publications Groups we worked with the Outreach Coordinator at Friends House to develop new material for Outreach. The following items were available in both Welsh and English versions, advertised by the Outreach Section within the Quaker week outreach material and sent out in packs to meetings:

- A revised introductory leaflet,
- Gold card introducing Quakers
- New poster

The Cytûn tent at both the Royal Welsh Show and at the Eisteddfod provided an opportunity to display the new Welsh exhibition and meet enquirers. A meeting for worship was held for the first time at the Royal Welsh Show. At the National Eisteddfod, volunteering for service in the Cytûn tent gave many Quakers their first experience of the *Maes*; a well supported meditation on sustainability led by Quakers was held during the week.

A revised bilingual edition of *Advices and Queries* was produced during the year, with editorial work done by MFW. By request from the Quaker Committee on Christian and Interfaith Relations, MFW Publications committee arranged for four leaflets about ecumenical occasions to be translated in Welsh and sent to all meetings together with their English equivalent.

The administrator is able to act as a central point for ordering and dispatch of outreach material. In September she produced a leaflet listing all resources in English and Welsh available for encouraging Outreach and sent it to all meetings. Meetings have used exhibition material but we hope that the new stands, which will soon be available, will enable and encourage more use.

***Our administrator was asked to undertake a radical redesign of the Website, so that it can be used both for Outreach and for communication amongst Friends. We expect this to be up and running in 2009***

## **3. Opportunities for Spiritual Nurture, Witness and Fellowship**

In addition to the gatherings outlined above, Meeting of Friends in Wales sent a representative to the Quaker Life conference on faith and practice. At our October meeting, this issue was given a Welsh dimension, and bilingual material based on this session is now available for meetings to use to complement that available from Quaker Life. MFW also supported the attendance of a young Friend at the gathering of Europe and Middle East Friends in Vienna.

A one-day workshop on Crime Community and Justice was held at the Pales Meeting House, led by members of the BYM committee. We heard an introduction to the Circles of Support and Accountability established in North Wales, and being extended to the South, and also of Friends' experience of working within the prison service.

***A one-day retreat is planned for 2009, as well as three one-day meetings for spiritual nurture and business.***

## **6. Financial Review**

At the end of the year, the **general fund** had a balance of £9595.84, an increase of £428.23.

Three small **restricted funds** are held: -

- Literature Fund: balance of £986.16, unchanged from 2007.
- Spiritual Hospitality Project: balance of £206.22, down by £596.75.
- Bursary Fund: (for residential events), at £8, unchanged from 2007.

In addition to these, we **designated** £391 from general funds as a further bursary fund following minute 08.08. This was the amount of a rebate from Swansea University in respect of a residential weekend in 2007.

MFW holds no **investments**; its balances are held in an interest-bearing current account. (CAF Bank currently does not offer an ethical option.)

**Reserves Policy:** Adequate funds are needed to cover the period from the end of the previous year, until money is received from Area Meetings - see below.

**Principal Funding Sources:** Almost all the funding is raised by MFW agreeing a per (adult) capita amount at its first meeting in the year, which is paid by the three Area Meetings that cover Wales. MFW Treasurer passes this request to the AM Treasurers, and monies are usually received from April onwards.

**Generating Funds:** No significant other funds are raised, although residential events are expected to raise sufficient funds to cover their costs.

We were in receipt of a **grant** of £6180 from Britain Yearly Meeting towards administrative costs, being the second year of a three year grant. We are using this to support the employment of our part time administrator. The costs of employing the administrator amounted to £4697.41. *We were in receipt of a legacy of £1000.*

Besides the amount spent on paid administrative support, major items of **expenditure** have been on publications £398.19 both on production of the newsletter *Calon* and on production and distribution of leaflets to Welsh local Meetings and £472.21 supporting the attendance of MFW representatives at Quaker conferences and similar events.

**Examiner:** The independent examiner, Alan Butterworth is an attender at Wrexham Meeting.

**Risk assessment:** Meeting of Friends in Wales owns no premises; when holding our regular meetings in hired premises or Quaker meeting houses we will take reasonable care on Health and safety matters. Residential are held in places which have their own insurance cover. The contract of employment covers the health and safety of the employee. Insurance has been taken out through the BYM policy, as advised by our examiner in 2006. For the annual residential event we ask that all volunteers working with children and young people have CRB checks in their local meetings, according to their area meeting policy.

Date: 28.2.09

Signed: Catherine James..... Catherine James, (co-clerk)

Deborah Rowlands..... Deborah Rowlands, (co-clerk)

J Bell..... Jonathan Bell, (Treasurer)