

**MANCHESTER & WARRINGTON AREA QUAKER  
MEETING**

**NEWSLETTER NO 21     JULY 2023**



***Summer  
garden gathering***

with a theme of wealth inequality  
and its impacts

2nd September  
2023  
2pm to 5:30pm



A social event at Sale Meeting House  
with activities, fundraising and discussions.  
Save the date!

## INDEX

- 3 – Inequalities and Race – Jonathan Dale
- 4 – Introducing our new Executive Officer
- 5 – Request for Gazebos and Tents
- 6 – Skill Share
- 7 - Safeguarding
- 8 – Why is Safeguarding necessary?
- 10 – Tent of Nations
- 12– Simpler Meetings – Robert Wilson
- 14 – Can we be too woke? – Nicholas Tyldesley
- 15 – Racism – a quote
- 16 – Vigil on military in schools
- 18 – Helping Wildlife – Elizabeth Coleman
- 19 – Anti-Racism – Stages in a Journey
- 21 – Pat Lee Memorial Meeting photo
- 22 – Racial Justice Group meetings invitation
- 23 – Sarah Donaldson’s Leaving Event
- 24 – DSEI Arms Fair in September
- 25 – Vigil against Illegal Migration Bill
- 26 – Making my Will – Sandra Dutson
- 28 – Gerald Winstanley quote
- 29 – Hardshaw Estates AGM
- 29 – Bamford Quaker Community - News
- 30 – Practising Prayer – Glenthorne course
- 31 – The Big Feed
- 33 - Anti-Racism – a quote
- 33 – Towards a Fairer Tax System – Anne Eardley
- 38 - Note from the Editor

## **Race Inequalities connect to Inequalities of Wealth: by Jonathan Dale**

**The Summer Garden Gathering on Saturday September 2<sup>nd</sup> represents a number of unusual connections. It connects serious concern and community relaxation – a sort of garden party with a theme! It connects enjoyment, learning, spiritual awareness and political action. As such it is an embodiment of our Quaker belief in the sacramental nature of the whole of life. It is organised by our four witness groups, on the basis that inequality of wealth is damaging in multiple ways – it connects our Social Justice, Environmental, Racial Justice and Peace witness. We are all on common ground.**

Just a few pointers to the connection of wealth inequality and racial injustice in particular.

- People from ethnic minorities in general have markedly less income and less wealth
- Globally almost all the countries with the greatest wealth have majority white populations; that wealth has been and still is inextricably bound up with extracting wealth from slave labour and the exploitative and violent power of imperialism
- The richest countries, including the UK, have emitted by far the most carbon dioxide and methane, either directly or by importing the goods made with emissions elsewhere; countries with less industrial development – mostly majority black - are savagely affected by a climate crisis they have done virtually nothing to cause. The richest countries have been slow to acknowledge that they need to repair the damage they – we - have caused. Climate Justice requires of us a much more radical sharing of wealth.

**So, let's join in the fun – seriously.**

## Introducing our new Executive Officer



Greetings Friends!

My name is Liz O'Neill and I have the enormous privilege of joining the Area Meeting staff team in August, when I will succeed Sarah Donaldson as Executive Officer.

I am an attender at Central Manchester Meeting, having started my Quaker journey with Sale Meeting about ten years ago. I serve on the local meeting Children and Young People's Committee and have very much enjoyed working with others to develop a programme of All Age Worship. I live in Stretford with my husband and our two teenagers, one of whom is a regular at Summer School and Teenage General Meeting.

The job I am leaving is as Director of GM Freeze: [www.gmfreeze.org](http://www.gmfreeze.org). It's a very different organisation – a specialist environmental campaign – but my role covers lots of similar responsibilities

including budgeting, accounts, reporting to a volunteer board and generally being where the buck stops. Before GM Freeze, I was Head of Communications at the Vegetarian Society, where I managed a bigger team and ran lots of events. Prior to that I mostly did marketing and admin for arts organisations, though I have also been a hospital cleaner, shop assistant and youth worker. In the small amounts of time left between work and family life, I am an active member of the Green Party.

Sarah has left big shoes to fill, but I have already received a warm welcome from the staff team and the support and guidance of wise Friends, so I can't wait to get started. I will be at my new desk from Monday 21 August and look forward to getting to know many more of you over the coming months.

## **REQUEST FOR GAZEBOS AND TENTS**

At our Summer Garden Gathering on 2 September, we will need a number of gazebos and tents, in case of rain. If you are able to lend any, please let Elizabeth Coleman know. [elizcol@dialstart.net](mailto:elizcol@dialstart.net) It would be even more useful if you could deliver them, help with putting up and taking down, and take them back home after the event.

We also need drivers to pick up tables etc.

## SKILL SHARE

If you can contribute, organise activities or have skills you could offer to share for a donation as a fun fundraising activity (for example, cook a meal, paint a room, babysit), please email Lucy Brennan, [ksbrennan@gmail.com](mailto:ksbrennan@gmail.com) or Phoebe [phoebejoe483@gmail.com](mailto:phoebejoe483@gmail.com)

Do you have skills and interests you can share? Services you can offer?

For example: cook a meal, a special cake, do simple repairs, do some decorating or gardening, babysitting, offer a foot massage, visit a place you enjoy together.

Our community will be much enriched as we discover others' gifts and talents, in return for a mutually agreed donation to the chosen charities for the Wealth inequality event. This can be such a good way of getting to know other Friends

We'd appreciate knowing what you can offer, then the fun of matching people up and introducing you

Please contact Lucy: [ksbrennan@gmail.com](mailto:ksbrennan@gmail.com), or Phoebe; [phoebejoe483@gmail.com](mailto:phoebejoe483@gmail.com)

# **SAFEGUARDING**

## **WHO NEEDS TO BE DBS CHECKED?**

Trustees

Members of Pastoral Care Team

Safeguarding Co-ordinators

Receiving Group

Those running children's activities. (2 DBS-checked people should always be present, but any additional people need not be DBS-checked.)

## **WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS THAT THERE MAY POSSIBLY BE ABUSE IN YOUR MEETING?**

DON'T do nothing

DON'T discuss it with other people in your meeting

DO contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinators. (At present, while Safeguarding Co-ordinators are being recruited and inducted, you contact the Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding, Kath Haworth.)

The Safeguarding Co-ordinators may decide to do nothing, but still it is useful for them to have the details, as it may be that they will see a pattern if a number of people report concerns about the same person, and this may lead to action at a later date.

## **RECEIVING GROUP**

You may not be aware that there is a Receiving Group in our Area Meeting. They are appointed by Pastoral Care Team, and provide advice if you inform them that an ex-offender is planning to attend your meeting, or is attending. Contact Beck Solway, with whom you will discuss what to do (which may be to do nothing) and discuss confidentiality – who needs to know of the person's criminal record?

## **WHY IS SAFEGUARDING NECESSARY?**

We can all feel a bit daunted by all the things that need to be done to put into place safeguarding procedures, and may wonder if it is all really necessary. Unfortunately, there are people who, because of experiences they have had in their lives, have formed a view of human relationships that can lead them to make choices that are damaging to others, including children and people with vulnerabilities/adults at risk. Parents and guardians may neglect and/or abuse their children, and strangers may form relationships with children in order to act in a way that harms them. Abusers may see Quaker meetings as a way of making contact with children. People who abuse can be convincing – we generally can't tell by meeting a person whether they might be a danger to others.

We cannot be sure that good policies properly followed will prevent all abuse. But we do what we can, in a proportionate way, to create a safe environment so that people with vulnerabilities/adults at risk can be a part of our meetings, and feel safe. This does not just apply to Meeting for Worship, but to all our activities, such as social events and weekends away. Some roles need an additional layer of safety – for example, members of Pastoral Care Team and those running children's activities need to go through a Safer Recruitment process, including obtaining references and DBS checks. If we have good policies in place, we may dissuade someone with abusive intent from carrying out abuse in our meetings. It is much better to prevent abuse than to deal with it after it has happened.

The abuse that we are aware of is the tip of the iceberg. Abused children may not speak out for years, even decades. There is far more harm happening than we are aware of.



We need to remember that those with a history of abusing others are human beings, and it is a challenge to try support them and try to help them to feel a part of our meetings, while protecting the safety of children and people with vulnerabilities/adults at risk.

We as a country have moved forward in our understanding of abuse. In the past, if people suspected abuse, they might do nothing. If a child reported abuse, the first response would often be denial. “XXX is a loved and trusted adult, he/she wouldn’t do a thing like that, the child must be lying.” The second is damage limitation – keeping the abuse covered up so as not to damage the reputation of the organisation, and quietly moving the abuser to another geographical location or to other duties.

We now know that we must listen seriously to any allegations of abuse, and deal with them, involving social services and/or the police if necessary. We know that there is a need for a general awareness of safeguarding, for good policies and procedures that are followed faithfully, for safeguarding training, and extra controls such as references and DBS checks for some key roles.

Safeguarding is a lot of work, particularly when you are trying to set up a new system, but it really is necessary.

## TENT OF NATIONS

Sandra Dutson brought “Tent of Nations” to the attention of Eccles Friends. Here are some extracts for a leaflet she provided.

“The Tent of Nations (**ToN**) is located on a hill southwest of Bethlehem and receives over 10,000 visitors per year from over 40 countries.



**With the tractor at work on the farm**



**Tree planting action with visitor groups**

For 32 years, as a Palestinian Christian family, we have been fighting in court to preserve our 42 hectares of land, which has been in the family since 1916.

Surrounded by 5 expanding Israeli settlements and a Torah school, we are not allowed to build any buildings and have to live in caves or underground dwellings without water and electricity. Therefore, we collect water in cisterns we dig ourselves and use solar panels.

Our family has been threatened with life several times. Nevertheless, we live without aggression according to the motto **“We refuse to be enemies.”**

We continue to believe in peace and trust in God’s justice.

The **ToN** offers work camps & volunteering opportunities to maintain the farm and to strengthen environmental awareness.”

[www.tentofnations.org](http://www.tentofnations.org)

## **SIMPLER MEETINGS**

**By Robert Wilson**

*"I've learnt that if we go through life expecting conclusive answers to our concerns then we will be disappointed because we are not accepting that we are part of a whole (cogs in the machine) and it's 'the whole' that leads us forward, following New Light.*

*In about 2016, being in the second triennium on the Nomination Committee for North of Scotland Area Meeting I attended a meeting in Perth with regards to a concern throughout Scotland that we were finding it difficult to fill our service roles and Friends generally were feeling over burdened with dwindling numbers.*

*About 3 or 4 years earlier I had been 'sent' to a Woodbrooke course on Becoming Friends, closely followed by training for Nominations, both held at Swarthmoor Hall in Cumbria, the home of Quakerism. I learnt that Quakers had survived until today because we evolved when other religious groups had died out within a few years of foundation. Because early Friends had accepted the priesthood of all and equality of ministry we progressed as one body, or that's how it appeared to me at the time.*

*Back to the Perth Meeting however. There was a meeting of reps from the Nomination Committees of the 4 Scottish Areas and General Meeting for Scotland to discuss nomination's concerns and service roles. When we convened I found that we were only four, having believed there would be many more of us. The others were General Meeting for Scotland Nominations Committee members and I didn't know them, except one who had been my tutor at Swarthmoor training. But I found that much good ground could be covered by a few dedicated Friends when they are committed I felt young and inexperienced (in Quaker teams) and the meeting was intense and long or so it seemed. I learnt much - there was a*

*commonality of issues in Scottish Quakers but there was a willingness to change if we were honest and open. A few weeks later, having heard or seen nothing of any notes or minutes, I contacted one of the other attendees. I was told there wasn't a record but we would know when our 'seeds were showing light' when we heard back snippets of our meeting discussion from other sources - the seeds having taken root, as it were. I pondered at such wisdom.*

*Nothing is wasted in honest and open conversation and no one size fits all. We keep sowing the seeds and stay open to New Light with a willingness to act however uncomfortable that challenge might be. Our challenge is not to become complacent and habitual in our community lives but to devote our resources to our spiritual development and growth.*

*I've been asked what we needed to do to address our challenges in Manchester and Warrington Area Meeting - I don't know - but WE might. Every situation is unique and every leading is unique to the challenges. What I do know is that we must accept our challenges, meet in honesty and openness and be ready to see New Light and act upon it.*

*In Scotland this led to the writing of a Concern (or Prayer) which a Meeting for Clearness in Inverness later endorsed leading on to a minute for General Meeting for Scotland Area Meeting from North Scotland Area Meeting. A working group was initially set up with representation from all Areas. Today Lesley Richards clerks the ongoing Options for Scotland which is leading to closer cooperation, less duplication and bureaucracy and..... What was the question and what's the answer?????????"*

## **Can We Be Too Woke?**

**by Nicholas J Tyldesley, Citizen of Bolton**

The current debate about woke attitudes is extremely lively and is a major cultural development across many areas of our social interactions. There are many positive features to commend this mindset: support for diversity in its different contexts; opposition to misogyny; confronting the dark sides to our history and institutions; combatting prejudice and bullying and too much patriarchal attitudes. The Quaker belief of there being that of God in everyone is a powerful precursor of wokism today.

Quakers as we know were active in the Abolitionist movement though not entirely free from gaining from the plantation economy. The story of Benjamin Lay, a British Quaker who moved to Pennsylvania via Barbados in the early C17 th encapsulates all the issues around being woke. His career is currently the subject of a one man show being performed at the Finborough Theatre in London from June 13-July 8 th . His book "All Slave-keepers that keep the Innocent in Bondage," argues that disruptive activities are the key to publicising the abolitionist argument. He would interrupt meetings and public occasions, using robust language to abuse his opponents. Once he took a hollowed out book into which he put a pig's bladder filled with fake blood, raised the book above his head, plunged a sword into it and splattered slave owners at Philadelphia Yearly Meeting shouting "Thus shall God shed the blood of those persons who enslave their fellow creatures", Lay also spoke up for animal rights, veganism and respect for the environment. His reward was to be disowned by Quakers on four occasions for his disrespectful behaviour, and there was no sympathy for a person with a crooked back, barely four foot tall.

So is “disruption” a good way to promote a just cause? Are conciliatory speeches and the Quaker way of discernment more effective in changing views? How do we regard the strategies of spreading orange powder, glueing oneself to surfaces, pulling down statues, vociferously no platforming controversial speakers at university events as means of achieving a woke agenda? Should we go down the route taken by Oxfam to produce a lexicon of approved terms that reject the use of words like headquarters, standing up, prostitute? But as Lenin said- you can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs – do we agree with such pragmatism? Whilst we might argue that selling goods in Oxfam to raise money is better than debating terminologies and we would always prefer our social interactions to be pleasant, the woke debate shows no sign of losing momentum. Unfortunately Hobbesian brutality appears to be stronger than the pursuit of utopianism in our current wicked world but we can still fight back from too much wokism whilst speaking truth to power, nicely.

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## **RACISM**

*Racism isn't about racist actions - though those are caused by racism. Nor is it prejudicial feelings, which are also caused by racism. Racism is more subtle: it's a lens through which we see the world. It's a lens that tells us that white people are better on almost every measure. We can't see this lens because it's shared by almost everyone we know. And we learn it from infancy. The work of anti-racism, then, is about resetting this lens and understanding the impact that it has on the people around us who are not white. It's not about treating everyone the same, but acknowledging that we need to fix the structures that systematically disadvantage those who are not white. Equality is not equity.*

*Kate McNally*

**VIGIL ON 10 JUNE ABOUT MILITARY VISITS TO SCHOOLS  
“DON’T TEACH CHILDREN TO KILL”**



**AM PEACE PROMOTION GROUP JUNE VIGIL**

by Allison Challen

Members of Stockport for Peace, Rochdale & Littleborough Peace Group and other peace campaigners, joined Friends in a vigil to raise the unsettling issue of UK armed forces visits to schools and under 18 recruitment. Thanks to the tree shade at Central Manchester, around 15 of us were able to withstand the heat for an hour which meant over 100 flyers were handed out to passers-by, who were mostly interested in or supportive of our concerns. These include those discussed in the 'Conscription by poverty?' report published by Child Rights International Network [UK recruitment report final.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#)





The Area Meeting Peace Promotion group is holding a silent vigil on Saturday 22nd July, 12-1pm, Central Manchester Meeting House steps, to highlight the issues around armed forces day events\*, under 18s handling weaponry and under 18 recruitment. It would be good to have the support of Friends once again, even if you are unable to come for the whole hour.

\* <https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/quakers-oppose-armed-forces-day-in-falmouth>

There are a few things we ask of vigilers - if you wish to talk during the vigil please do so quietly (as a silent vigil has more impact), please dress for the weather, and when on the steps leave a space either side of the centre handrails to allow ease of access for visitors to the building. There will be tea, coffee and biscuits available in the Friends room and chairs for sitting during the vigil if needed.

We hope you can join us on the 22nd.

## **HELPING WILDLIFE** **by Elizabeth Coleman**

My sister saw a man with a strimmer, about to cut the grass on a small plot of Council-owned land. She got into conversation with him, and suggested that he didn't cut the grass too short, to help wildlife. He agreed. When she next visited the site, she saw a number of bee orchids in flower.



## **ANTI-RACISM – STAGES IN THE JOURNEY A GUIDE FOR WHITE PEOPLE**

### **Extracts From a Powerpoint presentation by Kate McNally shown at a meeting of our Racial Justice Group**

These extracts from Kate McNally's PowerPoint presentation, following her research into what BYM Friends are doing on anti-racism, and shared at a recent Racial Justice Group meeting, provides important learning.

“The first step beyond resistance is to find our hearts open to the idea. This may happen because of any number of personal experiences or realizations. Here we begin to see and investigate racism in our surroundings. We might begin to be aware of microaggressions.

From there we begin to see the ubiquity of whiteness and the assumption that “white” is “normal”. The implications of this become apparent, including the fact that “different” is not “equal”. We begin to see the problem with the assumption of whiteness. Here we begin to think about and/or work for racial equality.

At some point we understand that we are white, with the privilege that white skin grants. This is where we begin to understand the link between being white and being racist. We accept the possibility that in spite of our best intentions we may be racist.

We investigate further. We may join reading groups or share resource lists with others. We may go back to investigating the implications and privileges of whiteness.

Here we begin to find ways to work in our community or at a local, regional or national level against racism. We find like-minded people to

work with. This is where we often begin to think more about racial equity than simple racial equality.

When we consider racial equity we recognise that wrong has been done and continues to be done. This is when we begin to consider reparations.

When we begin to think about reparations, we may go to experts for help in thinking about it. We may investigate the many forms that reparations can take. We may want to understand the historical and contemporary ways that racism impacts non-white people today. There are many ways that we can look at the question of reparations, including what US Friend Hal Weaver calls “retrospective justice”.



## PAT LEE MEMORIAL MEETING PHOTO



# **Racial Justice Group Meeting**

Blended meeting at  
Central Manchester Meeting House

**Topic: *Looking back, Looking forward***

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023 7.30pm - 9pm  
Refreshments provided.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89302653138?pwd=emx1Y1Q0MVVqZS9WdE1qMGtVT0FLZz09>

Meeting ID: 893 0265 3138

Passcode: 191271

## **NEWS FROM RACIAL JUSTICE GROUP**

We are pleased to hear of the establishment in East Cheshire Area Meeting of a separate Racial Justice Group.

# SARAH DONALDSON'S LEAVING EVENT



**BACK THIS SEPTEMBER!**

**DSEI\* - LONDON 'S HUGE BI-ANNUAL ARMS FAIR**  
*Actions being planned locally and nationally*

**MANCHESTER PEACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE**  
**CITY CENTRE WALK**

**FRIDAY 1<sup>st</sup> SEPT details to follow - save the date.**

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**Oxford to DSEI Peace Pilgrimage - 5th-12th Sept**  
<https://peacepilgrimage.org.uk/about-the-pilgrimage/>

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**LONDON**

**No Faith in War Day - Thurs 7th Sept**  
**Walk of Witness to arms company HQs - Mon 11th Sept, pm**  
**Vigil on the eve of DSEI - Mon 11th Sept**  
**Meeting for Worship on opening day of DSEI- Tues 12th Sept**

**MORE DETAILS**

**<https://www.quaker-roots.org.uk/>**

**\* Defence and Security Equipment International**  
**- <https://www.dsei.co.uk/>**

If you would like to know more or can help with organising the Manchester walk, contact Steve Hornby at [sh350l@gmail.com](mailto:sh350l@gmail.com)



## VIGIL AGAINST ILLEGAL MIGRATION BILL 14 JUNE



## **MAKING MY WILL**

**by Sandra Dutson**

I made my will in 2008 and sorted Power of Attorney a few years later. My primary consideration in both was so my two daughters would find dealing with my affairs when that became necessary as straightforward as possible.

At the time of making my will I had two daughters, one of whom had two very young children. The will gave more or less 3 equal shares to my daughters and Christian Aid. Although I think there are occasions when family commitments do need to take priority I do not subscribe to the kind of thinking 'charity begins at home' or 'family comes first'. I have supported Christian Aid for over 50 years because seeing all people as neighbours, and recognising we are part of one world is fundamental to my thinking. I totally respect Christian Aid's work in the way it supports emergency assistance, long term support, education about the root causes of poverty and its campaigning. I also like the grassroots connections with people in this country and partners. In a short letter to my daughters (to be given when appropriate) I expanded a bit on some more personal aspects of my preferences about eg possible future care needs I also suggested, depending on how much remained of wealth at my death, some should be donated to several other charities and organisations I support from my daughters shares. I felt able to do this as I trust my daughters.

Now my three grandchildren are in their teens I realised it may well be them who receive what might be quite generous amounts of money if my daughter has shorter life than I hope she will have and I was starting to question how I felt about this possibility.

Then as I started to reflect on thinking about wealth and not just income I realised though my regular income is in one of the lower quartiles, as I own my flat and have some savings my present will in a small way (I am not amongst the 'super rich) does in fact illustrate the way inherited wealth can increase the wealth inequalities in our society. I feel challenged by Jonathan Dale's recent template letter for our MPs and others. I share the understanding that greater equality is a crucial foundation for a good life and that we urgently need to become more equal as a society. I support the position that we have a huge need for resources to repair and improve our public services after years of neglect. And we have as great a need to make resources available for climate justice (Loss and Damage etc) and for our own transition to a low carbon nation. Jonathan points out a wealth tax could raise £10 to 20 billion while touching directly only a few hundred of the richest people in our country. Many millionaires are calling out for it – the Patriotic Millionaires. I am certainly not a millionaire nor seeking to avoid tax but could reconsidering my own will tip the balance in a very small way?

The following thoughts are offered as I grapple with making a decision whether to rewrite my will.

Some of my 'own' wealth has been inherited mostly from close family members. I have tried to use that money well and also in such a way that honoured the particular people who left me money. This has meant I have been able to give generously to charities/organisations I support and also assist family members and other individuals especially some of the people known to me who are seeking asylum.

I realise it is quite likely I might not approve of the way any money I leave in my will is then used. Expectations of family inheritance can be a very mixed blessing. I know of people who have deliberately not made provision for children or grandchildren as they felt that in some ways that was really not good for them. On the other hand having that responsibility and freedom can be a real opportunity for development of a positive

kind. I love my children and grandchildren dearly and would like to feel they would respond to that love in the way they chose to use any inherited money and it would inspire both generosity and wisdom.

If I write family members out of my will or at least give much reduced amounts how should I best dispose of the money? Allocating amounts between charities can get complicated as charities over the years can change and even no longer be needed or fail so being specific may not be helpful. It seems important to retain some money for my own use for my own or other emergencies and I am aware as we get older there may be a need for care.

I have spoken of this dilemma to a few friends and do find it a common assumption that wealth is passed on in the family perhaps with a smaller amount being specified for a 'cause' dear to the heart of the person concerned.

I would be really interested to know how other Quakers in similar positions have reached any decisions. I am aware of course many people are not in this rather privileged position and that is indeed part of the way inequalities grow.

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Was the earth made to preserve a few covetous, proud men to live at ease: or was it made to preserve all her children?

Gerald Winstanley, 1649

Founder of "The True Levellers"

Quote from a tea towel - [radicalteatowel.co.uk](http://radicalteatowel.co.uk)

(They also do a Benjamin Lay tea towel)

## HARDSHAW ESTATES AGM

Dear Friends,

The AGM of Hardshaw Estates will be on Wednesday 19th July at 7.30 using Zoom. David McHugh will be making the technical arrangements and will send these to all of you.

The invitation to attend is open to all members of each Area Meeting. Please circulate it with the request that Friends planning to attend what really should be the last ever AGM should let Margaret Gregory or David McHugh know so that we can send them log on details and the reports.

Thank you

Margaret Gregory

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## BAMFORD QUAKER COMMUNITY - NEWS

At a meeting of the Trustees of the Charity held on Tuesday 13 June the following minute was recorded.

**'It is clear there are insufficient people willing to join the community and it cannot continue in its present form. We will therefore explore selling the current building and land, and use the funds raised to pursue our charitable objectives in other ways.'**

## **Practising Prayer – Connecting with the Source**

**Led by Terry Winterton & Margaret Calvert**

Everything is a gift. Our planet nurtures us, but how do we respond? Using the acronym A.C.T.S we will explore how action and prayer are intimately linked in responding to our times. You are invited to share your experience of balancing prayer with action in a time of global emergency. A-Accepting; C-Connections; T-Testing; S-Seeking are our starting words but there are many more to be discovered. What might our prayer be at each stage?

There is free time each afternoon. Opportunity for individual spiritual accompaniment is also offered. Terry is the Quaker Friend in Residence at Glenthorne and a registered counsellor. Margaret is a Quaker who draws on many faith traditions in her prayer life.

14 places, £475

Persons under 35 qualify for £100 reduction

Monday 11th – Friday 15th September

<https://glenthorne.org/events-programme-2023>

## **The Big Feed, Fighting Food Poverty in Wythenshawe contributed by Anna Bunney**



The Big Feed is a campaign and events that have been organised by Churches Together in Wythenshawe to celebrate the generosity of the people of Wythenshawe and to campaign for the end of food banks and poverty. South Manchester Quakers are members of the group and we are taking part in this local campaign - linked in with the Trussel Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation Guarantee our essentials campaign.

Over a week at the start of the school holidays there will be an opportunity to join other church congregations to be present in the Wythenshawe Civic Centre – where we will be gathering signatures for a petition, collecting food donations and creating communal campaigning art work. This art work is a series of banners which represent the 58,000 people living in Wythenshawe who receive Universal Credit. These banner are going to be taken around to schools, community groups and churches around Wythenshawe and then be displayed around the railings of William Temple church.

Churches have also organised a number of events to offer free meals for local families – South Manchester's event is on Friday 28 July 4-6pm on the theme of fruit. There will also be opportunities for people to join in online prayer.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Civic Centre (everyday between 11am -2pm at Wythenshawe Civic Centre) or join South Manchester Quakers for our fruit food event (or have recipe or game ideas), or join in the online prayer let me know - [anna.bunney@yahoo.com](mailto:anna.bunney@yahoo.com) 07464 805808

## CAMPAIGNING FOR BETTER

In Wythenshawe	In the UK	For everyone
There are 97,635 people living in Wythenshawe, and 58,000 of them are receiving Universal Credit. At the moment, these payments are so low that people are going into debt just affording the bare essentials.	The Churches in Wythenshawe are calling on the government to bring Universal Credit payments into line with the current cost of living, so that everybody can afford the essentials.	It costs a single person around <u>£120 every week to afford the essentials to live, and £200 for a couple</u> . This means that the average person needs to spend £35 a week more than Universal Credit - just to stay alive.

 <b>FREE EVENTS NEAR YOU</b>		
<b>WEDNESDAY 26TH JULY</b>	<b>THE BIG FILM NIGHT</b>	Come see "Cloudy with a chance of meatballs", 6PM AT the block cinema, West View Court, Northenden, Wythenshawe, Manchester M22 4LQ. places are limited and booking is essential on <a href="http://thebigfeed.co.uk">thebigfeed.co.uk</a>
<b>THURSDAY 27TH JULY</b>	<b>THE BIG LUNCH</b>	Enjoy lunch together at st Martin's church From 12pm-1pm, on Bowland Road, M23 1LX.
	<b>THE BIG BBQ</b>	A BBQ From 6pm-9pm at Brownley Green Methodist Church, Broadoak Road, M22 9NE
<b>FRIDAY 28TH JULY</b>	<b>THE BIG FRUIT BOWL</b>	An afternoon of Fruit tasting, activities and games, and cheap recipes, with a baked potato tea, 4pm-6pm at Quaker meeting house, 82 Wythenshawe Road, M22 0DJ.
	<b>THE BIG FUN DAY</b>	A great day out with a bouncy castle, games and other activities - fun for all the family. Based at The Message Trust, Harper Road, M22 4RG.
<b>SATURDAY 29TH JULY</b>	<b>THE BIG SLOW COOK</b>	Come for a delicious slow-cooked meal, and every family gets a free slow cooker! (while stocks last) 4pm-7pm at Lawton Moor Methodist Church, Button Lane, M23 0ND.
<b>SUNDAY 30TH JULY</b>	<b>THE BIG SUNDAY</b>	3 course meal From 12.30pm-2.30pm at the Dandelion Centre, Oatlands Rd, M22 1AH.



## **ANTI-RACISM**

The Martinican psychiatrist Frantz Fanon argued in 1956 that we should abandon the habit “of regarding racism as a disposition of the mind, a psychological flaw”. Rather, “military and economic oppression most frequently precedes, makes possible and legitimates” racist beliefs. And this “systematic oppression of a people” can continue even if a majority of citizens do not have racist biases, unconsciously held or otherwise.

(Anti-racism) means understanding that the poor of the global south are as equally entitled to the world’s resources as the wealthy residents of the north.

Arun Kundnani in The Guardian 29 June 2023

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## **TOWARDS A FAIRER TAX SYSTEM**

by Anne Eardley

On 2 September you will have the opportunity to have a pleasant day at Sale Meeting House, having a rare social get-together in person, and enjoying the garden. You’ll also have the opportunity to learn more about one of the Social Justice group’s current concerns: the growth of wealth inequality in the UK. One aspect of this is tax.

### **What do we think about tax**

Tax has a bad press in UK - something to be avoided, unlike in

other parts of the world, where taxes are seen not as something taken from us, but as our contribution to the common good. The current government likes to hold out as a tempting offer the prospect of tax cuts.

I assume that Quakers would not be so susceptible to these promises. There are just a couple of references to taxation in Quaker Faith and Practice, one of them being at 20.54; *We shall not attempt to evade our proper obligations to the community by way of taxation.*

### **What's wrong with the tax system at the moment ?**

Quakers have been aware for some years not only that wealth inequality has grown steadily in the UK, but also of the many adverse consequences of this for our society, thanks to the work of Wilson and Pickett in their book 'The Spirit Level'. Many of us are keen to address the issue of a fairer society, making the most of this country's considerable wealth to improve the quality of life for everyone, as well as helping to secure a brighter future for our children and grandchildren who are currently facing the grim prospect of climate change.

What has this got to do with taxation ? There is plenty of evidence that the tax 'burden' borne by the wealthiest individuals in our society is disproportionately small, compared to the rest of the population. I am far from being an expert on these matters, but my understanding is that this is a combination of current taxation thresholds, and the fact that 'wealth' as opposed to 'earnings' is not taxed in the same way.

Their carbon footprint is so much greater and more damaging. Not only does this widening inequality have a corrosive effect on our community, but the super-wealthy have an enormously higher carbon footprint than the rest of us.

## Who's working towards a fairer tax system ?

**Fair Tax Foundation:** this is a not-for-profit social enterprise, based in Manchester. Their Fair Tax Mark accreditation is the gold standard of responsible tax conduct. Any business, large or small, can apply. Here is the sign displayed in Unicorn Grocery in Chorlton, a moderate sized workers cooperative:



They also organise a system for local Councils for a Fair Tax Declaration: I am currently pressing Manchester to adopt this accreditation, which obliges Councils to demonstrate that they are not awarding contracts to businesses who cannot demonstrate they have responsible tax arrangements, for example if they have

connections to tax havens. Bury, Trafford and Oldham have already signed up.

**Tax Justice UK:** this is a campaigning organisation, working towards a fairer tax system that actively redistributes wealth to tackle inequality. As they point out: *'the UK's approach to tax isn't working. We fail to raise enough money to support high quality public services, and wealth is desperately under-taxed'*.

**Tax Justice Network:** this organisation was launched in 2003 in the Houses of Parliament, and has a global focus. They consist of a coalition of researchers and activists with a shared concern about tax avoidance and tax havens.

**The Just Money movement: Christians for a fairer, greener world:** an organisation for Christians and churches who want to connect faith, money and justice. To quote: *'we educate, campaign and resource a movement of Christians and churches to act differently with our own money and speak out about money'*.

**Patriotic Millionaires:** this group began in the USA and now has a UK movement. They want the government to tax the super-rich – including themselves – a fair amount. In other words, a wealth tax, of one or two per cent on wealth over £10million. In a recent letter to the Prime Minister, they wrote the following:

*"Like you, we are millionaires who want the best for Britain. As experienced investors and entrepreneurs we know it takes a serious injection of capital to make any initiative thrive - which is what our country needs right now. But raising this capital also needs to be fair, and when millionaires pay lower tax rates than ordinary working people, we think that our current tax system is sending the bill to the wrong people.'*

## **Like to know more ?**

1. You can subscribe to any of the bodies mentioned above, which will keep you up to date on current campaigns, and give you the opportunity to sign petitions.

2. You can follow the Quaker economist Richard Murphy: he has many short videos on Youtube, explaining in very clear language about different aspects of the economy, including tax.

<http://www.taxresearch.org.uk/Blog/>

3. You can check out which businesses have signed up to the Fair Tax Mark, which may affect where you decide to shop.

4. You can check if your local Council has signed up to the Fair Tax declaration.

5. Come along to Sale Meeting House on 2 September !

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

If you are not on the mailing list, and would like to be emailed future copies of the Newsletter, email Clare on

[admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk](mailto:admin@manchesterquakers.org.uk) with your request.

Please send articles and photos for the Newsletter to [elizcol@dialstart.net](mailto:elizcol@dialstart.net) The deadline for the August newsletter is 31 July. It can take time for an email to be received, so to be sure that your submission is on time, I suggest that you aim for 30 July. I put almost everything I receive into the newsletter, with very little editing. Short items with pictures are best.

When submitting items for publication, please be aware that the newsletter is a public document, posted on our website, and we do not control who sees it. So think before submitting personal information, email addresses and photos.

Try to avoid sending text and photos that are under copyright, and get consent from people in photos if needed.

Look at the website <https://www.manchesterquakers.org.uk> under “Newsletters and Events” if you’d like to see back-issues of the newsletter.

Elizabeth Coleman, Editor