

London Quakers report 2016

In 2016 London Quakers organised three successful open events and one recreative singing event.

The Saturday 20 February 2016 conference on Housing and Inequality – what canst thou do? had a wide range of important and challenging speakers: Paul Parker, BYM recording clerk, Bernadette O'Shea, Bob Kerlake from the House of Lords and Paula Harvey introduced the topic and the issues.

In the afternoon, the conference had six workshops on Homelessness with Alastair Murray of Housing Justice; International Lessons on extreme housing exclusion with Gina Netto of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Lobbying and activism with Catherine West MP; Creating New Housing Stock with Gemma Tighe, Fran Hicks and Nigel Morris; Ethical Landlords and tenants' rights with Sarah Fishpool of Quaker Housing Trust; and Options for Older People with Maria Brenton of the Older Women's Cohousing Network.

This successful and widely attended day has led to follow-on sessions and several other actions such as supporting the setup of the Ethical Landlords Association.

On Saturday, 16 April 2016 we held a dialogue on Dementia, after which we held our AGM. The speakers were Linda Shampan, psychotherapist talking about accompanying her mother through dementia; Eva Kalmus, Quaker GP on dementia in an acute hospital and the "Ceiling of Medical Care" and Lisa Hill, Advanced Mental Health Practitioner. These were followed by an opportunity to share experiences in small groups – the "Dementia Café".

Several people commented on the helpful emotional and practical support they received on the day.

On Saturday, 1 October 2016 we had a dialogue called Break up the banks - we need a banking revolution, with Fran Boait of Positive Money, John Adams, Cait Crosse of QPSW, David Shirreff author of "Don't Start from Here: We Need a Banking Revolution", Peter Borgers of Triodos Bank and Monica Middleton of Oikocredit. This too has led to follow-on activity.

The Friday 17 June Leaveners-led singing event was poorly attended so we have decided not to repeat the event.

London Quakers has also provided Quaker representation on the Faiths Forum for London, an interfaith body that 'empowers religious communities to work together for a better London.'

We think data protection complications prevent us from compiling and issuing another London-wide list of Quaker names and contact details across London, so we reluctantly lay this down. However we are supporting a UK wide initiative to see if we can simplify and standardise websites and information sharing for UK local meeting, area meeting and recognised Quaker group websites.

Finally thank you to all the London Area Meetings who have financially supported us, Friends House Hospitality team, the busy London Quakers committee, and everyone who has enjoyed one of our events. Onwards to 2017!

Keith Walton
Clerk London Quakers.