



Budapest Cafe Watercolour

John Kay

NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA QUAKER MEETING

July - September 2025

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Web Address:

www.essexsuffolkquakers.org

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

SEAQM c/o Colchester Quaker Meeting House

6 Church Street, Colchester CO1 1NF

Email address: AMClerk@essexsuffolkquakers.org

Meetings for Worship

CLACTON

Meeting for Worship:

Sunday 10:30 am

Contact: liz.prockter@gmail.com

Harwich Worshipping Group

Contact:

hazel.jones1@btinternet.com

COLCHESTER

Contact:

pwp.campion@gmail.com

Meeting for Worship: 2

Sunday 10:30 am

Meeting for reflection:

Wednesday 12 noon

jg.greenwood@btinternet.com

EARLS COLNE

Meeting for Worship:

Sunday 10:30 am

Clerk: Jenny Kay

earlscolne@essexsuffolkquakers.org

SUDBURY

Meeting for Worship:

Sunday 10.30 am

Contact: Catherine Moffat

cathmoffat@yahoo.co.uk

Midweek Meeting Thursday 12.30 pm
Contact Robin Hart 01787 269613

FUNERAL CONTACT

Kate Powis 07939 223830

Notes from the minutes

Jenny Kay

Southern East Anglia Area Meeting held on Saturday 7 June 2025 at Sudbury Meeting House

There were 13 members present from Colchester and Sudbury.

Editorial

Hello Friends!

Sometimes we look forward to things - a holiday, a concert, the arrival of family. And often-times those things don't quite live up to our hopes. The homecoming brought with it other challenges, there was crowding at the concert, the holiday weather wasn't what we wanted.

What has struck me recently is when does happiness actually occur?

We were at Quaker Camp earlier this month and George had

sat within the circle of chairs before our wonderful daily outdoor Meeting began one morning. The sun shone. The chairs formed a beautiful pattern of shadows in the grass and a baby came to play with him, laying her head on his lap in a fleeting moment of tenderness.

It feels that such moments come so quietly - in the in-between times - when we're chasing other dreams. We can catch them, with hearts and minds prepared. And we've so much to be grateful for.

Becky Hallewell



My Writing table this month



Quaker Camp



Hydrangea

Photo: Jenny Kay

Apologies were received from Earls Colne Meeting and the representative from Clacton Meeting was prevented.

Death of Friends

Two deaths were recorded: Jane Wolton of Colchester Meeting who died on May 11 aged 81. A Quaker funeral was held at Weeley Crematorium on Monday 16th June and Henry Ruse, of Sudbury Meeting who died on May 21st aged of 81. His funeral and burial took place on June

17th at Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford.

Solemnisation of marriage

A meeting for worship for the solemnisation of marriage between Kate Mary Powis and John Henry Gray has been appointed to be held at Colchester Meeting House on August 2nd 2025.

Sylvia Jeffcock and Jet Grommel were appointed Elders to uphold this meeting with Ecky Prolingheuer as a stand in.

Appointments

Jan Hutchinson has been acting on our behalf as a Greenwood Trustee for about four years since she moved from Mid Essex AM where she was first appointed. Jan was thanked for this service and her appointment confirmed until June 2027.

Financial contributions

Robert Parkes, Clerk to Trustees read out the letter to be sent out to SEAQM members and attendees requesting contributions. He explained that the area meeting income is not covering its expenses. The revised letter will be sent to Friends listed in the Tabular statement for their action. See page 11

Meeting for Sufferings Report

Sara Merritt presented her report on Meeting for Sufferings, held 1 March 2025 and provided an update on communications received since the last meeting. Her report included report from QCCIR (Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith relations) which she found stimulating and fertile ground for action; information about Quaker Housing Trust's new Quaker Asset Fund; the theological and community implications of our online and blended Meetings for Worship; the need for more active strategies for sustainability, for example EcoChurch and climate action, for example the work of Greengage; A discussion followed as to how Friends could act with a more focused approach and

keep our name in our local communities. A copy of her report appeared in the April Newsletter.

Britain Yearly Meeting 2025

Reports by two Friends, Kay Stevenson and Arnrid Wood who attended this in person were read out and are included in this Newsletter on pages 4 and 5. The Epistle, Minutes, Swarthmore Lecture and other highlights are available on the BYM website.

Minute 30 on Gaza was also read out. (See below) The minute closes with the acknowledgement that making a statement is not enough. The meeting considered the actions proposed by Oliver Robertson, head of Witness and Worship for Quakers in Britain. Local Meetings were invited to do the following:

To display Minute 30 on their notice boards,

To distribute leaflets on it to others (eg Churches Together, other (faith) organisations).

To hold a collective peace vigil.

To write to local MPs as individual Friends and as an Area Meeting, urging government to stop the supply arms to Israel. The area meeting clerk was asked to send local meetings a draft letter to use for this purpose.

Request for Partnership and Collaboration with ASRDC (Action de Solidarite pour la Reconstruction de le Developpement Comunitaire)

genocide in Gaza. Meeting for Sufferings felt compelled to speak out following decades of direct Quaker witness and peace work in Palestine and Israel.

Over the last three months, we have witnessed the deliberate mass starvation of a people and dismantling of almost all life-sustaining systems within Gaza. We have seen the forced movement of Palestinians and a stated intention to expel them from Gaza. We have heard Israeli govern-

The clerk stood aside to present a report which summarised information received from ASRDC, from partner organisations, from Quaker Congo Partnership and Friends World Consultation Committee. Eliza was thanked for her huge amount of research in preparing this report which appears on page ??? of this Newsletter. After much discussion the Area Meeting agreed to support and build a partnership with ASRDC but more information about specific projects and the amount of money involved is required. The Meeting asked Eliza to contact Pastor Innocent to let him know we would like to help but cannot do anything without an itemised and costed statement. Sudbury local meeting was asked whether the money for supporting ASRDC projects can come from their restricted funds.

Peer Support Networks in Area Meetings

Our development worker Jenny Grant asked us to consider the extent to which our existing formal and informal peer support networks are operational and what needs we may have in these areas.

She offered to share her work on developing a confident Quaker voice and on Quaker outreach when this is ready.

Date of Next Meeting

The next Area Meeting will be on Sunday 14 September at Clacton Meeting House. Friends are asked to bring a 'bring and share' lunch.

ment ministers incite hatred against and dehumanise Palestinians. We have heard language and witnessed actions that cannot be justified and strike at the core of our common humanity.

Our long history of witness and peace work in Palestine and Israel gives us particular experience from which to speak on this issue. The fact that we are speaking about Gaza does not absolve us of our responsibility to learn about

Minute 30:

Gaza Excerpts

At the Yearly Meeting in London at Friends House

Last year, Meeting for Sufferings minuted its alignment with the International Court of Justice rulings that the term apartheid was an accurate description of the situation in occupied Palestine and that there was a plausible risk of

and respond to other atrocities around the world.

We understand that genocide under international law must meet certain strict criteria. It means specific acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Genocide scholars are clear that genocide does not constitute one overwhelming, horrific act only, but is a process with many stages.

With this in mind, and guided by the testimony and judgment of Palestinians, Israelis, and genocide and legal experts we look to and work with, we are therefore led to say that we believe that genocide and mass displacement are underway in the actions of the Israeli government and its military towards the population of Gaza, recognising that a legal judgment on this is a matter for the International Courts.

We acknowledge the historical weight of this term for Jewish people, set against centuries of anti-Jewish hatred and crimes, and the ultimate horror and genocide of the Holocaust.

We acknowledge the history and present day reality of anti-Jewish hatred in the UK, a hatred that was exported worldwide by British and other European colonial powers. We acknowledge the historic and current role of the British state in creating the context

of this conflict and the tragedy we see playing out now.

We see and uphold those in Jewish communities and in Israel working for peace and justice for Palestinian people.

And so, we cannot say clearly enough: it is this current Israeli government that we are led to say we believe is committing genocide. Jewish people are not committing genocide. The Israeli people are not committing genocide. We abhor, and will challenge, any attempt to exploit our words to incite, fuel, or commit anti-Jewish and antisemitic hatred or violence.

We abhor, and will challenge, any attempt to use our words to question the existence of Israel or the Israeli people's right to live in peace and security.

It is also a tenet of Quakerism that violence can never be the answer. That the means are just as important as the ends. This is our peace testimony that has led us for more than 350 years to eschew all war and all violence at all times. We cry out for the violence in Gaza to stop – for an end to the killing of Palestinians and for the Israeli hostages to be returned home. We cry out for Palestinians and Israelis to be safe and to live thriving, joyous lives in their homelands. Everyone deserves a place to live where they don't feel scared. Our long work for peace tells us that security for

some bought with the insecurity of others tears at our collective humanity and is only ever temporary. Peace can never be brought about by the systematic oppression of others.

We therefore use the word 'genocide' after deep discernment. We use this word with the aim of opening eyes, minds and hearts. We use this word in the deep hope that the actions describes will stop."

We know that making a statement is not enough. We draw Friends' and meetings' attention to Meeting for Sufferings minutes S/11/04/4 from April 2011, which asks Friends throughout Britain Yearly Meeting to boycott settlement goods, until such time as the occupation is ended, and MfS/18/10/19 from October 2018, which asks BYM to avoid investing in companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine.

We ask Friends and meetings to reach out in love to Jewish people and communities they have connections with, and to understand and learn about atrocities across the world.

...We hold in the light the people governing Israel and Palestine and pray that they are moved towards peace and compassion.

We uphold those in positions of power and pray for them as they "seek light on the road to peace."

Adwoa Burnley

Brief Brief Report on BYM

(Friends Yearly Meeting 2025)

Kay Stevenson

When in 2023 I attended Friends Yearly Meeting for the first time, the focus of business was church government and the reorganisation of long-established committees. While the patient process of moving toward discernment was impressive, it was not a theme in itself inspiring. The theme for

2025 was much more immediately rewarding: Peace Inside and Out.

I admit to a personal reason for attending this year; it was an opportunity for seeing younger members of the family who live in the north of England but who had come to London for the gathering. It was one of the joys of the weekend to see how fellowship with young Quakers of their own age groups deepened their sense of identity as Friends. It was also amusing to hear about the gentle parody of spoken min-

istry the teenagers produced during an icebreaker game. Generous and creative volunteers led children in enriching programmes.

On Sunday morning, several dozen very young Quakers played quietly on floor mats during the inclusive Meeting for Worship, and on Monday the older teenagers reported on their weekend away together. I would urge everyone who hasn't already done so to scroll through the Minutes available through the **QUAKE** website, stopping to read Min-

utes 41 and 42, describing the young people's experience. A clear account of the core experience at FYM 2025 is available on the website in Minute 30, the statement on Gaza, and in a video of Adwoa Burnley reading the 'epistle to all Friends everywhere.'

For me, the most moving session was on the question 'How do we as Quakers address violence and conflict in our local communities and across Britain?' I didn't catch the name or local meeting of the Friend who spoke about the vigil her meeting keeps outside a nearby mosque, but won-

der if such action could be something we ourselves would like to consider, witnessing to concern about people of other faiths who are threatened when attending a worship service.



Peace Vigil

Attached is a picture of part of the peace vigil held outside Friends house. It was towards the end so people are starting to disperse. As you see, I'm standing in the middle of the road.

Quaker photographers took much better pictures which will probably appear online and in 'The Friend'.

Ruth Fowler-Dixon

Attending Yearly Meeting

Arnrid Wood

Brief reflections

1. Why did you decide to attend?

Having entered into Quaker membership within the last 18 months, I am seeking to become more fully involved in the organisation, and have decided that includes going to business meetings at all

levels. I went to Yearly Meeting in person for most of Saturday and half of Sunday, and online on Friday evening and Monday morning.

2. How did you find the experience?

It was a mixed experience. I enjoyed the Meeting for Worship on Sunday morning: worshipping with such a large number of

people was a great experience. I found some of the plenary meetings interesting, especially those seeking discernment in relation to the statement on Gaza. I found the

Groups Fair a bit bewildering, and only managed to engage superficially with some stall holders because there were so many people demanding of their attention. Unfortunately I missed the Swarthmoor Lecture but enjoyed the Salter lecture (although I have to admit it was not particularly memorable).

3. Did YM meet your expectations?

Some of them. There were moments of value and depth and moments of acute boredom. The trick was to slow right down and accept a lot of quiet sitting. There was some beautiful heartfelt Ministry, both within Meetings for Worship and also Meetings for Business. It was encouraging to see some young

people, babies and children, and to have young adults participating in the main sessions. And there was a smattering of diversity in among a majority of ageing white people. Everyone was superficially friendly, even if they tended to huddle with the people they already knew.

4. Can you share one thing you took away from having attended?

Observing the discernment process in action in relation to the Gaza minute, I recognised the value of that whole process. It requires endless patience, which the Clerks displayed in spades, but it allows for all (or most) people who wanted to, to have a say, and for the outcome to more or less reflect the view of the whole Meeting, not just the organisers. At least, we hope so. There were

some thought provoking contributions. I came away from the weekend feeling, on balance, proud to be a Quaker.

Finally, I took away the simple story of the grandfather and the grandson. I'm sure you have already heard it. The grandson complains he has 2 voices inside his head, like 2 wolves, fighting.

One wants to be generous, kind and compassionate, and the other wants to be angry and hateful.

"Which wolf will win?" asks the grandson. The grandfather replies "The one you chose to feed".



Geranium

Photo: Jenny Kay

Faith and action

Read during the opening Worship of Area meeting

QD&P 23.03

We know that Jesus identified himself with the suffering and the sinful, the poor and the oppressed. We know that he went out of his way to befriend social outcasts. We know that he warned us against the deceitfulness of riches, that wealth and great possessions so easily come between us and God, and divide us from our neighbours. The wor-

ship of middle-class comfort is surely a side-chapel in the temple of Mammon. It attracts large congregations, and Friends have been known to frequent it. We know that Jesus had compassion on the multitude and taught them many things concerning the Kingdom. He respected the common folk, appealed to them and was more hopeful of a response from them than from the well-to-do, the clever and the learned. Yet he never flattered the workers, never fostered in them feelings of envy and hatred, and never urged them to press for their own interests ruthlessly and

fight the class war to the finish. He called them to love their enemies and to pray for them that despitefully use them. Yet the very fact that he appealed to the humble and meek leads up to ... 'the discovery that the blessing and upraising of the masses are the fundamental interest of society'. In brief, he makes us all ashamed that we are not all out in caring for our fellow-men.

H G Wood, 1958

Reflections on a Life-Altering Diagnosis

John Greenwood

As some will know, in late December last year, a call from the hospital informed me that my prostate cancer had now spread into my spine and elsewhere and all that could be offered was palliative care. When the call ended, my wife and I looked at each other long and hard, in the mutual recognition that here begins a new chapter in our lives - along with the resolve to make the most of it.

Looking back now, some six months further on, I would say that, given the choice, I would

rather have dodged this particular 'bullet'. However, that having been said, I am greatly valuing this new journey I find myself on, for it is teaching me much and am convinced I am the better for it.

I have long been of the belief, borne out of personal experience, that Darkness and Light, 'disaster' and 'blessing' are invariably to be found bound up together, if only one has the eyes to notice the 'good' that is always present, even in the darkest of times. And so it has proved, once again, with this terminal diagnosis.

Yes, there is no denying there have been some difficult times. As anyone who has been through chemotherapy will testify, it can

be brutal, disorienting and exhausting, and in the space of a few months I have witnessed the rapid change from a relatively fit and active seventy something, into a much weakened, often exhausted and sometimes unsteady old man. It also comes with a host of possible side effects, not least of which, in my experience, has been the havoc it plays with one's taste buds! It wasn't until this happened that I realised just what a huge part taste plays in the basic enjoyment of life.

Another major downside of the diagnosis has been my necessary confinement to home. This has robbed me of the daily connections with both friend and stranger in the world outside that

used to be an integral part of life. Similarly, I have had to step back from all my external involvements, not least of which have been Quakers and the local foodbank, both of which have left big gaps in terms of relationships and the feeling of connection. However, I am hopeful of being able to reengage with the Wednesday and Sunday meetings as my strength returns.

Finally, on the list of ‘downsides’, I feel almost obliged to add the shortening of one’s life expectancy, to what may be only a matter of months, or possibly a year or more, depending on how I respond to the treatment. On the face of it, this downside might not unreasonably be regarded by many as a major issue, but to be quite honest, I have hardly given it a thought, for reasons I will touch on later. I am not, however, insensible to those nearest and dearest to me who will view this from a quite different perspective.

As for the upsides, the many deep and precious times that my wife Oni and I have shared together in these last months, I would not have missed for the world. She has been my constant carer and companion, and her love shines through in all she does. Similarly, I have been bowled over by the love and support shown by our wider family and, indeed, by so many friends – not least dear Quaker Friends. It is in circumstances such as these that the normal ‘English’ reserve is relaxed and I have been blessed over these months by many precious communications with good friends containing a depth of sharing and intimacy that would not have occurred had things been more ‘normal’.

Another heartening ‘upside’ has been the reaching out of two previous ‘acquaintances’ of my wife, on account of her new situation, who have since become very dear and caring friends of hers. It is so heartening to know that, apart from our close family, she will

now have an even richer network of good friends locally when most needed.

And last, but by no means least, has been the gift of time given to me, in my confinement, for contemplation and reflection. So often, such times of quiet can be the first casualty of an over-busy life – at least in my experience! I have tried to immerse myself, not only in silence and wonder, but also in spending more time with those writers and thinkers and poets who continue to inspire me.

The more that I sense it for, and in, myself, and read of it in the experiences of others that I trust, the more I am convinced that the true meaning of our lives is to live in harmony with the world – as it truly is, and not as it seems on the surface. One where “earth is crammed with heaven..” and everywhere is holy ground, because the ground of our being, and that of the cosmos in which we exist, is underpinned by a Divine Spirit, whose nature and essence is Love. One in which Light will never be overcome by darkness, nor love by death.

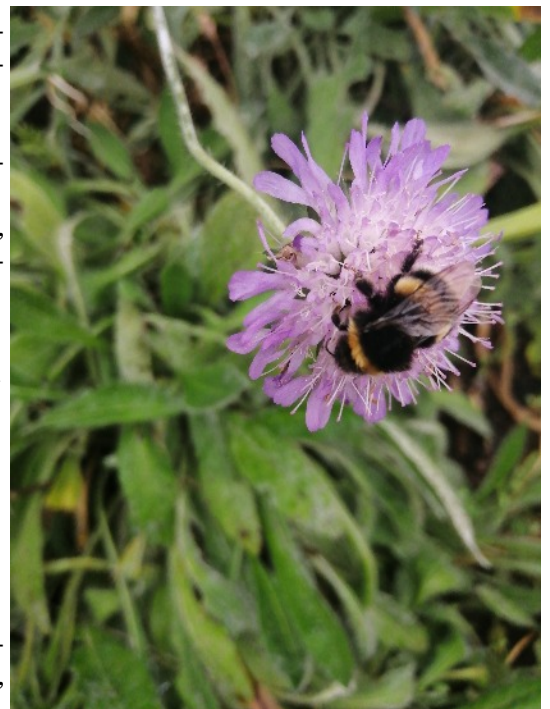
Of course I cannot ‘prove’ any of this. It is an understanding reached intuitively, through lived experience. Neither can I, or anyone else, prove ‘love’, or ‘beauty’ or ‘goodness’, or any of those other qualities that provide a precious insight into the ultimate nature of things, because they are all within the realm of ‘meaning’, rather than of ‘information’. Indeed, all such things that matter most to us, be it art, music, poetry, love, the sacred, need to remain in the implicit realm, for if you try to make them explicit, they fall apart, for they are all ‘of the heart’ and not of the head. To quote the poet Rumi, ‘Explanation by the tongue makes most things clear, but Love unexplained is clearer.’

All such things are not measurable, in a scientific sense,

but that does not mean they are not real. It is striking that the dominant worldview of our culture, namely, mechanistic materialism, which claims science and logic to be its founding principles, is nevertheless based on the premise that ‘if something can’t be measured, or proven, it doesn’t exist, in any meaningful sense’. Any system that is based upon ignoring any evidence, or data, that doesn’t fit the tidy categories of its own devising, can hardly claim to be scientific!

In conclusion, I would like to put in a shout for our wonderful NHS, and specially the Collingwood Centre at Colchester Hospital, where all my chemo treatment took place. Not only have I received excellent medical care, but equally importantly, we have been so impressed, indeed heartened, by the love and warmth of the staff and helpers, be it through genuine smiles with eye-to-eye contact, or through humour, or any other such means of conveying human affinity. Again, it is all about connection, about relationship, which I trust may be seen as the central thread running through all the above.

John Greenwood; June 2025



A Letter to Pam Fox

9 June 2025 at 16:51

Dear Professor Cox,

I was delighted to vote for you and welcome a Labour MP to Colchester.

I recognise that the time you have already spent in Whitehall has been an extremely busy one with many dreadful and continuing issues which involve Britain - along with many European countries. The conflict and supply of armaments to further war on one side or another are shameful. This leaves most British voters bewildered by Britain's stance in several conflicts.

As a Quaker, I write on behalf of local Quakers to express our bitter disappointment that the newly elected Labour Party should be so deeply involved in numerous conflicts, not least with the supply of Arms which cause major damage to cities, towns and homes in various parts of the world. You appreciate that Quakers have upheld a Peace Testimony since the middle of the 17th

Century. Most Quakers continue to hold tight to this crucial part of the Quaker Faith.

Local Quakers urge you to speak against offering arms to both Israel and the nearby Palestinian area. Both sides of this 'war' have engaged in horrendous conflict with the resultant loss of so many hundreds of young lives. There is still no sign of any end coming to this deeply troubled area.

Britain should be engaged in peace-keeping and a continuing debate with all Parties to seek a peace which would draw a curtain across the shameful deaths and woeful destruction in the Middle East.

Quakers exclaim: "We are called to live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars." This is not a limp squeak from a minority religious group but rather a continuous claim that we should all live within peaceful communities which cherish the young, tender the elderly and provide satisfactory working lives for the majority of adults in society. Present conflicts offer the exact opposites.

Further arms sales and advice from Britain on how to use them is a monstrous mistake. There must be a significant change in the way we - in Britain - approach conflict, misunderstanding and widespread willingness to pick up arms - usually supplied from wealthy states which have themselves suffered greatly from conflict in the past.

I speak for local Quakers in urging you to do all you can to explain the need to end the supply of arms and the training of young military lives. We should stand proud and urge those involved in conflict to cease the conflict which is currently reaping havoc in wide areas of the Middle East and blighting generations of our young people who are suffering from the folly of their elders. We should not aid these tragedies but enable deep and lasting peace-making.

Yours Sincerely,

Rod Usher

A member of the Labour Party.

Call to act on Gaza 1

Pam Cox MP 17 July 2025

Dear AM Clerk

Many of my constituents have written to me about this distressing situation in Gaza and the Middle East, and I would like to update you on the government's position.

I resolutely oppose Israeli plans and actions in Gaza and the situation in the Middle East. They are morally unjustifiable, wholly disproportionate and utterly counterproductive. They will not bring the hostages safely home. Nearly all hostages have been freed through negotiations, and I call on all parties to return to ceasefire negotiations. These must include the release of hostages and the rapid delivery of aid to Gaza.

I oppose the private delivery of aid. The UN has a humanitarian plan ready to deliver aid at the scale needed with mitigations against aid diversion. The Israeli plan to control Gaza and permit only minimal amounts of food to reach civilians is morally unjustifiable, wholly disproportionate and utterly counterproductive. I believe negotiations are the only way to bring this conflict to an end.

The Israeli Government's actions and rhetoric are egregious. They isolate Israel from its friends and partners and damage its reputation in the eyes of the world. The deterioration in the situation in Gaza is an affront to the values of British people and incompatible with principles that underpin the UK-Israeli relationship. I therefore support the UK Government's decision to suspend negotiations with this Israeli Gov-

ernment on a new free trade agreement and to review co-operation with it under existing bilateral roadmaps.

If Israel pursues the military offensive as threatened, failing to ensure the unhindered provision of aid, I support the UK's determination to take further action in response.

I continue to support the UK Government's decision in September 2024 on arms exports to Israel. Following a rigorous process in line with the UK's legal obligations, it concluded there is a clear risk that military exports to Israel, where used for military operations in Gaza, might be used in serious violations of international humanitarian law. As a result, it suspended approximately 30 licences for exports to Israel for items which could be used in the current conflict. The suspension does effectively cover all

arms exports for use in the current conflict in Gaza and will be kept under review.

I will not give up on a two-state solution as the only framework for a just and lasting peace. Such a solution must result in Israelis living within secure borders, recognised and at peace with their neighbours and free from the threat of terrorism, and in Palestinians living in their own state,

in dignity and security, free of occupation.

This solution is also in peril due to the spread of illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied West Bank with explicit support from this Israeli Government, which has led to soaring settler violence. I support the Government in imposing sanctions on a further three individuals and four entities involved in the settler move-

ment, acting against those carrying out abuses of human rights.

Thank you once again for contacting me about this very serious situation.

Pam

Call to act on Gaza 2

25 June 2025

Reply from Daisy Campbell, Researcher to Sir Bernard Jenkin MP

Dear Sylvia, Eliza and Jenny, (AM Clerks)

Thank you for writing to Sir Bernard about the situation in Gaza.

The events which have unfolded in the Middle East since 7 October 2023 have been unbearable to witness. Israel suffered the worst terror attack in its history at the hands of the Iran-backed terrorists Hamas, where innocent civilians were brutally murdered and hundreds taken hostage, including babies, children and the elderly. As a direct consequence of the actions of Hamas on 7 October and their use of civilian infrastructure to undertake terrorist operations, Palestinian civilians face a devastating humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

With regard to your request that the UK bans military exports to Israel, imposing an arms embargo would leave Israel exposed at a time of continued grave existential threat. With Iran being responsible for funding and supporting terrorism and instability in the region, and their attacks on Isra-

el, it is important that we do not weaken the ability of Israel to defend itself from these threats to their safety and to the interests of the West.

Sir Bernard supports a two-state solution that guarantees security and stability for both the Israeli and Palestinian people. Our long-standing position has been that we will recognise a Palestinian State at a time that is most conducive to the peace process. We are not at that point now. And we are clear that recognition cannot be the start of the process. Israeli hostages remain in captivity and every single one must be released. Ensuring Hamas is no longer in charge of Gaza and removing Hamas' capacity to launch attacks against Israel are also essential and unavoidable steps on the road to lasting peace. The UK Government's immediate focus must be on getting the hostages out and aid in. In doing this, they would be focussing on bringing the current conflict to a sustainable end.

The UK Government should be directly involved in efforts to find a way through this difficult moment. The international community must also reiterate that there can be no role for Hamas in Gaza's future and action needs to be taken to put an end to the malign influence of Iran, which is the cause of so much of the bloodshed and conflict in the region. The UK Government needs to do more. Shadow Foreign Secretary Priti Patel has consistently asked Ministers to set out the practical steps the Government is taking to get more aid into Gaza. The Shadow Foreign Secretary has asked Ministers how much aid is awaiting entry into Gaza, what steps the Government is taking to liaise with Israel on getting more aid in and if the Government will participate in new efforts to get aid into Gaza while preventing the Iran-backed terrorists Hamas from taking it. Sir Bernard is disappointed that Labour Ministers have consistently refused to provide answers and explain what practical steps they are taking to get aid into Gaza.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact Sir Bernard.

Kind regards,



Call to act on Gaza 3

From: James Cartlidge MP for South Suffolk, Shadow Secretary of State for Defence 10 July 2025

Dear Sylvia,

Thank you for your email regarding the Middle East.

This is a difficult and fragile moment for the region. We all want to see a sustainable end to this conflict, the return of the hostages, the alleviation of this awful crisis and, eventually, a two-state solution - with the region free of Hamas and of threats from Iran. To begin, I recognise that the situation in Gaza is desperate. I want to see the Gaza conflict brought to a sustainable end as quickly as possible. Throughout the conflict, the UK has supported NGO and UN partners to deliver medical aid and care in Gaza. The previous Government did everything it could to get aid into Gaza as quickly as possible by land, sea and air, including by:

- *Trebling the UK's aid commitment to the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the last financial year*
- *Establishing a field hospital in Gaza*
- *Participating in numerous air-drops of aid*

- *Providing a package of support to help set up a maritime aid corridor to Gaza*

It is vital that the UK continues to provide much-needed humanitarian support to the people of Gaza and works with our international partners to get more aid into Gaza. However, there cannot be movement towards a sustainable ceasefire whilst Hamas are in control, and without the release of all hostages. Israel suffered the worst terror attack in its history at the hands of this terrorist organisation, and Palestinian civilians continue to face a devastating humanitarian crisis in Gaza. It is therefore important that the Palestinian Authority commits to undertake serious, measurable, and tangible reforms, in order to facilitate the move towards a sustainable end to this conflict.

I think it is worth noting that since the atrocious attacks against Israel on 7th October 2023, the UK Government has worked with partners across the region to secure the release of hostages, including British nationals. In support of the hostage rescue activity, the UK Ministry of Defence has conducted surveillance flights over the eastern Mediterranean, including operating in airspace over Israel and Gaza. Surveillance aircraft are unarmed; they do not have a combat role, and they have been solely tasked with locating hostages. Only information relating to hostage rescue is passed to the relevant authorities responsible for hostage rescue.

With regards to requests to ban UK military exports to Israel, I am

aware that the Government has already suspended 30 of the UK's 350 arms export licences to Israel. Nonetheless, imposing an arms embargo has the potential to leave Israel vulnerable to further attacks given the continued threats from Hamas and Iran. With Iran being responsible for funding and supporting terrorism and instability in the region, it is important that we do not weaken the ability of Israel to defend itself from these threats.

On the matter of Palestinian Statehood, there should be a negotiated settlement leading to a two-state solution, with a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state- but that is going to be a long-term endeavour.

Finally on more recent developments, Iran has positioned itself as a destabilising force in the region, fueling conflicts through proxies in Yemen, Lebanon and Palestine, and threatening not just Israel, but wider regional and international security. Given the clear threat Iran poses not only to Israel but to wider regional stability, Israel has the right to act in self-defence to degrade Iran's nuclear infrastructure. Iran's long-standing lack of transparency, alongside its documented breaches of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and its ballistic missile development, have created widespread concern amongst the international community and therefore the threat they pose cannot be understated.

Moving forward, I continue to urge the Government to do everything in its power, working with our international partners to support the release of all hostages, the provision of aid into Gaza, press for a lasting and sustainable end to this conflict, and commit to finding a long term diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards, James



Our Meetings need your financial support.

Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting (SEAQM)

Registered Charity 1134208

Dear Friend

On behalf of our Trustees, I am asking all Members and Attendees to consider how they can make a financial contribution to the running of the Area Meeting and its constituent Local Meetings. This is essential for maintaining the viability of our Meeting and is a central part of Quaker membership and commitment to the Society of Friends. Advice and Query 20 asks us: do you give a right proportion of your money to support Quaker work?

In the past, Friends have made generous contributions towards the running costs of their Local and the Area Meeting. Thank you for your generosity. However, for some time now, we have not received enough income to meet our commitments. This has become urgent. This first quarter, for example, the Area has run up a deficit of over £5,000. Our

room hiring generates income, often meeting local needs, but running costs continue to rise. Friends put great store in our buildings but looking after them, and making improvements, comes at a cost. We also rely on paid assistance with administration and finance. These essential jobs were once carried out by Friends, voluntarily, but this is no longer the case. We continue to draw on our reserves, but they are slowly being used up. This is not sustainable

So, how much should you give? All gifts, whatever their size, are valued and make a difference. We believe very much in the principle of equal generosity, giving what you can afford. Trustees suggest a figure of £250 per person per year as a guide (about £5.00 per week). Not every Friend will be able to give this amount, some will be able to give more.

How do you give? Many of us already have arrangements to do this, paying directly to the Area and/or our Local Meeting. In which case, you may wish to review how much you give.

If this is new for you, the attached Giving forms explain

how you can give. You have the option to allocate your contribution to your LM and/or the Area. It can be by cheque to Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting, by bank transfer to 089299 65603293 or by Standing Order, or CAF. If you are paying from taxable income, please also complete the Gift Aid Declaration. Please complete a printed Form(s) and forward (along with cheque if applicable) to our interim Contributions Clerk: Chris Samuel, 49 Dale Close, Stanway, Colchester CO3 0FG Tel: 01206 365101. Please detach and send the completed Standing Order form directly to your bank.

I am also taking the opportunity to invite you to consider making contributions to Britain Yearly Meeting, which puts Quaker faith into action on our behalf, both in the UK and abroad and which provides us with ongoing advice and guidance. Information on how to pay directly to BYM is available on the website <https://www.quaker.org.uk/giving>.

With many thanks,
Robert Parkes

Clerk to Trustees, May 2025

Self Care and Tea

**Time out for you,
time with a F/friend.**
Come for sound
healing in the
morning and stay for
a cup of tea; bring
something to eat/
have lunch and cup
of tea before the
afternoon sound
healing session; or
just drop in for a cup
of tea and chat.

Self Care and Tea.

**Experience relaxing sound meditation and a
follow up cup of tea with F/friends**

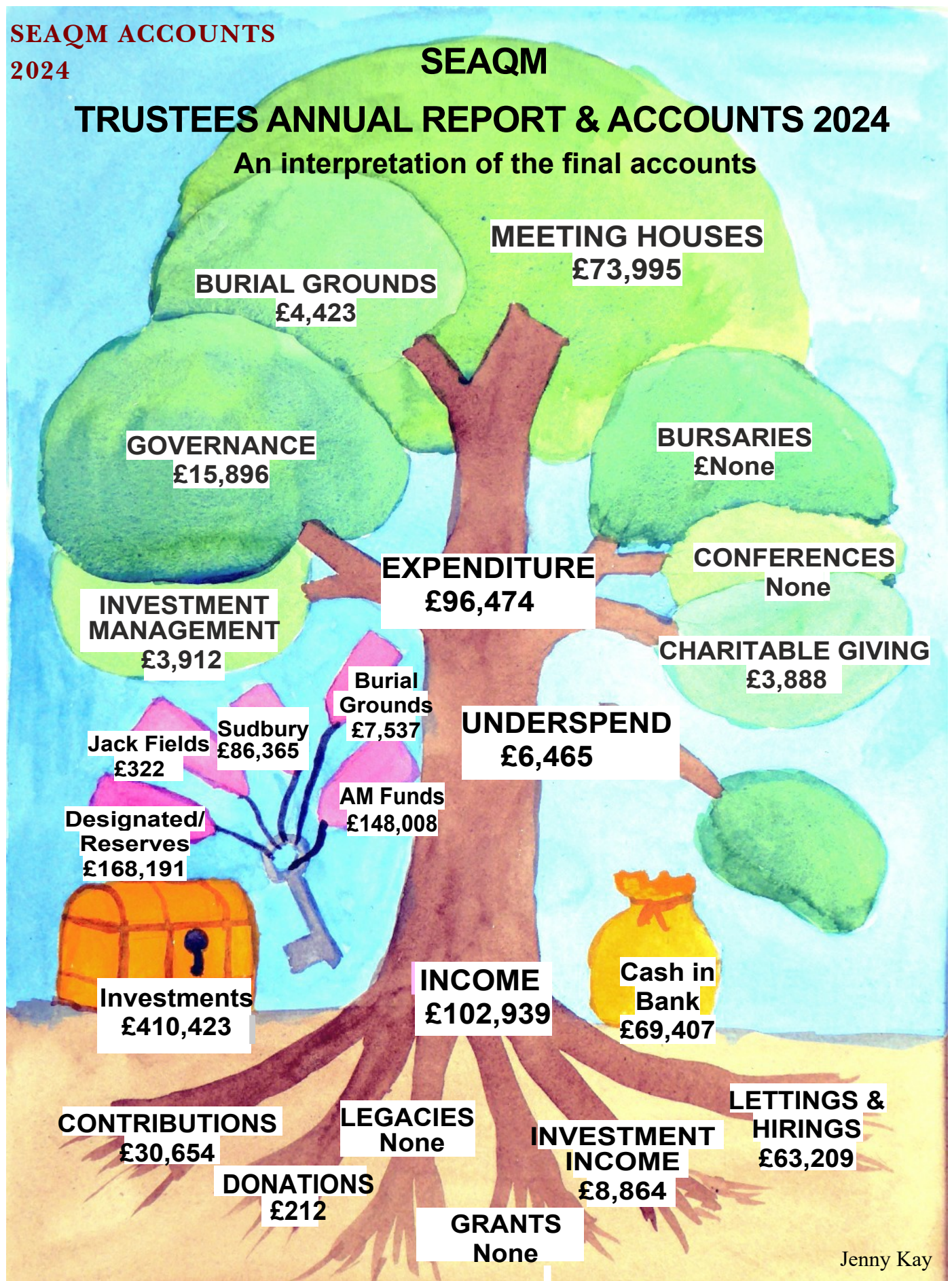
at Colchester Meeting House on **Saturday 16th August**

morning session 10.30
afternoon session 2pm
(pay what you can)



SEAQM TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2024

An interpretation of the final accounts



Jenny Kay

The figures used here are all to be found in, or are derived from the SEAQM Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statements 2024, independently examined and produced by Streets, Chartered Accountants. Any discrepancies in this interpretation are mine. Friends are asked to read the full report. The Accounts will be presented to Area Meeting at Clacton on Sunday 14 September 2025.