

# The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) In Ireland, Ulster Quarterly Meeting

## Annual Report & Accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022

### Introduction

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and in line with the guidance produced by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

### Constitution and governance

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) In Ireland, Ulster Quarterly Meeting is governed by its governing document which was agreed by the Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The Meeting was registered as a charity by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021 with registration number NIC 108015.

The Trustees, of whom there should be not less than two, are appointed at the Annual General Meeting. They are appointed for a period of up to three years and are eligible for re-appointment for a further two terms. Trustees who served during the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 were as follows:

Pleasance M Perry (clerk of Trustees)

Daniel H Sinton

W Paul Sinton

The Trustees are responsible for the policies, activities and assets of the charity. No Trustee received any remuneration for services as a member of the Board of Trustees and the charity has no employees.

The Meeting has put in place a data protection policy, based on guidelines from Ireland Yearly Meeting, which is reviewed regularly.

### Purposes of the charity

Ulster Quarterly Meeting is a Meeting for Worship of the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland that practises in accordance with the principles of the Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers.

The purpose of our charity, as set out in our governing document, is the advancement of the general religious purposes of the Religious Society of Friends by the following means, in so far as they are exclusively charitable:

- i. Strengthening the Christian understanding and religious development in the geographical area of Northern Ireland;
- ii. Contributing financially and practically to the relief of suffering at home and abroad;
- iii. Providing for the pastoral care of individual Members and Attenders, including assistance to those in need.

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 we had a total of 662 Members (a net decrease of 6 on the previous year).

### Our activities during 2022

The first Quarterly Meeting in February 2022 was again held online, due to some continuing restrictions from Covid-19. By June we were able to meet in person again, and the opportunity to worship together and enjoy a time of fellowship once more was much appreciated.

Several members of the Quarterly Meeting took part in the Loving Earth Project exhibition and workshop in March and April. Loving Earth is an international community textile art project, initiated by Quakers in Britain, which enables people to engage creatively with the challenges of the climate crisis. Fifty of the

panels went on display in Belfast, Portadown and Londonderry, and Friends were on duty for the duration of the exhibition to encourage visitors to engage with the topic and think more about sustainability.

The three monthly meetings reported to Quarterly Meeting that all their Annual duties had been carried out.

Ulster Quarterly Meeting were responsible for organising the Ireland Yearly Meeting in 2022, which was held at Stranmillis University College, in August with the theme '*Hope, Renewal, Healing*'. This was the first time Irish Friends had been able to meet in person since 2019, and it was the first 'blended' Ireland Yearly Meeting. Technology enabled Friends to participate via Zoom from all over the world, joining those sitting in Belfast. Representatives from other churches also attended, and visitors were invited from other Yearly Meetings in Britain and Europe. A rich time of worship, fellowship and business took place. The Public Lecture was given by Lynn Finnegan, a writer for the International Institute of Sustainable Development. The title of her talk was *Embodying the Quaker Testimonies in Service of a Living Planet: The Challenge of Asking Beautiful Questions*.

- Committee reports :

- The Jessie Cairns Bequest is managed by Ulster Friends Trustees Ltd on behalf of Ulster QM, and the income is distributed in line with the wishes of the donor to Coleraine Preparative Meeting, Lisburn Monthly Meeting and Ulster Quarterly Meeting. The income from the capital is to be used '*to sustain and extend the Christian witness of the Religious Society of Friends and to support Quaker charitable work within the bounds of Ulster Quarterly Meeting*'. The broad remit of this fund enables the income to be used in many different ways, such as helping Fermanagh worship group with the cost of hiring a room for their worship, and giving donations to Quaker Service for the Family Crisis programme, and to the Red Cross in response to the war in Ukraine.
- The Moyallon Centre remained quieter than usual, as Covid restrictions meant groups were not allowed to visit. In spite of the difficult economic year, accounts showed the Centre in a stable financial position. The administrator continued to work throughout the year, and as well as answering queries and attending to essential maintenance, she updated the website which was invaluable.
- Senior and Junior Moyallon residential Camps resumed this year after the pandemic. The camps are not exclusively for young Quakers - all faiths are welcome, and campers are encouraged to bring a friend if they are worried about coming on their own.
- The Ulster Quarterly Meeting Education Committee gave grants to 25 children attending Friends' School and local secondary schools in the Grange and Richhill area. Twenty three young Friends in third level education also received grants. A gift of up to £6,000 was approved for Friends' School Lisburn towards providing a counselling service.
- The James and Elizabeth Muriel Young Old People's Home Trust (JEMY fund) supports the comfort and wellbeing of members of the Religious Society of Friends, within Ulster Quarterly Meeting, aged 60 or over. Assistance is not means tested, and grants of £400 towards winter fuel payments were made to 171 households. Eight other grants were given to Friends over 60, and one grant was also given to a Friends Meeting House to improve the comfort of older Friends.
- The Archives Committee received a small number of enquiries via email over the year from members of the public. Most of these were dealt with by referral to the online Dublin and Lisburn archives on the Find My Past website.

## Looking forward

We look forward to God's continued blessing on our Meetings in 2023 and we hope to see growth in Christian understanding and spiritual experience in all our Meetings.

## Public Benefit

The trustees of Ulster Quarterly Meeting are pleased to confirm that they have complied with their duty to have regard to the public benefit requirement statutory guidance of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Our public benefit has been demonstrated in a number of ways over the past year:

- We ensured that our Meetings hold regular Meetings for Worship and these Meetings are open to members of the public as well as our own members and regular attenders – these Meetings provide spiritual nourishment and deepen the Christian experience and understanding of those who attend;
- Improvement in the circumstances of individuals and groups whom we support through practical action with charities such as Quaker Service which works mainly with isolated and vulnerable prisoners. The Family Programme which was based at Quaker Cottage, closed at the end of 2022, bringing an end to forty years of work with mothers and children;
- Greater public awareness and understanding of a Quaker approach to peacebuilding, sustainability, social action, education, spiritual growth and other concerns that we support financially and practically;
- Appreciation of the legacy of Quaker historical buildings and records in Northern Ireland.

## Financial Review

Our financial statement for the period 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 is attached to this report and shows that we had income of £81,761.20 and expenditure of £175,265.79 (largely due to £101,705.57 invested in Property Fund). This resulted in a deficit of £93,504.59 with the balance of funds falling from £245,245.12 on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 to £151,740.53 on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.

## Declaration

This report was approved at the Annual General Meeting on 16th September 2023 and is signed on behalf of trustees.

Pleasaunce M Perry  
Clerk of Trustees