

**Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE) Annual Report
Year ended 30 September 2017**

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FSSE (Friends Southern Summer Events) is a small Quaker charity, entirely run by volunteers, whose purpose is the advancement of the Religious Society of Friends through the provision of educational events for young people.

Object and Activities

FSSE's objects are:

- (a) to promote and advance the religious education of the community and in particular of young people, including those of the Quaker tradition, and others with an interest in learning more about Quakers;

AND in furtherance thereof:

- (b) to organise and promote events for the spiritual growth and moral benefit of the community and in particular of young people with an interest in Quakers;
- (c) to disseminate by whatever means the ideals of truth, non-violence and equality within a Quaker background; and
- (d) to promote any purpose that is charitable according to the laws of England and Wales and for the benefit of the public as may from time to time be determined by the trustees.

FSSE currently runs two week-long events: Junior Gathering, for 11-14 year olds; and Senior Conference for 15-18 year olds. The catchment area is southern England, though others are welcomed if there is space.

Public benefit statement

FSSE exists for the promotion and advance of the spiritual nurture and religious education of young people including both those of the Quaker tradition, and those with an interest in learning more about Quakers and Quakerism. This benefits personally the participants who attend the events, and also benefits the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) more widely, through the spreading of Quaker ideas and ideals.

In carrying out these purposes, FSSE currently organises two annual residential Quaker events in August of each year: Junior Gathering (for young people aged 11-14) and Senior Conference (for older participants aged 15-18). These events benefit the young people who attend them enormously, by providing spiritual education through workshops which advocate the Quaker testimonies of peace, simplicity, equality and truth. The events provide spiritual nourishment from new (and old) friendships, shared worship and activities including sports, games, drama, music and other creative arts.

Based on the feedback participants provide, we know our events are significant in the lives of those who attend, helping build confidence, knowledge and supportive friendships which in some cases last a lifetime. We see young people wanting to come back year on year, and also those who want to give back some of what they gained by helping at the events.

Funding

FSSE is funded primarily through participant fees, which for 2017 were £325 per person per event (2016: £325). We know that some participants are funded in part or in whole by their Local or Area Quaker Meeting. FSSE's aim is to ensure that no-one who wishes to come to Junior Gathering or Senior Conference is prevented from doing so for financial reasons, and as a result, in exceptional circumstances fees may be partially waived. Any decision to waive fees is made by the bookings secretaries, having consulted with the event coordinators and the treasurer. Any waived fees are presented as bursaries in the accounts. In addition, occasional gifts and donations are received from Quaker meetings and individuals.

Achievement and Performance

The year to September 2017 was another successful year for FSSE. Further detail on Junior Gathering 2017 and Senior Conference 2017 is set out in the Epistles below.

Trustees' Annual Report

Trustees believe that the events serve Quakers well, giving a shot of youthful dynamism to the Society of Friends. We ensure that the events are run in a Quakerly way and that the young people receive spiritual input and can learn more about Quaker values and testimonies. Their input is vital to the success of Junior Gathering and they run Senior Conference.

We'd like to thank everyone who helped run our events in particular, and also everyone who came, either as a participant or as a speaker or other contributor. We are grateful also to the Quaker meetings and other bodies whose bursaries enable many of the young people to take part, and who provide spaces for us to use on our outings. Thank you.

Whilst overall, trustees are content that FSSE is on a firm financial foundation, and that our financial reserves would enable us to meet the cost of one event failing, our costs have increased and participant numbers have fallen, and we made a loss in the year to September 2017. At the 2017 AGM, the meeting discerned that an appropriate response to this is to increase participant fees for 2018 with the aim of maintaining reserves at our target levels (although first time participants will be offered a reduced fee). We pay careful attention to the safety of our events – having first aiders and designated trained child protection team members and we assess other possible risks so that we mitigate them, or are prepared should we have an emergency.

Comments from the adult helpers and parents, as well as the participants' feedback forms from both events, indicate that FSSE was very successful in meeting our objectives. We did have one safeguarding incident in 2017 which was serious enough for the Event Coordinators to involve the police, who concluded that no further action should be taken. Trustees are satisfied that our policies were followed appropriately and felt that this incident was handled very well by the staff team. Our organisational records of the incident have been assembled by the Trustee responsible for safeguarding matters, and arrangements made for these to be stored securely for at least as long as the statutory minimum required period of time. We have noted those areas where we think we can improve the events in 2018 and discussed these with the event coordinators.

We have worked hard to make the events open to everyone, regardless of means, by helping participants with difficulties find bursary funding locally where possible, and where not possible, providing bursary funding from FSSE's own limited funds. We believe no-one was prevented from attending due to financial problems in 2017.

David Holtam – Clerk to FSSE trustees

Junior Gathering Epistle 2017

On 19th August 2017, 58 young Quakers aged 11-14 and 20 volunteer staff met for a week at Leighton Park School to explore the theme 'Gender Equality', enjoy being part of a community and have fun!

Visiting speakers and staff organised a range of thought provoking sessions during the week to encourage us to consider the inequalities in our world and the strength of us as individuals.

We started the week by creating a 'Web of Identity', a large outdoor structure made of yarn wrapped around a circle of poles, each one representing a personal quality (E.g. 'I am strong', 'I like football', 'I cry at sad movies'). Each participant created their own path within the structure and these paths came together to form a beautiful 'dreamcatcher' like pattern that represented all of us as a community.

A series of games and workshops helped us learn more about the gender stereotypes that exist within society and we enjoyed inverting traditional gender roles in drama performances of well known fairy tales, reworked to reflect the modern day.

On Tuesday we welcomed Sisters Uncut, an intersectional feminist direct action group who demonstrated the importance of funding domestic abuse services and providing a safe space for victims and on Thursday we learnt more about Gender Equality when we welcomed two transgender speakers who shared their personal experiences and stories about growing up in a gendered world.

Our daily Base Group meetings enabled us to meet with the speakers in smaller groups, ask questions and discuss these issues in more detail. Our annual trip to Oxford allowed us to meet up with old friends from previous Junior Gatherings and after a joint meeting for worship with Senior Conference, we were set loose on the city.

We had a lot of fun in our daily activity sessions, which ranged from ultimate frisbee and swimming, to disco ball making, mindful colouring and creative writing. There was something for everyone and we enjoyed being able to try something new every day. Evening sessions with the whole group were energy filled, with a barn dance, DIY wacky races and Base Group challenge which included egg parachuting and trying to make Keith laugh!

We appreciated the facilities provided by Leighton Park School and the friendliness shown by the school staff and ended the week with a moving outdoor Meeting for Worship under the stars.

During the week, through our worship and activities together, we became a more inclusive Quaker community. We return home determined to listen, to allow other's lives to speak, be better able to challenge gender inequality when we see it and to support those working to promote a more equal society.

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Gathering
Clerks: Rozzie and Coll

Senior Conference Epistle 2017

To all Friends everywhere,

'Quakers are too nice', a sentiment shared by two of our speakers throughout the week. As a group we can often be afraid to cause conflict. And yet, not all conflict is bad. It is important to raise problems within our own community and reflect inwardly on how we can improve. It is in this vein that in this event, and consequently this epistle, we attempted to look at both Quakerism's flaws and strengths in regards to the theme 'Diversity and Unity'.

From the 19th to 26th August 2017, 83 Friends aged 15-18 and 13 adult volunteers over 22 came together at Sibford School, Oxfordshire, to explore this theme. To introduce the theme, the committee organised a chatroom style session, with discussion groups centred on questions such as 'How do we define Quakerism?' and 'Should Quakers unite behind Corbyn?' Thoughts raised included the lack of diversity in race, class and age within Quakerism, the different interpretations of Quakerism as a religion, ideology and community and the importance of acting upon regional and societal issues. This would be explored in greater depth later in the week by our three speakers, Sam Walton, a Quaker activist, Gretchen Castle, the General Secretary at FWCC and Tony Clapp, Elder at Nottingham Meeting.

Sam's session began with an interactive activity from 'Train for Change' to illustrate the existence of mainstream and marginal groups within society. This highlighted the mainstays that are prevalent not only in general society, but within British Quakerism itself, such as that of the white, middle-class, able-bodied, straight, cis person; he himself acknowledging his adherence to these categories. In a poignant reflection, Sam noted the irony that he was giving a talk on diversity. Although compared to other religions Quakerism has been at the forefront of issues such as LGBT rights, there is still much work to be done in this area. Senior Conference also recognised that we, as young Quakers, are a minority, and are perhaps are not always catered for in the same way within our faith. Particularly for 18-year old participants there was a feeling of a cliff edge post-conference, with few events to bridge the gap between child and adult Quakers.

Whilst Quakerism has always been welcoming of other faiths, Tony Clapp talked about feeling like a minority as a Russian Orthodox Quaker, commenting that he was considered a radical at church and rather conservative at meeting. Gretchen Castle also discussed the human tendency to create distance and 'otherness', failing to recognise the core beliefs that bind us, or *that of God in everyone*.

At the beginning of Tony's talk he played a piece of liturgy from St John Chrysostom, and also brought in a variety of iconography. These sensory aids enhanced our understanding of the contrast between the rich opulence of Orthodox cathedrals and the pared back simplicity found in Quaker silence. In spite of this, when asked, he stated that the spiritual experience, for him, was similar. He also mentioned other faiths that shared Quaker values, such as the Mennonites, a fellow Peace Church. In doing this he highlighted the importance of respect for other ways of worship and the power of interfaith discussion. For Tony, the Orthodox Church offered a more Christocentric form of worship not seen in British Quakerism.

Gretchen Castle talked to us about a more Christocentric form of Quaker worship and the diversity of Quakers worldwide, leading a programmed meeting so we could experience it ourselves. The readings touched upon diversity in the sense that we are all unique and all have our part to play, no matter how small. Sam referred to this as the different callings within Quakerism. In his opinion, we must recognise injustice and inequality and be '****ing angry about it', each taking different steps

to 'make the world more awesome', be it attending a protest, working as a nurse or making art. Our unity is shown in our support for each other's actions. Gretchen summarised this, leaving us with the message to 'love extravagantly' as it is love that pushes us to act.

Sam used the quote 'Thou shalt decide for yourself' to illustrate how the Quakers' lack of creed allows people to come to their own beliefs and therefore believe more strongly. Gretchen demonstrated a programmed meeting format that some found unfamiliar, challenged by the hierarchical aspect of having a pastor which took away the freedom they felt in open worship. However, the silent portion of Gretchen's programmed meeting meant we could reflect on what we just heard, and unlike in other faiths, offer our own ministry. This allowed us to decide for ourselves what resonated with us and what we disagreed with, with ministry that both praised and contradicted elements of the service. The closing prayer encapsulated the thoughts offered through both prepared ministry from Gretchen and the ministry given by participants. Whilst many young Quakers were aware of the differences in the ways Friends worship around the world, they were struck by the commonalities that Gretchen focused on and the feeling of shared values. We left the talk with a renewed sense of unity, both as conferees and as Quakers.

Entertainment was provided in the form of many traditional Senior Conference games, some of the highlights being the Base Group Challenge, Human Cluedo and the Disco. This injected a sense of fun into the week that for many conferees is what keeps them coming back. The immense talent of participants was displayed in the Open Mic and Ents, where many felt confident enough to perform for the first time, or perform original material. The 22+ session 'Lifelines' had three adult volunteers share the highs and lows of their lives, again laying themselves bare to the audience. These sessions, sharing both laughter and vulnerability, are what build the sense of community felt at Conference and are an integral part of the experience.

Through our prologues and epilogues we both adhered to tradition and pushed the limits of Quaker worship. The simplistic worship organised by our Elders created a contrast to Gretchen's programmed meeting, while epilogues allowed for experimentation with seating, light and sound. At our regular morning prologue, on the centre table the Elders welcomed traditional Quaker faith books and the Bible, alongside holy books from other faiths, in a celebration of diversity of belief and demonstrating the unity we wish to see between religions. Ministry touched on the importance of young Quaker events like Senior Conference, commenting that despite their fleeting nature, they help us build the foundations needed to be a better person when in the 'real world'. The strength of our community at Conference was also evident, particularly in the solidarity shown on GCSE results day, with many seeing Conference as a safe and warm environment at a nervous and uncertain time. Our community was also tested as we tried to support vulnerable members through struggles in their lives, such as mental health, but we came through it with unity.

Overall, the consensus seemed to be that Quakers, despite our huge diversity worldwide, in beliefs, political views and backgrounds, are united in our goals. Sessions focused on the importance of bridging gaps between mainstreams and margins within Quakerism, increasing diversity on a national scale. Particularly relating to conferees, we feel there is a need to bridge the gap between young and old Quakers, engaging young Quakers within local meetings and providing more events for young Quakers, like this one (as we enjoyed it so much).

Signed in and on behalf of Senior Conference,
Clare BL and Nadia S

FSSE Annual Accounts

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Friends Southern Summer Events

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 30 September 2017, which are set out on pages 9 to 12.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name: Keith Walton

Address: C/O Wandsworth Quaker Meeting, Quaker Meeting House, 59 Wandsworth High Street, LONDON, SW18 2PT

Date: 11 July 2018

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)
Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2017 - Consolidated

	2017	2016	2015
Receipts			
Contributions & donations	1,498	2,590	870
Participant fees	45,965	51,376	54,125
Bank interest	0	0	0
Total receipts	47,463	53,966	54,995
Payments – all direct charitable			
Pre-event			
Applications administration	1,619	293	204
Planning expenses	3,528	1,052	2,098
Skills development	1,819	374	616
Total pre-event	6,967	1,718	2,919
Event			
Accommodation	40,790	41,656	43,839
Staff event travel	2,828	354	1,462
Group event travel	2,580	2,278	1,095
Speakers expenses	409	497	169
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)	-257	27	513
Outing costs	0	0	1,810
Materials & Supplies	1,017	1,008	969
Equipment and furniture	475	564	0
Miscellaneous	3	830	138
Total event expenditure	47,845	47,213	49,995
General			
Bursaries	0	326	1,385
AGM costs (room hire, fares and expenses)	0	735	80
Insurance	520	510	495
Bank charges	50	0	3
Honoraria	0	0	200
Total general	570	1,571	2,163
Total payments	55,382	50,502	55,077
Receipts less Payments	-7,919	3,464	-82
Balances brought forward at 1 October	30,006	26,543	26,625
Balances carried forward at 30 September	22,087	30,006	26,543
Prepayment for Sibford School	3,948	3,948	3,948
Cash at bank and in hand	18,139	26,058	22,595
Reserves	22,087	30,006	26,543

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)

Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2017 - Junior Gathering

	2017	2016	2015
Receipts			
Contributions & donations			
Participant fees	18,908	24,124	24,460
Bank interest			
Total receipts	18,908	24,124	24,460
Payments – all direct charitable			
Pre-event			
Applications administration			
Planning expenses	1,570	706	1,966
Skills development	429	292	318
Total pre-event	1,999	997	2,284
Event			
Accommodation	19,695	21,355	22,176
Staff event travel	1,531	223	285
Group event travel	1,370	678	
Speakers expenses	62	323	101
Tuck shop supplies (net)	-257	27	
Outing costs			1,810
Materials & Supplies	902	563	
Equipment and furniture		564	
Miscellaneous		251	
Total event expenditure	23,303	23,983	24,373
General			
Bursaries		81	225
AGM costs (room hire, fares and expenses)			
Insurance	260	255	311
Bank charges			
Honoraria			100
Total general	260	336	636
Total payments	25,562	25,316	27,293
Receipts less Payments	-6,654	-1,192	-2,833

Notes

(1) 2017 fee income reflects 58 participants (2016: 73)

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)
Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2017 - Senior Conference

	2017	2016	2015
Receipts			
Contributions & donations			
Participant fees	27,057	27,251	29,665
Bank interest			
Total receipts	27,057	27,251	29,665
Payments – all direct charitable			
Pre-event			
Applications administration			
Planning expenses	1,958	347	132
Skills development	0	82	
Total pre-event	1,958	429	132
Event			
Accommodation	21,095	20,301	21,663
Staff event travel	1,297	131	1,177
Group event travel	1,210	1,600	1,095
Speakers expenses	348	174	68
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)			513
Outing costs			
Materials & Supplies	115	445	969
Equipment and furniture	475		
Miscellaneous		579	30
Total event expenditure	24,539	23,230	25,514
General			
Bursaries		245	1,160
AGM costs (room hire, fares and expenses)			
Insurance	260	255	184
Bank charges			
Honoraria			50
Total general	260	499	1,394
Total payments	26,757	24,158	27,041
Receipts less Payments	300	3,093	2,624

Notes

(1) 2017 fee income reflects 83 participants (2016: 82)

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)

Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2017 - General Income & Expenditure

	2017	2016	2015
Receipts			
Contributions & donations (1)	1,498	2,590	870
Participant fees			
Bank interest			
Total receipts	1,498	2,590	870
Payments – all direct charitable			
Pre-event			
Applications administration (2)	1,619	293	204
Planning expenses			
Skills development	1,390		298
Total pre-event	3,010	293	502
Event			
Accommodation			
Staff event travel			
Group event travel			
Speakers expenses			
Tuck shop takings			
Outing costs			
Materials & Supplies			
Equipment and furniture			
Miscellaneous	3		108
Total event expenditure	3	0	108
General			
Bursaries			
AGM costs (room hire, fares and expenses)		735	80
Insurance			
Bank charges	50		3
Honoraria			50
Total general	50	735	133
Total payments	3,063	1,028	743
Receipts less Payments	-1,564	1,563	127
Notes			

(1) £750 grant from Taylor Trust; remainder represents cheques which were written out in previous years but never cashed; treated as donations back to FSSE

(2) Pre-event applications administration in 2017 includes refunds of £975 for participants who could not attend.

Appendix 1: Reference and Administrative Details

Name: Friends Southern Summer Events, known also as FSSE.

Charity registration number: 1155420

Governing Document: FSSE is governed by its constitution, a copy of which may be found on FSSE's website at <http://fsse.org.uk/files/FSSE-CIO-Constitution.pdf>

Address: c/o Wandsworth Quaker Meeting, Quaker Meeting House, 59 Wandsworth High Street, LONDON, SW18 2PT

Trustees (at November 2017): Margaret Lee, Bryony Rowntree, Katherine Gibbs, Peter Slade, David Holtam (Acting Clerk), Tessa Brown, Bernard Leeser

Clerk: Oliver Waterhouse

Treasurer: Graham Torr

Bankers: CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4TA

Appendix 2: Reserves and Investments Policy

Reserves

FSSE requires reserves for normal operational reasons, as follows:

1. cash flow during the year;
2. planned additional expenditure in a particular year;
3. expenditure higher than expected;
4. income lower than expected.

We understand that it is normal practice for a charity to hold 25% - 50% of annual expenditure as an operational reserve. With experience of our cash flow requirements, we agree that we will budget to hold between 30% and 50% of the previous year's expenditure.

Investment

We will hold our reserves as liquid assets to support the operations of FSSE, in a manner in keeping with Quaker principles. If it is possible to keep some in a higher-interest bearing account without operational difficulties, the Treasurer is requested to do so.