

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE) Annual Report Year ended 30 September 2019

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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 2019 were £360 per person per event (2018: £350). Fee income is supplemented by grants and gifts from charitable trusts and Quaker meetings.

Some participant fees are funded in part or in whole by a young person's 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. Grants and gifts enable us to support participation by young people who could not otherwise afford the full fees. Decisions to apply grants and gifts to support participation are taken by the bookings secretaries in consultation with the treasurer.

Achievement and Performance

The year to September 2019 was another successful year for FSSE. Further detail on Junior Gathering 2019 and Senior Conference 2019 is set out in the Epistles below.

Trustees' Annual Report

Trustees believe that FSSE's 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.

Trustees are of the view that FSSE remains on a sure financial footing although reserves have fallen since last year. Our financial reserves would still just about enable us to meet the cost of one event failing. Our finances have run at a deficit, and the combined challenges of falling participant numbers coupled with rising accommodation costs at the schools we use mean that we are not currently running at sustainable financial levels. We will continue to focus on increasing our participant numbers in order to address this, but over time we expect that participant fees will also need to rise. We are aware that many AMs and LMs support our participants, their families, and FSSE finances through part funding of participant places.

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 2019.

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. In June 2019 FSSE ran a Safeguarding Development Day with members from both staff volunteer teams, and Trustees.

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 have

noted those areas where we think we can improve the events and discussed these with the event coordinators.

Since AGM 2018, Trustees held separate meetings 4 times¹ and also organised a “Strategy Day” in February 2019, which was a great opportunity to review FSSE’s current activity and direction outside of the usual annual cycle of delivering events. This was run as a general meeting of FSSE, rather than a meeting only of Trustees.

We'd like to thank everyone who helped run our events this year, 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. We all feel a sense of joy and inspiration to be connected to this organisation, its events and the people who contribute to them. Thank you.

David Holtam – Clerk to FSSE trustees

¹ 12 May 2019 (video call), 22 June (Friends House), 5 August (call), 21 October (video call)

Junior Gathering Epistle 2019

To all Friends everywhere,

From the 17th to the 24th August 2019, 53 young people from all across the UK and abroad came together with staff members for a week of fun and learning around the theme of modern equality.

We valued our times in worship together in the mornings and evenings. There was some lovely ministry throughout the week, some of which highlighted our focus on the theme and our awareness of our privilege. We found music very helpful as a focal point during some meetings, as well as guided meditation and small objects, such as pebbles and Lego pieces, to help focus attention. Epilogue outdoors was a particularly spiritual, quiet and calming experience for all involved.

There were lots of fun activities throughout the week. Some of our personal favourites included the barn dance (which was tiring but very fun) and the rainbow carnival themed disco (which was incredibly colourful). There were novelty activities which we enjoyed playing in teams such as solving the giant live action Cluedo and creating Mega Marble Runs. We enjoyed working in teams and bonding with each other. Lifelines was very emotional as we learnt about staff members' lives, the hardships they have overcome and the amazing people they are today. The fete was very glittery! *thumbs up emoji*.

Speakers helped us to explore our theme of modern equality by talking about their life, work and other experiences. Svenn (one of our own staff members) spoke about his time as an ecumenical accompanier in Palestine and the injustices he saw there. Angharad from Fairtrade Foundation talked about the inequalities in global trade and how we can take actions to ensure that trading benefits all those in the supply chain. Liam, from Extinction Rebellion, spoke to us about the power of nonviolent protests and the urgent need to combat the climate emergency, inspiring much discussion and motivating action amongst many of those present. Suzanne (from QPSW) helped us learn more about economic inequality within the UK and the huge and unfair disparity between those who have the most and those who have the least wealth, facts that many of us found shocking. Tatiana, also from QPSW, spoke about issues to do with the climate and refugees.

On Tuesday we visited the Harris Gardens in Reading and enjoyed the splendid scenery as we played games and music, chatted and made friendship bracelets. On Wednesday we took a day trip to Oxford where we enjoyed meeting up with Senior Conference and worshipping together, although it was a bit of a squeeze! We then went out into Oxford and enjoyed the beautiful city, picking up things for our disco costumes and for our Secret Friends.

The things we have learnt and experienced this week have inspired us to take action and to learn more about inequalities both at home and abroad. We feel that the relationships we have formed during the week have enabled us to explore difficult topics. We hope the event and these friendships continue for many years to come.

We decided in Business Meeting that the theme next year will be Mental Health.

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Gathering 2019,

Rosamund and Rowan (Clerks) Bonnie and Owen (Elders)

Senior Conference Epistle 2019

To all Friends everywhere,

Between the 17th and the 24th of August 2019, 83 young Friends aged 15 to 18 and 15 adult volunteers gathered at Sibford Boarding School near Banbury to explore the theme, 'Quakers in the 21st Century: What will our Chapter be?'. Over the week we sought to find answers to this question via speaker sessions, chatrooms and base group discussion.

On the first day, we listened to a talk from Matt Alton, a young adult Quaker, who shared with us a personal and relatable introduction to the theme. As well as talking about his own experiences of young Quaker events - with pictures included - he presented the results of research carried out last year in which he spoke to 60 young adult Quakers from around the country. This highlighted what these young Quakers thought about Quakerism today and what they wanted it to look like in the future. A puzzle box analogy was used to demonstrate how Quakerism is 'wrapped in layers of delicate rules'. Although the box looked easy to open on the outside, it required a specific sequence of movements in order to 'obtain the divine contents'. The analogy also pointed out that what is inside the box is not necessarily for everybody, adding that Quakerism is not the answer, but only an answer.

On the second day, we engaged with our next speaker Susanna Mattingly, as she showed us a glimpse through the use of videos and stories of what other young Quakers around the world were doing in the next chapters of their life, particularly in the fight against climate change. As she illustrated just how important it was for us all as Quakers to work together on this issue, it reaffirmed the fact that this was going to be a part of our next chapter too, whether we liked it or not. Startling statistics originating from the Paris Agreement showed that us Quakers, alongside the whole global community, have to work harder, even past the agreement's original guidelines, to be more sustainable in our own lives. It also showed that we as global citizens need to campaign for political institutions to take more action on this issue. This needs to be done in order to guarantee a future for not only our generation, but for those beyond our years as well.

A great effort was undertaken to build strong bonds between participants within the conference throughout the week. This included many participant-led base group sessions throughout each day, including a base group challenge, which sought to bring each participant closer to their group. In the midst of what was a busy timetable, these sessions offered a chance for participants to relax and play games, but also provided a smaller and more private space to discuss the theme and other issues. A sense of love and togetherness was also fostered through a 'secret friend' system, which gave participants the opportunity to give gifts anonymously, enhancing the overall community experience. The relationship between participants and adult volunteers was also developed in a session titled 'Any Questions', where we were given insights into such topics ranging from favourite song lyrics to overcoming difficult situations, dotted with a few embarrassing moments.

Towards the end of the week we heard from our last speaker, Adwoa Bittle. In her own chapter of being a young Friend, she had seen the diversity of Quakerism through pilgrimages and national gatherings. From her experiences in the Revisions Preparations

Group, which suggested changes to the Book of Discipline, she was able to give us an idea of what needed adding to the book. This included statements/advice on climate change, mental health and assisted dying. As young people, we asked ourselves and each other what we thought was lacking in the text. Some answers included bridging the age gap present amongst the Quaker community and further LGBTQ+ inclusion. Our opinions on the use of religious language within Quakerism were also discussed, as we were asked to write down words that we never/sometimes/always used to connote God. Some of us were surprised to find that the same words had been placed in all the spaces, signifying the diversity within Quakers in their relationship to the more traditional Christian influences, which can sometimes be seen as a restrictive weakness. However, the value of diverse experiences that it brings cannot be understated within the faith.

Many other fun activities also took place throughout the event. This included an Open Mic', which hosted performances ranging from comedy to music, as well as a disco. The participants also had their investigative skills tested, as they were tasked with hunting the committee who were hiding around the main building. One of the biggest events in the week was the annual trip to Oxford, which allowed us to meet up with Junior Gathering in a Meeting for Worship. This also gave us an opportunity to prepare as base groups for the themed meal later that day, which showcased spies, and re-enactments of the Wizard of Oz and Romeo and Juliet to name but a few. The entertainments on the final night displayed performances by base groups, comedic acts and fortune telling. Through all the laughs, it succeeded in bringing all of the participants together, in what would for some be their final ever night at Senior Conference.

By the end of the week, we felt as if we had a better understanding within ourselves of what will come next for Quakerism in the 21st century. There was a general affirmation towards wanting to fight harder against climate change, and to promote further inclusivity within the faith. But perhaps most of all, it is necessary to give further definition to Quakerism, especially for newcomers, whilst still retaining the diversity of beliefs that makes the faith what it is. It is clear, even in circles outside of Quakerism, that we live in a fractured world where division and conflict are constantly challenging humanity and its ideals. It is up to us as young Quakers to live out our ideals for the future, and project outwardly the truth that we have an answer.

Signed in and on behalf of Senior Conference 2019,

Jess K and Paris W (Clerks)

FSSE Annual Accounts

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Friends Southern Summer Events (charity no. 1155420)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") set out on pages 10 to 14 for the year ended 30 September 2019.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date: 8 February 2020

Name: Paddy Ford

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body: CIMA

Address: 42 The Grove
Walton-on-Thames
Surrey
KT12 2HS

Receipts and payments to 30 September 2019

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)

Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2019 - Consolidated

	2019	2018
Receipts		
Contributions & donations	3,889	6,800
Participant fees	46,491	48,192
Bank interest	0	0
Total receipts	50,380	54,992
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	427	814
Planning expenses	2,225	2,041
Skills development	600	824
Total pre-event	3,252	3,679
Event		
Accommodation	40,991	41,631
Staff event travel & services	3,344	1,489
Group event travel & services	3,035	3,321
Speakers expenses	309	515
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)	160	-581
Materials & supplies	595	444
Minor equipment	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	0
Total event expenditure	48,434	46,819
General		
Management & trustee meetings	559	161
Trustee expenses	649	79
Subscriptions	120	120
Insurance	543	543
Bank charges	66	60
Total general	1,937	963
Total payments	53,623	51,461
Receipts less Payments	-3,243	3,531
Balances brought forward at 1 October	25,618	22,087
Balances carried forward at 30 September	22,375	25,618
Prepayment for Sibford School	3,948	3,948
Cash at bank and in hand	18,427	21,670
Reserves	22,375	25,618

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)
Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2019 - Junior Gathering

	2019	2018
Receipts		
Contributions & donations	0	0
Participant fees	17,341	18,931
Bank interest	0	0
Total receipts	17,341	18,931
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	0	0
Planning expenses	944	763
Skills development	577	0
Total pre-event	1,521	763
Event		
Accommodation	17,958	20,166
Staff event travel & services	1,386	721
Group event travel & services	1,555	1,800
Speakers expenses	0	190
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)	31	-313
Materials & supplies	371	207
Minor equipment	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	0
Total event expenditure	21,301	22,771
General		
Management & trustee meetings	0	0
Trustee expenses	0	0
Subscriptions	0	0
Insurance	0	0
Bank charges	0	0
Total general	0	0
Total payments	22,822	23,534
Receipts less Payments	-5,481	-4,603

Notes

(1) 2019 fee income reflects 52 participants (2018: 58)

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)
Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2019 - Senior
Conference

	2019	2018
Receipts		
Contributions & donations	0	0
Participant fees	29,150	29,261
Bank interest	0	0
Total receipts	29,150	29,261
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	0	0
Planning expenses	1,281	1,278
Skills development	23	0
Total pre-event	1,304	1,278
Event		
Accommodation	23,033	21,465
Staff event travel & services	1,958	768
Group event travel & services	1,480	1,521
Speakers expenses	309	325
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)	129	-268
Materials & supplies	224	237
Minor equipment	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	0
Total event expenditure	27,133	24,048
General		
Management & trustee meetings	0	0
Trustee expenses	0	0
Subscriptions	0	0
Insurance	0	0
Bank charges	0	0
Total general	0	0
Total payments	28,437	25,326
Receipts less Payments	713	3,935

Notes

(1) 2019 fee income reflects 83 participants (2018: 84)

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)
Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2019 - General Income & Expenditure

	2019	2018
Receipts		
Contributions & donations (Note 1)	3,889	6,800
Participant fees	0	0
Bank interest	0	0
Total receipts	3,889	6,800
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	427	814
Planning expenses	0	0
Skills development	0	824
Total pre-event	427	1,638
Event		
Accommodation	0	0
Staff event travel & services	0	0
Group event travel & services	0	0
Speakers expenses	0	0
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)	0	0
Materials & supplies	0	0
Minor equipment	0	0
Miscellaneous	0	0
Total event expenditure	0	0
General		
Management & trustee meetings	559	161
Trustee expenses	649	79
Subscriptions	120	120
Insurance	543	543
Bank charges	66	60
Total general	1,937	963
Total payments	2,364	2,601
Receipts less Payments	1,525	4,199

Notes

(1) In 2019, contributions and donations comprised: £2,000 from North East Thames Quaker Trust, £1,000 from the C B and H H Taylor Trust and £212 from Cambridge Jesus Lane Quaker Meeting. The remainder represents cheques written out in the previous year which were never cashed, treated as donations back to FSSE.

The grants from North East Thames Quaker Trust, the C B and H H Taylor Trust and Cambridge Jesus Lane Quaker Meeting supported participation by fourteen young people who would not otherwise have afforded the full fees.

Statement of assets and liabilities at 30 September 2019

The charity had no material assets or liabilities at the end of the period other than the net Reserves (£22,375) reported under Receipts and payments.

The Trustees declare that the charity has given no guarantee where potential liability is outstanding at the date of the statement of assets & liabilities.

The Trustees declare that the charity has no outstanding debts which are secured by an express charge on any of the assets of the charity at the date of the statement of assets & liabilities.

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>

Contact address: 30 Lucombe Way, New Earswick, York, YO32 4DS

Trustees (at November 2019): Katherine Anne Gibbs, Margaret Louisa Rose Lee, Bryony Helen Rowntree, Tessa Rosemary Brown, David Roderick Holtam, Bernard Paul Leeser, Anna Trethewey, James Barnard, Peter Slade, Gwendolen Da Sousa Correa, Michael Wood, Candia Crossfield

Clerk to trustees: David Holtam

Clerk to management committee: 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.