

SUSTAINABILITY PLANS

in response to IYM 2016

Churchtown	3
Ballitore	3
Bessbrook	4
Coleraine	4
Cork	5
Drogheda	7
Edenderry	7
Enniscorthy	8
Eustace Street	8
Fermanagh	9
Frederick Street	9
Grange Meeting	10
Limerick	11
Monkstown	12
Moyallon	12
Rathfarnham	13
LURGAN	15
Richhill	16
South Belfast	16

*“Let our worship and daily lives enrich each other.
Growing in the spirit is a consequence of taking action,
and action flows from our spiritual growth;
here is the connectedness we seek.”*

IRELAND YEARLY MEETING 2016

Minute 40

40. CALL TO ACTION ON SUSTAINABILITY FROM FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION (FWCC) PLENARY IN PERU

Claire Conboy-Stephenson has read the minute agreed at the FWCC Plenary in Peru urging the worldwide Quaker community to re-double its efforts in relation to sustainability. It calls on Yearly Meetings to initiate at least two concrete actions on sustainability by January 2017. The Special Interest Group facilitated by Eco-Quakers Ireland has reflected on this and has proposed a number of actions. We agree to the following two actions:

- 1.** To commit to making all the Meetings within Ireland Yearly Meeting as sustainable as possible, considering such factors as accessibility by public transport, energy efficiency, use of Fairtrade tea and coffee and use of organic and locally sourced food when possible. We ask Meetings to develop a sustainability plan, no matter how simple, before January 2017. We ask Ireland Yearly Meeting to take its sustainability plan into consideration when planning for its next Yearly Meeting.
- 2.** To follow in the steps of FWCC by developing an investment strategy, by January 2017, to ethically invest all the funds within the Yearly Meeting in sustainable and peaceful companies, and divest from destructive industries, including fossil fuels. We also ask all Meetings to consider how truth prospers with regard to sustainability, taking care to relate this to all of our testimonies – peace, simplicity, truth and equality.

CHURCHTOWN

Churchtown Meeting actively works towards sustainability. Our Eco Group was laid down last year but our Warden maintains the progress we made. This includes: segregating waste, using low energy bulbs, using eco-friendly cleaning products, and reducing water use through displacement in our toilet cisterns. We also have a recycling centre in our Meeting House for batteries, ink cartridges etc.

The newer parts of our buildings are reasonably insulated and we use an electricity supplier with a higher percentage of renewable sources. Heating is natural gas on a timer and with thermostats in different zones. Our buildings are rented out to other groups so we do use heat and light outside Meeting times.

We are fortunate to be near the Green Luas line but Members of our Meeting are very widely dispersed. A few Friends cycle to Meeting or walk but most drive. Many could use public transport if they went to a different Meeting, but would prefer not to. We recognise that there is more that we can do, but many of the remaining steps are more difficult to carry though or difficult to determine if they are actually more sustainable.

We also realise that we need to continue thinking sustainably. This year we are going to be more mindful of the small things we can do that add up: for instance, to consciously carpool when possible, to be aware of our personal carbon footprint, particularly around travel, to buy local food in season and to turn down the heating in our homes and our Meeting House. To support this we will read and reflect on sustainability tips/queries once a month at the end of Meeting for Worship.

To support pollinators and biodiversity generally, we intend to plant three fruit trees in our garden this winter. We will discuss our concerns with the gardener to learn what more we can do.

There may be other improvements to be made to the sustainability of our Meeting House; however, because there of the on-going discussions about Dublin premises, we will wait for plans to emerge.

BALLITORE

Terry told me that they discussed eco plans last Sunday after meeting for worship and they are going to do the same again this coming Sunday. They are struggling to know what they can do, given that they don't own the premises. Kildare County Council owns the building and Friends share use of the premises with a youth drama group. They support Fairtrade and buy organic and local produce as much as possible. They are considering replacing the open fireplace with a woodburning stove. He'll inform us of any future decisions they make and he will be at YMC on the 28th.

BESSBROOK

We have just embarked upon a program of building improvements to our premises, such as dealing with roof leaks and dampness throughout. It will be an expensive operation but long overdue. We had formed an eco-committee to examine our requirements in that direction but felt we would have to suspend that procedure until we have finally completed our renovation plans. The Eco Committee and the building improvements

COLERAINE

What we've already done:

- We use fairtrade tea and coffee
- We put the heating on a timer for one hour a day, and have a curtain at the front door
- We maintain a front garden that is one of the most biodiverse in the street
- We use crockery rather than plastic cutlery and plates for our Sunday coffee after worship and monthly bring-and-share meals
- Most of us grow some of our own food, and Don keeps bees and Carol used to keep bees
- We regularly discuss ecological issues informally after meeting during coffee
- One attender subscribes to *Ethical Consumer* and shares it with the Meeting
- During a 2006 renovation we sourced and used:
 - o Eco-paint from Germany
 - o Eco-insulation (wool and paper) for the roof and walls
 - o Reclaimed door and oak floor
 - o Double-glazed windows
 - o A double flush toilet
 - o A solar heating system which reduces the amount of gas needed
 - o A light tube to bring natural light to downstairs bathroom

Challenges:

- We want to be committed to this and also realistic, as hardly any of us actually live in Coleraine
- Any biodiversity projects we have attempted in the back garden has got thoroughly vandalised
- There is no other way most of us can get to Meeting apart from a car. Lynn cycles when she's staying with her parents, but no one else currently lives close enough.
- We have informally discussed whether we are avoiding the really thorny issues - including the carbon footprint we leave by our air travel: between us we fly quite a bit and it would take a very great deal of car-sharing to balance that up.

What we hope to do:

- We will check with Avery (treasurer) that we are with the most ethical bank possible for our type of account
- Plans are underway to change from gas cylinders to piped gas when we have the funds
- We will continue to thoughtfully manage heat and light

- We (the premises committee) will draft-proof the window strips
- We will try to carshare more
- We will try – including announcing it in advance – to make our monthly bring-and-shares local, seasonal and vegetarian
- We will explore how to celebrate Earth Hour more intentionally

CORK

Cork Monthly Meeting adopted this plan at its November meeting (Minute 2016/84). It will be reviewed in 6 months time. The plan is grouped in 4 sections:

- The Meeting House
- The Grounds
- Education and Outreach
- Our Activities: Meetings and Catering

The Meeting House

Our Meeting House dates from 1938 and is of brick construction. There is some roof insulation but no double glazing. The portacabin is life expired and has very poor insulation.

The heating is by gas but the boiler is old and inefficient by modern standards. The controls are also inadequate and the radiators of mixed vintages. Hot water is provided by electric heaters and kettles. All light bulbs are low energy. Our cleaners use eco-friendly products. With our building project, we plan to build a new extension to modern standards for energy efficiency and to do so in as an environmentally friendly way as possible. The project also includes the refurbishment of the existing Meeting House to improve its energy efficiency. Attention will be given to the efficient use of water and to rainwater harvesting. The project will establish our current energy use so that comparisons can be made in the future. We do not propose to install solar cells for electricity generation at this stage but will seek to make sure that these can be added later if funds permit and if this then seems a sensible course of action.

We will actively look for grants to support sustainable building and energy systems for the Meeting House and extension. We have already agreed to participate with UCC in an EU funded sustainable construction project, if UCC are successful in their bid for it.

The Grounds

Our grounds are extensive, around 2.5 acres and the burial ground is a unique green space in the urban environment of Cork City. We recognise the opportunities and responsibilities that this presents in our stewardship of the grounds.

The principles that we will adopt in managing the grounds are:

- To create a habitat for as wide a variety of native wildlife as we can
- To use no artificial pesticides or weed killers except when absolutely necessary
- Take care of the walls and structures so that they are not damaged by vegetation
- When planting, use only native species where possible

- Compost or reuse our green waste and keeping as much as possible on site
- Have a mixture of food bearing and ornamental plants and trees
- Encourage people to share the space with the wildlife and plants
- Enable and respect the use of the burial ground as a place of rest
- Maintain a child friendly area where they can play and learn

The actions that we plan to progress during the next 3 years are:

- Compile a plan showing the current planting and an assessment of the wildlife
- Continue removing the overgrowth of ivy on the walls
- Plant native perennials, using shallow rooted ones in areas where there have been burials and establish a managed wildlife area
- Improve the soil by mulching and encourage worms etc.
- Investigate the possibility of becoming a hedgehog rehab centre
- Install heaps of material particularly to provide a home for insects such as bumblebees
- Maintain and enhance the child friendly area
- Look to provide some seating around the burial ground for people to enjoy the space
- Establish and manage a bird feeding station
- Put up bat boxes
- Examine the possibility of using biochar for carbon sequestration

Education and Outreach

We plan to hold a series of events to educate ourselves, including

- A talk on “Introducing the Sustainable Energy Agency & what they do”, understanding how they can help us.
- A Workshop on energy sustainability at home
- Arrange a tour of a sustainable energy system in real life – e.g. The biomass boiler at Ballymaloe Farm.
- Arrange a biochar making workshop next summer
- When our buildings are modernised, we hope to use them as an example of what can be achieved, possibly having an open day.
- We will make the Meeting House available free for public events supporting sustainability where these are in line with our philosophy and not party political.

Our Activities Meetings

Friends travel to the Meeting House by car, bike, bus and on foot. We plan to do some work to establish the CO2 impact of travel to Meeting for Worship on a Sunday and understand how significant it is in our lives.

Parking provision for bicycles is haphazard at present and proper provision will be made by the building project.

Car sharing when travelling to Quaker events away from Cork is well established in the Meeting and we will actively continue with this.

We have flowers at Meeting on a Sunday and recognise the importance of these being seasonal and locally grown.

Catering

We provide tea and coffee with cakes and biscuits each Sunday. There are also occasional shared lunches.

We will change our purchasing of tea, coffee and biscuits to use Fairtrade products where available and organic if possible.

We will ask the Friends who provide food for lunches to consider using locally sourced, organic or naturally produced food. We will always provide a vegetarian option. Food waste will be minimised – where it cannot be reused by Friends (which it often is), it will be made available to homeless shelters or composted on site.

DROGHEDA

As you may know, Drogheda is in a slightly different position to most Meetings in that we have no Meeting House/Room of our own and are instead are given use of the Board Room in the old building of Drogheda Grammar School. Consequently, we have no role in decision-making on school environmental policies. However, renovations on the building have included energy-saving measures for lighting and heating, with separate controls for each area.

The school is working for its Green Flag Awards and we do our best to encourage and support this and other environmentally friendly activities.

We try to use Fairtrade Coffee and tea, and make or buy organic biscuits whenever possible.

The School is situated some distance outside Drogheda and there is no bus service outside school and commuter times. Those who attend our Meeting are scattered over a large area of counties Louth, Meath and Fingal, mostly without public transport, and at some distance from each other, so car-sharing is not feasible for most of us. However, we do try to car-share or use public transport when possible if attending events in Dublin or further afield.

As individuals, all of us attempt in our own lives to live as 'lightly' as possible in our use of resources (e.g. by using passive and alternative energy, supporting biodiversity in our gardens, buying from sustainable and organic sources).

We discuss together the issues of the day, bearing in mind the testimonies of peace, simplicity, truth and equality.

EDENDERRY

We move into a smaller room for the winter months for meeting for worship. In 2016 we replaced some of the floor in our winter quarters and installed 60mm foil backed, high density closed cell insulation under the entire floor of our winter quarters. The same room had a door leading off it into a small WC.

We moved the door out of the room and now the WC can be accessed from the hallway. These two changes have made the room easier to heat, thus saving fuel.

This year, 2017, we intend to install an 8kW wood burning stove instead of the open fire. We will line the chimney while we're at it. The installer promises twice the heat for half the fuel, thus saving more fuel.

Next year, 2018, we plan to slab and insulate the two outside walls of our winter quarters. Currently, they're cold and a bit damp and they take a while to heat up on Sunday mornings. We're running a dehumidifier at the moment in an effort to dry out our meeting house. It's taking out 2.25 litres of water each day and we find the drier building easier to heat. More fuel saved. That brings us up to 2019/2020. I'll let you know what the plan is for the 2020's when we have it prepared.

ENNISCORTHY

The QUNO statement is prominently displayed in the entrance hall of Enniscorthy meeting house.

Dermot has been helping finance committee review investments.

Replacing the boiler in the Meeting House with something more modern and efficient is being considered.

Enniscorthy is the largest truly rural meeting in the Republic with farming Quakers who live a very traditional lifestyle of simplicity that is quite untouched by modern patterns of (over)consumption. One old lady never bought aluminium foil - but saves up butter wrappers if she wants to roast something in the oven.

Many Members produce their own food which they share with each other and have always done so.

Dermot believes that "Actions" for sustainability among these country Friends are just normal. He sends best wishes to eco-friends in these challenging times for the world.

EUSTACE STREET

Encouraging car-pooling – getting list of those who would be willing to give offer a lift (or share a car) and who is in need of one.

- Use of Public Transport - by having bus routes and relevant times available in Meeting House.
- Checking most sustainable and environmentally-friendly way of using new heating system. One Member spoke to us about the teething problems of getting this stabilised given there are multiple users in the Meeting House. Some of these problems have been sorted.
- Gathering information on eco-friendly cleaning products.
- Checking out eco-friendly biscuits – already using Fairtrade tea and coffee.
- Checking what recycling facilities there are in the area and if there is a facility for organic waste.
- Look at feasibility of finding new bulbs for the fittings we have.
- Keeping some internal doors closed to ensure the heat stays in.
- There is secondary glazing in the Meeting room – there might be a chance of getting same done in kitchen and school-room.
- We got a technical report from our previous Eco-Quaker Representative for Eustace Street who is an environmental architect. This report covers all the base-line structural aspects of the building – which is old and has a conservation order on it.

FERMANAGH

Our Fermanagh Worship Group is very 'green'. The venue for our meetings is an organic sustainable small farm so a project is not necessary but the 'possible actions' section could be helpful in our wider & varied community connections.

FREDERICK STREET

Frederick Street Meeting has existed in its current location in inner city Belfast since about 1810. The first small building, for a long time known as the 'Woman's Meeting House', was replaced in 1839 by a much larger Meeting House which could accommodate six or seven hundred people. By 1971, the premises had become unsuitable for modern requirements, and a new Meeting House was erected at a cost of £42,120.75. The only part of the former building which remains is the Institute, (a listed building), which fronts on to Frederick Street. This building is rented to the charity Concern.

On the ground floor of the Meeting House, the meeting Room, kitchen, committee room and cloakrooms lead off a square double height hall. A wooden staircase leads upstairs, where there are two more rooms which can be used for committee meetings or children's activities. There is a caretaker's flat behind the building, with a door connecting it to the kitchen. Heating is by gas. There is a thermostat in the main meeting room to adjust the temperature, and it is possible to just have the heating on in the meeting Room and hall if the upstairs is not being used. The caretaker puts the heating on in advance when required. The windows and doors are not double glazed, and windows are mostly metal framed which are ill-fitting in some of the rooms, causing draughts.

A heat check was done 12 years ago which showed there was a lot of heat escaping from the flat roof of the caretaker's flat. Some work was done to improve the insulation of the roof and walls which solved the damp and condensation problems. It was not possible to insulate the roof of the meeting room due to the shape of it. Research was done to see if the semi-circular windows of the meeting Room could be replaced with double glazed ones, but as they are not a standard shape the cost would be excessive. The toilets in the building are not dual flush. Light bulbs are replaced with low energy bulbs as necessary.

Currently there are about 33 people who attend regularly on Sundays, but no children at present. There is car parking around the building, and most Friends travel to Meeting by car. There are no members or attenders living near the Meeting, but it is fairly well served by public transport, with a station and bus routes nearby. There is nowhere secure to leave bicycles.

There is some planting in beds round the perimeter of the site which is managed by the caretaker.

Tea and coffee is served after Meeting on Sundays, and this is Fair trade (check*). Biscuits are not Fair Trade, but an effort is made to use eco-friendly cleaning products where possible. There are no facilities for recycling in the building, and it is not known if the caretaker has bins to recycle garden or household waste.

Several members of the Meeting are involved with our local charity - Quaker Service - and all members and attenders are encouraged to reuse and recycle by donating items of unwanted clothing and household goods, books etc. to the Quaker Care shop. All money raised goes to support the various projects of Quaker Service. There is a collection box for items in the meeting.

ACTION PLAN

Urgent

- investigate recycling opportunities (ask Maurice about bins)
- source recycling containers (Pleasaunce)
- check what Fair Trade items we use
- Find out if Eco congregation news can be circulated along with announcements to raise awareness in meeting

Suggestions for future

- Undertake a survey of what plants we have outside. Add to existing planting to make it more insect / bird friendly
- Undertake a check of the building inside to see where we could improve things
- Eco notice board
- Bike rack
- check our carbon footprint
- Promote Fair Trade week and relevant events
- Encourage ministry on sustainability

GRANGE MEETING

Grange Meeting is an old Meeting house built in 1756 and the New Meeting house built in 1816. (we celebrated our bicentenary in October 2016)

We have completed a 5 year restoration project in 2014 restoration project on the “new Meeting house” this involved a new roof and replacing windows, and reinstalling the balcony.

All the light fittings now have low wattage bulbs.

The heating system has had a timer fitted.

We have purchased “eco” cleaning products for the Meeting house.

We try to encourage the use of Fair trade tea and coffee (when available) and have given Fair trade Chocolate to the children at Christmas.

We have recycling bins in the kitchen for waste.

We have also over the past year had a “bring your unwanted clothing” and these items were then donated to the Quaker shop in Belfast.

We have organised mid- week summer evening walks over the summer months– bringing dogs, family and friends, and ending with a coffee and fellowship epilogue at various Friend’s houses, - getting outdoors and enjoying the wonderful wildlife in our parks and walks within the local area.

We have replaced some trees within the meeting house grounds over the past years and will continue to do so.

This year the Woman’s Meeting will be reviewing the Sustainability plan and hope to look at introducing some bee friendly plants and flowers in the grounds and other innovative ideas.

LIMERICK

Further discussions have been held and it has been agreed that the following actions will be taken:

1. Grounds: Audit of grounds in relation to specific edible/eco landscaping, to be organized by Des Power and Feidhlim Harty. Suggestions included herbs and crab apple trees.
Michele Russell has reviewed the scope for keeping bees (report attached).
Rainwater harvesting to be organized through the premises committee.
2. Energy - audit of current energy use, use of suppliers and investigation of solar panels to be organized through the Premises Committee.
3. Purchasing policy for foodstuffs, cleaning products etc to be standardized in order to be consistently environmentally friendly, and in line with Fair Trade policy. A draft purchasing policy has been proposed. This is attached.
4. Lectures - to be held, possibly with a speaker followed by discussion in relation to environmental issues.

Item	Reduce/Avoid	Adopt
Food	Highly packaged foods; foods from industrial agriculture; highly processed foods	Reusable packaging or unpackaged food; local; organic; fair trade
Packaging	Highly packaged products; mixed materials packaging such as cardboard/plastic/aluminium "cardboard" cartons	Minimise packaging where possible; reusable packaging; separatable and recyclable packaging
Cleaning products	Toxic chemicals (the label will clearly label toxins)	Health Shop products such as Lily's Eco-Cleaner, Ecover etc.; vinegar and bread soda work very well on many applications
Plants	Invasives such as Rhododendron or Indian Balsam; pollinator-inaccessible flowers such as those with multiple rows of petals	Native flowering or fruiting species which are good for wildlife; select species that are particularly good for wildlife as well as being beautiful
Grounds maintenance	Toxic chemicals in the form of herbicides and pesticides; plastic or PVC coated metal for garden furniture	Safer weed control methods such as mulching, hand weeding, safer sprays; appreciate our wildflower "weeds"; wooden or other natural materials for garden furniture
Paint	Conventional paint, undercoat, thinners etc. can contain a lot of harmful chemicals	Organic paint can be purchased from Biochrome Natural Paints in Co. Clare
Lighting	CFLs due to mercury content	Tungsten has the drawback of higher energy use, but upside of generating heat; LED lights are lower in energy use, but also tend to have lower light output
Construction materials	minimise on size to minimise on resource use	The more natural, recyclable, reusable the better
Paper/pens	Chlorine bleached paper from virgin wood pulp	Unbleached or oxygen bleached paper recycled from 100% post-consumer wastepaper; direct recycling by using scrap paper where appropriate
Toilet paper	Non-recycled paper products	Unbleached, recycled paper
Furnishings	New for the sake of new; plastic, mixed materials that are tricky to recycle at the end of life stage;	Is there already something that can be repaired or mended to fit the requirements; natural materials; locally crafted

MONKSTOWN

In the last few years the following has happened in Monkstown.

- Replanting some trees
- Switch to eco cleaning products
- Replacement of heating system with condensing boiler and better control system.
- Encourage more composting.

MOYALLON

Moyallon Meeting House was built in the 18th century, we have an extensive site which includes an adjoining caretaker's cottage, driveway and burial ground. The property is in a rural location between Portadown and Gilford and the Moyallon Centre is co-located on the site. We meet on the first and third Sundays of each month. We are a small meeting and our usual attendance at meeting for worship is around 12.

The Meeting House building is Grade A listed as an historic building and as such there are strict limitations on what structural changes can be made. The Meeting House is heated by electric convector heaters. The building has no insulation and there are problems with condensation, damp in many areas and particularly on a north-facing gable wall though this had extensive traditional type repairs in 2016.

The caretaker's cottage is heated by an oil fired system with radiators. Where it is feasible we will insulate though double glazing or wall insulation cannot be fitted. The cottage is a very small space in comparison to the adjoining Meeting House but is home to a family of four.

Many Friends travel long distances to this Meeting and some Friends share transport, With our rural location we are not conveniently served by public transport, particularly on Sundays. There is little more we can do to reduce transport fuel use.

To reduce energy use and our carbon footprint we currently:

- communicate by e-mail with all members and attenders of the Meeting where possible;
- control heating in the main meeting rooms by time switches though manual switching is also used to ensure the heating is not left on unnecessarily;
- use point of use electric water heaters in the cloakrooms and kitchen area;
- use low energy fluorescent lighting for internal lighting.

Since Yearly Meeting 2016 we have decided to:

- use Fairtrade tea and coffee;
- use crockery rather than disposable cups and plates.

In 2017 we will:

- purchase only 'Eco' cleaning products;
- Place water saving devices in our toilet cisterns;
- Have separate/recycling bins for; paper/cardboard, glass, waste food stuff (which could be used to feed hens or pigs) and black bin non recyclable waste;
- Install LED sensor lights outside in place of the existing tungsten halogen floodlights;
- Investigate energy efficiency improvements in our caretaker's cottage;
- Investigate switching to an electricity supplier who sources power mainly from renewable sources.

RATHFARNHAM

*“Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength....
Do you keep yourself informed about the effects your style of living
is having on the global economy and environment?”*

- Advices and Queries



Ratharnham Meeting has taken steps to become more eco-aware and eco-friendly. Completing Eco-Congregation Ireland's check-list helped us see what we had already achieved and to decide on new areas to prioritise.

Practical steps taken inside have included using energy- efficient lightbulbs wherever possible, regularly servicing boiler and heating appliances, ensuring the heating system has a timer and thermostatic controls, putting containers in the toilet cisterns to reduce amount of water per flush, using crockery rather than disposable cups and plates, installing clearly-labelled bins for recyclables and switching to eco-friendly cleaning products, soap, washing up liquid, toilet rolls etc.

Practical steps taken outside have included planting fruit and nut trees and a herb garden, installing a water butt, providing a home to bees and promoting biodiversity by allowing the end of the lawn grow into a natural meadow.

Worship – contributions during Meeting for Worship include gratitude for the beauty of nature and the need to take care of the environment.

Fairtrade – We are committed to using Fairtrade tea and coffee and we ask those who use our premises to purchase Fairtrade products too, whenever they can. Maria, a Fairtrade banana farmer from the Dominican Republic, visited us in March 2016 and told us how our

purchasing Fairtrade makes a huge difference to families and communities in developing countries.

Junior Meeting – Recycling, living simply, the importance of bees and other insects, Fairtrade, water, rainforests and globalisation have all featured in Junior Meeting in recent years. Playing the *Go Green* board game, making an Easter Garden from natural materials and planting herbs, vegetables, daffodils and hyacinths have all proved popular activities. The children and teenagers have also heard speakers from Irish Quaker Faith in Action, Concern, Christian Aid and the Quaker United Nations Office.

Books – Our library includes adult and children’s books on earth-care.

Transport – a number of our Members and Attenders walk or cycle to Meeting for Worship.

Local produce – we have made a commitment to use flowers or plants grown in our own gardens, or in the garden of the meeting house, on the table in the meeting room, whenever possible.

Testimonies – We have held discussions on the 4 Quaker testimonies – peace, integrity, simplicity and justice - each of which relates to environmental care. We have posed the question, ‘Should earth-care become a testimony too?’

Be the Change – We ran a series of events in 2016 focussed on how we – as individuals and as a Quaker Meeting – can become environmental change- makers.

Local community – we have invited members of other Quaker meetings and of the local community to join with us in marking Earth Hour with a candle-lit vigil and in nature walks and litter picks.

Global – we hold regular collections for charities and development agencies that work overseas, including Irish Quaker Faith in Action and Christian Aid. The children and teenagers have held fundraising cake sales for various organisations, including VITA and Rainforest Concern.

Stop Climate Chaos

We regularly support Stop Climate Chaos events and campaigns, including climate marches, photo stunts and ecumenical prayer services.

Going forward, we pledge to:

- **Explore ways to cut down on energy use** e.g. insulation, electronic room sensors, solar thermal panels
- **Explore options for investing ethically** e.g. Oikocredit
- **Use eco-friendly paints** internally and externally – eco-friendlypaints.ie
- **Twin our toilets** with two toilets in developing countries – toilettwinning.org
- **Set up a communal compost heap**
- **Raise environmental awareness** and encourage users of our premises to take eco-friendly steps too e.g. create an ‘eco corner’ with books, posters, flyers and other information and put up notices by light switches saying ‘*Please switch me off*’

LURGAN

Lurgan Meeting is blessed with a newly constructed meeting house which is 20 years old. That being the case, many eco features are included in the design of the building. We have well-insulated walls, efficient heating on a timer setting, PVC draught-sealed windows and energy-efficient light bulbs in place.

Outside, in the adjoining burial ground, the surrounding high stone walls create a habitat for mini-beasts. The grounds are well maintained and contain a variety of flowering shrubs and flowers, berries and seeds which provide food and shelter for small wildlife. This place is also a quiet haven adjacent to the town centre. Visitors have commented on the peacefulness and rest to be found within its walls. Perhaps we could introduce piles of leaves and rotting logs for insects and mini-beasts. We could also look into further composting waste garden material. A garden seat, donated by one family, was installed to provide visitors to the burial ground with a restful area. The whole area is very environmentally friendly.

One idea we mooted was placing a water bottle in one of the toilets to save water when flushing

Some time ago a shredder was purchased to enable Friends to shred personal documents.

In the kitchen we have been mindful of sustainability in collecting and separating paper, plastic and other recyclables for taking to a recycling centre. We will look into collecting batteries and glass for recycling.

We have also been aware of Fairtrade products and intend to introduce more of them in our tea and coffee making .

In our eco discussion we heard how we might consider the feasibility of installing solar panels to recoup the electricity costs of our building and also to receive payment from selling excess energy to the electricity grid. In the new year we will have a representative from a local solar business to speak to us of using solar energy.

We also intend to introduce eco-friendly cleaning products eg Ecover or Method as and when we need to replace them. We already use our own crockery in the kitchen. Many of our catering enterprises use our own home-made food sourced from local suppliers.

We plan to display an eco-tips list on our notice board for everyone to see.

In the financial sphere, we have recently investigated ethical investment. We are using Ulster Friends' Trustees knowledge of ethical investment to place our savings resources.

In the summer, we had a trip to a rare breeds open farm this year. In Lurgan town and very close to the meeting-house, we are blessed with having a lovely park which we could use more frequently for leisure pursuits. The park has a large lake with swans and ducks on it. There is a children's play area, facilities for tennis and cricket, tarmac paths around the lake and many eco features.

So, to sum up, we are very conscious of being sustainable and have already introduced many eco practices into our meeting's ongoing life.

RICHHILL

Richhill Meeting acknowledges the Quaker testimonies of equality and peace that are witness to our vision of a world grounded in love and in answering that of God in each other. They call for a transformation of the economic and political system, as well as the ending of the misuse of the Earth's resources, which we recognise creates inequality, destroys community, affects health and wellbeing, leads to war and erodes our integrity. We acknowledge these are both spiritual and material challenges. This is our contribution, limited as it may be, to developing and highlighting sustainability within Richhill Meeting.

The scope for the introduction of a comprehensive sustainability plan within Richhill Preparative Meeting is limited for the following reasons:

1. The Meeting does not have any significant financial resources that are invested other than what is held in bank accounts.
2. Our Meeting House is an historic building which has been listed under the Planning (NI) Act 2011. This severely limits the alterations that can be made to the building. Therefore, alteration aimed at improving the insulation would be difficult e.g. replacing the windows.
3. As a rural based Meeting, we are limited in the use that we can make of public transport and we are therefore heavily dependent as individuals on the use of private transport.

Richhill Preparative Meeting encourages Friends to consider the use of resources in their private, professional and/or business lives.

Richhill Preparative Meeting undertakes to purchase only Fair Trade tea and coffee for consumption at events held by the Meeting.

SOUTH BELFAST

Sustainability Discussion 13 November 2016 (32 present)

General

- We recognise that our Meeting is generally time-poor, and that we do a lot individually. We need to know what people are doing individually so we are more aware of what's going on. The challenge is to decide a couple of things we are actually going to do, rather than emptily supporting everything as a good idea.
- We were reminded that we mustn't judge our worthiness on our sustainability!
- It was decided to write a sustainability plan like a ten-year plan, laying out what we want to do in the first year, and what we want to aspire to in the future eg. in five or ten years.

Energy and Transport (*introduced by Kerry*)

Without burdening too much work on them, we ask premises committee:

1. to consider all options as they develop plans for the new roof - e.g. solar panels for water water/heating/electricity - bearing in mind costs and cost effectiveness, and that our biggest cost is currently heating.
2. to note that we have two boilers, and asked can we heat one room at a time without turning off radiators?
3. to look into whether we have cavity walls, and is it possible to improve insulation?
4. to consider paying a consultant to look at our building and electricity usage and suggest a priority list for future improvements
5. to note Monthly Meeting's encouragement to use Bangor Meeting funds for sustainability-related projects/costs.
6. to look into how much of the building has double-glazing and if there's an opportunity for improvement

Food and Biodiversity (*introduced by Alice*)

- We noted that we have successfully had a Traidcraft stall for years, as well as, more recently, three apple trees, a compost heap, vegetable plots, raised beds and a new beech hedge.
- Acknowledging its important that someone takes overall responsibility for each action (ideally committing for 3-5 years), suggestions for action included:
 - Making a bird feeder with the Children's meeting
 - Letting people know where they can buy organic milk nearby, to encourage us having organic milk for teas and coffees
 - Linking up with a qualified beekeeper e.g. David Gamble, to keep bees in the garden
 - Making the back garden more intentionally into a wildlife and bee-friendly garden,
 - Expand traidcraft to provide the meeting with toilet paper, and (Alice to) get feedback on what people would like more of, e.g. more coffee, meusli and ginger biscuits!

Finance and Consumption (*introduced by Tony*)

- We noted that some of our finances are invested in fossil fuels and that Quaterly Meeting trustees are currently looking at a solution to divest.
- Suggestions for action included:
 2. Check with library that we still have an ethical consumer subscription, and encourage members to get one
 3. Ask finance committee treasurer to investigate local and ethical banks
 4. Place three bins beside eachother in reception, clearly labelled for recycling/compost(?)/landfill.
 5. Do research into how to coordinate/encourage recycling of specific products like biros, printer cartridges and electronics

Speaking Truth to Power (*introduced by Kate*)

- We were reminded that sustainability is about justice, for example as we are going to see more and more climate refugees. Are we fostering a welcoming atmosphere for refugees?

Cultivating Community (*introduced by Kate*)

- Highlighted the importance of everyone owning this issue, rather than being tempted to 'shunt' it onto 'young people and children' and consider it done.
- It's a long, lonely road when you are out there campaigning/on the ground. Can we find a way of supporting people doing it on our behalf?

- It was suggested to create a small sustainability group of five-six people to meeting around every six weeks. They could:
 1. Provide suggestions for *how* to complete tasks in the Eco-Quaker booklet
 2. Keep in mind that it is the responsibility of the whole Meeting to take on board these suggestions
 3. Pick a few issues to do each year: handwritten letters to DUP because they listen to churches; invite refugees to lunch; do one-off events; consider idea of having a Quaker representative for local council; outreach to local churches to work together on refugee issues