



Welcome to our Spring Newsletter. This can be a wonderful season of hope and renewal but it can also be a time of reflection and some of the articles here perhaps mirror that thought – especially our chosen Spring poem.



## Events for March

Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	10.30	Meeting for Worship	Meeting House and on-line
	12.00	Business Meeting	Meeting House
Thurs 7 <sup>th</sup> March	14.00	Social Group	Issy's house
	19.00	Meeting for Worship on Zoom	On Zoom:
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	10.30	Meeting for Worship	Meeting House and on-line
Thurs 14 <sup>th</sup> March	1400	Social Group	Issy's House
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> March	10.30	Area Meeting	Chichester Meeting House
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> March	10.30	Meeting for Worship	Meeting House and on-line Zoom log-in:
	10.30	Children's Meeting	Meeting House
Thursday 21st March	14.00	Social Group	Issy's house
	1900-1945	Meeting for Worship on Zoom	On Zoom
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March	10.30	Regional Meeting <i>Disability with reference to Testimony on Equality led by Ade Couper</i>	Lewes Meeting House
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> March	10.30 am	Meeting for Worship	Meeting House and on-line
Sunday 31 <sup>st</sup> March	10.30	Meeting for Worship	Meeting House and on-line

## Future Dates

- Remember to go to QNet for all Future Dates. For those Friends with no computer access, the Pastoral Team will keep you informed. The log-in for QNet is: <https://quaker.app/>

**This month's charity is the UNICEF Children in Gaza appeal.**

*"The whole population of Gaza is now affected by an extreme lack of food, and children are the most affected. In parts of Gaza, one in six children under two are acutely malnourished. Of these, almost 3% suffer from severe wasting, the most life-threatening form of malnutrition. These children need urgent treatment with therapeutic food to recover. The people of Gaza are relying on humanitarian aid to survive."*

The link for donations is here: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/donate/children-in-gaza-crisis-appeal/>

**The Charity for April is Carers Support.**

Carers Support West Sussex is a local charity who are dedicated to offering unpaid Carers information, guidance, and emotional support. Their aim is to deliver a well networked and supportive approach for each carer. Many Friends will have caring responsibilities and once you have registered with this Charity as a Carer you get excellent help and resources available, with small amounts of financial assistance for equipment and self-care which can be so important. As a Volunteer for this Charity, in their Digital Support team, I have seen for myself what a difference this Charity can make to Carers' lives.

The link to this charity is here: [Supporting West Sussex Carers with the Carers Smart Search \(carerssupport.org.uk\)](https://www.carerssupport.org.uk)

**Charity for May is Médecins San Frontières/Doctors without Borders**

MSF is an international humanitarian organisation providing medical care in more than 70 countries. Since 1971, they have been treating people caught in complex crises and chronic healthcare emergencies around the world.

From paediatric nurses to off-road drivers, they are experts at working in fast-moving and highly-insecure environments. So, whether it's launching a rapid response or delivering community care, they go wherever they are needed most.

The link to this charity is here: [Donate to MSF UK \(Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders\)](https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org.uk)  
[- TESTING FUNNEL | MSF UK](#)



Birthday greetings to Clare (Herbert) who celebrates with a special one in March. Enjoy your day!

## HELLO FROM THE CHILDREN'S GROUP



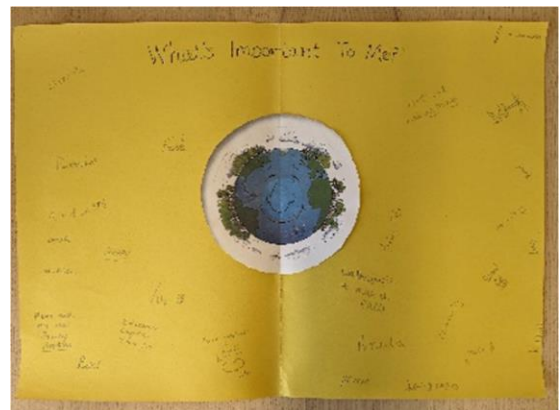
Over the winter months, there have been three children's meetings. The first two were Christmas themed, retelling the biblical Nativity story at our mid December session and taking a special look at the coming of the Magi with their symbolic gifts on Epiphany Sunday.

After considering what a 'symbol' is, we all enjoyed sorting a batch of small picture cards with Christmas motifs into three categories to consider what Christmas might be about and how different objects can hold different meanings and fit into more than one category. While a Christmas pudding or cracker might simply be 'Nice To Have', a Christmas tree or holly branch, although still in the 'Nice To Have' category, could be considered 'Symbolic' too. We came to the conclusion that only the pictures of a star and a Christmas gift came into all three of our categories being 'Nice To Have', 'In the Nativity Story' and 'Symbolic'.



We just had to get messy and paint some clay star decorations after the deep thinking required for this activity! We also added some streamers to our stars with hopes for 2024 in the January session with New Year being a time for looking forward.

At our February meeting we really did look forward to the year ahead with the introduction of our new theme of 'What's Important to Me'. Again there was much discussion about what we could include on our spider diagram of things we felt to be important. The poster we created covered a wide range of ideas from 'my family', 'pets', 'homework' to 'climate', 'peace', 'kindness'.



The craft activity that followed on involved making some fiendishly complicated woven paper heart wallets and tucking tiny drawings of important things in our hearts on that day inside them.

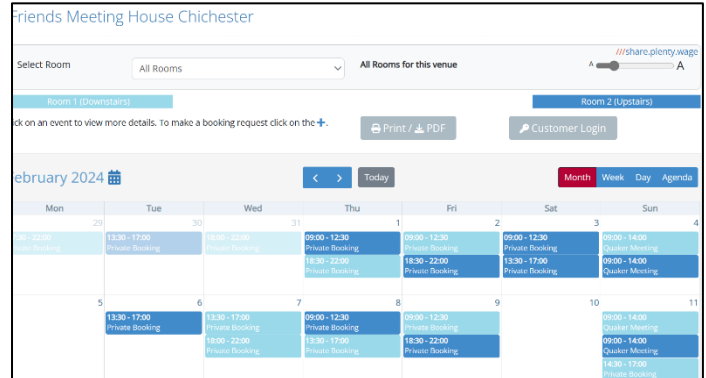
*Children's Committee: Jill (Dyble), Francis (Kelly), Jenny (Webb)*

## Our Warden Michael (Gilson) has sent us this interesting report on the hiring of the Meeting House

Dear Friends,

I thought it might be useful to update you on progress with our new booking system and our hirers as well as one or two other bits and pieces concerning the operations of Friends Meeting House.

You might all know by now that we have a new booking system installed called Hallmaster (see website under Room Hire). It was quite a lot of preparatory work for Mary Butterworth and myself, with the migration of all of our information from an informal system to new software quite painstaking. However the results I think are a vast improvement on what we had before.



Now hirers have accounts which allow them to request or alter bookings and see their invoicing record at a touch of a key. I think it creates a stronger bond between them and FMH although of course I am always available should problems arise or any special requests come in. New hirers still have to be vetted by me before we give them an account. I should say this has very much streamlined the booking and accounting systems. Hallmaster is used by many community halls and FMHs and seems good value for money.

It's worth just touching on the hirers we now have at FMH. I'm pleased to say that we are growing the numbers of hirers using the Meeting House which is bringing in more revenue for us.

Last year we saw a 23 per cent rise year on year in fees and this year (fingers crossed) that could rise by about 40 per cent. We can never guarantee this of course as some groups may simply come to an end of their natural life. We have to work hard to make our guests feel welcome and the facilities we now offer certainly help. The new projector screen, brand new hearing loop, digital TV upstairs, are all excellent additions.



I will be trying to circulate our advertising leaflets again in a few weeks to see if we can pick up a few more community groups and educational associations. If you know anyone who is looking for premises in which to meet please take a leaflet and give it to them!

It's worth just taking a bit of time to outline the kinds of groups we now have coming into FMH on every day of the week. It really does feel like a community hub and of course there are plenty of possibilities for us to reach out to them to tell them what Quakers are all about.

- New additions this year include Transition's Earth Cafe every Friday morning which is worth dropping into and the U3A Local History Group. They join another history group, the Historical Association, using Room 1 downstairs.
- We are very lucky that the U3A uses us extensively. Groups that cover Italian conversation, climate change and art appreciation meet here regularly.
- Incidentally some of the Earth Cafe regulars are going to help Kitty with the garden this year which is fantastic.
- In addition we have two reading groups, the Aspergers Society, poetry organisation Stanza and Alcoholics Anonymous using the upstairs rooms. This year two hirers have joined offering one-to-one therapeutic counselling, one of them for children through play. They both appreciate the intimate space that upstairs offers them.
- Perhaps our most loyal hirers are Arun Speakers Club which meet once a month to practise their oral storytelling skills and improve self confidence.
- Also not-for-profit first aid trainers Tigerlily are regular users of the downstairs room on a Saturday morning.
- Politically we have the District Council's ruling Lib Dem group meeting here, the Chichester and Arun Green Party and the Conservative Association. Just need the Labour Party for the full set!
- Finally it has been good to welcome the trustees of St Mary's Hospital who have booked a number of meetings after moving from Cathedral premises. They like the space and the price!

I hope you agree that this is a diverse and interesting variety of people using FMH and does make me wonder if we might have a think about how we introduce visitors to Quaker values or even invite to worship. A couple of attenders at various meetings have asked me questions and said they were considering coming along on Sunday so there is potential to pique interest I think.

Quickly on other issues we have sorted out the small rainwater leak we had during the 'monsoon' recently with roofers clearing out the leaves from the guttering on the left hand side of the building as you look at it. A new hearing loop has been installed and the new screen in the downstairs room is working really well.



I should add that our new cleaners from TopMop are marvels. I thought I left the premises fairly clean but when I come in on Monday morning (they start at 5am) FMH is like a showroom!

I'm sure I've forgotten something but I will endeavour to update you in future newsletter.

*Michael*



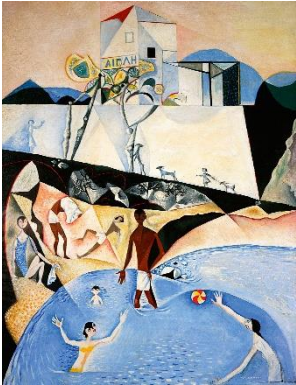


## News from the Arts Group

The Arts Group were invited to join with the SOGI group (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Inclusion) for their Meeting in February – lunch, and a visit to Pallant House to see the Exhibition of John Craxton – with an excellent introduction at the Meeting House by Avril Konrad.

What a highly enjoyable afternoon. There were about 25 Chichester Friends and visiting Friends there. Avril gave a very entertaining and informative introduction to this extraordinary artist who had small connections with Chichester.

Born in 1922 into a large, musical and bohemian family. The family spent summers in Selsey and for a time John was a Chichester Cathedral chorister, where he fell in love with the Romanesque relief panels. Wanting only to draw and paint and to forge his own way he drifted about England and Paris sharing studio premises with Lucian Freud. When he was 23 he was suddenly reborn when he flew to Athens in 1945 hitching a life in a bomber borrowed by the British Ambassador's wife – a typical Craxton story. Gay in every sense of the word and defiant in the face of all convention, every image he created paid homage to Aegean light, life and landscapes to freedom in the sun. His semi Cubist approach best caught the jagged and rugged character of Greece.



The Tapestry '*Landscape with the Elements*' that he designed for the University of Stirling is also on display in Chichester Cathedral.



Clare and Philippa facilitated the lively discussion after we had all seen the Exhibition. There was a positive reception to the Exhibition with everyone commenting on the colour and joy of life that he represented. Friends loved all the goats and cats he painted but also commented that he could paint women without the obvious "male gaze" and how well he represented the clothed body – nudity was not necessary. When challenged about whether the Exhibition reflected Quaker spirituality, we talked about the Quaker Testimonies of Equality (the artist painted all people with no hierarchy – sailors, priests,); Simplicity - reflecting a particular way of life and by being yourself and not painting for money. John Craxton felt that he could only become his true self when he got to Greece – he longed to be there. So the last question we were all asked was where did we all "long to be" and was there anywhere we felt we were totally at home and could be ourselves. There were interesting and surprising answers ranging from New York, anywhere on the water, anywhere in nature, Italy, Brighton .... But most heart warming was the response of being in Chichester with Friends and friends who accepted and understood them, which we all agreed with.

Where would you like to be?

Janet (Beckett)



## Economic Justice and Sustainability Group

### 'Shifting money and power: true transformational climate action as a peace and justice multiplier.'

On International Human Rights Day, Lindsey Fielder Cook of QUNO chaired a side event at COP 28. Eight speakers each gave a view from their particular experience – community activists from Cameroon, Barbados, the Sami people of Scandinavia, NGO activists from India, Africa, UK and one UK academic. Each had their own perspective – human rights, equity, sufficiency, land rights, militarism and abatement technologies – and a power coming from direct experience. The focus was on what the IPCC can do to strengthen its work but there was learning for each of us.

The IPCC builds inequality into its modelling as it assumes economic growth at 2% p.a., continuing current disparities. There is no modelling based on contraction and convergence among richer countries and while developing countries struggle to fund climate mitigation and to ameliorate damage, international green finance/climate finance is urgently needed to make equity real.

Human rights are for all, regardless of place of birth, but electric cars for the affluent in the global north just shifts the CO2 and environmental damage to mining communities in the global South. Northern carbon capture projects require a land grab which will impact Southern subsistence/ indigenous farmers the most. While Human Rights agreements are voluntary, trade treaties and contracts are binding so, at least, society should make sure companies pay their taxes, meet their human rights obligations and are held accountable.

Among other horrors, Ukraine and Gaza demonstrate the environmental impact of military action as arms industry profits soar. Conflict emissions should be included in IPCC projections. Defence ministers often cite climate change as a reason to increase budgets, instead we should invest in community safety and equity.

The Sami speaker encouraged us to 'Think of your grandmothers, where you come from and where you want to be.' The Sami have a reciprocal relationship with their environment, their role is to maintain harmony in the natural world, avoiding harm, being modest in impact and these cultural values need to be part of eco system management not monetisation.

Finally, transformation is a mind set. In Scandinavia, electric cars have led to more car usage than previously. Conversations at COP are high level but we need to bring that conversation to the average person or community, every sector of society, if transformation is to be achieved for climate, peace and justice.

Speaking of which - some 'local' snippets

Co-op Bank and Coventry Building Society are in exclusive merger talks, which would return the Bank to mutual ownership. Meanwhile, the Bank's Customer Union continues to monitor the Co-op's ethical policies.

Following a number of campaigns, Barclays Bank [originally Quaker] plans to stop directly financing new oil and gas projects and any oil or gas project in the Amazon, the Arctic or involving oil sands. It doesn't go far enough but it's something.

There is also a nationwide Big Bank Switch campaign encouraging people to choose to align their money with their values by switching from a bank that funds planet-destroying fossil fuels to one that doesn't. The climate crisis isn't just happening, it's being funded – sometimes by people who are most concerned about the crisis itself, and all because they have a bank account with HSBC, Barclays, Santander, NatWest, Chase, Lloyds or another high street bank. If thousands of individuals take meaningful action with their bank accounts, a clear message will be delivered to bank executives that there is no faith in fossil fuels, pressuring these banks to stop funding climate breakdown.

*Barbara (Hayes)*

**To end this Newsletter, Trevor has chosen a poem called Spring by Christina Rossetti.**

Frost-locked all the winter,  
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,  
What shall make their sap ascend  
That they may put forth shoots?  
Tips of tender green,  
Leaf, or blade, or sheath;  
Telling of the hidden life  
That breaks forth underneath,  
Life nursed in its grave by Death.

Blows the thaw-wind pleasantly,  
Drips the soaking rain,  
By fits looks down the waking sun:  
Young grass springs on the plain;  
Young leaves clothe early hedgerow trees;  
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,  
Swollen with sap, put forth their shoots;  
Curled-headed ferns sprout in the lane;  
Birds sing and pair again.



There is no time like Spring,  
When life's alive in everything,  
Before new nestlings sing,  
Before cleft swallows speed their journey back  
Along the trackless track,-  
God guides their wing,  
He spreads their table that they nothing lack,-  
Before the daisy grows a common flower,  
Before the sun has power  
To scorch the world up in his noontide hour.

There is no time like Spring,  
Like Spring that passes by;  
There is no life like Spring-life born to die,-  
Piercing the sod,  
Clothing the uncouth clod,  
Hatched in the nest,

Fledged on the windy bough,  
Strong on the wing:  
There is no time like Spring that passes by,  
Now newly born, and now  
Hastening to die.

***Spring is the beginning of Nature's great cycle of life and the sense of this is delightfully conveyed by some vivid images.***

***Here also, though, the poem infuses Spring with a bittersweet sense of its own transience: as soon as the new life of Springtime is 'newly born' it is already 'now/Hastening to die'.***

***What is not mentioned, however, is that Spring may die, but only to usher in glorious Summer!***

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook [Chichester Quakers \(Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends\) | Chichester | Facebook](#)

