

Central England  
Quakers

## Peace Hub Annual Report 2020



In 2020 Peace Hub adapted to the challenging situation of coronavirus: opening up new audiences online, and finding ways to safely connect in person, to keep encouraging action for Peace.

*Image: campaigners join together for a socially distanced walk to highlight the Tyseley Incinerator, stopping outside the Hub.*

41 Bull Street, Birmingham B4 6AF

Tel: 0121 238 2869

Email: [office@peacehub.org.uk](mailto:office@peacehub.org.uk)

Website: [peacehub.org.uk](http://peacehub.org.uk)

**Peace Hub** is a branch of The Central England Area Quaker Meeting Charities, registered charity number 224571.

# About Peace Hub

## What is Peace Hub?

Peace Hub is a friendly, café-style space in central Birmingham, focussed on peace & justice. It is a semi-autonomous branch of Central England Quakers, or CEQ, (registered charity number 224571), with its own management committee, budget and bank account. The building is owned by CEQ, with the top two floors sub-let to Peacemakers (West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project).

The organisation acts as a Hub for peace & justice activity in the city, connecting members of the public, activists, faith groups and NGOs with each other, via three main strands:

1. Normally, our drop-in space is open to the public three days a week, to spread awareness and encourage action around a series of peace & justice themes. In 2020 much of this work moved online.
2. We offer office support and expertise to voluntary and faith groups working for peace & justice, to multiply their impact.
3. We work with local and national NGOs to deliver joint workshops and engage a wider audience in campaigns for peace & justice.

Peace Hub aims to engage members of the public of all faiths and none. As a Quaker organisation our commitment to peace & justice (and the various themes) springs from our faith, and we are happy to discuss this with any of our visitors who are interested.

## Vision Statement

**As Quakers we are called to act for Peace and Justice. Peace Hub seeks to provide a centre from which an inclusive community is inspired to take up this call.**

**We aim for Peace Hub to become a Quaker-led service to the public that people of all faiths and none in Birmingham and the Midlands are glad to have. We hope that Peace Hub will become a place to which people naturally come when wanting to act for peace and justice, and provide a base for networks of peace-makers.**

## Aim & Objectives

Aim: A centre from which a diverse community in Central England is inspired to act for peace and justice.

### Objectives:

We seek to meet this aim using a rolling programme of peace and justice themes, through which we:

- Inform the public on a wide range of peace and justice issues
- Stimulate dialogue with the local community about peace and justice
- Offer hope through positive examples of peace-making and justice-building
- Encourage people to act for peace by
  - Advocating for local, national and international structures that support peace and justice - as Quakers say: 'speaking truth to power'
  - Showing solidarity with peace-makers and justice-builders

We further support our aim through ongoing activities:

- Supporting community & interfaith cohesion
- Encouraging people to make peace in their own lives
- Upholding activists and groups working for peace and justice
- Explaining why Quakers as a community are called to act for peace and justice

## Work & Witness at the Hub

One of Peace Hub's core strands of work uses a rolling programme of peace and justice themes to engage the public and encourage them to take action. For the duration of theme, our website and social media highlight relevant information and pose stimulating questions, along with simple actions that people can take part in (when we are able to open, there is a corresponding display in the Hub). The term 'visitors' below refers to online visitors to our website, social media accounts and Zoom events, as well as in-person visitors during the periods that we could safely open.

Each of our themes in 2020 highlighted a major international issue, breaking it down into more manageable portions with local or personal connections. We offered simple actions that people could take in their own lives, alongside a call to those in power to tackle the underlying issues.

In 2020 we explored a new theme: **Refuge & Freedom**, in partnership with Medaille Trust. The theme raised awareness of modern slavery both in the UK and around the world, offering personal stories of survivors and Medaille Trust's expertise on how to spot the signs, and take appropriate action. Visitors took action from sending a message of solidarity to calling for better regulation of supply chains to prevent slavery being used to produce the goods we buy. We also supported Medaille's activities to mark Anti-slavery Day in October (below).

**A Burning Issue** built on Climate Emergency declarations by Birmingham City Council and many other places in 2019. With a growing awareness of the seriousness and immediacy of this topic, visitors made a pledge to switch to more plant-based foods – backed up by calling on the council to convert their words on the climate emergency into real action.

**Think Global, Act Local, Get Equal** highlighted the issue of tax avoidance, and its contribution to economic inequality. Visitors were encouraged to support local independent businesses, and those who have signed up to the Fair Tax Mark (below), alongside supporting the Tax Justice UK campaign not to give Covid-bailouts to companies that avoid tax.

**Be the Friendly Face of Brum** contrasted the positive impacts that people arriving in our community have brought, with the 'hostile environment' they face. Visitors took action to show solidarity and welcome to people seeking refuge, as well as supporting an Amnesty International campaign for humanitarian workers being prosecuted in Greece for helping rescue people drowning in the Mediterranean (below).



Anti-Slavery Day



The Fair Tax Mark



Humanitarian workers  
Sara & Sean

## Partnerships & Reaching Out



Our partnership with **Footsteps (Faiths for a Low Carbon Future)** continued to be highly fruitful, and we supported them to run a number of online events, as well as one outdoor in-person event during the summer (following regulations at the time). These events helped us to reach a new audience, with over 300 people attending in total. At the heart of these events is bringing together faith communities to explore both practical actions to take for the environment in our own lives, and speaking truth to power about the climate emergency. They also provided a good opportunity to connect with young people, such as the Youth Climate Strikers, and young activist-poets Matt Sowerby (left) and Millie Gould.

Footsteps also offer a window into local government's approach to the climate emergency, as they were represented on the Birmingham City Council Route to Zero [Carbon] Taskforce, and gave regular updates on the successes and frustrations of this. These insights helped to inform a campaign on Birmingham's waste, calling for an end to the use of incineration at Tyseley, and instead reuse, recycle and compost/digest domestic waste. This campaign brought together **Friends of the Earth, Jai Jagat 2020** and **Climate Action Network West Midlands**, along with ourselves and Footsteps. This coalition developed relationships with local councillors, including via an outdoor meeting and walk in September (see cover image). In December a petition was presented to the full council with cross-party support, and conversations with the council are ongoing.

Effective partnerships in 2020 focussed on:

- **Climate Emergency**
- **Tax Justice**
- **The Arms Trade**
- **Responding to the pandemic**

We worked together with **CEQ Peace Committee** to run an online event on Tax Justice with over 30 participants. The event made good links between **Church Action on Tax Justice**, the **Fair Tax Mark**, trade unionists and local councillors, who are keen to certify Birmingham as a 'Fair Tax Council'. There were some simple actions to take away which we were able to highlight as part of our economic equality theme at the time.

We partnered with **Powell House** (the Quaker study centre in New York state) and **Quaker Roots** (supporting Quakers to take action against the arms trade) to run a transatlantic online workshop in October. Participants reflected on what we can learn from past peace actions, and considered how they would like to challenge themselves to take difficult actions for peace, in the context of a divided society.

During the pandemic, a broad movement came together to call on the UK government to **Build Back Better** rather than returning to business as usual. Peace Hub is supporting the 5 key asks, which overlap with many of our themes: secure health; protect public services; create a green new deal; invest in people; and build solidarity. The government has adopted the words, but there is much to do to turn this into action – Peace Hub has joined the ongoing **Quaker Peace & Social Witness** BBB programme, as well as the broader national network.

Early in the year, **Lifeline Options** began using our Resource Centre on Mondays and Fridays. The Hub is normally closed to the public during these times, so we are pleased to be making fuller use of our assets through this partnership. Lifeline Options aims "to meet the immigration, welfare and professional needs of asylum seekers and refugees in the West Midlands", particularly by providing legal expertise. This work also largely moved online after March, but we look forward to welcoming Lifeline Options back when it is safe to do so.

Unfortunately, plans to run Junior Peacemakers workshops in schools had to be postponed for the year. We are working together with Peacemakers on plans to bring these to schools when it is safe to do so, including making increased use of outdoor space.

## Measuring Impact

In March, Peace Hub had to temporarily close its doors to the public, due to the coronavirus pandemic. Most of our work moved online with our website and social media accounts offering information on the theme and how people can get involved.

**Building relationships between people remains at the heart of what we do. Whilst online working will be a useful tool in future, the periods that we were able to open in 2020 highlighted the importance of the 'cup-of-tea' factor in facilitating conversations about difficult topics and helping people to feel they are part of a community that cares.**

We were able to reopen in September, with measures in place. Although these meant that the atmosphere of the Hub had to be somewhat sterilised, there was still interest from many of our regulars, who appreciated the opportunity to have a face-to-face conversation.

Having to close the Hub in the spring, and reopen in very limited circumstances in the autumn meant that we had far fewer in-person conversations about peace & justice with visitors in 2020 compared to recent years. In total we had around 200 interactions with 62 unique individuals in person.

During the times that we had to close, this was augmented with over 400 interactions with people via Zoom in workshops and webinars. These offered space for the type of direct, friendly conversations that are the hallmark of the Hub, albeit in a more structured manner.

Interactions with Visitors

**200 400**

in person via Zoom

Online Engagements

**8000**

via website & social media

Interactions both in-person and online largely focussed on:

- informing people about our themes;
- answering their questions;
- encouraging them to take part in our actions;
- and linking them up with other organisations working for peace & justice.

We also engaged people over 8000 times in 2020 via our website and social media – an increase of a third over recent years. These posts were largely replicating the information that we would have in the displays and actions at the Hub, and included many examples of online actions to take in support of peace & justice that users clicked through to.



Embracing the new normal

## CEQ Peace Hub Accounts for 2020

	£ 2020	£ 2019
<b>INCOME</b>		
Peacemakers rent	7,020	7,020
Donations from individuals	3,218	4,274
Donations from Local Meetings/Branches	3,600	2,741
Legacy (Pam Williams) <sup>1</sup>	2,834	-
Grants from Trusts	4,000	3,000
Grants from CEQ Area Meeting <sup>2</sup>	6,000	6,000
Grant from B'ham City Council (COVID-19)	2,000	-
Donations for use of basement	20	190
Recharges for consultancy work	1,048	893
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	29,740	24,118
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Salary	15,405	16,204
<b>Activities</b>	-	4,850
Workshops <sup>1</sup>	-	4,850
Marketing materials & outreach	79	176
<b>Support costs</b>	754	689
Birmingham City Council Rates	381	867
Utilities, cleaning, maintenance	4,190	4,787
Insurance	613	584
Sundry administrative expenses	754	689
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	21,422	28,157
<b>SURPLUS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>	8,318	(4,039)
Fund balance brought forward 1 Jan	6,784	10,823
Fund balance carried forward 31 Dec <sup>1</sup>	15,102	6,784
<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>		
<b>NET ASSETS (cash at bank)</b>	15,102	6,784

### Notes to the accounts

1. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic it was not possible to undertake the planned Junior Peacemakers workshops in 2020, and so the funds earmarked for 2020 workshops (including a legacy) have been carried over to 2021 (when we hope to resume this activity). This accounts for the higher than expected 2020 closing fund balance.
2. The Peace Hub building has been reclassified by CEQ as a "functional property" (heritage asset) and we are no longer required to pay CEQ Trustees for tenancy. The grant from CEQ Area Meeting has been reduced by an equivalent amount, with no overall impact on Peace Hub income and expenditure. Figures for 2019 have been adjusted for comparability.

### Reserves Policy

Peace Hub has no investments or reserves. It aims to maintain at least £6,500 (up to 30% of annual expenditure) in its bank account to cover cash flow fluctuations, and to provide some protection for the staff salary. Aside from this, the budget for each year must be balanced with income sufficient to cover expenditure. Apart from a grant from Peace Hub's parent area meeting (CEQ), and the rent paid by Peacemakers, Peace Hub relies on voluntary contributions for its income.

## Future Plans

2021 remains uncertain for all of us, but whatever happens, Peace Hub will continue to share information, ideas and action for peace & social justice.

We look forward to welcoming visitors to the Hub again, when it is safe to do so. The past year has opened up a much wider audience to the possibilities of online connection, and we will continue to work with partner organisation on online events. However, we have been reminded of the transformative power of direct personal contact, and anticipate that people will be keen to connect face-to-face.

We have decided to focus on four themes for the year, including: the climate emergency, mental wellbeing and social inequality.

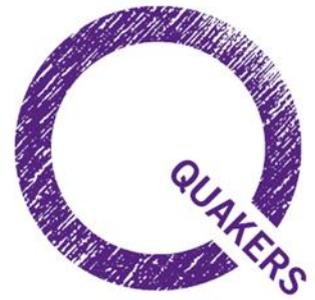
Throughout all of these themes, we will be making connections to the Build Back Better movement, and emphasising how our recovery from the pandemic is a chance to reshape our society around the things we value most.

The past year has highlighted and exacerbated existing social injustices. Polling<sup>1</sup> suggests that only 9% of people want life to simply return to "normal", and our collective response to Covid has demonstrated that people are willing to make significant changes for the benefit of the most vulnerable. We look forward to continuing these nuanced conversations and helping people put their desire for change into action.

1. [YouGov April 2020 on behalf of the RSA](#)



Looking forward to opening our doors for face-to-face conversations again



Central England  
Quakers

## Donate

Our work relies on support from people like you, who are passionate about peace and justice. Please consider making a donation using the details below:

- BACS transfer to Central England Quakers Peace Hub, CAF Bank, Sort code 40-52-40, Account 00024686
- Send a cheque made payable to "Central England Quakers Peace Hub" to 41 Bull St, Birmingham, B4 6AF.
- Donate securely online at [peacehub.org.uk/donate](https://peacehub.org.uk/donate)

Please use the contact details below for more information (including how to apply gift aid for individual donors) or to inform us of a donation so that we can send an acknowledgement.

### Stay in Touch

We welcome feedback, suggestions and opportunities for collaboration from our stakeholders.

Please feel free to contact our coordinator, Peter Doubtfire:

[office@peacehub.org.uk](mailto:office@peacehub.org.uk)

0121 238 2869 (when open)

Peace Hub  
40 Bull St  
Birmingham  
B4 6AF

[@QuakerPeaceHub](#) (Facebook & Twitter)

41 Bull Street, Birmingham B4 6AF

Tel: 0121 238 2869

Email: [office@peacehub.org.uk](mailto:office@peacehub.org.uk)

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