

The Retreat York

Benevolent Fund

Funding initiatives to support good mental health across the Quaker network

Newsletter

Winter 2018

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Benevolent Fund



A message from Mike Wash, clerk of the Trustees of the Benevolent Fund:

“Since 1919 The Benevolent Fund has been helping Quakers in straitened circumstances gain access to mental health care. In more recent times the Trustees have judged this to be too narrow and have therefore with The Charity Commission's authority been able to widen our objectives so our work can go beyond benefiting Quakers. In today's society where there is still a disparity between mental health care and physical care, we feel as Quakers, a leading towards a path that is not too far from the original Tuke vision that lead to the setting up of the Retreat Hospital in York. That is - to offer hope to those in need and to support pioneering work for the benefit of improving mental health. This is our first newsletter and we are pleased to present to you some of the work we are sponsoring.

“There is passion and expertise within the Quaker family to make a difference in the way we care for each other and we hope by offering some support we can sustain our Witness to better mental health for all.”

What is the Retreat York Benevolent Fund?

The Benevolent Fund is a small Quaker charity, working to support mental health by giving grants to individuals, projects and initiatives across the Quaker network.

The Benevolent Fund is managed by trustees – who are Mike Wash, Susan Mosley, Sallie Ashe and Shirley Torrens. We need more trustees – if you might be interested do get in touch.

The trustees meet 4 times a year. Grants for projects are considered in March and September. The Fund has limited money and there may be competition between applications. Grants for individuals are considered at every meeting and can be considered outside meetings, if the situation is urgent.

Application forms can be downloaded from the website:

www.retreatyorkbfund.com

You can get advice and support about completing your form from Alison Mitchell, Mental Health Development Officer on

mhdo@retreatyorkbfund.com

We prefer your form to be submitted electronically to our General Secretary, Bal Saini, using the email:

secretary@retreatyorkbfund.com

We do have a PO box address if you need to use paper copies:

Retreat York Benevolent Fund,
Office 102,
51 Pinfold Street,
Birmingham,
B2 4AY

On our website:

www.retreatyorkbfund.com you can find details of our charitable objectives. What they mean in practice:

- We give grants to individual Friends who need support for their mental health which they cannot otherwise afford. This is often to pay for counselling or other therapy, but can also pay for assessment (for instance to see what help is needed). We can fund respite care, travel expenses to visit someone who is an in-patient or other ways of supporting mental well-being.

We can only give individual grants to people who are Quakers or have a strong link to Friends. We can't fund long term therapy and we don't generally pay more than £2,000.

- We also give grants to mental health projects – projects which are led by Quakers and which hold to Quaker values. Our general guidance is that we can only fund to a maximum of £10,000 for two years and most of our grants are for less than £5,000. We hope to support projects which are good ideas, which will make a difference – with the hope that sometimes we can start things, that projects might grow and be able to seek funding from other sources.

Here are some little snap shots of some of the projects we've already funded:

A project based in York worked to help participants develop their therapeutic skills.

Here are some comments:

I think a lot of what we did today [relational listening and loss] will be helpful in some training I am delivering on Tuesday for people working with refugees, so the impact of the course is widening.....

K's quote below describes her use of the training:

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R is using the training to model to staff how to support children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in a school in Cumbria. She is developing a safe space for children called 'The Den'.

During the day on loss, M raised our awareness of the plight of refugees. She is developing training for adults who work with people with learning disabilities.



N is developing a centre for young people who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. She combines therapeutic skills training with spirituality and yoga.

W and C are both members of staff from a school supported by New Earswick Meeting and are planning to deliver therapeutic skills training to teachers and support workers in other schools.

E works part time as a secondary school counsellor and is developing intervention for young people whose behaviour prevents them from staying in classes with the aim of reducing their anger and anxiety, so that they increase their availability for learning.

T and S are developing groups for parents to support them with the challenges of parenthood.

*A project was funded to enable the translation of a key book
about the Retreat into Russian
This is their report:*



(If your Russian isn't up to it – the Retreat book is top right!)

Over a decade ago Alexei Odallamskiy, a Russian clinical psychologist, spent a month on a placement at The Retreat. It was professionally life-changing and since then he has had a sense of mission about bringing the values and practices of The Retreat to the treatment of patients with psychoses in Russia. The Soviet legacy was an institutional, biologically-based, pharmacological model of treatment.

Alexei urged Friends House Moscow, which supports Quaker witness in Russia, to include Samuel Tuke's book in its publishing programme. This was made possible by a much appreciated grant of £3520 from The Retreat Benevolent Fund for a Russian translation to be published on the internet and 100 paper copies.

Chris Holman, former Medical Director of The Retreat, provided an excellent afterword for the book, bringing the story up to the present, and, in fact, providing an interesting stand-alone account.

Alexei went to work promoting the book among colleagues, and raised sufficient donations to fund another print run of 100 copies. His wife, Zina, is assisting with distribution and was encouraged recently to receive an unsolicited request for 10 books from a St Petersburg bookshop. Meanwhile copies were taken to the first Quaker gathering in Ukraine this September.

This has to be a tribute to the legacy of The Retreat in all its manifestations.



The Benevolent Fund is supporting a project, now called Horfield Friends Café, at Horfield Local Meeting in Bristol which is offering weekly sessions to older friends and people in the neighbourhood who are experiencing problems with their memory and/or social isolation and loneliness.



Every Friday from the beginning of October we shall be welcoming all comers with cups of tea or coffee and slices of cake to an afternoon of fun activities, entertainment and information. We are building up a team of 'Café Friends', volunteer helpers who have all trained as Dementia Friends. At first the majority of these are Quakers but we hope to expand the team as the project develops.

There are a number of similar cafés in Bristol, but none serving our neighbourhood or running every week.

The pictures are from a trial session at Horfield on September 21 with a mixture of Horfield Friends and residents from a nearby Quaker-founded Care Home. Almost everyone who came left determined to return two weeks later for the public opening.

The Benevolent Fund's grant covers the first six months of the café's operation, supporting a part-time café coordinator and covering travel expenses. The aim is to share the lessons we learn with Quaker Meetings throughout the country in the hope that this will encourage others to see this work as part of their service to their community.



A Benevolent Fund grant was given to a group aimed at supporting older people experiencing depression or isolation

It can be hard to make friends and develop supportive relationships – especially in later life and particularly if you have experienced depression. The money was used to provide a facilitator for group meetings. Some of the comments from people using the group:

I have felt able to contribute to discussion and group exercises which is usually very difficult for me to do. I have found a “buddy” so we now contact each other outside the group for mutual support.

Acceptance of why things are the way they are for me. A realisation that it can be very difficult to know what is “going on” for other people.

The decision to attend involved much thought which leads to my reminding myself through previous years of psychoanalysis. This was helpful and has resulted in a change in me.

Less concern about loneliness. Positive feelings and contacts with others in the group.

**Feeling lucky.
Liking people more.**

I have been assured of the benefits that can come from mindfulness and have applied for a course.

Have made some good friends. I think I may have found a buddy.

I attended only the initial group, couldn't attend the next and then realised I'm not very good in groups – unless I am in charge!!

The Benevolent Fund is also supporting other projects:

- **A Local Meeting is linking with their local primary school and community, aiming to build the mental health and resilience of the whole community.**
- **A counselling project is using a grant to increase the availability of free counselling sessions**
- **Staff in a local mental health unit are using a grant to develop a garden. People using the hospital will help to plant the garden and will be able to access the open space.**

Mental Health Development Officer



Since October 2017 the Benevolent Fund has employed a part time Mental Health Development Officer. My name is Alison Mitchell; I describe my job as ‘giving Friends the information and the inspiration to discern our response to mental health issues.’ I visit Area Meetings, organise conferences and courses, run workshops, talk to people who have lived experience of mental health problems, make links with people in other churches and faiths exploring the same issues...I listen, talk and ask awkward questions. Sometimes I think mental health is the elephant in the Quaker room and so maybe my job is Elephant Identification Officer.....

I visit Area Meetings to lead some thinking and activities around mental health – to help us to reflect on our ministry in mental health. If you would like me to visit your AM get in touch and we can find a suitable date mhdo@retreatyorkbfund.com or 07483028490

To Find Out More

www.retreatyorkbfund.com

On our website you will find application forms and more information about the Fund. There is more information about our history and introductions to our trustees and information about all of the activities across Quakers to do with mental health. You will also find details of how to donate to the Benevolent Fund

If you have questions or concerns get in touch with Alison, the Mental Health Development Officer: mhdo@retreatyorkbfund.com



Quaker Mental Health Forum

The Quaker Mental Health Forum is a project of the Benevolent Fund. The Forum is an annual day conference for Friends interested in mental health to come together. Because of the Fund's support the event is free for everyone to attend. The first meeting was held in December 2017 and was entitled "Dementia: our shared Journey" It was a rich, worshipful day of sharing and exploring.

The next meeting is 3rd November in Birmingham and will be looking at young people and mental health. It will be a day of worship, sharing and reflecting – for young people, parents, teachers, professionals and those who are simply interested. To book search Quaker Mental Health Forum on Eventbrite or follow this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/quaker-mental-health-forum-mental-health-and-young-people-tickets-45232690194>



Mental Health & Young People

Programme of Events

We will be exploring the topic of mental health and young people. Grounded in our faith, we will be sharing experiences and ideas. The day will include:

- A range of panel speakers talking from their own experience followed by small group discussions and questions.
- Topic sessions including:
 - Exploring self-harm
 - Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs (QAAD)
 - Exploring social media and how to stay safe
 - How to train people, that work with young people, in therapeutic skills
- Response groups including:
 - Writing
 - Singing
 - Creative crafts
 - Worship-sharing
 - Discussion
- Meeting for Worship

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

The day is suitable for those aged over 15; we suggest people under 18 come with a supportive adult.

The next Quaker Mental Health Forum is on
Saturday 3rd November from
10:00am to 4:00pm
in The Priory Rooms,
Birmingham, B4 6AF

Please Note

We hope every Area Meeting will send a representative.

Please bring a packed lunch
Drinks will be provided.

There is no charge To Book

Eventbrite – search Quaker Mental Health or
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/quaker-mental-health-forum-mental-health-and-young-people-tickets-45232690194>

For more information please contact:
Alison Mitchell – Mental Health Development Officer
mhdo@retreatyorkbfund.com or 07483028490