

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE) Annual Report Year ended 30 September 2022

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Year ended 30 September 2022

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 usually 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 advancement 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 usually 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 to 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. Fee income is supplemented by grants and gifts from charitable trusts, Quaker Meetings and individuals.

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

2022 was a year of continued recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We report further in the trustees' report below and in the epistles of Junior Gathering and Senior Conference.

Trustees' Annual Report

In many ways 2022 represented a return to more traditional ways of working, following the COVID-19 inspired changes to our events in 2020 and 2021. Both Junior Gathering for 11-14 year olds and Senior Conference for 15-18 year olds ran as fully in-person events and were, from the feedback received, highly successful.

The 2022 events were not without their inherent challenges. Owing to some particularly tragic circumstances, one of the Junior Gathering coordinators was left with no option but to withdraw from the event two months before it was due to take place. We focussed on finding someone suitable to fill the role on a one-off basis and we are grateful to Eduin Boater-Latimer for stepping in at short notice, supporting Olivia Sewell-Risley. We are also grateful to the entire staff team for supporting Olivia and Eduin through a planning process which we know was challenging at times.

FSSE's event coordinators, trustees and officers met on a fortnightly basis in the months leading up to the events. This was a very useful way of keeping in touch with each other, and for everyone involved to understand the tasks involved in running the events and the timescales required to achieve them, and to ensure all had the chance to express their ideas and any concerns. It meant all were aware of arising issues and challenges and could offer support, advice and suggestions where needed. It also led to stronger links between the two events and with other FSSE role-holders, than might have been the case in previous years. We expect these regular pre-event meetings will continue for future events.

We are grateful for the relationships we have with the schools we use to hold our events – Sibford School near Banbury for Senior Conference and Leighton Park School, Reading, for Junior Gathering. We have worked hard to meet both schools' expectations, and are aware of how fortunate we are to be able to use Quaker schools to host our Quaker gatherings. Our coordinators have worked hard to foster productive relationships with the schools, and we hope, even in the context of significant price rises due to the cost of living crisis, that these partnerships will continue.

Price rises are an ongoing concern, but Trustees are nonetheless confident that FSSE remains on a sure financial footing. With fewer transactions and decreased costs in 2022 – not least the savings made from the continued emphasis on blended and Zoom-based planning meetings – we were able to save money, and are grateful for the large and small donations we receive to continue our work. We know many Area and Local Quaker Meetings support our participants, their families, and FSSE finances through part funding of participant places, and are glad that this approach continues so robustly.

We worked hard to make our events open to everyone, regardless of means. In previous years this has included helping participants with difficulties find bursary funding locally where possible, and where not possible, providing bursary funding from FSSE's own limited funds. We remain committed to ensuring no participants are excluded for financial reasons, and are pleased that our financial model allows us to do this.

We pay careful attention to the safety of our events, with designated trained safeguarding team members. We carefully assess possible risks so that we mitigate them, or are prepared should we have an emergency. It is our policy for all event-based volunteers to have a clean DBS in place prior to the event; this became a concern this year, as not all checks came back from the Disclosure and Barring Service in the format requested, and we were still in the process of confirming volunteer status in the days leading to the events. We will continue to focus on this vital element.

Being able to run both our events as two distinct, fully in-person, gatherings means we anticipate this pattern will continue for the future. We have learned, especially over the last three years, to be flexible to changing circumstances; regardless of what form future events take, we will continue to focus on increasing our participant numbers, as well as taking time over the next few years to scope out potential options for how we can meet the needs of our young people through the format of the events we run.

This year has been another strong reminder that FSSE's events are managed by skilled, conscientious, committed and courageous teams. The planning process for both events was not always straightforward, but the willingness and ability of both events' planning teams, as well as those in supporting roles, to deal with numerous external factors has been heartening to see. We are not a set of distinct work-groups working in isolation, we are a group of people working hard to provide and oversee events which bring joy and inspiration to many. In many ways this collaborative working has been the stand-out element this year, and we would like to thank everyone involved wholeheartedly for bringing this ethos to their work.

It remains a privilege to be connected to this organisation, its events and the people who contribute to them.

Thank you.

James Barnard – Clerk to FSSE trustees

Junior Gathering Epistle 2022

To all Friends everywhere,

From the 20th to the 27th of August 2022, 50 young people and 16 staff gathered in Leighton Park school for a week of exploration and reflection on the theme of “Respecting all life and identities and understanding different opinions”.

Both internal and external speakers helped us better understand and discuss our theme through interactive sessions, workshops and talks. In Phil Wood and Lou Whalley’s session, we discussed how conflict and cooperation can co-exist and both are needed to expand our ideas and perspectives. Different opinions enrich us as a community. We also discussed how to deal with conflict and tensions, and how important it is to remember to not disagree with the person, but with the idea. We spoke about respecting differences, and how when differences in opinion arise, we can work together to achieve a win-win outcome, someone doesn't always have to ‘lose’. Furthermore, in Jamie Harris’s speaker session, we reflected on respecting and protecting all living things, including animals big and small. Through Peyton Lee's session we explored the feelings which arise out of both inclusion and exclusion, feeling that respecting all identities means including everyone. In Gwen Da Sousa Correa’s session, we debated and discussed topics, learning how to disagree respectfully. This led us to reflect that through working together to tackle ideas, we can achieve more.

As a Quaker event, our days contained periods of worship. During the week we found many ways to explore the spiritual side of Quakerism. For example, we began each day with worship in which we often had focus materials such as play dough, paper doves and readings from young Quakers. A particular reading that struck us was the story of the girl and the starfish from *Living our Beliefs*, which supported our theme of respecting all life. We also ended each day with an epilogue, with guided meditation, music and candles arranged in striking designs. Over the week we had many interesting ministries from both old and young friends.

Over the course of the week, there were many fun activities led. This included building and launching rockets, a plants themed disco, a visit to the Harris Garden, ents, a scavenger hunt, a fete and barn dancing. Barn dancing was particularly fun as we had an instructor and live band! We were also led through the staff’s lives in our life lines session. It was fascinating to see how they had pushed through their struggles. These fun activities helped us to connect better as a group of young friends.

Our trip to Oxford was a fantastic time to visit the Senior Conference and see the beauty of the city. The trip gave everyone a lot of freedom and a chance to connect with their friends more. Powerful ministry was given by all friends, which enhanced our spiritual selves.

One striking thing about Junior Gathering was the community. Everyone felt more accepted and included than they do generally in situations such as school. An easy place to connect and make new friends were base groups, led by brilliant base group leaders. In base groups we discussed speaker sessions and played games, such as mafia and two truths and a lie, which were really fun and bonded us together. We ate together at meal time allowing us to

share interesting conversations. After every meal we had a period of silence to appreciate the food and each other's company. Everyday we had free time, where there was a lot of music played on the piano and other instruments. We also played pool, table tennis, connect four, and shared laughter. We also had secret friends which were a really good way to feel included and appreciated within the Junior Gathering community.

One quote that we thought coincided with our theme is: "Through conflict handled creatively we can change and grow. I am not sure real change, either political or personal, can happen without it." Quaker Faith and Practice 20.71.

Overall, Junior Gathering is an accepting and inclusive place where everyone feels that they can be themselves. All Friends channelled a sense of belonging, community and love. We really look forward to next year's Junior Gathering, a week of fun and friendship.

In our meeting for worship for business, it was discerned that the theme for Junior Gathering 2023 would be: "The past and present of Quakers around the world."

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Gathering 2022,

Clerks

Pippa B and George S

Elders

Hayden K and Thomas N

Senior Conference Epistle 2022

Friends,

*"The poetics of the oppressed is essentially the poetics of liberation" –
Augusto Boal*

Our experiences are all connected; our oppression, our pain, and our privilege are all entangled in a web of power systems and hierarchies which make up our society. In order to be liberated, these systems which oppress so many must be deconstructed. However, it is not just systems which must change: we all have a part to play in society's evolution.

We bring you warm greetings from Sibford School, Oxfordshire, where 52 young people met between the 20th and the 27th of August to gather in fellowship and discuss our theme, "Intersectionality: Exploring Different Perspectives". An introductory session set the tone for the week by describing the concept of intersectionality, defined as: "the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage". The session encouraged acceptance and inclusion. People were called to express themselves without fear of making mistakes, but also to accept constructive criticism and challenge from others.

*"If you have come to help me then you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up in mine, then let us work together" –
Aboriginal rights activist group (Unattributed)*

This year's Swarthmore Lecturer, Helen Minnis, a professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, was our first speaker. She facilitated a conversation in which many of us shared our own exposure to marginalisation, silencing and stereotyping. There was a powerful feeling of vulnerability, and a sense that Conference is a community where we are able to share our pain and oppression, finding not only empathy but also solidarity. Although we greatly appreciated many participants' willingness to share their experiences, Helen also reminded us that no-one owes anyone else their lived experience of suffering, and that the responsibility is on those in positions of privilege to combat oppression.

We also heard from two of our adult volunteers, firstly on increasing participation in Westminster and secondly on Non-Violent Communication. Our first talk focused on the accessibility of politics. We were asked to guess statistics about the representation of marginalised groups in Parliament. When we were told the real numbers, there was audible dismay at how low these figures are. We were told about the barriers presented by the fabric of the Palace of Westminster itself and the resistance at the highest levels of our political system to addressing this. Despite the disheartening revelations about the centre of our democracy, we left determined to change things for the better, with the encouragement that we become more involved in politics.

The second talk in this session was about Non-Violent Communication, a technique pioneered by Marshall Rosenberg. It challenged us with the revelation that our everyday speech can often be unintentionally violent. The Rosenberg system aims to counter this, acknowledging each other's differing needs and experiences in order to come to a mutually enriching outcome. We were left possessing tools which we can apply in everyday interactions, for example at work or school, allowing us to assert confidence without aggression. We are very grateful for the generous offer of both our volunteers' time and energy. The passion with which they both spoke has increased our conviction to make positive change in our society.

Our fourth speaker of the week was Judith Moran, the director of Quaker Social Action (QSA). Judith described her organisation's approach to equity, diversity and inclusion, but it was the stories of QSA's work on the ground that we responded to most enthusiastically. One such project was "Down to Earth", a scheme to help those experiencing funeral poverty which elicited cross-party support in Parliament. The work they do in the poverty space is a glowing example of Quaker values in action. QSA can not, Judith said, solve every problem, and so the projects they run are intended to help a limited number of people in specific and practical ways. Its contribution to the battle against economic oppression is small in stature but huge in impact for those it works with. There was also an emphasis on treating those whom the charity seeks to support with respect, as opposed to patronising them. Like QSA, we must make every effort, however small, to fight any kind of marginalisation in our society.

We felt a strong bond across the community, not only for the conferees, but also with the adult volunteers, who presented us with an entertaining and emotive 'Any Questions' session. Social activities allowed us to create and strengthen these bonds as we discovered more about each other's backgrounds and interests. Most importantly, we will remember the love and laughter we have shared, be it during anarchic organised social activities, base groups, or in private moments, sitting together between sessions in the airy foyer or at meal-times. It was evident that the Spirit was here. It may have been defined and expressed in different ways, but undeniably something moved amongst us. Ministry from our dear Friends was frequent, deep and moving. Shared worship with Junior Gathering, our sibling event, in Oxford saw us join with Friends younger than us in a spiritually rich meeting. We thank the members of Oxford Meeting for so kindly hosting us.

This week that we spend annually in each other's company is a constructive, joyous occasion where old friendships are rekindled and new ones sparked. Participants often observe that they can truly express themselves, a sentiment we rarely encounter in everyday life. A fellowship grounded in love and mutual acceptance is created which extends beyond the short time here at Conference. This year was no exception.

Signed in and on behalf of Senior Conference 2022,

Rozzie W and Edward R

Clerks 2022

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") for the year ended 30 September 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with 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 did not accord with the accounting records or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed:

Date: 6th June 2023

Name: Keith Barnes

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body: Fellow, CIMA

Address: 2 Beeforth Close
New Earswick
York
YO32 4DF

Receipts and payments to 30 September 2022

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)

Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2022 - Consolidated

	2022	2021
Receipts		
Grants, contributions & donations	750	3,557
Participant fees	38,258	33,470
Bank interest	19	0
Total receipts	39,026	37,027
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	372	503
Planning expenses	442	98
Skills development	0	1,165
Total pre-event	814	1,765
Event		
Accommodation	31,779	28,014
Staff event travel & services	1,478	1,293
Group event travel & services	3,498	1,230
Speakers expenses	264	90
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)	11	-61
Materials & supplies	823	828
Minor equipment	95	293
Miscellaneous	0	0
Total event expenditure	37,948	31,686
General		
Management meetings	0	0
Trustee expenses	0	0
Subscriptions	129	201
Insurance	549	544
Bank charges	96	88
Total general	774	833
Total payments	39,536	34,284
Receipts less Payments	-509	2,743
Balances brought forward at 1 October	24,432	21,688
Balances carried forward at 30 September	23,922	24,432
Prepayment for Sibford School	3,948	3,948
Cash at bank and in hand	35,536	34,447
Less payments not cleared at year end	15,942	13,963
Plus deposits not cleared at year end	380	
Reserves	23,922	24,432

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)

Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2022 - Junior Gathering

	2022	2021
Receipts		
Grants, contributions & donations	0	0
Participant fees	18,860	14,620
Bank interest	0	0
Total receipts	18,860	14,620
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	0	0
Planning expenses	126	98
Skills development	0	95
Total pre-event	126	193
Event		
Accommodation	17,152	14,355
Staff event travel & services	727	682
Group event travel & services	2,049	630
Speakers expenses	0	15
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)	23	-72
Materials & supplies	159	220
Minor equipment	47	257
Miscellaneous	0	0
Total event expenditure	20,157	16,087
General		
Management meetings	0	0
Trustee expenses	0	0
Subscriptions	0	0
Insurance	0	0
Bank charges	0	0
Total general	0	0
Total payments	20,283	16,279
Receipts less Payments	-1,423	-1,659

Notes

(1) 2022 fee income reflects 50 participants (2021: 38).

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)
Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2022 -
Senior Conference

	2022	2021
Receipts		
Grants, contributions & donations	0	0
Participant fees	19,398	18,850
Bank interest	0	0
Total receipts	19,398	18,850
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	0	0
Planning expenses	316	0
Skills development	0	210
Total pre-event	316	210
Event		
Accommodation	14,627	13,660
Staff event travel & services	751	611
Group event travel & services	1,449	600
Speakers expenses	264	75
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)	-12	10
Materials & supplies	664	607
Minor equipment	47	36
Miscellaneous	0	0
Total event expenditure	17,791	15,599
General		
Management meetings	0	0
Trustee expenses	0	0
Subscriptions	0	0
Insurance	0	0
Bank charges	0	0
Total general	0	0
Total payments	18,107	15,809
Receipts less Payments	1,291	3,041

Notes

(1) 2022 fee income reflects 52 participants (2021: 52)

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)
Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2022 -
General Income & Expenditure

	2022	2021
Receipts		
Grants, contributions & donations	750	3,557
Participant fees	0	0
Bank interest	19	0
Total receipts	768	3,557
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	372	503
Planning expenses	0	0
Skills development	0	860
Total pre-event	372	1,363
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 meetings	0	0
Trustee expenses	0	0
Subscriptions	129	201
Insurance	549	544
Bank charges	96	88
Total general	774	833
Total payments	1,146	2,196
Receipts less Payments	-377	1,362

Notes

(1) In 2022, grants, contributions and donations comprised: £500 from Mr & Mrs M Johnson, £155 from Cambridge Jesus Lane Quaker Meeting, and £95 from additional donors. Donations particularly help FSSE support participation by young people who could not otherwise afford the fees. In 2022, bursaries provided totalled £1,380.

Statement of assets and liabilities at 30 September 2022

The charity had no material assets or liabilities at the end of the period other than the net Reserves (£23,922) 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 30 September 2022): James Barnard, Candia Crosfield, Kit King, Oliver Waterhouse, Michael Wood

Clerk to trustees: James Barnard

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.