

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE) Annual Report

Year ended 30 September 2024

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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 enormously the young people who attend them, 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 - Trustees' Annual Report

During 2024 our focus as trustees was on supporting the organisation to run its events. There were two strands to this: supporting the work to revitalise our finances and providing support to event coordinators to adapt the two events to run on the same site.

After many years of Senior Conference being based at Sibford School we were informed that this wouldn't be possible for 2024. Having evaluated other venues and options FSSE made the decision that it made the most sense to hold our two events – Junior Gathering and Senior Conference – simultaneously at the venue that Junior Gathering has been using since 2015 (Leighton Park School).

In practical terms this is a continuation of adapting our events in response to the changing boarding school landscape in the UK (reduction in available beds), new guidance on sharing sites with other groups (Keeping Children Safe In Education guidance), tighter shared safeguarding arrangements with the school and the increasing costs of running the events.

Throughout the year trustees were involved in the event support meetings that happen approximately once a month. These served as the main operational decision-making meetings alongside other committee communication channels (email/WhatsApp).

Trustees were represented on the volunteer teams for both events and met with coordinators regularly to provide historical context, policy advice, operational support and additional capacity, and supported specific tasks such as liaising with the venue, travel logistics, volunteer recruitment and safeguarding training.

Pre-event event checklists were reviewed by trustees to agree that the event plans were in accordance with FSSE's values, expectations, policy, legal compliance and good practice and were safe to run.

The very hard work of all volunteers in FSSE resulted in the events in 2024 being very well run and an all-round success. We have received excellent feedback from volunteers, young people and parents/guardians.

We are hoping to build on the learning from combining the two events onto the same site at Leighton Park to run the events similarly in 2025. Due to careful financial management and the generous response to fundraising efforts we are now in a much better financial position.

With this success we are now able to focus our energy on wider long term strategic challenges that need to be addressed to improve the sustainability of the organisation.

Michael Wood
Clerk to FSSE Trustees

Junior Gathering Epistle 2024

To all Friends everywhere,

From the 20th to the 26th of August 2024, 40 young people and 15 staff gathered at Leighton Park School, Reading for a week of exploration and reflection on the theme “Gender Equality”.

External speakers helped us to better understand and discuss our themes through interactive sessions, workshops, and talks. In Joe Holtaway’s session we spoke about gender stereotypes and inequality in the workplace. We also had Sarah Cosgriff who talked about identity and intersectionality - the crossroads of how we identify ourselves and how this impacts our experiences. Thomas Penny spoke to us about having difficult conversations, being empathetic, and remembering that both we and our views have the possibility of being wrong - “Think it possible that you may be mistaken” (Advices and Queries 17). Cassie Gates and James Brydon-Dickenson spoke to us about their experiences as trans people and shed light on the joys and difficulties of being a trans person.

Each day we started and ended with Meeting for Worship and held a moment of silence during meals. We enjoyed having engaging items to interact with in the morning, such as play dough and leaves. In the evening, it was nice to wind down after a long day, often with some music and candles.

To have an opportunity to get to know each other more, we were able to choose from some activities led by staff each morning, for example: swimming and various other sports, crafts, Chillin’ ‘n’ Spillin’, meditation, board games and creating a Junior Gathering Newspaper. In the afternoon and evening we did group activities such as an ‘escape room’, the disco and Ents – short for entertainments. Along with this, we had a construction activity which was a great opportunity to work as a team and listen to each other’s ideas. There was also Lifelines, where two staff told us about their life experiences and their highs and lows. It helped us to get to know these staff more and see different perspectives on growing up.

For the first time in many years our sister event, Senior Conference (for 15- to 18-year-olds), was held on the same campus as us. This was appreciated by everyone because people who had siblings or friends who had moved onto Senior Conference could talk to them. On Friday, we had a day out in Oxford which began with a Meeting for Worship with them at Oxford Meeting House. We then went out in individual groups of our picking to explore Oxford.

One of the unique things about Junior Gathering is that people make friends of all ages, which young people don’t usually do in school. It is also nice to connect with other young Quakers as many of us come from areas where there aren’t many of them. Something that

again helps us to develop our connections and meet old and new friends is our Base Groups, which are small 'homegroups'. Here we played games, spoke about how we were feeling, and discussed the speaker sessions in more detail.

What the week has highlighted to us is the need to accept others and allow them to be the people they are.

In our Meeting for Worship for Business, it was discerned that the theme for Junior Gathering 2025 would be on the theme of global problems, particularly focusing on conflict and climate change. We also hope that Meetings for Worship and Epilogues in 2025 can explore different ways Quakers worship around the world. The 2025 JG disco theme is Sports.

Overall, Junior Gathering is a really positive and accepting event where everyone feels welcome.

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Gathering 2024,

Laurie W & Harriet CS
Clerks

Nell C & Maddie M
Elders

Senior Conference Epistle 2024

To all Friends everywhere,
From the 20th to the 26th of August, 57 young Quakers and 13 adult volunteers gathered at Leighton Park School, Reading for a period of connection and reflection. This year we centred ourselves around the theme of "Using Our Beliefs to Construct a Hopeful Future" through speaker sessions that helped us to question preconceived notions of what a hopeful future looks like and the steps we, as Quakers, can take to help us achieve it.

To begin our consideration of the theme, three members of the adult volunteer team engaged us with their own stories about their beliefs and how these have affected the decisions that they have made through their lives. Following these speakers, participants joined small discussion groups to share how their beliefs and what they hope for relates to their own lives and experiences. This session established a good foundation to examine our theme more personally.

The next speaker was Ellis Brooks who works for Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW). In Ellis' session we discussed the effectiveness of nonviolent civil disobedience and learnt many surprising facts, such as that as few as 3.5% of a population need to become involved in nonviolent protest movements for it to be successful. A discussion about what constitutes violence inspired many thoughtful and passionate conversations. From this session, we took away the idea that nonviolent action from a diverse range of people is often more likely to be successful than violent action. There was space to share how each of us understands the complexity and contextual nature of each scenario that we explored.

Our final speaker, David Kikaya, told us stories of his experiences as a Kenyan Quaker and his involvement in organisations such as Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)

and Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO). These broadened our view as British Quakers and gave us a unique perspective of what a hopeful future looks like on a global stage. David's academic work in Peace Studies, and experiences of a childhood living under the propaganda of British colonial rule in Kenya, were an important reminder of how the actions of our government created huge levels of inequality and unfairness that continues today. David explained how he was drawn to Quakers because of their work putting their beliefs into action by engaging with other international organisations to create a better, more hopeful world.

In our non-themed sessions, we enjoyed a trip to Oxford with Junior Gathering, holding a joint Meeting for Worship before exploring the city. Evening Entertainments continued to create fun and laughter with events such as the Quiz, the Themed Disco, Hunt the Committee and the final night Ents. Base groups and Secret Friends created welcoming, familial spaces for participants to form closer connections. A quiet breakout space supported participants and sustained an inclusive atmosphere.

For the first time in many years Senior Conference has been sharing the same venue with Junior Gathering, which has strengthened the connection between the two events. Changing venues has been challenging; we adapted the event whilst maintaining the parts we think are special, such as the strong community and the responsibility and agency held by the Arrangements Committee.

Our morning Meetings for Worship and evening Epilogues maintained the spiritual closeness throughout the event. With guidance and support from the Elders, people were moved to give emotive and powerful ministry – some for the first time. Centrepieces helped to focus the worship as we shared our beliefs and hopes, as well as our worries, for the future.

We reluctantly leave a week of happiness, safety, and fun, but feel filled with love and hope for the future. We are now re-energised and inspired to take action.

Signed in and on behalf of Senior Conference 2024,

Freddie Fricker and Sam Bennett
Clerks

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 2024.

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: 17 March 2025

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 2024

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)

Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2024 - Consolidated

	2024	2023
Receipts		
Grants & donations	14,829	1,666
Participant fees	40,790	36,918
Bank interest	55	61
Total receipts	55,673	38,645
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	313	291
Planning expenses	2,153	834
Skills development	823	2,270
Total pre-event	3,289	3,396
Event		
Accommodation	36,752	38,869
Staff event travel & services	2,069	2,010
Group event travel & services	2,050	3,260
Speakers expenses	525	286
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)	-100	-27
Materials & supplies	544	532
Minor equipment	84	14
Total event expenditure	41,924	44,944
General		
Management meetings	144	47
Trustee expenses	0	0
Subscriptions	289	239
Insurance	392	554
Bank charges	60	60
Total general	885	899
Total payments	46,098	49,240
Receipts less Payments	9,575	-10,595
Balances brought forward at 1 October	13,328	23,922
Balances carried forward at 30 September	22,903	13,328
Prepayment (Note 1)	0	3,948
Cash at bank and in hand	23,479	24,837
Less payments not cleared at year end	758	17,457
Plus deposits not cleared at year end	181	2,000
Reserves (Note 2)	22,903	13,328

Notes

(1) "Prepayment" at 30 Sep 2023 was a deposit of £3,948 held by Sibford School. It was refunded in Jan 2024 as a bank transfer, so the reserves at 30 Sep 2024 include the cash equivalent of that deposit.

(2) Included in the Reserves for 2024 and carried forward into 2025 is £2,130 being the unspent portion of a grant of £4,000 from the Sir Thomas Reckitt Charity to provide bursary support to young participants.

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)
Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2024 -
Junior Gathering

	2024	2023
Receipts		
Grants & donations	0	0
Participant fees (Note 1)	16,917	16,180
Bank interest	0	0
Total receipts	16,917	16,180
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	0	0
Planning expenses	473	449
Skills development	0	830
Total pre-event	473	1,279
Event		
Accommodation	16,171	19,816
Staff event travel & services	1,101	525
Group event travel & services	1,025	2,055
Speakers expenses	525	0
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)	-22	-1
Materials & supplies	252	0
Minor equipment	70	14
Total event expenditure	19,123	22,409
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	19,595	23,688
Receipts less Payments	-2,678	-7,508

Notes

(1) 2024 fee income reflects 40 participants (2023: 41).

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)
Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2024 -
Senior Conference

	2024	2023
Receipts		
Grants & donations	0	0
Participant fees (Note 1)	23,873	20,738
Bank interest	0	0
Total receipts	23,873	20,738
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	0	0
Planning expenses	1,681	385
Skills development	823	840
Total pre-event	2,503	1,225
Event		
Accommodation	20,581	19,053
Staff event travel & services	968	1,485
Group event travel & services	1,025	1,205
Speakers expenses	0	286
Tuck shop deficit/(takings)	-78	-26
Materials & supplies	292	532
Minor equipment	14	0
Total event expenditure	22,801	22,535
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	25,305	23,760
Receipts less Payments	-1,432	-3,022

Notes

(1) 2024 fee income reflects 57 participants (2023: 56)

Friends Southern Summer Events (FSSE)
Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 30 September 2024 -
General Income & Expenditure

	2024	2023
Receipts		
Grants & donations (Note 1)	14,829	1,666
Participant fees	0	0
Bank interest	55	61
Total receipts	14,883	1,727
Payments		
Pre-event		
Administration & marketing	313	291
Planning expenses	0	0
Skills development	0	600
Total pre-event	313	891
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
Total event expenditure	0	0
General		
Management meetings	144	47
Trustee expenses	0	0
Subscriptions	289	239
Insurance	392	554
Bank charges	60	60
Total general	885	899
Total payments	1,198	1,791
Receipts less Payments	13,685	-64

Notes

(1) In 2024, grants comprised: £5,000 from the Innominate Trust; £4,000 from the Sir James Reckitt Charity (supporting bursaries to participants who would otherwise find it difficult to afford the cost); and £1,000 from North East Thames Quaker Trust. Donations were received from Kingston & Wandsworth Area Quaker Meeting (£1,000), Mid-Thames Area Quaker Meeting (£500), an anonymous Quaker Meeting (£500), and Cambridge Jesus Lane Local Quaker Meeting (£189). Personal donations were received from two anonymous donors (£1,000 each), and sums from six other donors totalled £640.

Statement of assets and liabilities at 30 September 2024

The charity had no material assets or liabilities at the end of the period other than the net Reserves (£22,971) 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: 47 St Ladoc Road, Keynsham, Bristol, BS31 2DR

Trustees (at 30 September 2024): Candia Crosfield, Imi Hills, Rebecca Kennard, Anya Moore, Kai Sim, Alex Skinner, Oliver Waterhouse, Michael Wood

Clerk to trustees: Michael Wood

Clerk to management committee (at 30 September 2024): David Holtam

Treasurer (at 30 September 2024): 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.