

Quakers & Business Group
Annual Report
Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1157008

YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2024

TRUSTEES Lesley Bacon
 Michael Christopher Marshall
 Timothy Phillips
 William John Lovatt

TREASURER Michael Christopher Marshall

CLERK William John Lovatt

REGISTERED ADDRESS

18 Longford Road West, Stockport,
Greater Manchester, SK5 6ET

BANKERS Triodos Bank, Deanery Road, BRISTOL, BS1 5AS

Purpose

The objects of Quakers and Business Group (Q&B) are to promote Quaker principles, particularly in the context of business and the workplace. Q&B is a membership organisation, open to anyone with an interest in ethical business management, which aims to be a meeting place for those whose experience is that integrity in business and the workplace matters. Our meetings and core principles are organised in accord with the Quaker Business Method, which seeks to include and value the input of all members of a meeting.

Public Benefit

As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, we are very aware of the need to use the monies and other resources entrusted to us by our membership with care. Trustees ensure that while making decisions and plans they have regard to the public benefit in general, and minimise any risks.

Membership

At the end of 2024 there were 110 individual members, a reduction from 115 in 2023. Two new members arrived, but seven left, due to moving away from business interests. As a membership organisation Q&B attempts to respond to concerns brought up by members, and encourages interactions of all types.

In finding members to be Trustees and serve on the working groups, we pursue the Quaker tradition of seeking to discern the appropriate roles for the organisation, and encourage all members to take their part in upholding its principles and practices. We seek the 'Light' in everyone, and attempt to treat each member equally. We stress plain language and try to avoid Quaker jargon wherever possible.

The Management Committee met monthly in 2024 and is composed of the trustees, convenors of working groups and any member who wishes to attend.

Review of the year

In the first half of the year there were serious concerns about the viability of Q&B and whether the organisation should be laid down, due to declining membership and inactivity of Q&B. At the AGM in June the new trustees and the new clerk offered to revive the organisation, based on simplifying and economising, while appealing to the members for ideas to revive our activities.

Encouragingly, members came forward with suggestions, all of which are now ongoing, as follows:

- to develop an accredited programme for business owners,
- a course training for business advisers,
- a course in Employer skills development
- a programme to update our book Good Business,
- to have a stand and a Special Interest Meeting at Britain Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends Groups Fair,
- To apply for the Hodgson Award to travel round the Quaker Areas to disseminate our research into why early Friends were so successful, and the award was given.
- To add blogs to our website (6 blogs created during 2024)

In addition, a major project was undertaken to completely rebuild the website, partly because the cost had become almost half our annual income, and partly because the existing website had a membership system attached it which was haemorrhaging members by deleting them after one reminder and reminding members with standing orders, resulting in refunds. The brief to build the website at no cost was achieved, so there is now no monthly cost for the website – only a small hosting charge once a year. All the members' records were removed from the website, and all its resources were made open to all comers. It was built using AI with a large number of pictures. The membership system was simplified and made manual but with automation using Excel.

The Credit Union working group continued its correspondence with the PRA/FCA, and by the end of 2024 appeared to be on track for licensing in 2025.

2024 financial review

At the end of 2024 the total funds were £2,654, a decrease of £1,498 on the last year. The decrease was due to transferring £1,699 out of restricted funds to Northampton Area Meeting for them to hold for the Restoring Relations project, but was reduced by £200 due to our income exceeding expenditure by £200. The subscriptions reduced by £250 (about 10%) as members left due to not being involved in business any longer, and the new members arriving did not compensate. The reduced level of Charitable Activities during 2024 was reflected in a lower expenditure which was reduced by £2,000.

Last year the restricted fund held on behalf of the Restoring Relations project stood at £1,699. In January 2024 we transferred £1,699 to Northampton Area Meeting for them to hold for the Restoring Relations project, so the accounts show a deficit of £1,699, leaving £2,654 in unrestricted funds. This level satisfies the Reserves Policy of holding at least 50% of the previous year's unrestricted funds.

The level of turn-over means that it is not necessary to employ an external examiner this year.

Statement of Financial Activities
(incorporating an income and expenditure account)
Year ended 31 December 2024

	2024		2023	
Income and endowments	Re- stricted	Unre- stricted	Re- stricted	Unrestricted
Subscriptions	0	£2,670		£2,932
Other donations	0	£60	0	£150
Other Trading activities	0	£52	0	£39
Interest	0	£0	0	£10
Gift Aid	0	£405	0	£178
Total income	0	£3,187		£3,309
Expenditure	0			
Raising funds and manage- ment	0	£2,372	0	£2,183
Charitable activities	£1,699	£393	£355	£2,241
	£1,699	£1,699		
Subscription refunds	0	£220		£235
Total expenditure	0	£4,685		£5,014
Net income/(expenditure)	0	(-£1,498)		(-£1,705)
Total funds brought forward		£4,152		£5,857
Total funds carried forward		£2,654		£4,152