

Update

June 2017



Northern Friends Peace Board NFPB, Victoria Hall, Knowsley Street, Bolton BL1 2AS
Charity SC 024632 nfpb@gn.apc.org 01204 382330 <http://nfpb.org.uk>

Election peace concerns

Ahead of the General Election, NFPB produced a short document commenting on some of our key peace concerns at the moment, for consideration by people before voting and discussion with candidates.

In the preamble we write: "Our society and our planet need politics that will enable people to live sustainably, with respect for differences and diversity, promoting human

rights for all. These are some of the foundations for peace."

Themes covered are: Building bridges, Shared Security, Peace in Schools, Disarmament priorities, and Sanctuary.

This is available from our website at <http://nfpb.org.uk/GE2017> and from the NFPB office on request.

Workshops

At the end of April we facilitated a short workshop looking at populism. This was for Westmorland Regional Meeting, gathering in Kendal. Friends looked at what is being seen or labelled as 'populism', as well as looking at root causes of some of the tensions in society and aggressive media and political discourse. They also identified the positive opportunities and skills that Friends have and how these can be used for contributing to peace.

We have been developing ideas for workshops on the theme of 'Building Peace Together – Making Space for Hope'. We are intending to run 2 or 3 pilot workshops and then offer these more widely to Quaker Meetings and to other groups.

We are also exploring the possibility of links with Rethinking Security (Ammerdown Group) and partnering with them in offering workshops on that theme. NFPB members participated in an event in London that looked at how different groups can take this agenda forward, and we hope that we can now build on this.

Following our conference last year on 'Changing the narrative for peace' we would like to be able to offer workshops on working and engaging with the media.

Please get in touch if you are interested in any of these workshop areas.

Social media

Social networking through Facebook etc. has its limitations, but it can be a valuable way of sharing information and discussion. Northern Friends Peace Board regularly uses Twitter and Facebook to this end, sharing news of our own and other peace-related activities and resources:

Find us at: [facebook.com/NFPB1](https://www.facebook.com/NFPB1) twitter.com/nfpb1

Board meetings

Bolton Meeting House was the venue for our NFPB members' meeting at the beginning of March. A good number of Friends from the area attended as well. The day included a short workshop session, reports of some of the strands of work covered in this update, and an encouraging report on our finances at the end of 2016. An increase in contributions from Area and Local Meetings has been very much appreciated.

Nuclear disarmament was also high on the agenda, with the Board agreeing to support NFPB member Janet Fenton in contributing to the civil society presence during the negotiations in New York for a nuclear weapons ban treaty. Taking the concern into the streets during our lunch break, some NFPB

members held an impromptu 'flash mob' protest calling for 'NHS not Trident'.

We were inspired to hear from Hannah Larn, a QPSW peaceworker currently based at the Foundation for Peace in Warrington and doing innovative work with young people.

Tim Gee concluded the day with a session in which he shared some of the questions and initial thinking for centrally managed Quaker work on forced migration. Responding to his introduction, Friends talked about the range of ways in which they are involved in providing support. They also spoke with passion about the ways in which those seeking sanctuary in this country encounter systemic hostility.

NFPB next meets on 17th June in Dumfries.

Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty

In New York during March/April discussions took place at the United Nations towards a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty. NFPB member Janet Fenton was part of the international civil society presence. Significant progress was made, with the majority of the world's nations playing an active and positive role. The UK government, along with other nuclear powers and their allies, boycotted the talks. The negotiations resume in mid June, with Janet, and fellow Quaker Tim Wallis from QPSW, planning to attend again. Janet writes of *"the positive hope, despite the accelerated new arms race, in the recognition by the majority of the world's states of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons accident or use for their citizens"*.

Janet has also brought a Scottish perspective to the forum, commenting that *"Many Scottish peace groups have also come to take a position of support for independence for Scotland. Scottish CND has produced compelling evidence that scrapping Trident would, at the very least, make it extremely difficult for any UK Government to continue its nuclear-armed foreign policy posture in the UK if Scotland became independent.Many Scots peace activists would aspire to a Scotland that can speak at the UN and participate at the highest level with the member states and consider that our objectives and interests will be far better served by a democratically elected government than anything that Westminster is offering."*

For links relating to the nuclear disarmament, visit our web page at:
<http://nfpb.org.uk/current-concerns/challenging-militarism>

Material for Meeting Houses, stalls and events

We have a number of printed materials for sale and for free distribution. These will be suitable if you want to have something to publicise Quaker peace concerns in your building or at a particular event. Please get in touch if you would find this helpful and to discuss what resources you might use. (see over the page for our contact details)