



Quaker Values in Education (QVinE)

Publication Group

Newsletter November 2015

The beginning

On April 15 2015 the Oxford Meeting House hosted a group of Friends, who met with a common interest, 'education', whose main aims were to write discrete articles and to publish a book, authored or edited. The purpose really of the Newsletter is to summarise progress from all the e-mails and other communications received. However, its other main task is to provide to those who are currently writing, to others who are still contemplating doing so, and to outline some of the challenges, but most of all to provide you with the good news.

I think we are reasonably clear as to where we are, where our focus needs to be in the future and what processes we need to set in train for future stages, one of which is to build on the supply of potential Quaker authors.

It is probably best to start with authorship first. Towards the end of August, Edward e-mailed his revised thoughts on Chapters for the book, with names linked to possible authors for each and these are summarised below.

- **Political scapegoating, policy, Evidence neglect, truth to power (Wendy Scott, Janet Sturge)**
- **Social justice, community, integration, peace education, ways of being (Anna Gregory from WMQPEP, Belinda Hopkins, Izzy Cartwright/Ellis Brooks, Hilary Cremin) Maybe break this down into 2 chapters)**
- **Equality and school systems (the private Quaker school question primarily?) (NAME NEEDED)**
- **Leadership and Quaker processes in education (Giles, Jeff, Belinda Hopkins, Alice Harlan?)**
- **Accountability and expectations, pressure on students and the workforce, impact on truth (NAME NEEDED)**
- **Seeing that of God in every student and teacher (practical considerations) (NAME NEEDED)**
- **Curriculum safety, breadth and creativity, a love of learning (Janet Sturge, John Mason)**
- **Creating space for silence/reflection (NAME NEEDED)**
- **Behaviour and moral development (Don, Edward, Keir)**
- **Preparing and training an educational workforce to consider all the above (Gill Johnson)**

Updates from September

In September, one of our major issues, was a worry that we had insufficient potential authors for each chapter and although this remains a concern, we are now confident that there is sufficient support for our final destination to be an edited book.

We may not have the chapter focus absolutely right and a recent e-mail from Janet Nicholls containing notes on two papers 'Equality and the competition for school places' and 'Simplicity and the immiseration of education' directed Edward to ask the question 'Would you be able to adapt these for the proposed edited book?' Anne Watson would like a section about classroom work in some subject disciplines, using mathematics as an example. Anne writes 'as tensions between driving for test scores and a more holistic approach to education [increase] [these issues] are what push many teachers out of the profession and can challenge a teacher's integrity and care for individuals....' Also Paul Bowers-Isaacson has suggested areas of interest, including curriculum development and assessment.

Where are we now

Currently we have 'Every Person is Precious' document resulting from the August 2014 Woodbrooke Conference and the material already available to schools by Janet Sturge 'Notes for New Teachers' and other materials at various stages of production.

An original suggestion by Keir Mitchell, 'Short contributions should be as tightly written as an Advice or Query and include the agreed wisdom of many minds' has been taken up by Anne Watson, Margot Lunnion and John Mason and has resulted in 'draft 4 after a weekend at Woodbrooke'.

What might we do now

Keir exhorts us 'to hold whatever approaches we do deem Quakerly up to the light of Trevor Jagger's principles - I think this would be an interesting exercise that would bring much clarity – let's get on with it!' 'Would it be beyond us to illustrate each of those principles in 250 words? That would be one evening's work each for seven of us and it would produce an extremely powerful series of shorts small enough to post in social media. Who would feel capable of doing such a thing, if we were to agree to do it? (see concluding remarks) Please e-mail us now with any information you wish to share, especially concerning additional authors.

Publishing matters

The sections below represent a dialogue between Giles and Edward about publishing and the current efforts being made by them in this area from 9 to 28 October.

From Edward

I think it [the book] should, perhaps be grounded in the testimonies as suggested at our day in Oxford, which is much the same as planning the book in more detail.

I agree that we ought to explore publishing this through a Quaker source – it's taken several months to just get a reply to another book proposal I'm working on. We do have to be mindful that a book will be a 1 year plus project once a proposal has been accepted (which may also take a year).

I have a meeting with Routledge in two weeks time who are keen to chat to me about education and mental health publications. I shall raise the idea of a book about Quaker values (or spirituality more broadly) and educational concerns to test the water with them. If they were interested it could be a good alternative.

From Giles – response from QPSW (and QL)

Dear Giles

Richard, Paul and I put our heads together briefly on Tuesday about this. We are clear that the very limited resources we have for publishing need to be used only for work which clearly takes forward the agreed work of our programmes. Even for our own work we sometimes find that we do not have enough in-house staff time to do it all, and need to buy in additional services. We cannot provide a publishing service to other Quaker groups.

You might perhaps want to investigate a couple of publishing houses with Quaker connections - Quacks Books in Yorkshire, and Sessions Books.

Helen [Drewery]

Obviously this is a bit disappointing. I have given it some thought and have identified at least three options...

1. We follow up possible production via one of the publishing houses mentioned by Helen in her response. I am happy to carry out investigations and feedback.
2. Some of us are already published through mainstream publishers. We could test out possible production through these contacts. (I am not sure our potential pamphlet/booklet projects would win appeal, although the more substantial volume might do).
3. We establish our own imprint - Quaker Education - for example, and get on and do it ourselves. The attraction in this is that we take responsibility for our own destiny! The downside is the time commitment to sorting everything out. I have certainly done this in the past and know a reliable print shop.

From Edward

OK. I will check out the two other publishers. I am not sure Routledge will be up for a smaller project, ie. the educational advices and queries, or the 12 Quakers on Education idea.

I spoke to Routledge today. They said the book is a good idea but too niche for them and recommended approaching a suitable publisher, specialising in such texts. They would however be interested in receiving a proposal if it had a more general/spiritual approach. This is the response I expected, I don't think it changes anything. We would need to seek a specialist publisher or self-publish, perhaps keeping a generalist text as a back-up idea if there was any interest. I imagine we want to keep it focused on Quakerism.

From Giles (28.10.2011)

Thanks for the update, Edward. I haven't had a response from Sessions Books yet, so given your experience at Routledge I will phone them tomorrow and see if I can get a steer on their approach. I think we need a 'proper' publisher for the main book, but for the 'minor' productions I am still confident that a self-published avenue might be worth investigating

Conclusions and Requests

First an apology from me/us about the ramshackle way in which this Newsletter is presented, but better this way than not at all.

Milestones – authors, an edited book, available materials

Pending – quick wins

Ongoing - publishing

There is a lot of activity amongst us and though we are geographically separated there is a will to make the project work. We ask for more feedback to give the co-ordinating group encouragement.

Here is a call for quick action, who would be willing to co-ordinate quick wins in the run up to the 2016 conference, whilst the book continues to develop little by little.

Jeff Beatty, Giles Barrow, Edward Sellman