



## **The Association of Talking Friends: Registered Charity no. 299656**

### **Trustees' Report for the year ended 31/ 12/ 2008**

The Trustees present their report on the activities of the Association for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup>/ 12mo / 2008.

#### **Background**

This Quaker charity exists to provide those who are visually impaired with audio access to Quaker periodicals and books at low cost. The Association was founded in 1988 under the care of Dorking and Horsham Monthly Meeting and responsibility for its care transferred to Warwickshire Monthly Meeting (WMM), now known as Central England Area Quaker Meeting (CEAQM), during 2007.

Members of CEAQM began recording The Friend onto cassette tapes for visually-impaired subscribers in October 2007.

The objectives and rules of the Association are defined in its Constitution.

#### **Trustees and Committee Members**

The Constitution of the Association requires that there shall be not less than 3 Trustees:

- (b) Trustees shall be appointed by Dorking and Horsham Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), (or by any body to which its functions are transferred in whole or part from time to time), from amongst persons who are and remain Members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).
- (c) A Trustee shall automatically resign on ceasing to be a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).
- (d) Persons appointed as Trustees may retire at any time of their own volition or at the request of the Appointing Body for the time being.

The following served as trustees during 2008:

Gill Coffin	appointed 17/ 7/ 2007
David Grimshaw	appointed 17/ 7/ 2007
John Lampen	appointed 17/ 7/ 2007

The following served as Committee members during 2008:

Anne Austin	appointed 17/ 7/ 2007
Joe Coffin	co-opted January 2008; appointed 10/ 5/ 2008
Anne Fletcher	appointed 17/ 7/ 2007; Equipment Officer
Alan Johnson	appointed 17/ 7/ 2007; Clerk of Committee (Note1)
Victor Lobb	appointed 17/ 7/ 2007; Treasurer (Note1)
Linda Pegler	appointed 17/ 7/ 2007; Membership Secretary
Stella Roberts	co-opted 17/ 7/ 2007; appointed 10/ 5/ 2008
William Waddilove	appointed 17/ 7/ 2007; Website Administrator

Note 1: Appointed for three years up to the 2010 AGM. Other Committee members are appointed for one year, and may be re-appointed subject to their consent at the following AGM.

Eleanor Tew was co-opted as technical advisor on 3/ 7/ 2008 and hopes to take up this appointment in mid-2009.

Trustees meet with Committee members at least four times in each year.

Trustees and Committee members have a wide range of relevant qualifications and experience, and the Committee includes, as required by the Constitution, one member who is visually-impaired.

## **Objectives and Activities**

The object of the Association is *'to relieve the blind, or the partially sighted, or those labouring under some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability which makes reading a strain, by the provision of equipment, materials and facilities all of whatsoever nature or description to provide for audible reproduction of printed or spoken material and music or tactile reading matter'*.

Members of Talking Friends may subscribe to any or all of *The Friend*, *Quaker Monthly*, *Friends Quarterly* and *Towards Wholeness*. All subscribers receive the cassette version of *Quaker News*. New subscribers also receive a copy of the cassette version of *Advices and Queries*.

## **Achievements**

During 2008 the Association continued to record these Quaker publications onto cassette tapes and to distribute these to visually-impaired subscribers.

The Association has maintained its membership of subscribers and ended the year with 45 members. The incidence of visual impairment increases with age, and so it is natural that most members are in the older age groups. We continue to welcome new members, and hope that the service will be publicised and used more widely.

There are 22 Friends who read *The Friend*, a weekly publication, onto tape, working in 9 teams representing 8 Local Quaker Meetings within CEAQM. Other Quaker journals are read by Friends in CEAQM and other Area Meetings.

In the past, Quaker books have been recorded on demand by volunteers. No books have been added to the list held on the Association's website this year.

The publications that we make available in audio form are 'Quaker' in origin but accessible to all. We publicise our service to members and attenders of the Religious Society of Friends in the UK and through our website: [www.talkingfriends.org.uk](http://www.talkingfriends.org.uk)

We have started to investigate newer technology for recording and distributing these audio publications. We have sought the views of our subscribers, one of our trustees has evaluated the technical options, and we have carried out a trial recording of *The Friend* in a CD-based format.

We have updated our publicity leaflet to improve accessibility.

We thank our volunteer readers for their continued commitment and expertise, and we also wish to thank Friends at Quaker Life for copying and distributing recorded material on our behalf.

**Talking Friends : Registered Charity 299656****Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2008**

	Notes:	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
		£	£
<b><u>Incoming Resources</u></b>			
Subscriptions	1	890	688
Donations: Individuals		49	22
Donations: Quaker Meetings		130	64
Sales (recorded books)		0	59
Miscellaneous		0	0
Bank Interest: current account		34	25
Bank Interest: deposit account		145	139
Total Incoming Resources		1247	997
<b><u>Outgoing Resources</u></b>			
Cassettes, wallets and labels		194	216
Equipment purchase		-	-
Equipment servicing		6	-
Administration (post and printing) & AGM		282	80
Travel expenses		-	133
TNF membership and Insurance		125	115
Advertising		30	32
Other publicity		-	-
		637	576
Depreciation: equipment	2	129	184
<b>Total Resources expended</b>		766	760
<b>Net incoming (outgoing) resources</b>		481	237
Balance brought forward at 1st January		5668	5431
<b>Balance carried forward at 31st December</b>		6149	5668
Held as:			
Triodos Deposit Account		4356	4211
Nationwide Current Account		1492	1027
Cash in hand		0	0
Fixed Assets	2	301	430
Plus: debtors at 31/12/2008		0	0
Less: creditors at 31/12/2008		0	0
<b>Total assets at 31st December 2008</b>		6149	5668

**Talking Friends charity 299656**  
**Notes to the Financial Statement for 2008**

2008

2007

1 The majority of subscriptions fall due in December. Subscriptions are shown as income in the year in which they are received.

2 Fixed Assets

Value at 1 January	430	614
Add: Equipment purchased	-	-
Subtotal	<u>£430</u>	<u>£614</u>
Less: Depreciation at 30% of reducing balance	<u>129</u>	<u>184</u>
Net Book Value at 31 December	<u>£301</u>	<u>£430</u>

**Examiners Report to the Trustees of Talking Friends**  
**Registered Charity No 299656**

I have examined the financial statements of Talking Friends (Charity Registration Number 299656) in accordance with the regulations under Part VI of the Charities Act 1993 and with the Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting by Charities. In my opinion the accounting records of the charity have been kept in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 1993, and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2008 accord with these records. All information and explanations to which I am entitled in connection with this examination have been afforded to me and no matter has come to my attention which requires further report under the regulations.

Signed  
Peter Ullathorne

*original signed*

16/02/2009

## **The Future**

### **1      Our context**

We are an independent charity within the Quaker 'family' and so will be guided to reflect joyfully on the recent determination of priorities for Quakers in Britain for 2009- 2014 published in 'A Framework for Action', a strategic focus for activity.

### **2      Distribution of the Talking Friend**

Recorded materials are copied and distributed by staff at Quaker Life, based at Friends' House, London, who generously took over this task in 2006. We are discussing with Quaker Life Central Committee the possibility of transferring this task elsewhere. As before, our objective will be to avoid any disruption in our service to our subscribers.

### **3      Transfer to new technology**

Producing Quaker published materials in alternative formats is an important way of honouring Britain Yearly Meeting's commitment to equality.

Our recordings are made on 'compact cassette' tapes, which was the standard format used by organisations offering 'talking books'. This 1960's technology is being replaced by newer, digital media.

We hope to continue work on the evaluation of alternative systems, which has already included an appraisal of a CD-based system.

We are asking our subscribers for their views on, and their access to, newer audio technology such as CD players and the internet, and their preferences for such systems.

A transfer to new technology is likely to require a relatively large investment in replacement equipment, and may require additional fund-raising.

### **4      Our Volunteers**

We have noted our thanks to those who volunteer to read for us. We recognise the need to nurture and support our volunteers and to anticipate the need to plan succession for those readers who 'lay down' their service to the Association.

## **Examiner**

We thank our Examiner, Peter Ullathorne, a member of CEAQM, for examining our 2008 accounts. He has indicated his willingness to accept reappointment as examiner of our accounts for a further year.