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The Association of Talking Friends: Registered Charity no. 299656 Trustees' Report for the year ended 31/12/2011

The Trustees present their report on the activities of the Association for the year ending 31st / 12mo / 2011.

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 2011:

Gill Coffin	appointed 17/7/2007
Joy Aldworth	appointed 12/6/2010
Mary Wong	appointed 06-11

The following served as Committee members during 2011:

Anne Austin	appointed 17/7/2007	
Gillian Bryan	appointed 15/5/2010;	Treasurer from 23/6/2010
Joe Coffin	appointed 10/5/2008	
Anne Fletcher	appointed 17/7/2007;	Equipment Officer
		- resigned at AGM 14-05-11
Alan Johnson	appointed 17/7/2007;	Clerk of Committee (Note1) (Note 2)
Linda Pegler	appointed 17/7/2007;	Membership Secretary
		– resigned at AGM 14-05-11
Stella Roberts	appointed 10/5/2008	
William Waddilove	appointed 17/7/2007;	Website Administrator

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

Note 2: Victor Lobb's term of office ended at the Committee meeting held on 23/6/2010

The committee has not been able to find a technical adviser to report on the quality of recordings on behalf of the subscribers.

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 Voices*, *Friends Quarterly* and *Towards Wholeness*. All subscribers receive an audio version of *Quaker News*. New subscribers also receive an audio copy of *Advices and Queries*.

Achievements

During 2011, the Association continued to record these publications on cassette tapes and to distribute tapes to subscribers using the Royal Mail 'free postage' concession.

There was a small reduction in the number of subscribers during 2010 and we ended the year with 39 members. The incidence of visual impairment increases with age, and so it is natural that most members are in the older age groups. We welcome new members, and hope that the service will be publicised and used more widely.

At the end of 2011 there were 9 teams with 19 readers available to make up 6 teams recording *The Friend*, a weekly publication, and *Quaker Voices* (bi-monthly), and 1 each reading *Friends Quarterly*, *Towards Wholeness* and *Quaker News*.

By the end of the year, 19 subscribed to *The Friend*, 18 to *Quaker voices*, 10 to *Friends Quarterly* and 9 to *Towards Wholeness*.

We have reflected on the priorities for Quakers in Britain in 2009- 2014 published in 'A Framework for Action', and have submitted our response.

In anticipation of the costs arising from the planned introduction of digital recording, we have increased the price of subscriptions to all the journals we record to 50% of the cost of the printed version. This is the first increase in price for several years. [No further increase in subscriptions took place in 2011].

We continue to publicise our service to members and attenders of the Religious Society of Friends in the UK through an updated publicity leaflet, attendance at Yearly Meeting Gathering, and through our website: www.talkingfriends.org.uk

We have investigated newer technology for recording and distributing these audio publications. We have sought the views of our subscribers, one of our trustees has carried out a technical evaluation of the technical options, and we have carried out a trial recording of *The Friend* in a CD-based format. The committee has accepted the offer by a

trustee to record Quaker News on CD and cassette in order to determine subscriber preference. It is anticipated that the experiment will take place in early 2011. 50% of the subscribers replied and overwhelmingly expressed a preference to receiving journals on CD

Further evaluation

29.11 Formation of a technical sub-committee.

There was a long discussion about matters to do with going forward with digital technology. Stella will enquire at Coventry Community Service Radio how to convert analogue (audio cassette) to digital format (Memory Stick).

Alan's summary will be circulated as a separate document once all relevant data have been collected.

Technical evaluation

A meeting of the technical sub-committee was convened at the Priory Rooms on Monday, 12 December.

Present: Anne Austin [Assistant Clerk], Gillian Bryan [Treasurer&Secretary], Gill Coffin [Trustee], Danny Collman [Assistant Administrator Birmingham Talking Newspapers (TN)] and Alan Johnson [Clerk].

Prevented: Stella Roberts.

Danny Collman reminded us of how Birmingham Talking Newspapers is organised. He went on to discuss the benefits of moving from an analogue to a digitally based recording system. Among several points he made were: time to acquire equipment and suppliers, a long period of instruction and supervision in training 'technicians' to monitor each recording. This aspect was stressed as the organisation continued to make recordings in analogue and digital format.

Gillian Bryan demonstrated the Bridge Digital system which appeared to be uncomplicated to learn and to use, with practice.

After some considerable discussion in which the needs of readers were examined in a measure of detail, it was agreed to recommend the system to the next meeting of the committee and trustees in January 2012.

In the meantime, Gillian and Alan would confer to determine the extent and costs of purchasing the equipment. Once those details are known, Alan will approach Ken Bridge to discuss finance. It was noted that external microphones may be needed for readers.

A clear set of procedures needs to be written to assist readers.

At a convenient date, a demonstration and workshop will be arranged with as many readers as possible. Perhaps there should be an intention to announce the date of the switch-over at the association's AGM in 2012.

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

The Future

1 Context

Producing Quaker published materials in alternative formats is an important way of honouring Britain Yearly Meeting's commitment to equality. Our audio-publications for people with a visual impairment are mostly written by and for Quakers, but have a wider appeal. 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.

2 Transfer to new technology

In last year's report, we stated that we are planning to introduce MAGIX Audio Cleaning Lab editing software to record and edit publications in a digital format on re-usable memory sticks.

This year, in an attempt to broaden our understanding of available digital products, a training session was arranged for a demonstration of Audacity, a free download of digital software.

To keep pace with other providers of information to visually impaired recipients, the association may need to move to using Memory Sticks. Should this be the case, subscribers will have to be provided with a simple 'play' unit which is readily available.

We have asked 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. Their response has been mostly to welcome new media, but we shall produce a master cassette tape from the digital recording, for copying to those who continue to prefer to receive cassette tapes.

These recorded CDs or re-usable memory sticks can be sent to our subscribers through the free postage system.

We believe that this proposal will minimise the investment required in new equipment.

Subscriber numbers - Date: 31/12/11

Quaker Voices -	18
Friends Quarterly -	10
Towards Wholeness -	9

Talking Friends accounts 2011

Talking Friends :Registered Charity 299656
Statement of financial affairs 31 December 2011

	2010 £	2011 £
<u>Incoming Resources</u>		
Subscriptions	1155	959
Books		44
Donations	95	95
Misc. (postage)	25	25
Bank interest (CAF - current account)		2
Bank interest (CAF - deposit account)		1
Bank interest (Nationwide - current account)	1	
Bank interest (Triodos - deposit account)	2	
Total incoming resources	<u>1278</u>	<u>1126</u>
<u>Outgoing resources</u>		
Cassettes	183	193
Advertising	248	248
Printing	53	0
AGM	141	40
Readers expenses		90
Officers expenses	60	113
Insurance	98	105
Subscription	42	63
Postage		17
Digital switchover		53
Misc.		37
	<u>825</u>	<u>959</u>
Depreciation of equipment	63	148
Total resources expended	888	1107
Net incoming (outgoing) resources	390	19
bt/fwd 1/1 - Opening reserves 1/1	6104	6494
c/fwd 31/12 - Closing reserves 31/12	<u>£6,494</u>	<u>£6,513</u>

Held as:

Fixed Assets - note2	148	0
Triodos deposit account	4385	0
Nationwide current account	1961	0
CAF current account		5760
CAF deposit account		1001
Cash in hand	0	0
less Creditors	0	-248
Total assets 31/12	<u>£6,494</u>	<u>£6,513</u>

gb12/12

Talking Friends Charity 299656

Examiners Report to the Trustees of Talking Friends fRegistered Charity No: 299656

I have examined the financial statements of Talking Friends (Charity Registration No: 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 2011 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

Date