Trustees' annual report (including Directors' report) for the period 1 January to 31 December 2025

Charity name: Quaker Voluntary Action

Charity registration number: 1083412

Company number: 3908675

Trustees/Directors

Jeffrey William Beatty - Britain Yearly Meeting

Matthew Alexander Bittle (appointed 27 July 2025) - Britain Yearly Meeting

Susan Angela Glover Frykman (Company Secretary) (ceased as Trustee/Director on 1 January 2026 but continues as Company Secretary) - Sweden Yearly Meeting

Conor Mungo Jerram - Britain Yearly Meeting

Barry Anthony Jenkinson (Treasurer, coopted 18 December 2025) - Britain Yearly Meeting

Gordon Elton Matthews (Clerk) - German Yearly Meeting

Keith Edward Scott (Treasurer, ceased 24 June 2025) - Britain Yearly Meeting

Co-opted outside the period

Jeremy Martin Russell Smith (coopted 9 April 2026) - Switzerland Yearly Meeting

Staff team

Kit King (Coordinator) - Britain Yearly Meeting

Suzie Green (Communications Manager, appointed 1 October 2025) - Britain Yearly Meeting

Objects of the Charity

"The object of the Charity is to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of local communities in Britain, Europe and other parts of the world, by associating together volunteers and Quaker groups and/or other local organisations in a common effort to advance education and training, preserve and protect health, relieve

poverty, sickness and distress. In carrying out the object the Charity will act in pursuance of the religious beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends."

Public benefit

These objects are charitable and, in pursuance of them, trustees have complied with their duty to have regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Operational objectives, activities and performance

In pursuing this overall objective, the charity reviewed its work, aims and vision. At the AGM/residential committee meeting in March 2006 the following statement was approved:

Vision

QVA bears witness to the value and importance of volunteering, as a visible and practical way of putting faith into action to meet social needs. The Quaker approach has a particular contribution to make to this.

Volunteering can:

- bring people together
- nurture a sense of passion and adventure
- foster a sense of social responsibility
- provide a seed of learning that can be shared

Mission (Revised April 2018)

We enable participation in spirit-led volunteering that makes a practical and social difference. Our projects build community and work for a more just and peaceful world.

Grant making

QVA does not make grants and therefore does not have a grant making policy.

From time to time, we donate to other organisations which share our concerns. In 2025, we made a donation of £260 to FWCC Europe and Middle East Section (Scottish charity number SC 036528) to contribute towards the bursary fund for their All Age Gathering. QVA holds a bursary fund of its own, but this functions in the form of providing discounts to participants who need it, and the participant pays the remaining balance.

Achievements and performance

At the beginning of 2025, QVA began a process of discernment about its future. Trustees received a paper titled 'Navigating our future' from the Coordinator, Company Secretary, and Treasurer, sparked by the request for release from service of the Clerk (though he continued as a Trustee). It posed a risk for QVA's sustainability and, due to the cancellation of several retreats in 2024, raised questions about our programme model overall.

Trustees, supported by the Coordinator, explored several options for the charity. These included changing the programmes we offer, requesting support from other organisations in appointing Trustees, and even merging with a different organisation or winding up. Trustees and the Coordinator decided to scale back the 2025 programme and invest more staff time in the governance and structure of QVA. This involved reviewing and updating policies and procedures, long-term organisational planning, and supporting Trustees with searching for and on-boarding new Trustees.

The Coordinator ran the QVA stall at the Groups Fair at Britain Yearly Meeting in May 2025, alongside a myriad of Quaker organisations. This served as an excellent networking and publicity opportunity for QVA, with many flyers being handed out, expressions of interest in future programmes, and networking with other Quaker organisations.

The Coordinator represented QVA at meetings of the Peace and Service Network of FWCC Europe and Middle East Section.

Two Working Retreats ran in 2025 on the theme of 'Caring for Creation'. Some participants said:

"It has been special to spend time at this location [Rookhow] and to be able to focus on being present in each moment. Doing the outside work has been as spiritually enriching [as] the themed sessions and Meeting for Worship."

"I found it uplifting and moving and supportive. Great to be amongst so many new Friends and old. The best work teams I have known - and some of the best examples of valuable work and valuable ministry I have had the pleasure to experience."

"Even though at times I found it challenging to live and work [ ] in community with people I did not really know at the outset, I feel it is often through the challenges that I am able to learn more about myself and my connections with others. We did move towards 'We' from 'I'."

Quaker Voluntary Action

The first was held in April at Claridge House, Surrey. Claridge House is a Quaker centre for retreat, rest, and renewal (charity number 1167155). 5 volunteers and the Coordinator spent 4 days at the House carrying out work such as:

- Repainting stair nosings on the outside steps,
- Pressure washing patios,
- Repainting outside walls,
- Sanding and oiling a wooden beehive to prepare for a new swarm, and
- Repainting an outdoor trellis.

Volunteers also took it in turns preparing lunch and dinner for each other, thus serving the community as well as the House. There were four theme sessions - one each day. The first was an introductory session, which allowed Friends to start getting to know one another and to start thinking about the theme. The second session focussed on climate justice. Our third session was on peace. The fourth session was a reflective session on the time that they had spent together. Meeting for Worship was held every morning and evening, and a period of silent worship was held at the start and end of every session and meal.

The second Working Retreat was at Rookhow Quaker Meeting House and Bunkbarn in the Lake District (charity number 1188409) and was attended by 11 volunteers and two facilitators. The work included:

- moving stones to repair a track in the woodland,
- moving logs from the woodland to the bunkbarn,
- polishing furniture in the Meeting House,
- removing invasive plants, brambles, and weeds from along the paths,
- spreading meadow sweet, and
- renovating Rookhow's carved roadside sign.

Volunteers shared the task of preparing meals. Two freelance Facilitators guided volunteers through theme sessions which included an introduction, lectio divina, "Sold Out" travelling museum of non-human animal artefacts, and story weaving. Meeting for Worship was held every morning and evening, and a period of silent worship was held at the start and end of every session and meal.

Staff at Claridge House and Rookhow fed back how greatly impactful it was to have QVA volunteers on site, working and worshipping together. Not only was a large amount of work done in a small amount of time, but the venues felt that they had been spiritually nourished by QVA's presence. Claridge House's manager said "It was such a pleasure to have Quakers from afar at the House, it certainly makes one feel like there is a community and that there's connection - very worthwhile, nevermind being totally delighted with the work done."

In June 2025, Trustees approved the recruitment of a Communications Assistant on an initial six-month fixed-term contract from October 2025. Following a review in March 2026, this was confirmed as a permanent Communications Manager post. This investment led to a notable increase in visibility, inquiries, and participation, with bookings for the 2026 programme filling rapidly upon launch.

In 2026, QVA feels stronger, better organised, and more focussed on our goal to achieve our charitable aims. Bookings for the 2026 programme opened at the end of 2025 and were fully booked by the new year. We feel confident about our future and look forward to seeing what it holds.

Financial review

At the end of 2025 QVA's reserves (retained earnings) had fallen by £511 to £35,667. This reduction was caused by an increase in employment costs which were not fully covered by increased grant income. This increase in employment cost was fully anticipated and will continue for the foreseeable future but with increased income.

QVA's reserves policy is to retain all earnings and ensure that employment costs are covered for the next 12 months. QVA's principal sources of funding are grant income and donations from individuals and Quaker Meetings. The principal risk to QVA is the cessation of that income due to economic pressures or reputational damage to QVA. An additional risk is running Retreats at a loss but this is within the operational control of staff and Trustees.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated January 2000.

Quaker Voluntary Action is a Quaker Recognised Body (QRB), as recognised by Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) (charity number 1127633). This means we are part of a network of Quaker organisations that are endorsed by Quakers in Britain as being part of the faith community, but legally, financially, in governance, and in structure separate from Britain Yearly Meeting. QVA does, from time to time, receive advice and support from Britain Yearly Meeting staff and role holders, for which we are deeply grateful.

We note that QVA’s Coordinator, Kit King, is Assistant Clerk (vice chair) of Trustees of Britain Yearly Meeting. QVA was recognised as a QRB in 2017, before Kit worked at QVA and before they became a Trustee of BYM. A formal register of interests is maintained; should any conflict arise, the Coordinator withdraws from relevant discussions and decision-making.

Trustee meetings are co-chaired by the Clerk and Company Secretary. Trustees also appoint a Treasurer and Safeguarding Trustee. From time to time, Trustees will appoint working groups and committees for certain projects or workstreams. There were no working groups or committees in 2025.

The staff team consists of a Coordinator and a Communications Manager (as of October 2025). The Coordinator is line-managed by the Company Secretary. The Communications Manager is line-managed by the Coordinator. Staff work remotely.

Trustees search for names and widely advertise for new Trustees throughout the year to fill vacancies and may co-opt them at any time, and their service ends at the rise of the next AGM, at which point they may be formally appointed for a term. Only the Annual General Meeting may formally appoint Trustees.

Prospective Trustees meet with the Clerk, the Company Secretary, and the Coordinator for an informal conversation to explore whether or not a) the Trustee is suitable for service and b) whether or not the Trustee is still interested in service. Following this conversation, the Clerk and Company Secretary send a nomination to the Trustees who make a decision on whether or not to co-opt them. At the time of the AGM, Trustees send the names of co-opted Trustees to be appointed by the members.

New Trustees are given access to all QVA policies and procedures, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, recent Trustee meeting minutes and papers, and financial information such as the budget. Some QVA Trustees opt to have a [name]@qva.org.uk email address. All Trustees are required to complete a conflict of interest declaration form, trustee eligibility forms, and a skills audit form.

Declarations

The company has taken advantage of the small companies' exemption in preparing the report above.
The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report (including directors' report) above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees/directors:

Gordon Elton Matthews Date: 19/08/2026
Chair

Sue Glover Frykman Date: 19/08/2026
Company Secretary