

FRIENDS/QUAKERS

Thank you for the opportunity to tell you what Friends/Quakers have been doing to play their part in the massive job of reducing our impact on this planet.

Friends have always had an ethos of living simply. They have been aware of the problems of CO2 levels for a while and in 2007 brought out a booklet called 'Walk Cheerfully, Step Lightly' as a guide to some of the issues and what we can, personally do, to combat them.

In 2011 Britain Yearly Meeting, our national body, produced and accepted minute 36 which committed Friends to becoming a low carbon community.

After minute 36 was accepted, Ludlow Friends Meeting House officially appointed five members to run a Sustainability Group in February 2012. I had been involved with a Quaker eco group for many years and was accepted as a member of this group. A National minute 36 group was set up as well, and an Area Meeting one, which covers Friends Meeting Houses in the Marches Area. This group ran a Zero Carbon Britain event in 2014 with a speaker from CAT.

Our Ludlow group started by asking all our members what their thoughts were about Climate Change. We then did a Carbon Footprint of travel to our Meetings. We surveyed the Meeting House, which does have insulation but could do better, and advised a change to a more efficient heating boiler. We also joined the Green Festival, with a stall showing our commitments, and helped with the open garden event showing what vegetables can be grown in a small space. We realised that our travel to Meetings is where we used the most CO2 so have been monitoring that over the years. Last year Ludlow Meeting House paid a carbon offsetting fee. We bought eco friendly cleaning products and recycling bins. We already used Fairtrade toilet rolls and refreshments.

We have been very active writing to Philip Dunn and organising meetings with him. We have also been in touch with Bill Wiggins from the next door constituency.

We have taken regular meter readings and have a history, now, of our electricity use. We have many publications we consider. There are already Quaker organisations working on ways to tread more lightly on our earth and we have kept in touch with them. There are also local groups, like Stretton Climate Care, Herefordshire Christian Ecology Group and Ludlow 21, who we keep links with. We are active in many campaigns and share these with Ludlow Friends for their consideration.

Last year we considered the problems of food production, its consequences for CO2 levels and other environmental issues. We decided to make a recipe book to explore these more. Ludlow Friends have already been introduced to LOAF and are, on the whole, very careful about their food. The book is about to be printed.

Our Meeting House is also another issue under consideration. Our numbers have increased over the years and we are beginning to feel a bit squashed in our Meeting House. Our sustainability group are very keen to make sure any replacement, or move, reduces our environmental impact.