

QUAKER LIVING WAGE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

Inspired by faith to build a more equal world



NEWSLETTER ISSUE No1

Living Wage Week 30 October – 06 November 2016

It is now 16 months since we launched the Quaker Living Wage National Campaign. When we started we knew that a few parts of our Quaker community were accredited Living Wage employers, they included **Britain Yearly Meeting (Friends House), Quaker Social Action in London and Quaker Service in Northern Ireland**. During these months we have been in contact with the 92 Meetings that were involved in Quaker Equality Week 2015, all Area Meeting Clerks, Friends who are members of the Quakers & Business Group and our Quaker Schools. We have run campaigns to encourage the Co-operative Group to pay the Living Wage and universities to pay their support staff the Living Wage. We have used Quaker publications to announce the campaigns and to celebrate achievements.



Our Lancaster Living Wage campaigning group has grown from 3 Friends to 6. We have developed a series of materials to support Friends who may wish to campaign in their local areas. The documents include research about the benefits to businesses of paying the Living Wage, sample letters to use when writing to businesses and universities as well as a leaflet to use when witnessing. We outline why Quaker organisations should seek accreditation as Living Wage Employers. This body of material is added to as we develop new campaigns and accompanying materials. They are available to download from our website www.lancsquakers.org.uk/livingwagecampaign.php

Our campaign group has partnered with the Living Wage Foundation so that we can draw on their expertise and better understand the accreditation process so we can support Friends. It also means we can influence developing policy.

WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

1. First and foremost we would like to get our own house in order to give Friends campaigning in their locality the credibility they need.
 - We want Area Meetings that have employees not only to pay the Living Wage but also to become accredited Living Wage employers thus witnessing to all they come into contact with that they believe in treating their employees fairly, that they pay them a fair wage that can be lived on and are committed to continuing to do so.
 - We would like all Quaker Schools to pay their support staff the Living Wage and to pay it as soon as the rate rise is announced in November each year. We would like them to become '*patterns and examples*' to other independent schools by becoming accredited Living Wage employers.

- We hope that Quakers who own their own businesses will join the campaign and those who work for others will ask appropriate questions in their workplace.



2. We want Quakers to challenge large employers in their locality such as their local council, head offices of retail companies and universities to pay the Living Wage.

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED SO FAR

1. Area Meeting Accreditations as Living Wage employers.
We needed our Area Meeting, **Lancaster Central and North Area Quaker Meeting**, to become accredited so that we have credibility when campaigning within the Society and in Lancaster. We were accredited in December 2016 joining **York Area Quaker Meeting** and **Manchester and Warrington Area Quaker Meeting** who were already accredited.

This year **Mid Thames Area Quaker Meeting** achieved accreditation and we have been told that the following Area Meetings are preparing to seek accreditation:

South East Scotland
Leicester
Pendle Hill
Devon

We hope other Friends will discern that this is a way forward for their Area Meeting.

2. The Quakers and Business Group
Goldclipper one of the businesses that is part of the Quakers and Business Group is in the process of applying for accreditation. This business will join **Kevin Mayhew Ltd** which is already accredited.
3. Our partnership with the Living Wage Foundation has enabled us to discuss with them issues that have been raised by Friends in relation to accreditation. One, the question 'can Friends offset the provision of free accommodation to Wardens against payment of the Living Wage?' has been raised by a number of meetings. Recently we have been told by the Foundation that we can, if we wish, offset an amount for provision of free accommodation to our Wardens using the government's formula for offsetting free accommodation against the *national living wage*. The rate for 2016/2017 is £42.00 a week. This rate is reset on 01 October each year.
4. The Co-operative Group Campaign.
We started this letter writing campaign in Quaker Equality Week 2015 and Friends from across the North West joined in June to encourage the Co-operative Group to pay the Living Wage and to reduce the differential between their lowest paid staff and the senior team. In February 2016 we campaigned with the Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign Group writing yet more letters to further encourage the Co-operative Group.
We were pleased to hear in March 2016 that the Group CEO asked to take a pay cut. From 2017 his basic pay is reduced from £1.25m to £750,000 and his bonus is now set at 40% of his basic pay rather than 100%. Combined with a reduction

in pension contributions the total remuneration package is reduced by 60%. This means that the pay ratio within the Co-operative Group will be 1:47 in 2017. Friends House is 1:4

The Living Wage Foundation told us in May 2016 that the Co-operative Group has committed to talks with them and that the new Head of Rewards had already met with them.



5. The University Campaign

In March 2016 Friends wrote to nine universities (Lancaster, UCLAN, Cumbria, Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan, Goldsmiths, Greenwich, Derby (Buxton Campus) Bangor) asking them to pay the Living Wage to their support staff. Four replied. We have held back from continuing our conversations until union action is completed.

The good news is that Manchester University pays the Living Wage and requires its sub-contractors to pay it. So it will be possible to speak with them about accreditation.

Our information is that Lancaster University is imposing the pay rise they have offered. This will bring all low paid staff onto the current Living Wage rate. However there is no guarantee that payment of the Living Wage will be maintained. We know that Lancaster University will not seek accreditation as they want to retain control of their pay structure. Once the union action currently planned is concluded we will write again to Lancaster asking that their payment of the Living Wage is maintained in coming years.

WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

Full time workers on the real Living Wage earn £2,000 more a year than those on the government minimum, and £4,000 more a year in London. Everyone in the business gets the Living Wage not just those over 25 as is the case for those on the government minimum. Only the real Living Wage is based on what people need to live on. The rates for 2016/2017 are:

Outside London £8.45 an hour and the London Rate £9.75 an hour

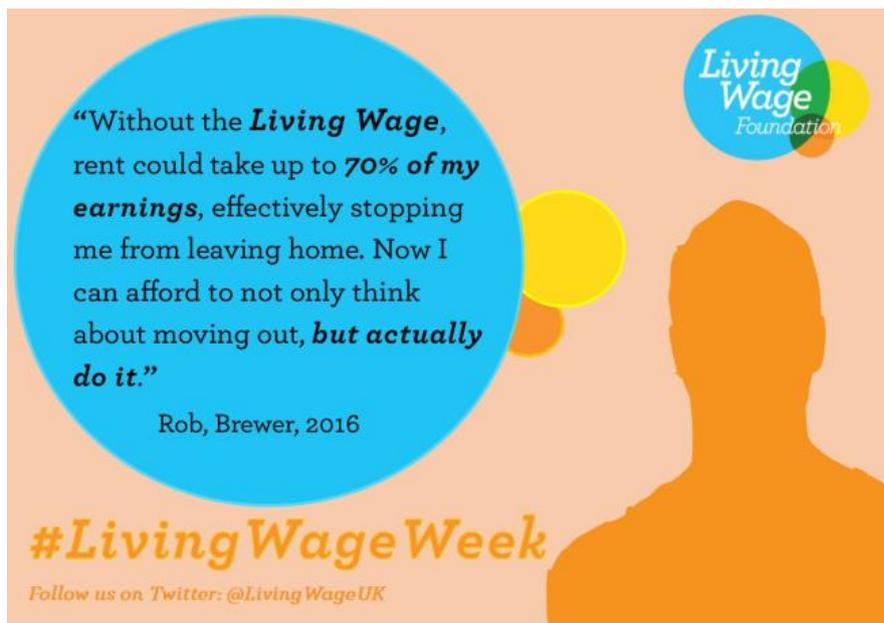
A graphic for Living Wage Week. It features a large blue speech bubble on the left containing a quote: "I eat better, I sleep better and I'm much less stressed. I get proper holiday time off and I'm able to save a bit for a rainy day." Below the quote is the name "Linda, Carer, 2016". To the right is an orange silhouette of a person's head and shoulders. In the top right corner is the Living Wage Foundation logo. At the bottom left, it says "#LivingWageWeek" and "Follow us on Twitter: @LivingWageUK".

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Linda, Carer, 2016

#LivingWageWeek

Follow us on Twitter: @LivingWageUK



QUAKER MEETINGS AND GROUPS TAKING ACTION

Wrexham LM is part of a collection of local community groups known as Together Creating Communities (TCC): <http://www.tcc-wales.org.uk/>

‘We have worked with this group on a local living wage campaign and we made a video of the actions that we took: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xODIUHe62zw> Wrexham LM also approached the agency that provides our cleaner and talked with them about the Living Wage. We had only limited success, but our cleaner now receives a Living Wage for the hours that s/he spends cleaning the meeting house.’

South East Scotland AM: Took the campaign to business meeting at end of November 2015. They planned action for 2016 (e.g. vigils, lobbying local businesses, held a meeting with the local MP, and plan to hold public meeting). They are approaching large employers through the AM. They held a vigil in Edinburgh for August during the Festival. They are looking to get the AM accredited. To support this they will move the contract for cleaning at Edinburgh Meeting House to a company that pays the Living Wage.

Musselborough and Portobello LM: They have been working with the Area meeting on the campaign. The local group carried out action in the city centre in March. They have been in touch with local employers. In Living Wage Week this year they are holding a vigil focussing on the Living Wage

Manchester and Warrington Social Justice Group: They were involved in the Area Meeting Accreditation. Members wrote to the Co-op HQ as part of the national campaign. They have engaged with two of the Universities in Manchester (Salford University already being accredited) and received replies from both.

Keswick LM: are working with Fair Cumbria and the local Equality Trust. This includes running a Living Wage campaign. Fair Cumbria presented a petition on the

Living Wage to Cumbria County Council in 2014 and in 2015 organised a debate about inequality before the election. *'We have now completed a Living Wage Survey in Keswick and will have stickers available for LW employers in the town to display. We are wondering whether we might encourage businesses to register with the Fair Tax mark.'*



South East London AM: Replied to the university action alert in Earth and Economy. Friends wrote to Goldsmith and Greenwich universities about the payment of the Living Wage to support staff.

Lancaster LM: We asked the Area Meeting to apply for accreditation. We held 3 letter writing workshops in 2015 as part of the Co-op Group campaign, 40 plus letters were sent. We have witnessed in the city centre in the lead up to the 2015 General Election. In Living Wage Week 2015 we hand delivered letters to 50 local employers explaining why the Living Wage should be paid. We hope that one of the 50 will become accredited in the near future joining the 10 businesses already accredited. We have made contact with the Chamber of Commerce and Lancaster City Council. The council pays the Living Wage to their employees but are not yet accredited. We have written to 3 universities and had replies from 2. We have had a number of articles in the local press about our activity and shown the film 'The Divide'. In Living Wage week this year we will celebrate local accredited companies in the Lancaster Guardian and have a display in the Meeting House so that all our users can see why real Living Wage is crucial to help end poverty.

Mid Thames Area Meeting: Friends in the Mid Thames Area Meeting are involved in the Reading Living Wage Campaign. The Area Meeting was accredited this summer, as were a few other local organisations. The group has held stalls at local events and will be having one in the centre of Reading on November 5th. Their aim is to publicise the Living Wage where they can, eg through the local press and Churches Together. *'We hope to celebrate one of the new Living Wage employers at the stall and send out a press release to local papers.'*

Disley LM *'We have engaged with our MP recommending 'The Spirit Level' to him and he has said he will ask the House of Commons Library to get it for him. We also wrote to him about the Living Wage calculated by the Living Wage Foundation he did not reply. We also asked him to sign the pledge that pay ratios should be made public. Members wrote to the Co-op Group CEO but did not get a direct reply. We wrote to Manchester University, Manchester Metropolitan University and Derby University (Buxton campus). We also wrote to Cheshire East County Council who pay the Living Wage but are not willing to ensure contractors do so cannot be persuaded to become accredited. In 2017 we plan to show the film 'The Divide'.*

Ruthin LM – responded to the alert in Earth and Economy about the university campaign

Sale LM – responded to the alert in Earth and Economy about the university campaign

Cambridge Jesus Lane LM – have used the posters in the building where rooms are let to other organisations.

Warwick LM – have displayed the posters and Friends have read the pack.



Bournemouth Coastal AM: has an active Living Wage Policy

Bournemouth and Fordingbridge LM: minute supporting the campaign in principle.

Bournemouth LM: has written to the local press.

Poole LM: hopes to work with Churches together on a local campaign

Liverpool & Southport LM – took part in the Co-op campaign

Stockport LM - took part in the Co-op campaign

Chorley LM - took part in the Co-op campaign

Holyhead - North Wales AM – took part in the Co-op campaign

Six Week Meeting – ‘Six Weeks Meeting agreed last year to provide extra funds to enable our Area Meetings to pay at least the London Living Wage (currently £9.40 an hour) to direct employees.

They are in the process of surveying the terms and conditions of everyone who works on a regular basis for Local Meetings across London. The great majority of these are categorised as self-employed (part-time cleaners, gardeners, caretakers etc), and here we are finding that we generally exceed the minimum requirements of the Foundation, paying them an hourly rate which usually allows for annual and statutory leave elements (pro rata 28 days per annum);

Early last year **London West Area Meeting** renegotiated the terms of the contract with the company which cleans Westminster Meeting House to ensure that the people actually doing the work received the Living Wage.

LWAM also decided last year to make the caretaker role at Uxbridge MH employed, rather than continuing with this being self-employed, enabling Six week Meeting to ensure he received the Living Wage. We are looking at whether other roles across London should be treated similarly.’

Six Week Meeting is also looking at the issue of fair treatment of tradesmen who work for them on an occasional basis - electricians, painters, plumbers. In time they might consider only contracting those companies which are accredited but at the moment the pool is somewhat small.

If your meeting is taking action on the Living Wage or you are talking to your Area Meeting about becoming accredited as a Living Wage employer do let us know by emailing us at: livingwage@lancsquakers.org.uk

TOGETHER LET US BUILD A QUAKER LIVING WAGE COMMUNITY