

QUAKER LIVING WAGE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

Living out our faith in the world



NEWSLETTER ISSUE No2

Living Wage Week 05 - 11 November 2017

5.5 million people in the UK working population are currently not earning enough to live on. In a society that expects everyone of working age to work is that right? We hear that working families make up a large percentage of people using food banks. The 5.5 million have to rely on welfare to top up wages to get by and risk being stigmatised in the media. The government's *national living wage set at £7.50 for those over 25 and minimum wage of £7.05 for those under 25* are not based on the cost of living and do not allow for the additional cost of living in London.



An initiative of
Lancaster
Quaker Meeting

The real Living Wage is based on the cost of living, is paid to all over 18, provides an uplifted rate for those working in London and is recalculated each year. The new real Living Wage rates announced on 06 November 2017 are:

Outside London for all over 18: £8.75 an hour
In London for all over 18: £10.20 an hour

1,500 employees will get this pay rise, paid now by more than 3,600 employers across the UK.

Earning the real Living Wage makes a huge difference to working families. Until recently Florentina worked 72 hours a week earning *the national living wage* for a fast food outlet in London. Now that she works for a cleaning company paying the **London real Living Wage** she only needs to work 40 hours a week. Her quality of life has improved beyond measure.

What does God require of us?

As part of the Quaker Campaign for a New Economy in which Quaker Testimonies can flourish we want to work with the Living Wage Foundation to convince as many employers as possible that they should pay the real Living Wage. **We need to get our own house in order first. '...for only when we are also working on ourselves can we witness and speak beyond Friends'. Extract from Minute 38 of YMG 2017.**

In the 28 months since we launched the Quaker Living Wage National Campaign, the aim of which is to get as many parts of our Quaker Community as possible accredited as Living Wage Employers or supporters, we have made slow but steady progress.



When we started we knew that just five parts of our Quaker community were accredited Living Wage employers, they were:



Britain Yearly Meeting (Friends House and Swarthmoor Hall)



Quaker Social Action in London

**Quaker Service in Northern Ireland
York Area Quaker Meeting**

**Manchester and Warrington Area
Quaker Meeting**

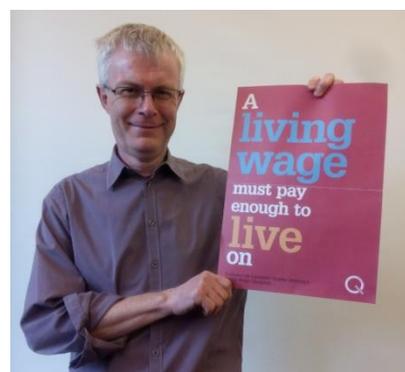


The list has grown to 13. It now includes:



**Lancashire Central and North Area
Quaker Meeting**

Mid Thames Area Quaker Meeting



**Pendle Hill Area Quaker Meeting
S E Scotland Quakers
Notts and Derby Area Quaker Meeting**



35 Area Quaker Meetings have engaged with us and through this we know of others who have taken the decision to apply to become accredited with the Living Wage Foundation and are in the process of gaining their licence.

Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017

The Swarthmore Lecture

The 2017 Swarthmore lecture 'Faith in Politics? A testimony to equality' given by Catherin West MP for Hornsey and Wood Green featured the work of our Quaker Living Wage Campaign Group.

Special Interest Meeting

It was lovely to meet up with Friends whose AQMs are already accredited and those seeking information to take back for discernment. We heard of the concern of one Friend that the real Living Wage rates are not sufficient for those who are self-employed. We hope that Friends when engaging self-employed workers will take this into consideration.

Session 5

'Feet – How do we work with others'. This session was opened by a prepared ministry about how our Quaker Living Wage Campaign is working with others beyond our Quaker Community. In this we explained how working with the Living Wage Foundation has led us to examine more closely Quaker employment practices in relation to Wardens. We asked if it is right to have warden's given free accommodation but no pay? Could meetings consider free accommodation as payment for the 24 hour caretaking role resident wardens carry out and pay the real Living Wage for other duties.

Why does accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation matter?

The Living Wage Foundation plaque in our Meeting Houses and the logo we can use on our literature enables us to witness to all we come into contact with that we believe in treating our employees fairly, that we pay them a fair wage that can be lived on and are committed to continuing to do so. We thus show that we are living out our faith and being '*patterns and examples*' to other employers.

In addition the annual licence fee of £50, for most Area Meetings, provides some of the income to keep the Living Wage Foundation working with employers across the UK to lift more employees out of wage poverty. The income from the annual fees is their main income.

What if your Area Meeting has no employees but would like to witness to show support for payment of a real Living Wage?

Area Meetings, which do not have employees, can still consider becoming accredited members of the Living Wage Foundation. The cost is £50 a year. This

also means that Area Meetings that use Friends in Residence or volunteer wardens, who are not classed as employees, could consider this route to join in our witness. For further information on this please contact the Living Wage Foundation.

Tel: 020 7043 9882 website: <https://www.livingwage.org.uk>



Who else in our Quaker community do we want to join in?

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

Local Campaigning

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 real Living Wage. To support this we have developed a body of material available to download from our website www.lancsquakers.org.uk/livingwagecampaign.php

We know that **South East Scotland AQM** has held a Meeting for Learning about the real Living Wage and is in contact with large local employers. **Lancaster Local Meeting** is engaging with Lancaster University. **North Wales Quaker AQM's Social Justice Group** is considering promoting the real Living Wage in North Wales. **Notts and Derby AQM** is joining our campaign to promote the Living Wage to AQMs.

Lancaster Local Meeting was pleased to learn that the Co-operative Society who they engaged with by writing letters in 2016 has during 2017 started to engage with the Living Wage Foundation.

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 or supporter do let us know by emailing us at: livingwage@lancsquakers.org.uk

TOGETHER LET US BUILD A QUAKER LIVING WAGE COMMUNITY