

# QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

## WINTER 2019 EDITORIAL

This issue of our Newsletter looks at Prisons Week. This is an annual event that marks the work carried out in our custodial establishments and looks at all aspects of the work in prison. The theme for this year was What Does Freedom Mean to You? & Are You Free?

Our Friends at Wells Quaker Meeting House (Norfolk) held their ecumenical act of worship on 13th October, and with the organiser’s permission I am using some of their material to highlight this work here.

Cheekily I have also placed a book advertisement in this edition. Crime and Consequence looks at what should happen to people who commit criminal offences. It is a work that I have been involved in, and also contains writings by others with lived-experience of prison.

As I am sure that we are all aware, prison work does not get a good press, and so we can help put that right in our own little way. The media shows us time and again that there is so much wrong with the prison estate, but can you remember when they told you about some good work that goes on behind those high walls and razor topped fences? I cannot. But, as someone with lived experience (as the professionals like to call it) of our prison system, I know that there is much to celebrate.

We also have important notices concerning our organisation. Take time to read what Rodney has written about the constitution, and of course, the leaflet on our annual subscriptions.

**Mark Humphries**  
**Editor**



Jonathan & Mark (co-editors)

## ARTICLES

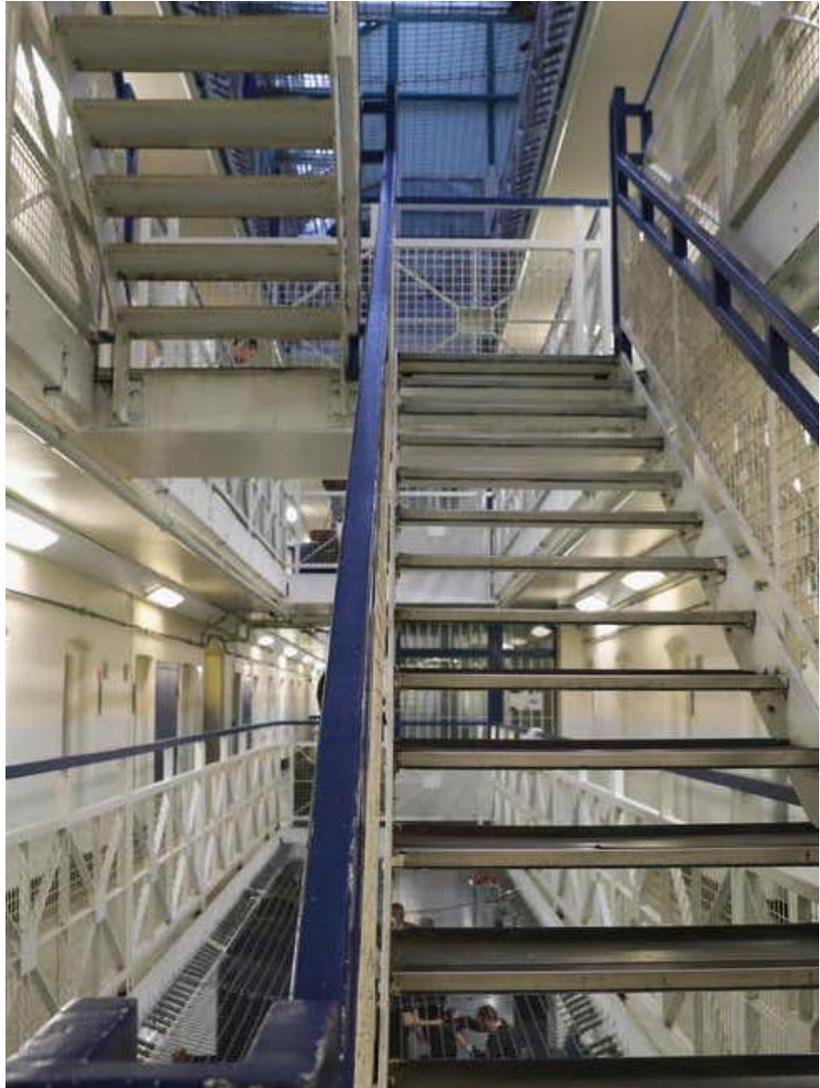
- 1 - Editorial
- 2 - About “Prison Week”
- 3 - A “Prison Week” Reading
- 4 - Children - Heard & Seen
- 6 - Heard & Seen - A Service User’s View
- 6 - What Am I Doing In Prison?
- 11 - Hope
- 11 - Silence
- 12 - NI Restorative Practices Conference
- 14 - Crime & Consequence
- 15 - Prayer For Prison Week
- 15 - Extract From “Prison - A Survival Guide”
- 16 - QICJ - Constitution
- 16 - Membership Update
- 17 - State of Our Prisons
- 21 - Conference Application Form
- 22 - Article on Upcoming Conference
- 23 - Membership Renewal Form
- 24 - Contact Details

---

# ABOUT PRISONS WEEK

---

For four decades Prisons Week has prepared literature to use as guides in praying for our prisons, and it has led to many churches from all denominations working together and creating acts of worship to bring about a local theme to this event. We are encouraged and led to pray for the needs of all those affected by prisons: prisoners and their loved ones, victims of crime and their communities, those that work within the prison and in criminal justice. We are also praying for those that are involved in the care of those affected by crime on the inside and outside of prisons.



Prisons Week was the initiative of Bishop Victor Guazzelli, a Roman Catholic. The idea quickly gained ecumenical support and the patronage of the Archbishops of Canterbury, Westminster, Wales as well as the Moderator of the Free Churches Group.

Prisons Week motivates volunteers to make a step forward and to give their time and gifts in prisons and in their own communities. It provides that annual focus, that I believe we need, in working together and making a difference.

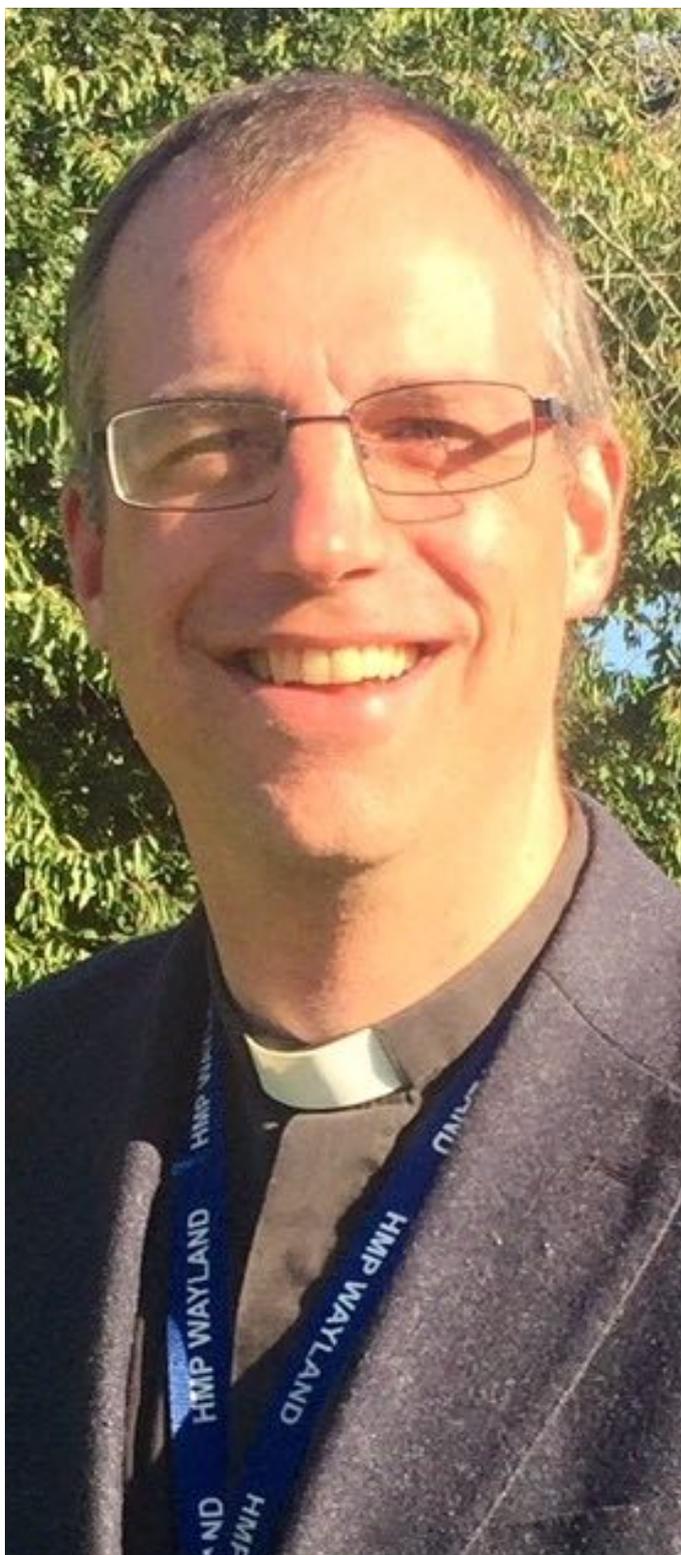
Prison population in October 2019 = 83, 533  
Children with a parent in prison = 95,228

**Mark Humphries**

---

# A PRISON WEEK READING

---



The Prisons Week theme this year comes from Psalm 111:9 – ‘he sets his people free. He made his agreement everlasting. He is holy and wonderful.’

God’s will and intention for all his people is freedom – the freedom to be the people he created them to be. Prison Chaplains work with people who often find it hard to believe that God has any interest in them or their lives. They struggle with the concept that they are made in the image of God and do not dare to hope that they might have a future in God which does not involve crime, arrest and imprisonment. In the same way those whose lives have been marred by crime and its effects, often struggle to see a new future in which the promise of freedom in Christ might be fulfilled.

This Prisons Week we give thanks that the freedom which God offers is available to all, even to those whose liberty has been temporarily or permanently taken away by society. As we pray together for all those who come into contact with the criminal justice system in any way, we share in that work of establishing God’s covenant of redemption – that each person, precious to God might discover what freedom can truly mean for them.

**The Venerable James Ridge  
(Chaplain General).**

---

# CHILDREN - HEARD AND SEEN

---

The number of children who have a parent in prison is not officially recorded. Crest's Children of Prisoner's Report (2019) estimated that there 312 000 incidents a year of losing a parent to custody. They will not be offered any specific governmental support. Children impacted by parental imprisonment are a vulnerable group through no wrongdoing of their own; by the age of 48 boys with a parent in prison are three times more likely to have a history of drug abuse, unemployment, heavy alcohol abuse, anxiety or depression and broken relationships (cited in Social Care Institute for Excellence 2008). 65% of boys with a parent in prison go on to commit an offence themselves (MOJ 2008). If the behavioural and emotional toll inflicted on the children of prisoners is not enough, it is estimated that for every £1 invested in supporting prisoners' families could save the taxpayer £11 (PACT 2012).



So why are the government and local authorities not doing anything to combat this? These were the thoughts of Sarah Burrows when she established the charity Children Heard and Seen in 2014. Burrows has worked for over thirty years with children and families, including in children's homes in Banbury, as a social worker and for the Prevention of Offending Service for the Banbury Council where she lived for twenty-four years. She set the charity up in her spare time whilst working for the Oxfordshire County Council in the Pre-court and Prevention Team because she noticed the amount of children entering the criminal justice system who had a parent or parents in prison.

Children Heard and Seen has come a long way since a part-time operation from her kitchen table in 2014, with four permanent employees and thirty-five volunteers currently active, with over one hundred and sixty-one children currently supported, including twenty-six in Banbury. The charity receives referrals from all over the country, with families supported from places as far out of Oxfordshire as Essex, Kent, and Birmingham. Sarah Burrows has submitted evidence to the Joint Subcommittee on Human Rights on the impact of parents in prison and how the needs of the children need to be considered in sentencing, beginning with a database to record prisoners who have children. The charity won the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in June, the highest award a charitable organisation can receive.



The charity is hoping to expand further throughout Oxfordshire and beyond, for example running weekly group sessions in areas other than central Oxford (as some families have come to these from as far out as Islington in London) but in order for this to be possible, further funding is needed. Because there is no government support for this, the voluntary sector must pick up the slack and so it remains a postcode lottery for those impacted by parental imprisonment unless the charity has the means to keep expanding.

**Children Heard and Seen**  
**<https://childrenheardandseen.co.uk/>**  
**1 Aristotle Lane, Oxford, OX2 6TP**

support for children with a parent in prison

---

## HEARD & SEEN - SERVICE USER

---

I was the very first service user of Children Heard and Seen.

When they found me, I was at my wits' end. For 12 and a half years, I felt I had no one and nothing until Children Heard and Seen changed our lives completely.

Along came Ben, a mentor for Children Heard and Seen; he was a lovely guy, he changed Tom\* from a troubled, challenging boy into a kind, caring one, who is now in college and starting his apprenticeship. I truly believe that this would not have been Tom's path, had the charity not intervened. The idea is Tom could talk to Ben without the fear of anything difficult being brought up and he could express himself freely.

Children Heard and Seen gave Tom a purpose; Ben saw him every week, and this gave Tom stability and structure, from years of stigma and feeling that he'd have to keep a big part of his life secret. Finally, there was a service where Tom could be himself.

Not only do the charity provide mentors, they run group activities in the community, having parties for children who are all in the same situation, even if it is not discussed that they have a parent in prison, it's known to them, and there is a sense of acceptance. Tom attended their regular activity group, being with teenagers in similar situations was important, Tom felt isolated and this gave him a platform to know there were others like him.

**Anonymous**

**\*Name has been changed**

---

## WHAT AM I DOING IN PRISON?

---

Crime has many innocent victims. So unfortunately does prison. The families of those incarcerated are hugely affected and particularly the children. Recently in H.M.P. Whitemoor we were part of a Family Day, organised by the Chaplaincy. It was a very moving occasion; wives, partners, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, girlfriends, cousins, aunts, uncles, all were proudly introduced; as if to show that here was the proof of their value, the reality that people who are in prison are still loved by those they've left behind.



We saw youngsters clinging on to their fathers' necks, loving the "normality" of this prolonged time, when they could eat together, be a family again for a short respite. We talked with all shades of society that day: from a very middle class lady who dreaded answering the question: "What's your son doing these days?" to the obviously impoverished young teenager, who had travelled for hours on public transport to make it to this remotely located prison, for this rare opportunity of an extended less formal visit.

We recently asked a long term prisoner how he would describe prison. Straightaway the word "RAW" was offered. In prison there is exposure to brutality, from prisoner to prisoner, from this group to that group, and sadly but happily not often, from officers who exercise their position of power unwisely. The system is brutal. So living in a state of high alert becomes the norm. It is like Maya Angelou speaking about racism, who describes it as "the rust on the razor that threatens the throat".

From our experience of working on a voluntary basis in prison, that seems to fit. There is an imposed order, but gurgling beneath that order is turbulence. Another word he used was "HOPE". You hope your visit request will be approved; you hope to get to use the telephone; you hope for mail; you hope so and so will be, or not be, on duty; you hope to make parole; you hope there is no lockdown. Lockdown happens for many reasons: often insufficient staff, or a security breach, but whatever the reason, twenty three hours in a cell is not helpful. So it is hopes met and hopes dashed.

Also, surprisingly, he used the word "TRANSFORMATIVE". He is a long term prisoner. He has seen lives made better and lives brutalised. I too have seen evidence of the transformative change for good. Let us mention a few. . . . .

One man who is doing a course to help him face up to the ripple effects of his crime, declared strongly: “I will NEVER forgive her, I could NEVER forgive her.” And yet some weeks later, there he was in chapel, looking very relaxed. “Surprised but pleased to see you here. How’s the forgiveness battle progressing?” “It’s sorted, Edna. What a freedom! I feel so much better.” And he looks it!

**AND THERE IS THE INMATE FROM THE PARAMILITARY BACKGROUND, STILL STRUGGLING WITH WHAT HE KNOWS, YET KNOWING CHRIST’S CLAIM ON HIS LIFE. HE RECENTLY TOOK A HUGE STEP IN TRUSTING CHRIST AND DEFYING HIS PAST.**

Another man who so obviously had the anointing of God on him, knew he was free because of his faith, even though he remained locked up.

Then there is our friend from a very violent traveller background, who knew no other way to respond, but who with great courage is facing his childhood traumas and gradually learning a better way.

And there is the inmate from the paramilitary background, still struggling with what he knows, yet knowing Christ’s claim on his life. He recently took a huge step in trusting Christ and defying his past.

We are repeatedly impressed with prisoners we meet. We do not ask, nor seek to know their offences. Sometimes they want to tell us and then we listen. We serve a God of second [and more] chances, who longs for each of us to humble ourselves before Him, and accept we need His help. He promises to turn away none who come to Him.

Worshipping in Whitemoor chapel is a privilege. It’s a privilege to see the men give to the food bank [like the widow with her mite]; it’s a privilege to be a part of the camaraderie; it’s a privilege to hear the joy in their praise. And yet they thank us for “bothering” with them. Unlike many of us, they know their guilt and when God’s love touches them they are amazed. . . . “Why would He bother with me?” We echo that. We are truly thankful He bothers with us.

Our first visits to local prisons was through a charity called “Sing Inside”. It is a group of university students who go into prisons and form a choir with the residents. In the morning we practice some songs together, then perform them in the afternoon to an audience of other residents and staff. At Christmas this takes the form of a carol

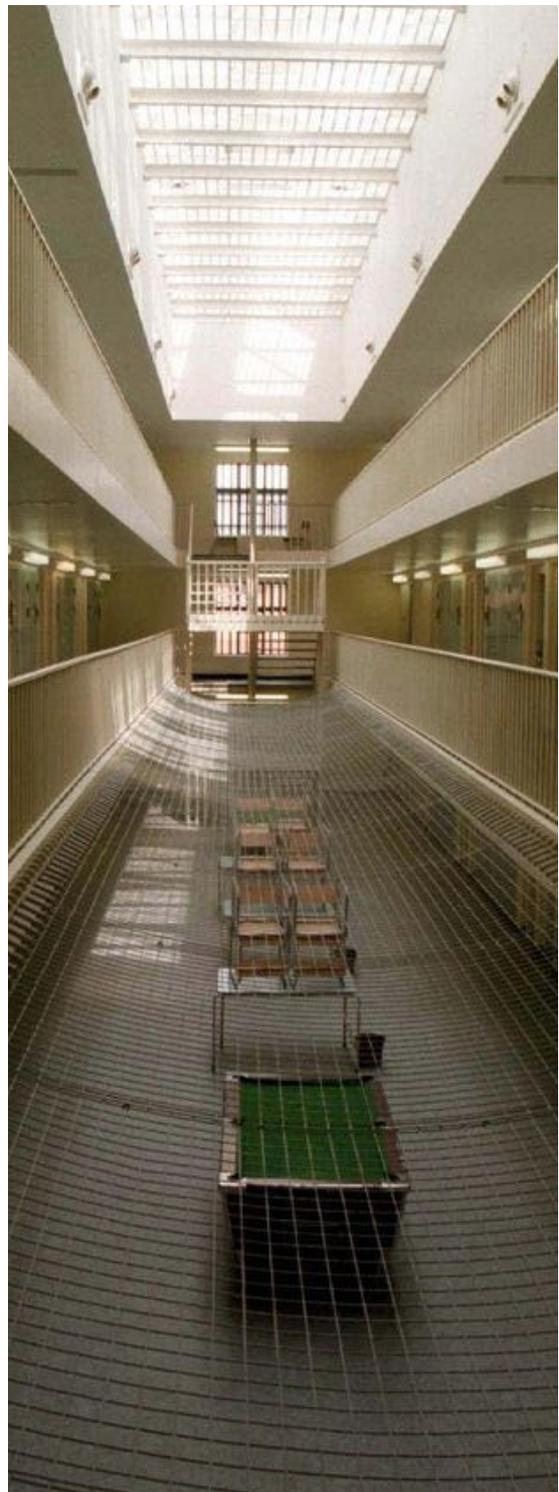
service. There are usually around ten from the outside and we are joined by up to thirty in the prison. We have also been to the prison holding women in Peterborough.

The question the residents always ask is: “Why do they come to us?” They are aware that some of these singers are world class. They are overwhelmed that such people, at the top of society, would bother about them, who feel themselves to be at the bottom. Our response is that we have the same feeling about why God, in the form of Jesus, would come to this world for us!

This singing day is a transformative experience for all involved. The students themselves view the prisoners differently, having worked together with them. They understand that on a human level we are all basically the same. Many of the prisoners will never have sung in a choir before, and it takes a great deal of courage to sing in front of other prisoners. We remember one man in Bedford prison who asked if we could sing a song for a baby his wife had just miscarried. It really expressed his pain.

We also notice how enthusiastic the audience is. During the carol service, every offering is clapped: readings, carols, testimonies, prayers, talks, all get appreciation. It is indeed a privilege to sing with such talented people, and that includes the residents.

Individually we have also worked briefly with a few men in prison to help improve their reading skills. Over 60% of those in prison will have reading and writing problems. If they are to (1) benefit from any courses available inside and (2) get gainful employment after incarceration, then they need these basic skills. The men are asked to choose any book and we will read it together using a supportive approach called ‘Shared Reading’. It was amazing that one individual brought a book called “From Gangland to Promised Land”.



It was about a man who had found Christ and been radically changed from a gangster to a minister! What was even more surprising was that the prisoner concerned was a Muslim and there are dangers involved in changing religious allegiances. He was aware what the book was about and yet was adamant this was what he wanted to read each week.

We have written before about a week long course called KAIROS run by local Christians in October each year. We would like to tell you about one young man who was part of a group of six men. There are about 30 men in five groups of six and we work together in teams. He was a gaunt youngster who behaved rather oddly by sometimes getting up and going “walk about” at odd moments, staring into space as though not engaging with anything that was happening.

The turning point occurred when a Hindu priest came into the session and asked him if he would like to come out and perform his prayers. To our great surprise he chose to stay. We knew then that God was obviously working in this man’s life - whatever the outward manifestations. In discussions with the Prison Chaplain it transpired that this man had been a child soldier and has witnessed traumatic events.

Since the end of the course he has regularly attended Chapel. It is difficult to have conversations about how his relationship with Jesus is going, but his entire demeanour has altered beyond recognition. He is no longer thin but healthy in appearance; his wandering has ended and his face is a picture of peace and contentment. He seems to be constantly smiling. He is very quiet and doesn’t interact a great deal, but a transformation has obviously taken place. Our prayer is that he will continue to walk with Jesus when he is released in the next year or two. Life post-prison offers many stumbling blocks.

Prisons are places of pain, they are a response to harm but also cause harm. Being willing to sit in love with people is both valued and valuable. Jesus said that: “Where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there with them.” And He is.

**THE TURNING POINT  
OCCURRED WHEN A  
HINDU PRIEST  
CAME INTO THE  
SESSION AND  
ASKED HIM IF HE  
WOULD LIKE TO  
COME OUT AND  
PERFORM HIS  
PRAYERS. TO OUR  
GREAT SURPRISE  
HE CHOSE TO STAY.  
WE KNEW THEN  
THAT GOD WAS  
O B V I O U S L Y  
WORKING IN THIS  
MAN’S LIFE**

**George & Edna Armstrong**

---

# HOPE

---

the cell doors are beige  
the blankets are green  
always be heard  
but never seen  
locked up, bailed  
recalled, breach  
so much experience  
with nothing to teach  
calendars come  
and calendars go  
pouring with sweat  
as you walk through snow  
total depression  
face showing glee  
hoping one day  
to fulfil your destiny



---

# SILENCE

---

Handed a life sentence for GBH at 29, he felt all hope was lost. But as he tried to prove he was no longer a danger to society he wrote for a prison magazine and discovered a passion that proved a game-changer. He hadn't even picked up a book until a prison officer taught him to read and write. Writing helped him "climb out of the worst situation of my life". Lord Bird credits learning to tread as the catalyst for the changes Steve made, allowing him to make a difference.

He bounced from prison to prison taking the courses on offer trying to work towards his eventual parole, with his release far from a forgone conclusion.

The plan is that the Partnership will work within their statutory responsibilities, but must ensure that a join-up between servicers to support the prisoners is effective for all concerned.

**Extract from Big Issue (Steve Newark)**

---

## NI RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONFERENCE

---

The Restorative Practices Forum for Northern Ireland celebrated 25 years of promoting restorative justice and practices at a conference, Building a Vision for the Future of Restorative Practices, which took place on 14 and 15 November in Belfast. The Forum began life as the Restorative Justice Working Group in 1994 and was formed following an influential Restorative Justice Conference organised by Quaker Service (formerly the Ulster Quaker Service Committee) that same year. This small group of people started to meet with the aim of pressing for change in how justice is carried out in this country.

The Restorative Practices Forum (NI) has brought a wide range of people and organisations together over the past 25 years to promote restorative justice and practice, to offer opportunities to share best practices and to support research. It can claim that it has contributed to the rapid expansion of restorative practices over the past 20 years and to Northern Ireland's international reputation for high quality and innovative restorative approaches in a variety of sectors. The Forum has extended its focus beyond criminal justice to support the development of restorative practices in schools and family and children's services. Today, the Forum has representation from more than 25 organisations within the community, voluntary, statutory and educational sectors and has traditionally been chaired by the Director of Quaker Service.



The youth justice system in Northern Ireland has attracted international attention as an exemplar of how to integrate restorative justice at the core of criminal justice, address the needs of victims and reduce reoffending. The community based restorative justice sector is unique in the world in providing a local service by local people for local people. It is making a real contribution to creating safer and more peaceful communities. The NI Probation Board has recently won an international award for its enhanced combination order which incorporates restorative practices into an alternative to prison. The Prison Service is also supporting victims to confront the people who have caused them serious harm and using restorative practices to develop a more respectful, safer and rehabilitative culture within its prisons.

So, this conference was an opportunity to take stock and celebrate these considerable achievements over the past 25 years. As an indication of how far restorative justice has progressed, the opening session included presentations from Sir Declan Morgan, Lord Chief Justice, Simon Byrne, Chief Constable, Cheryl Lamont, Chief Executive of the Probation Board, Brendan McGuigan, Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice, and Paul Doran, Director of Rehabilitation in the Department of Justice.



The conference not only recognised how far we have come in a relatively short time, but it also engaged conference participants in examining what more needs to be done and in Building a Vision for the Future of Restorative Practices, the title of the event. To this end the conference also featured keynote speeches from two of the leading and most influential restorative justice thinkers and researchers in the world, John Braithwaite from Australia and Jennifer Llewellyn from Canada.

There was an opportunity for conference participants to discuss a wide range of applications of restorative practices in small groups. These workshop sessions not only took a fresh look at current practice, but also pushed the boundaries of restorative justice in relation to critical public issues. The conference addressed giving a greater voice for victims of crime, gender violence, inter-communal conflict, hate crime, restorative schools, restorative approaches to parenting and family group conferences, problem-solving courts, and building a restorative society.

More information can be found here [www.rpfconference.com](http://www.rpfconference.com).

**Janette McKnight/Jonathan Morton**  
**Quaker Service Northern Ireland**

---

# CRIME & CONSEQUENCE

---

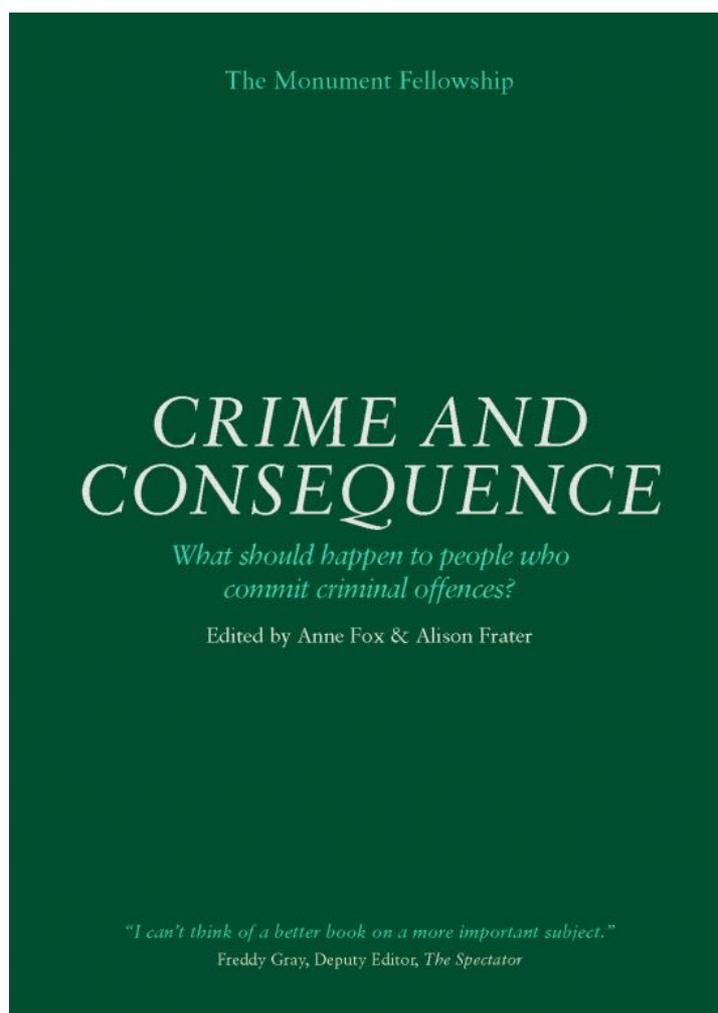
The following email arrived in my inbox this morning as I was preparing this Newsletter, and I thought that I must share it with you. Two reasons for sharing: Firstly – the book is a great collection of essays and reflections on What should happen to people who commit criminal offences. Secondly, on pages 45-50 you will find an essay by me.

We are delighted to announce the launch of Crime & Consequence - what should happen to people who commit criminal offences? This is the third in a series of books curated by the Monument Fellowship.

In Crime & Consequence, over 65 diverse voices offer their lived and professional experience of the justice system to answer one of the most important questions in our society. Many have seen first-hand the intended and unintended effects of our criminal justice system. The wide range of insights from academics, teachers, business leaders, artists, criminal justice professionals, charity leaders and prisoners themselves explore how our society can respond to crime to tackle the causes and consequences. Their answers are practical, philosophical, emotional and revealing.

The book is for sale via the Koestler Arts website, [www.koestlerarts.org.uk](http://www.koestlerarts.org.uk), priced at £10.

The book is also available as a free digital PDF download from the Clinks website, <https://www.clinks.org/publication/crime-and-consequence>



**Mark Humphries**

---

## PRAYER FOR PRISON WEEK

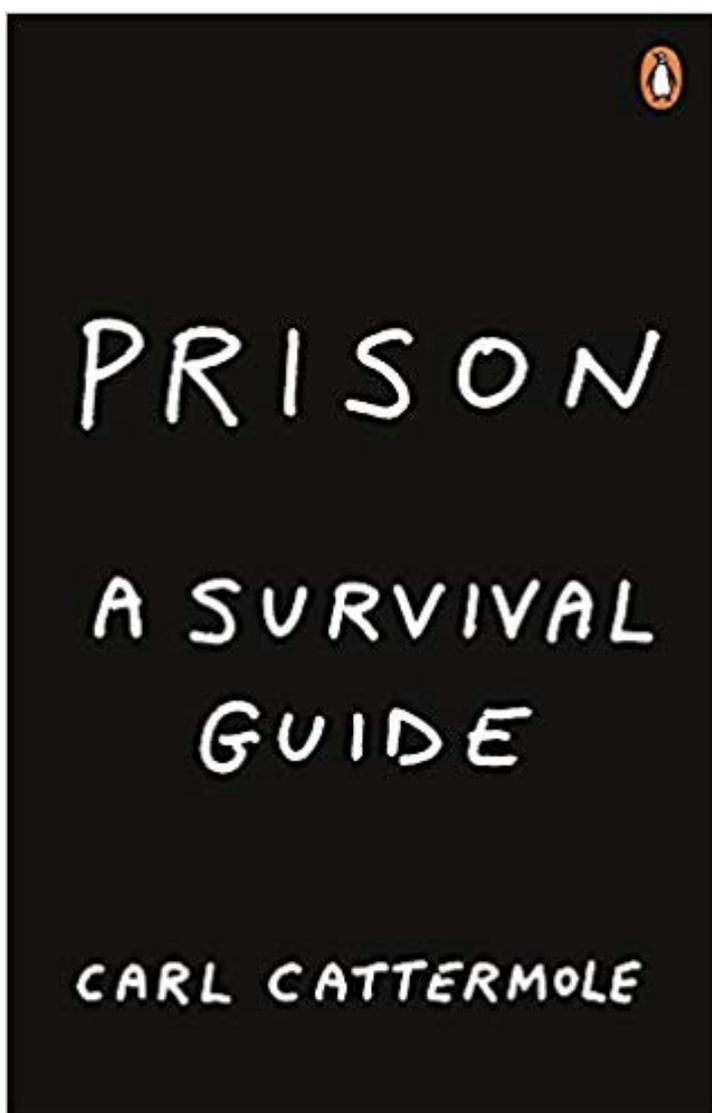
---

Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those that are in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exists. Support with your love prisoners, their families and friends, prison staff and all those involved in the care of all within our prisons. Heal those that have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us all to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together. Amen.

---

## PRISON - A SURVIVAL GUIDE - EXTRACT

---



Prison Wives: We call ourselves Prison Wives even if we are not married by law. We play a supporting role and get no glory and no understanding: we are like the football player who provides the crucial pass for the striker to score a goal – we feel left behind when the camera only zooms in on him. For the thousands of partners whose life is also dominated by the prison system, there is virtually no support in either practical or financial terms. I can feel prison stigma from the community and that's only the tip of the iceberg.

My mental health has been tested to the max. One in six prisoners receive no visits whatsoever and same-sex partnerships can't even show the limited amount of affection due to homophobia.

**From 'Prison – A Survival Guide  
(Carl Cattermole)**

---

## QICJ & ITS CONSTITUTION

---

QICJ was founded in 1983, but we're not sure if it has ever had a formal constitution, in the sense of a set of rules that govern how we do things. Not that it's been a problem; we know what we do, and how we do it: in general it follows Quaker best practice as elsewhere in the Society, and with good clerking it gets passed on from generation to generation.

But, as with the General Data Protection Regulation, there is a tendency these days for everything to become more formal, and where we interact with other financial institutions, they are starting to need proof when we are, for example, not liable to be charged VAT. The Committee have therefore concluded that we should get ourselves a proper Constitution, and stay at the forefront of best practice. We are already working on a draft document, and plan that it will be offered to the membership at the AGM in February next. Although it will contain a certain amount of pseudo-legal language, it will not change what we currently do. And our decision-making will still be guided by the Spirit. The 'power' will still rest with the membership through the AGM, and the Committee will remain answerable to the AGM. The final draft of the document will be available to members from the Clerks well before the date of the AGM, and Committee members will be happy to discuss any concerns about all this at the Conference.

**On behalf of the Committee, Rodney Mahon**

---

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

---

As stated in the Autumn newsletter our membership remains stable, now at 136 members. Over the year we have had 4 resignations and I have recently learnt of the death of one member, who died back in the spring. New members are spread between Cornwall and Shropshire. Sadly a small number of members who remain in arrears will need to be deleted from our membership. Friends, we depend on our individual membership for our survival. It has recently come to notice that some supporters feel that they do not need to be individual members if the organisation they are affiliated to belongs as a corporate member of QICJ. We seek affirmation from groups by them becoming members, a statement of shared value and concern. However please do consider keeping your individual membership as otherwise we will eventually be untenable as an organisation. Members can obtain an updated membership list by application to Simon Ewart, Membership Secretary, Skewjack Barn, St Levan, Cornwall. TR19 6NB. Mail to: [qicjmembership@gmail.com](mailto:qicjmembership@gmail.com)

**Simon Ewart**

---

# THE STATE OF OUR PRISONS

---

My views in the state of our prisons are informed by many years' contact with the prison system, as tutor, trainer, visitor and reformer, sitting on the Prisoner Learning Alliance and the Ministry of Justice Learning Difficulties/Disabilities Practice Development Group.

Few people outside the sector are aware of the wholesale reforms that came in this April. Governors have now been 'empowered' to take on a new role as commissioners of services to meet the needs of their populations. These reforms include identification and support for prisoners with conditions such as dyslexia - my particular area of interest and involvement. Technology is to have a larger role in supporting learning and ensuring that people leave prison with everyday IT skills. Family contacts are to be given more priority (detailed in the Farmer Review) and there is a specific female offender strategy.



Unfortunately a more punitive rhetoric has re-surfaced since Boris Johnson became PM and Priti Patel took over the Home Office. This is not being challenged by the present Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice, Robert Buckland, who replaced a more pragmatic and clear-thinking David Gawke. Gawke supported research on the inefficacy of short sentences and the need for more community provision. Even more significantly, he pulled the plug on the disastrous 'Transforming Rehabilitation' initiative whereby Probation Trusts were dismembered and private companies bid for the rehabilitation of short-sentenced prisoners. Another loss to the sector is Rory Stewart as Prisons Minister, shifted in an earlier reshuffle, and replaced by Lucy Frazer.

A good place to gain an overview of current government policy and priorities is the Spending Review: has the Ministry of Justice once more been subject to savage cuts? Surprisingly, it hasn't. But what has funding been allocated for?

This is not good news: the creation of an additional 10,000 prison places in a mistaken attempt to reduce crime (at an overall cost of £2.5 billion); £100 million to increase security in prisons through the introduction of more security scanners, mobile phone detection / prevention technology. Of course, this is part of the drive to restrict the flooding of prisons with psycho-active drugs which have been largely undetectable up to

now. Widespread drug use increases unmanageable behaviour and build-up of prisoner debt, both of which can lead to violence, while putting a huge strain on health services. Year after year, inspections paint a picture of diminishing 'purposeful activity', depressing squalor and increased levels of self-harm. Is it not obvious that the uptake in drug use is, in part at least, due to the failure to provide meaningful ways of 'doing time'?

Perhaps there is some hope in the final item in the Spending Review, which is un-costed: additional funding for crucial probation reforms that will help reduce reoffending and improve post-custody supervision. This conceals the massive U-turn - and £11 million price tag - linked to terminating contracts and re-designing 'Transforming Rehabilitation' (referred to above).

Back to the reforms which are still far from embedded - where is the additional money to come from to fund this programme? The groundwork has been done, the contracts awarded, the governors supported in their new commissioning role. A comprehensive IT system, both to support learning and to hold any assessments along with the Prisoner Learning Plan, is not yet operational. A huge cost is attached to providing the necessary IT infrastructure, especially in all our older establishments. So I am 'watching this space'



Regarding these older establishments, a regrettable policy reversal occurred last month (Oct 22nd), with the announcement that the programme to close the most dilapidated Victorian prisons has been abandoned. You may recall Michael Gove, during his short tenure heading up the Ministry of Justice, declaring that the prison estate would be modernised by closing prisons which were no longer 'fit for purpose' and selling off the sites. As a result, a number of older prisons were closed, (HMPs Holloway, Lancaster,

Gloucester and Shepton Mallet) but a surprising number of very old premises remain – more on this later.

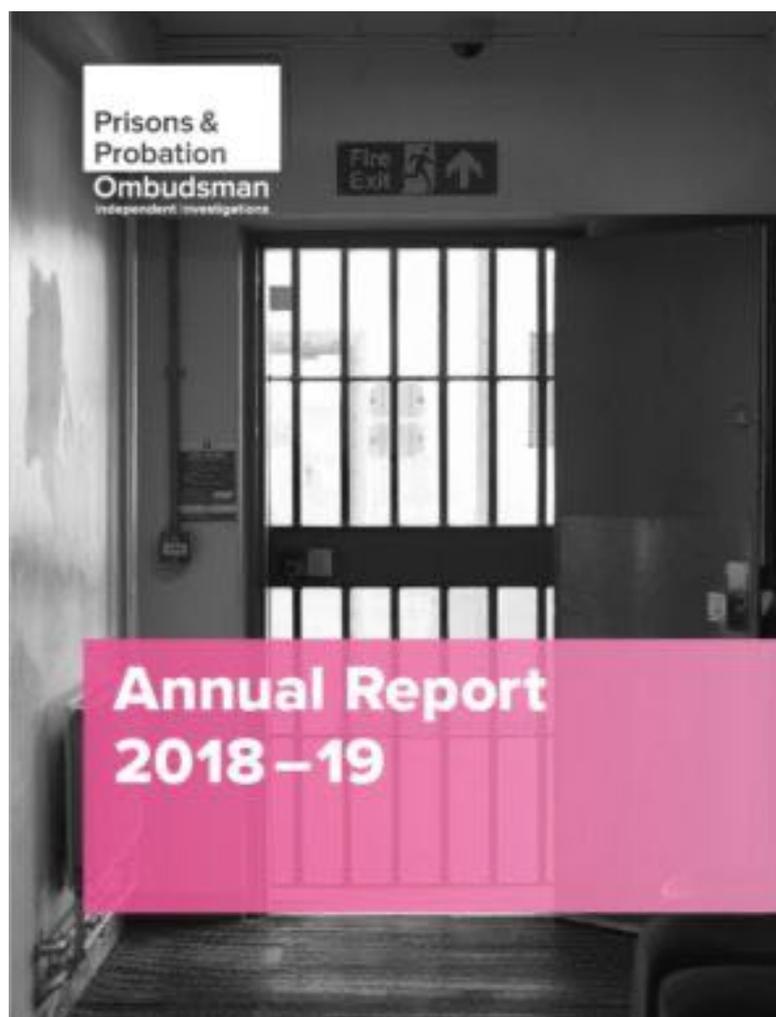
Now the current Prisons Minister has said that we need to keep these old prisons in addition to the 10,000 new prison places already confirmed. Furthermore, changes are proposed which will see those convicted of serious crimes staying in prison for a longer proportion of their sentence, all of which contributes to overcrowding. This appears to be a typical ‘tough on crime’ election stance.

An interesting blog by Russell Webster, highlights the age of much of the prison estate. Entitled How old are our prisons? his article includes an interactive chart of all 120 prisons in England and Wales arranged along a timeline of when they were first constructed. SEE <http://www.russellwebster.com/prisonhistory/> Russell explains that some premises have changed function or been modernised over the years, whereas others, such as HMP Pentonville, remain more or less as they were originally built – in 1842, in this case.

The chart reveals that 34 institutions were originally constructed in the 19th century or even earlier, with HMP Stafford, our oldest prison, built in 1794. Each establishment is represented by a ‘bubble’ whose relative size relates to its overall capacity. Hovering over a bubble reveals the name of the prison, whether it holds men, women or both genders, its opening date and capacity.

Notice the cluster of prisons along this timeline, with only Feltham opened between 1895 and 1933, but 20 new prisons in the 1960s. Another busy period was the 1990s, with 16 new prisons. The chart brings us up to date with the current decade in which we find HMP/YOI Isis and HMPs Thameside, Oakwood, and Berwyn – the last two in this list being our largest establishments with a capacity of 2106, both privately run.

The state of our prisons is reflected in the annual report of the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman for 2018/19. This records that prisons are failing to act on the same safety recommendations, year after year, to prevent self-inflicted deaths. These increased by 23% last year, totalling 91 deaths. Failings were



highlighted in Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT), responsible for prisoners at risk of suicide and self-harm. The report also pointed to on-going problems in the use of segregation, the treatment of older people and healthcare provision. Today's news (Nov 5th) brought a distressing example of a healthcare failure: the death of a new-born baby at HMP Bronzefield where a woman gave birth alone in her cell. How can this be allowed to happen?



As we look to the future, government plans to unify probation, under the National Probation Service, give us some cause for hope. Once again, probation will become responsible for the supervision of ex-prisoners and those on community sentences. I welcome the demise of the Transforming Rehabilitation / Community Rehabilitation Companies contracts, but note that this is now delayed until 2021. Amidst the 'noise' of Brexit, the fate of those labelled 'offenders' must not be allowed to fade from view.

**Melanie Jameson**



**QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020**

**Woodbrooke Quaker Studies Centre, <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/> Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6LJ 2 28/02/2020 to 01/03/2020 closing date for bookings 31/01/2020**

**Challenges and Helping Hands**

People with Learning Difficulties are over-represented in the CJS. The challenges they face will be our primary focus. However, we shall open with the Magistrate’s perspective on vulnerability. Workshops will include the proven benefits of yoga and meditation in prison settings and help for those entrapped in a hidden form of imprisonment - modern slavery - and how we might be alert to it. We shall also learn about key challenges facing the reform programme in our prisons.

We look forward to a performance of ‘Lock Down’ by the Journeymen Theatre group <http://www.journeymentheatre.com> on the Saturday evening. The play portrays the story of a prisoner in his 70s who has spent most of his life in prison. During the course of the play we see his interactions with prison medical staff, the prison chaplain, a probation officer and an official from the inspection service.

**Book your place a.s.a.p.to avoid disappointment** £250 residential, £150 non-residential.

I/we wish to attend the 2020 QICJ conference on a **residential/non-residential** basis and enclose the sum of £ (cheques made out to Quakers in Criminal Justice) **OR**

Have paid by BACS £ *Please delete whichever is not applicable.*

If paying by BACS please put ‘Conference 2020’ as reference. Details are: Quakers in Criminal Justice, Cooperative Bank, Sort code 08-92-99 Account number 65406034.

NAME	ADDRESS	CONTACT DETAILS

**Please detail here any particular needs that you would like us to be aware of such as mobility/diet etc**

**It would be helpful if you could tell us a little of your interest in the Criminal Justice System**

I/we give consent to the details above being circulated to other conference participants

Signed..... Date.....

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO:** Simon Ewart. [Skewjack Barn](#), [St Levan](#), Cornwall TR19 6NB, or if paying by [bacs](#) and you prefer then email to [simonofskewjack@gmail.com](mailto:simonofskewjack@gmail.com)

## **QUAKERS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**Woodbrooke, 28 Feb – 1 March 2020**

### **Challenges and Helping Hands**

Our 2019 conference had a very tight focus as we learned from experts about drugs issues and ways forward. We moved from being individuals with a range of views to unity around the legal regulation of drugs as the best path and, unusually, we were led to discern a Minute. If you want to revisit the expert contributions or the Minute do go to our website and look up last year's event <http://www.qicj.org/conferences/2019.html> Since that time, the extension of 'county lines', drawing more young people into the drugs trade, overdose deaths and pleas from the authorities for a re-think have surfaced regularly in the news. Having been exercised by this situation, we hope to provide updates this year.

In 2020, our conference looks at the criminal justice system (CJS) from a number of perspectives, under the overall heading of 'Challenges and Helping Hands'. We shall open with the Magistrate's perspective on vulnerability, drawing on the expertise of a Friend with many years' experience on the bench.

People with 'Learning Difficulties' are over-represented in the CJS. On the Saturday we shall consider those with 'specific' difficulties, such as Dyslexia, and those with 'Learning Disabilities' (described as 'impaired intelligence and social functioning'). These are the terminologies in use in the prison service, often conflated as 'LDD', despite the very different populations to which they refer. The challenges both groups face will be our primary focus, presented by speakers with national profiles.

The theme of challenges and helping hands will be carried forward in a range of workshops. These will include the work of the Prison Phoenix Trust in helping individuals address their difficulties as they take part in yoga and meditation, the benefits of which are backed up by research. We shall learn about available help for those entrapped in a hidden form of imprisonment - modern slavery - and how we might be alert to these practices. The policy lead at the Prisoner Learning Alliance will enlighten us concerning key challenges facing the government reform programme in our prisons.

If participant numbers call for a fourth workshop, this is likely to be given by the 'helping hands' of prison and community chaplains on their challenges in providing a service.

There is an additional treat in store: a new performance by the Journeymen Theatre <http://www.journeymentheatre.com> on the Saturday evening. 'Lock Down' portrays an older prisoner who has spent much of his life in prison. During the course of the play we see his interactions with medical staff, the chaplain, a probation officer and an official from the inspectorate. These interactions with staff and visitors enable him to share aspects of his life inside and reflect on the nature of prison life.

As usual we shall conclude by drawing together the threads of our conference, leading us into a time of reflection and our Meeting for Worship.

The committee looks forward to welcoming you at Woodbrooke on February 28th - so book now, either on-line or using the booking form in this edition of the newsletter. You are encouraged to bring along any information or new resources to share with the group.

**Melanie Jameson  
Co-Clerk of QICJ**



Simon Ewart, Membership Secretary Skewjack Barn, Saint Levan, Cornwall TR19 6NB.



Dear Friend,

Please find below a renewal subscription form for QICJ for 2020 It would be very helpful if you could pay by standing order, but of course a cheque annually in January is very acceptable! Membership rates are £20 per individual (£10 low income) £25 per couple and £35 for organisations. Please return the completed form to Simon Ewart Skewjack Barn, Saint Levan, Cornwall TR19 6NB. If you already pay by standing order please ignore this request.

With best wishes, Simon. 01736 871161 [simonofskewjack@gmail.com](mailto:simonofskewjack@gmail.com) .

**YOUR DETAILS**

I/We wish to renew my/our membership of QICJ for 2020

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A sum of \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed (if paying by cheque) made payable to Quakers in Criminal Justice

**Standing Order Authority:**

To \_\_\_\_\_ Bank

Sort Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Account Holder: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount (Words) \_\_\_\_\_ (figures) \_\_\_\_\_

Reference (surname) \_\_\_\_\_

First Payment Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Subsequent Payments: Annually thereafter on 1st January until further notice.  
Beneficiary Name: Quakers in Criminal Justice Beneficiary Bank: Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT Beneficiary sort code: 08-92-99  
Beneficiary Account Number: 65406034

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Committee Members for 2019 are: Simon Ewart (Membership Secretary), Rodney Mahon (Treasurer), Ann Jacob, Alice Audsley, Marian Liebmann, Jo Rado (Co-Clerk), Melanie Jameson (Co-Clerk). Mark Humphries & Jonathan Lamb are our Newsletter Editors

## Published by Quakers in Criminal Justice

Opinions expressed are those of the writers and do not represent the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Quakers in Criminal Justice or the Newsletter Editors

### Newsletter Editors:

**Mark Humphries**

8 Pilling Road

Norwich, NR1 4PA

[humphries.mark@outlook.com](mailto:humphries.mark@outlook.com)

**Jonathan Lamb**

34 Salisbury Street

Belfast, BT7 1AH

[jonolamb@mac.com](mailto:jonolamb@mac.com)

### Membership Secretary:

**Simon Ewart**

Skewjack Barn

St Levan

Nr. Penzance

Cornwall, TR19 6NB

[qicj.membership](mailto:qicj.membership@gmail.com)

@gmail.com