

Welcome to this is the first newsletter from the Loving Earth Project. Some of you may have contacted us a long time ago, and others have only just found us. With the measures in place due to COVID-19 we are adjusting to new ways of working and we are grateful for your patience.

Origins of the project

The Loving Earth Project started about a year ago for an art exhibition at Swarthmoor Hall, Ulverstone, organised under the auspices of the Quaker Arts Network. The *Seeking Routes* exhibition was a group exhibition by diverse Quaker artists and this project enabled a wider group of people to be involved, using the creative process to help us explore how our spiritual values of love and truth might help us to address the environmental crisis and how we might engage with it.

People found the project a helpful and fun way to engage with their concerns about the environment, so we have developed it as an ongoing community project open to all. We know that continuing with 'business as usual' is not the answer, and that radical changes are needed but many of us feel confused and don't know what to do. Others may already be actively engaged with environmental issues and feel overwhelmed, anxious and/or worn out. The loving Earth offers a way to rest and regenerate our energy and spirits while still helping to turn the tide of public opinion by making something beautiful and showing example of creative actions.

New shoots in many directions

In recent months we have held quiet times for creative and prayerful reflection, events for local Quaker groups and churches, 'sew and chat' events in local libraries and our first school visit. We have discussed, embroidery, plastic waste, and concerns for ourselves and future generations, often finding it



easier to talk with people outside our immediate daily lives before discussing with our nearest and dearest. People have made some beautiful panels and written movingly about them. Many of the panels have already been shown at several events, including an arts centre, a WI conference, a green fair, local public libraries, and various Quaker venues. A school visit with year 5 children changed their anxiety and horror about deforestation in the Amazon into positive actions. They each chose an action they wanted to take - such as eating less beef, avoiding palm oil in chocolate or biscuits, talking with their parents about their carbon footprint, or raising money to support the protection of forests.

Exhibitions , workshops and the Coronavirus shutdown

Plans for exhibitions and events an art gallery in Walton on Thames, an international conference in Paris, an interfaith event in Glasgow in the next few months are on hold as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. However you can see some of work in progress on our Facebook page and many panels already made are on our online gallery <https://lovingearth-project.uk/gallery/> .

The Loving Earth Project is ideally suited for people to join from home while in quarantine, and we are developing additional resources to support this. A guided meditation is now available at <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/lovingearth> to help people get started with the project, and the lovingearth-project.uk website has a variety of other resources and links to explore inspire and inform. There are lots of 'how to' videos on the internet to help with sewing or other textile techniques. You might like to share your favourites via our Facebook page or to email us further suggestions. We also hope to provide further resources including Zoom meetings to share our textile work-in-progress or thoughts about sustainability matters etc. These will be posted on the events page of our website and on our Facebook page. We also hope to translate of some of the key information into different languages - volunteers to help with this would be welcome.



We welcome textile panels from anyone, in any style, provided that they are 30x 30cm in size, robust enough to be put in the post, and are accompanied by an explanatory text.

Due to the current Coronavirus close down, **we are currently asking that no panels are sent in** to us and that you keep them with you until we are able to receive them once again. Meanwhile, please **email us photos of your panels, your name and contact details, and a short text** to accompany each panel. We can then display your work on our website and will let you know when we are ready to receive them again after the Coronavirus shutdown.

More information about making panels is on our website and a .pdf document introducing to the project and with key information about making panels is attached. Please print it off for reference and to share with others.

The project can be adapted in many ways and it would be lovely to develop more resources for specific groups - such as young people, especially online resources at present. We have a small team of facilitators able to run a wide range of Loving Earth Project workshops, adapted to the needs of a wide range of circumstances, but are currently feeling our way with the Coronavirus shutdown. You may wish to organise your own Loving Earth event or project within your community group, faith group, youth group etc. It would be lovely to publicise these in future newsletters, via Facebook or our website. You can drop us a line with your news, or send suggestions, requests for help etc at lovingearthproject@gmail.com

Quakers and the Loving Earth Project

We have already run a number of events specifically for Quakers, and Woodbrooke (the Quaker study centre in Birmingham) is now able to support further Loving Earth events as part of their work on supporting British Quakers in their spiritual and practical witness to sustainability and in response to the climate crisis. Their first on-site weekend planned for May has been postponed but new online resources such as the meditation have already been produced other events are in the pipeline. Woodbrooke will also run the Loving Earth Project e-newsletter (for everyone). We are also grateful for continuing support from the Quaker Arts Network and of the Friends World Committee for Consultation.



Supporting the project

Please publicise the project to anyone you think would be interested, for example through social media and our website. We can also help with other publicity on requests. We would love to have participants from a wide range of communities in different parts of the world as this is a way to help build understanding and cooperation and demonstrate our shared love and concern.

If you'd like to offer practical help (eg with publicity, translations, etc or as a facilitator) please be in touch. We are also seeking funds to enable us to support this work where necessary, as we would like the workshops to be open and free to participants as far as possible. Donations are welcome, and cheques should be made out to *Quaker Arts Network* and sent to the *Loving Earth Project*, % QAN Treasurer 'Nettlebank', Wootton Rivers, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 4NQ, UK. Donations can also be made by BACS to: HSBC Branch 40 07 30 "Quaker Arts Network" account 42286459. If you make a BACS payment, please reference LEP and your name and email us at lovingearthproject@gmail.com.

<http://lovingearth-project.uk>

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General enquiries lovingearthproject@gmail.com

To join or leave this mailing list, or for specifically Quaker enquiries, please email us at lovingearthproject@woodbrooke.org.uk