in Criminal Justice

Website https://www.qicj.org/ **Email** qicjmembership@gmail.com

Welcome to the work of QICJ

Quakers in Criminal Justice (QICJ) is a registered educational charity and a Quaker Recognised Body We comprise Friends with an interest in the criminal justice system, keeping them abreast of current criminal justice issues, while enabling members in various roles within criminal justice to offer each other mutual support.

Membership is open to individuals, and to Local and Area Meetings as Supporting Groups. We are also in close contact with leading charities in the field including Prison Phoenix Trust, Prison Reform Trust the Centre for Crime & Justice Studies and the Howard League.

The main activities of the group are as follows:

1. **QICJ Newsletter -** The QICJ newsletter is published three times a year. Articles are written by a diverse range of contributors; each issue provides information, shared experiences and perspectives on criminal justice matters. For example: the continuing impacts of the Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentence despite its abolition in 2012; the plight of elderly men in prison; the proven benefits of yoga & meditation in custodial settings; restorative justice practices and book reviews along with full reports from our conferences. You can also read about our Justice Interest Group (*see below*) and the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network. The Newsletter is circulated to all members as both an electronic and hard copy.

2. **QICJ Annual Conference -** QICJ holds an annual conference, to which expert speakers are invited and topics of current interest discussed. This provides an opportunity to share information and challenges with others who have expertise in various fields of the criminal justice system.

3. **Justice Interest Group (JIG) -** As a consequence of the Simpler Governance and Restructuring initiatives within BYM, QPSW's priorities were re-defined as Peace & Peacebuilding and Sustainability & Climate Change. Staff numbers were reduced accordingly and various QPSW committees were laid down including criminal justice work within the Social Justice Committee. Because of this decision, a significant level of concern was expressed throughout BYM leading to consideration at Meeting for Sufferings. In order to perpetuate our Quaker witness on criminal justice, QICJ & SJC clerks then took the initiative to form a 'Justice Interest Group', JIG. This informal group has the brief of determining current key criminal justice issues where a distinctive Quaker voice can be discerned, which is rooted in our values, principles, and experience, and then identifying the appropriate forums in which to raise them.

   The work of JIG is disseminated through the Newsletter and information is uploaded bi-monthly on to the Justice Update section of the QICJ website https://www.qicj.org/updates.html Briefings from JIG include work on Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP), an international overview of Restorative Justice practices, a consideration of the effects of poverty & Adverse Childhood Experiences and responses to relevant consultations. Having made good links with BYM publicity and advocacy staff, JIG is now supported in its endeavours by BYM.

4. **Regular Updates on issues concerning the Criminal Justice System -** Members regularly receive info. via our email circulation list; all previous Justice Update items are on the website.

5. **Working Group on Welcoming former prisoners into our Meetings -** We were pleased to hear a call in the 2024 Swarthmore lecture to help people gain a sense of belonging, post-release, in a Quaker Meeting. We know that the transition from prison to becoming part of a Quaker Meeting presents challenges and opportunities, requiring careful consideration to ensure that our Quaker Worship & Witness is open and safe for all. The QICJ working group has produced 'WELCOMING ALL TO MEETINGS' after consulting widely; this document is on the home page of the website.

Visit our website https://www.qicj.org/ for past and present newsletters, our constitution, briefings and updates on the criminal justice system and to find out about membership.