

Settlement Future Visioning Engagement

After some discussion and with the support of Yearly Meeting 2021, WEST and Settlement residents have engaged with Friends to ascertain views and understand what possibilities exist for the Settlement’s future. We made use of a survey (see appendix one) and face to face focus groups (see appendix two) with Young Friends and Junior Young Friends when they were at the Settlement.

In addition, a Friend involved in a hybrid seminar in 2021, provided detailed feedback and this has been included in this document.

Survey Sample

Sample: 61 responses were received: 58 from individuals and responses from three Monthly Meetings¹.

Table 1: Respondents Ages

Age ²	Total Responses	31 – 50 yrs	51 – 70 yrs	71 yrs +	N/A ³
Number	61	3	24	29	5

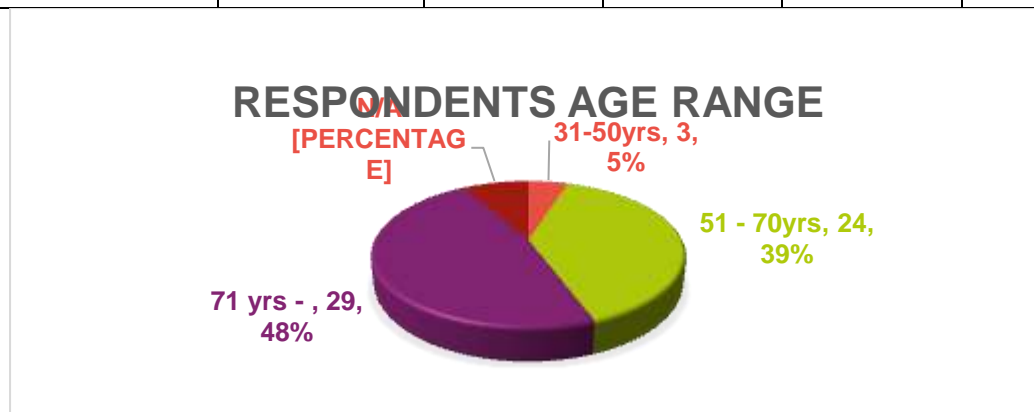


Figure 1: Respondents Age Range

¹ Whanganui, Northern, and Kapiti

² No individual responses from under 31 years

³ Group response or did not answer

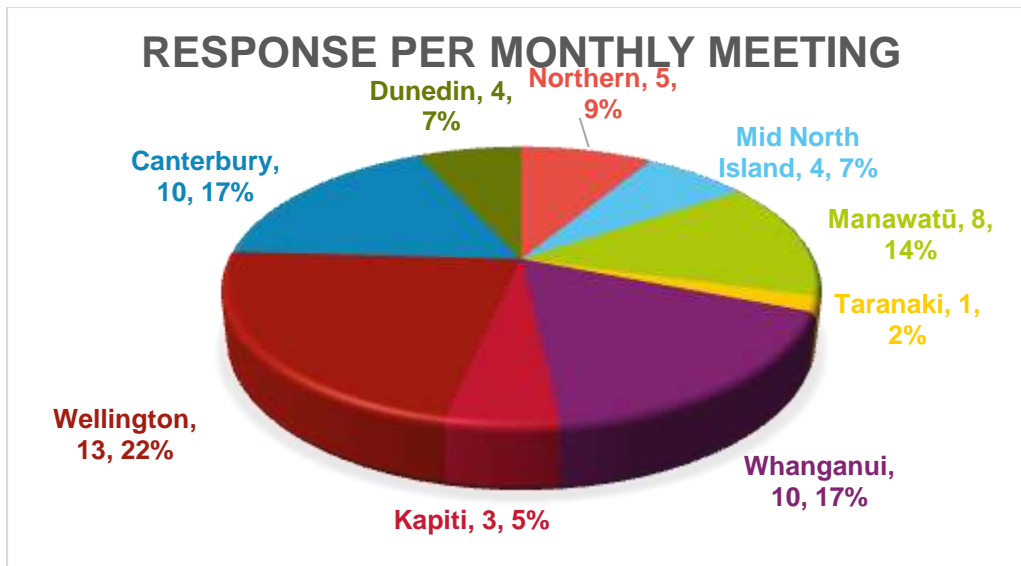


Figure two: Respondents Monthly Meeting

Method of compiling the questionnaire

We identified a set of broad issues we wanted to explore and then identified questions from these. The questions were shared with the WEST board to get feedback.

A 10 question survey (see appendix one) was distributed to residents, Friends via YM Clerks Letter, and advertisement in the Quaker Newsletter. The survey was open for responses for 8 weeks.

Many responses were made using the electronic form and those that weren't, were entered into the google form and an excel sheet created. The column that detailed email addresses was removed and six open ended questions were selected for coding using reflexive Thematic Analysis⁴.

Nine residents (three also WEST Board members) of the Settlement and three additional Board members assisted with the coding, theming and analysis of responses.

Individual word documents were created for each of the six qualitative answers which were then coded. We were encouraged to be directed by the data (inductive coding) and a second round of coding was completed where we explored grouping codes across questions into themes. Appendix 3 illustrates the codes under the overarching themes identified.

Findings

⁴ [Understanding TA | Thematic Analysis](#)

The overarching themes identified are depicted by figure 3 below.

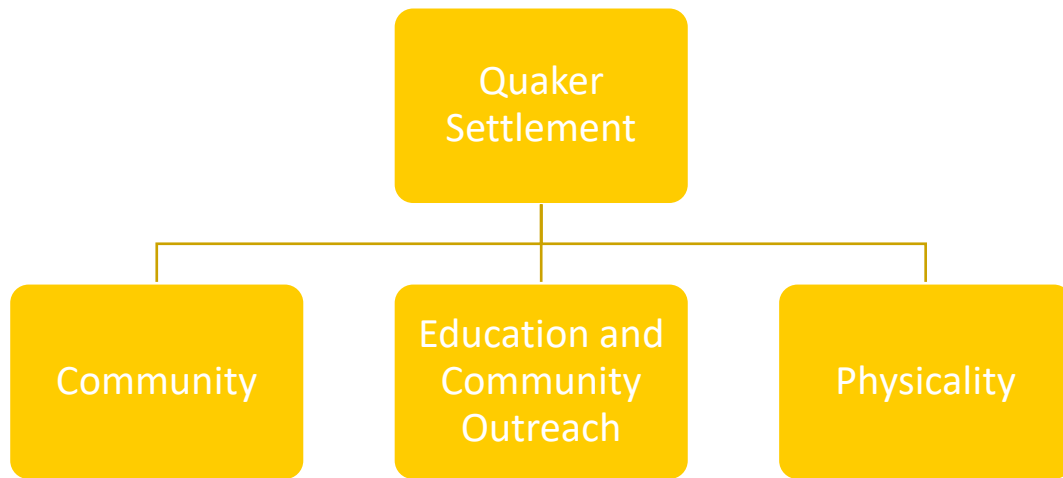


Figure 3: Overarching themes

Theme One: Community Manaakitanga

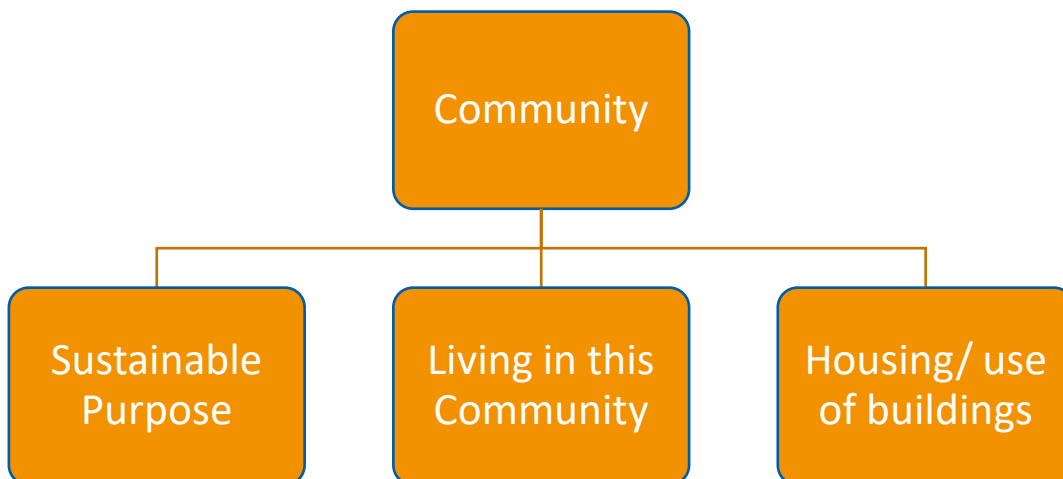


Figure 4: Community Life

The Quaker Settlement was developed following the closure of the Friends school in 1970 as an intentional Quaker community. Initial community members were Quakers; however over the years more non-Quakers have joined the community. As at September 2022 there are currently 17 homes and 23 adults and eight children live here. Of the adults, eight identify as Quakers.

Sustainable Purpose

The Quaker Settlement’s Trust Deed identifies the Settlement purposes as:

- To build a community of like-minded people to preserve uphold and promote those spiritual values and ideals shared by the Society of Friends
- To provide facilities for study and education on matters relevant to Friends
- To provide facilities for conferences of an educational or religious nature.

We were reminded of these purposes as we moved through the responses.

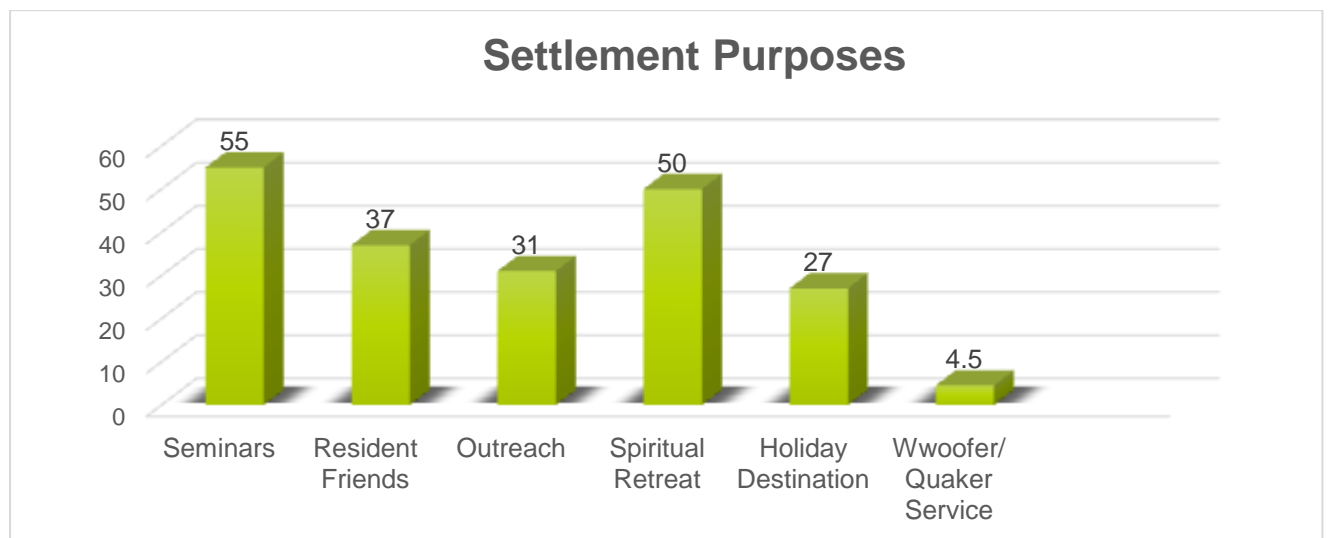


Figure 5: Future Purpose for the Settlement

Several respondents identified that they gathered at the Settlement for seminars and appreciated the commitment of the Settlement to its role as the Aotearoa New Zealand Quaker educational centre. These gatherings are clearly important for relationships and is captured by one Friend’s comment “coming together with Friends and re-confirming that this is my ‘tribe’ – the people I feel most comfortable and at home with”.

Some spoke about the Settlement as a ‘turangawaewae’ or marae acknowledging that the Quakerism within made it extra special. It was described by one Friend as a “very beautiful loving special place with profound manaakitanga” and by another,

“The Settlement is our marae. The lived Quaker values and practices make it special - leading as they do to reflective silence, thoughtful conversation, light-heartedness, dancing and music, games, deep relationships, and getting our hands dirty caring for the whenua/land using permaculture”.

The effort required to sustain the Settlement is not un-noticed with many responses identifying the years of work that has gone into its development and maintenance. capturing concerns about the work load whilst enjoying and celebrating the manaakitanga currently offered.

Several respondents offered suggestions for dealing with the workload including: accessing support from paid help with maintenance tasks, securing a Resident Friend position, and volunteers such as Wwoofers.

When asked about 'our wildest dream for the Settlement's future', many responses indicated a desire to see a strong thriving community which expressed Quaker values. Several wished for a community with diverse ages committed to sustainable living.

There was an almost universal theme expressing a desire to see the Settlement thriving in 20-30 years. The exact definition of "thriving" however differed in the responses that described their vision. Most expressed a need for a close-knit community of diverse ages and a mix of families and single people, and the majority wanted the community to be larger with more homes or tiny houses.

There was a split between people that envisioned a welcoming 'open' community which would be involved in the activity and needs of the local community, while others saw a community of primarily (or entirely) Quakers adhering to "Quaker values". This is not necessarily a different view. However there seemed to be a distinction between those that wished to see a more intentional Quaker community, and those that saw a more diverse community open to people with similar environmental and communal or service oriented values.

For many respondents the environmental and sustainability aspects of the settlement were highlighted as important characteristics.

The educational purpose of the community was highlighted by several respondents; however the responses again were divided between those that saw the purpose to serve the Quaker community almost exclusively, and those that saw a mission to the wider community. The need for both in-person and on-line education offerings was expressed by several respondents.

A number of responses invite us to consider our relationship with Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and to mana whenua. Some churches have returned land to local iwi

and one Friend suggests “Quakers need to consider these relationships and how land originally passed from hapū”. Another Friend wonders whether

“a partnership could be developed with tangata whenua and a way found to return the title of the land back to the Indigenous people to which it originally belonged. The settlement is then leased from them in some kind of mutually beneficial agreement that is developed together as an act of solidarity with tangata whenua. This is part of a broader plan in which there is no freehold, collectively owned 'Quaker' land in this nation.”

Living in this Community

There were a significant number of responses highlighting that what is special about this community is that it is “intentionally Quaker” and alongside this wanting to hold the aspiration that more Quakers join the community so that “Quaker culture is thriving”. One option offered was to limit the number of non-Quakers resident in the community.

Certainly, the goal captured by many responses is encapsulated perhaps by this Friends response a “vibrant sustainable Quaker community with mixed ages”. Another said

“The Settlement urgently needs to have a stronger Quaker presence with all the 16 homes occupied by people committed to being part of an intentional Friends Settlement and to contributing to the work involved in the Settlement being an active seminar and conference venue for Friends and others. All Settlers should be committed to Quaker values, and the vast majority (better than 90%) should be Quakers”.

The importance and value of having the younger generation and families living here is mentioned and having systems in place that support the nurturing of our “Quaker values, history, families in a sustainable bilingual permaculture paradise where everyone feels welcome”.

There was an invitation to consider housing options for retired Quakers as one Friend articulated “given the demographics of New Zealand Friends (and to a lesser extent of the wider New Zealand community) the Settlement could usefully explore providing more purpose built accommodation and support for the elderly”. This sentiment was shared by a number of responses.

Connection of the Settlement with both Yearly Meeting and Whanganui Monthly Meeting featured in responses. One response asked about having the

Settlement Handbook visible to Friends via the member section of the Quaker website and also wondered whether it was possible to have the WEST agenda circulated with more time for Monthly Meeting consideration. This was seen both as ways to build connection but also to enable more input from MMs into WEST meetings via their elected representative.

A small number of Friends commented that Whanganui has effectively two meeting houses and wondered whether there were possibilities to hold all meetings at the Settlement.

Meeting for worship is held in the Quiet Room at the Settlement six days per week from 8.30am – 9am. One Friend wondered whether “one morning a week there could be a zoom component to morning worship so that Quakers from anywhere can join in”.

Housing/ use of buildings

A number of responses indicated that considering housing needs for vulnerable people is important and that possibilities for building social housing on the land could be considered. Possibilities for assisting climate refugees from the Pacific was mooted as was acknowledging the housing crisis in Aotearoa.

There were suggestions that there should be more engagement with the local community, and more community use of settlement facilities. This may require more communication to understand the barriers. There was a suggestion that advertising the availability of “a ‘pay as you led’ system to hire the facilities for local ‘likeminded’ groups e.g. from dance to environmental and anything in between” would be helpful

Theme two: Education and Community Outreach Whakawhanaungatanga

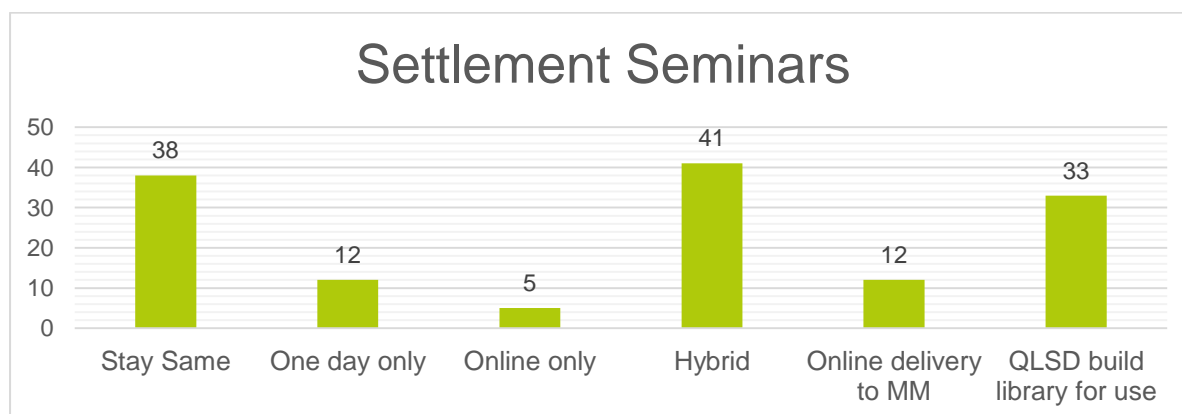


Figure 7: Future provision of seminars

COVID 19 has necessitated a significant leap into leveraging technological options for group participation in events. We have seen Yearly Meeting held online, hybrid seminars have been offered and the Settlement has been running its weekly Management Meeting as a hybrid meeting for many months.

Figure 7 shows that there was significant support for hybrid⁵ seminars as well as slightly less support for seminar delivery remaining the same, in person only. Other responses indicate that Friends might benefit from some flexibility in delivery with one day only seminars being attractive to some and the sense that a resource library for use by Monthly Meetings would increase access. Across this is the overarching sense that the timing may be right for the Society to review how learning offerings are organised and delivered nationally.

One Friend eloquently states

“I think it would be good to have a more flexible learning program. The current annual program has had the same format for many years. I wonder if it is time for a big change. I think it would be good to have some weekends planned that don't have a theme. Invite people to come and just let a program emerge - people could offer sessions or just come and read or have retreat time but with the fellowship of others”.

⁵ Where participants are a mixture of in person and online.

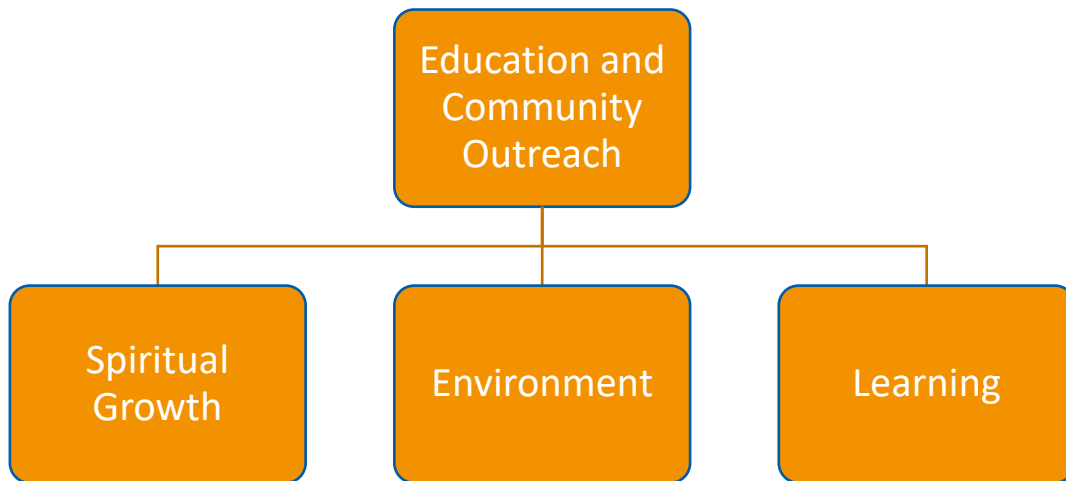


Figure 6: Education and Community Outreach

Three subthemes emerged as per figure 6.

Spiritual Growth

Many responses mentioned the way the Settlement embodies various aspects of Quaker values and spirituality. The achievement of creating an intentional Quaker Community was recognised and appreciated for its ongoing commitment to Quaker testimonies and way of living.

Comments highlighted that this is a place that provides opportunity to share ideas and connect with the spirit. It was described by one as “part of my spiritual grounding” and for another where “I get to know Friends from other meetings, deepen my spiritual growth, learn more about Quakerism”. Formal learning is often complemented by the informal learning that happens when we gather with one Friend highlighting these as “informal experiences - around the fire, in Nick Pyle's hot tub, in the swimming pool, walking the boundaries”.

Many Friends noted that the provision of hybrid seminars was a useful option and perhaps even inevitable for some seminars. One Friend said “I would usually aim to come in person to seminars, though acknowledge the value of hybrid to expand participation. June seminar was very well done as hybrid, but important not to lose the value of deeper connection achieved in person”.

The June 2022 hybrid seminar offered on Stories of the Spirit had one in person facilitator and two who attended on Zoom. Detailed feedback about this experience as facilitator has been provided (appendix 4).

A small number of Friends commented on support for provision of seminars and wondered whether we should:

“re-visit using off site people as contact people for seminars or even just taking the registrations. Offsite contact people has been done in the past and worked with having a person at the Settlement to link to. Registrations can be done from anywhere. Ask the WEST Board members if they could take on this role for some seminars. This could help to reduce the work load for residents and provide a way for Board member to be more involved”.

Environment

The physical environment was important for many with comments about the “beautiful environment”, “fantastic gardens”, the connection between the indoor and outdoor spaces, and responders’ personal history of watching the Settlement environment evolve. Gatherings at the Settlement were seen as an opportunity to “bring Quakers together to learn and play and support each other”. The natural environment of the settlement was seen as an important aspect, which very much adds to visitors’ experience.

Some respondents emphasised the need to consider the use of the land in terms of the wider community needs, and that consideration should be given to using a portion of the property for low cost housing for the benefit of the wider community.

Learning

Recognition that many groups within our society are working on social issues that align with Quaker values and testimonies may have led to a number of Friends indicating that they would support the Settlement increasing opportunities for others to make use of the facilities. One Friend commented “a PAL system for local ‘like-minded’ groups to hire facilities” could be an option or for another “not for profit community initiatives ... addiction support groups, home-schooling groups, disability supports groups and parenting courses”.

Many commented that other educational type seminars could be using the facilities, e.g. running permaculture courses but acknowledged that this may require some marketing and would most certainly result in additional pressure on residents who currently maintain the community facilities.

In addition to our relationship with mana whenua Friends commented about the integration of Te Ao Māori and te reo learning. One Friend wondered whether a learning offering on “the wairua and healing relationships with native plants; on Tikanga ..such as gift economies (koha); on waiata and kapa haka” might be possible. They went on to suggest exploring “ways of integrating Quaker values with the indigenous values Sharing ideas on how to reverse the effects of colonisation”.

The different roles of the Quaker Learning and Spiritual Development committee to design seminars and the responsibility of the Settlement to host, was described in one response. They went on to suggest that consideration be given to a cost structure that considers the expense of travel in conjunction with the Quaker Education Fund.

Theme three: Physicality Kaitiakitanga

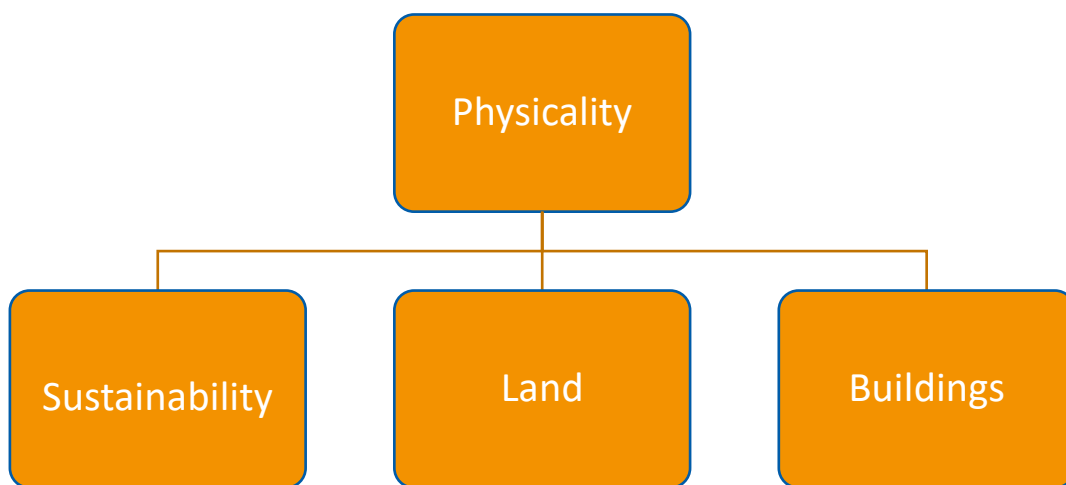


Figure 8: Physicality

Sustainability

A number of responses mentioned the location of the Settlement being in Whanganui meant it is not easily accessible to many Friends due to being difficult to get to, travel costs, climate change. Is there an opportunity for the Settlement in Whanganui to be sold and an alternative location be identified that is more accessible?

Concern for its sustainability is captured by this Friend who says:

“The Settlement does not appear to have thought through the urban/rural balance. It started as a rural commune, and it has not rapidly enough adapted to urbanisation. Currently it is not a model that others could imitate - it has too much land for too few people. To be an example it needs to become much more urban and demonstrate how people can live in an environmentally sustainable way and as a strong community in an urban setting”.

Many felt that the Pay As Led (PAL) suggestion would increase engagement in the Settlement and associated values. Others felt that this would also support people with low financial means. Several respondents outlined problems with the increased financial risk and time costs involved.

A number of suggestions made included:

- encouragement of marketing via electronic means, Quaker networks and other organisations
- Setting minimum and maximum stay lengths
- Limiting access of this offer
- Offering multiple pricing levels instead.
-

A number of Friends commented about the importance of understanding the true cost when considering PAL and one Friend wondered if it would be “only partially effective without support for travel costs, and action to reduce the environmental impact of travel”.

Although there were Friends who affirmed this approach many Friends commented about not understanding what it means and urged caution, “let’s not panic because COVID19 has made the last three years challenging”. There was a sense that if implemented this should be closely monitored and for a trial only as some were worried it might be “complicated”, “messy” and queried whether it was financially sustainable. In summary, there is no clear direction on whether PAL for short stays in a fully furnished home would increase engagement with the Settlement. The voices of approval, disapproval and uncertainty about this were distinct, so the design of a limited trial may be warranted.

Note: From October 2022 WEST and Management Meeting are trialling a Pay as Led pricing structure for the hiring of community buildings and short-term use of accommodation to improve sustainability and promote wider use of Settlement facilities.

Land

A real sense of stewardship was present in many responses from Friends who recounted being present at the beginning of the Settlement and spoke fondly of attending work weekends. This 'caring for' resulted in a sense of belonging to this place. One response captured this by describing we have "attended many Queen's Birthday work weekends with great social time, working together and involved in tree planting at these weekends over an extended time. Connected with the land via the tree planting and watching those trees grow".

Another Friend said that "what makes it special is the space that is held here not just for Quakers but for all people from local, national and global communities. The other space that is held is the one that has been created as a portion of the land has slowly returned to native tree habitat".

Buildings

As with the land, the connection to the physical structures was also highlighted. As one Friends says "I was part of a group that were the first to sleep in the shared accommodation, so I have been involved in the history of the development of the Settlement since". Another commented that they "helped with building of the Quiet Room and attached foyer, toilets, etc., in 1999/2000. Many memories attached to this special place involving the people and the land and the wider Quaker community in Aotearoa New Zealand".

The Quiet Room was described as a "special place" by many Friends, one wishing it was kept for quietness only.

There were also comments about whether the current accommodation met the needs of the Quakers who wish to use it with one respondent suggesting that "the sleeping accommodation and other facilities no longer suit the needs of many Friends". Another Friend commented that:

"most of the Quakers I know are in their senior years 70s and 80s and beyond, where everyday living can be difficult, even in their own spaces, so it is a major challenge to travel and then to bunk down or share accommodation with people they have not met before. It is just too hard for many to do".

There was a sense coming through from the survey and engagement with YFs that upgrading or reconsidering how the facilities are organised might be a useful exercise both to increase comfort and to increase capacity.

Settlement as a Priority for the Society

Notwithstanding all the suggestions and options for improvement offered by Friend's responses there was a clear sense that the Settlement remain a priority for the Society as shown in table two.

Table two: Settlement as a Priority

How much of a priority should it be for the Society of Friends to sustain the Settlement					
Scale	1 - Not a priority	2	3	4	5 -Absolute priority
Number of responses	0	1	7	21	31

Limitations to the survey

There were no individual responses to the survey from any Friends under 50 years old. We have reported below our focus group engagement learnings but wonder whether there may be opportunities at Summer Gathering to hold space for further reflection or feedback on the Settlement future.

Focus Groups

Young Friends Engagement

A couple of Settlement residents joined Young Friends (YFs) in July 2022 for an informal conversation framed by the questions in appendix two. YFs spoke about a deep connection to the physical space, a space that thrives long after people have left. One described the “developing of something in a slow and restorative way”. YFs spoke about visiting over many years and described the Settlement as “safe” and a “constant” noting that “as young people we move around a lot. So having some place where the trees remain is extra special and important”. The diversity in ages present at the Settlement was highlighted as valuable.

Accessing the Settlement was not always easy; travel and distance was mentioned. YF spoke about an awareness of the seminar programme however busy lives meant attendance was not always possible or Seminars were simply forgotten. Attending seminars online was not necessarily preferred especially when work time was spent online. However hybrid options could work, especially where Friends could meet in local Meeting Houses and join a seminar as a ‘hub’. Improving meeting houses technological capability was considered as important to support this.

YFs saw a future for the Settlement that included: tiny homes; enhanced wetland; harakeke library being maintained; traditional food being grown; an openness to other groups contributing.

Ideas for change included revamping the sleeping house, increasing capability, more comfortable mattresses, providing all linen and having moveable cabin beds. The idea of a wood fired hot tub sparked delight.

Junior Young Friends

A mixture of residents, Junior Young Friends (JYFs) and camp adults joined an informal gathering in October 2022. The conversation was framed around the focus group questions. JYFs shared their connections with Quakerism which ranged from recent involvement to life long. They value the diverse range of people they connect with at the Settlement and described feelings of peacefulness, openness, freedom and acceptance. One JYF commented that

the openness was evident in the books available in the library at the Settlement and valued being able to read the writings of Thich Nhan Hanh.

Appreciation for the physical environment was mentioned with one JYF saying “love the garden, its beautiful ... just walking outside, magical”. All agreed that coming with their families for a holiday would be wonderful citing the pool as a draw card however were also aware that logistically for many families the expense of travel made it prohibitive.

They brainstormed ideas for seminars that would appeal that included: Quaker history; the intersection of Quaker ideas and Te Ao Māori; how we relate to non-human animals, spiritually and practically; trust and its connection to false information; crafting. Perhaps, remarkably, the initial idea offered was an unstructured seminar with a JYF saying “in my experience activities are cool, but actually people just enjoy talking with each other”, to which others nodded.

JYFs have mechanisms for communicating with each other via social media and use these regularly to remain connected.

When asked what the Settlement could change JYFs offered improving internet connection, drinking fountains around the Settlement, additional showers in communal bathrooms

Appendix 1: Future of the Settlement Survey Questions

Tell us about you

1. What is your age: 15-30, 31-50, 51-70, 71 +, or N/A as group response from a number of Friends
2. What area in Aotearoa do you live?
3. Thinking about your history of visiting the Settlement what makes this place special for you including what event or experiences brought you here?
 - a. If you have not visited, would you like to tell us a little bit about why this is?
4. Thinking about future seminars at the Settlement, the preference is to:
 - Continue as they have been
 - Only last for one day
 - Be delivered online only
 - Be delivered online as an optional way of participating
 - Be organised by the Settlement for delivery online to Monthly Meetings
 - Work with the Quaker Learning and Spiritual Development team to build a library of online seminars for the use of Quaker groups nationwide
5. From the list below, tick any that appeal to you regarding future use of the Settlement:
 - Seminars
 - Resident friend possibilities
 - Outreach
 - Spiritual retreat
 - Holiday destination
 - Wwoofing/ Quaker service
 - Other: describe

6. WEST is venturing into a 'pay as led' pricing structure for the use of our spaces in the hope of increasing accessibility for those who have low means or have significant travel costs. Do you think having a fully furnished home (pay as led) available for short term stays encourage greater participation? How could this be promoted and actualised?

a. Any other ideas for increasing use and participation of the buildings and spaces at the Settlement?

7. How much of a priority should it be for the Society of Friends to sustain the Settlement?

1, not a priority: we have more important matters

2

3

4

5, absolutely

8. What would be your wildest dream for the Settlement 20-30 years from now?

9. What could the Settlement change?

10. Any other comments:

Appendix 2 – Questions that guided Focus Groups with YF and JYF

Thinking about your history of visiting the Settlement what makes this place special for you

Would having a fully furnished home (pay as led) at the Settlement encourage younger Friends to be here?

Would you see the Settlement as somewhere to come with your whānau for a holiday?

Any ideas they may have to support greater involvement of YFthinking of seminars, work weekends, as a venue

What types of concerns could be the subject of a seminar for JYF? If you had to run a seminar what would your topic be

What would be your wildest dream for the Settlement 20-30 years from now?
What could the Settlement change?

Appendix 3: Themes and initial coding

Themes	Community	Education and Community Outreach	Physicality
Codes	<p>Example of living</p> <p>A thriving sustainable community</p> <p>Sense of community</p> <p>Hospitality</p> <p>Education, Quaker processes, role model using Quaker values</p> <p>New ideas, new ways</p> <p>Connection to other communities</p> <p>Holiday/ retreat</p> <p>Te reo, Te Ao Maori, Te Tiriti, manawhenua relationships</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>Financially sustainable</p> <p>Diversity of gifts</p> <p>Mixed age Quaker community</p>	<p>Example of living</p> <p>Peace and quiet</p> <p>Hybrid seminars</p> <p>Seminar diversity</p> <p>Travel assistance for seminars, costs, QEF</p> <p>Youth groups</p> <p>Ecological focus</p> <p>Permaculture workshops</p> <p>Wwoofers</p> <p>Climate change</p> <p>Outreach, retreats</p> <p>Activism</p> <p>Family focus</p> <p>Learning</p> <p>Like-minded groups</p> <p>Offsite contact people, board members</p>	<p>Capacity big events</p> <p>Seminars in other cities</p> <p>Cost of housing</p> <p>Cohousing</p> <p>Short term rentals</p> <p>Smaller houses</p> <p>Quaker retirement</p> <p>Old Quakers</p> <p>Committed Quakers</p> <p>Refugee options</p> <p>Peace and quiet</p> <p>Diversity of gifts</p> <p>Financially sustainable</p> <p>Grounds</p> <p>Quiet room</p> <p>Welcoming hospitality</p> <p>Living sustainably, sharing resources - cars</p> <p>Financially</p>

	<p>Elderly support</p> <p>Staff contracts, outside help</p> <p>Younger people, specific needs</p> <p>Youth groups</p> <p>Outreach and retreats</p> <p>Resident friends</p> <p>Building community, new residents, buddy system in the Settlement</p> <p>Expanding community</p> <p>Like-minded groups</p> <p>Wwoofers</p> <p>Open days</p> <p>Improved publicity, earlier, using all Quaker networks</p> <p>Greater Quaker presence</p> <p>WEST linkages</p> <p>Connection with Wanganui monthly meeting</p> <p>Communications, QS handbook, West</p>	<p>Quaker commitments</p> <p>New technologies,</p> <p>Seminars fully online</p> <p>Outside group seminars, education focus</p> <p>Publicity, stall at Whanganui market</p>	<p>sustainable</p> <p>Urban-rural balance</p> <p>Location</p> <p>Rewilding</p> <p>Wwoofers</p> <p>Upgrade facilities</p> <p>Allow alcohol?</p> <p>Conference centre somewhere else</p> <p>Seminars in other cities</p> <p>Communications</p> <p>Staff contracts</p> <p>Employed staff, catering</p> <p>Outside help</p> <p>Hospitality</p>
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	agenda Partnership with Yearly Meeting		
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Appendix 4: Hybrid Seminar Feedback from Co-Facilitator

Stories of the Spirit seminar, 17 - 19 June 2022

First thoughts on how the arrangements went by Elizabeth Duke

For Seminar Committee, Management Meeting, Quaker Learning & Spiritual Development Committee, Quaker Education Fund Committee, Clerk of WEST

These are reflections on holding a seminar inclusive of onsite and online participants. I had thought it was the first, but Ronis Chapman and Michael Searle say they have done it before at the Settlement.

Particular features of this event

The seminar was planned by Murray Short, who invited Thomas Owen and me (Elizabeth Duke) to join him in facilitation. Thomas is living in the Yukon, so took part online via the Zoom link. Shortly before the date Murray found that the after-effects of Covid were leaving him exhausted by very little activity, so that it was impossible for him to be at the seminar in person, and he contributed one presentation online. This left a single onsite facilitator.

Thomas and I worked in advance and ad hoc on necessary modification of the programme, which had originally been developed in our planning with Murray. All of us missed Murray greatly, while feeling that he was indeed with us. Thomas facilitated parts of the sessions, and I facilitated others, while dealing with arrangements onsite. Thomas may wish to comment on this document!

It's impossible for one person to manage both the actual facilitation of the programme, and the online link. I have huge thanks to Ronis and Michael who set up the equipment, and managed it for Friday and Saturday; many thanks, too, to Marion Sanson who was at the controls on Saturday night and Sunday.

Thanks partly to Covid, several registrations came in near the event, and one Friend had to move from in person to online. This added extra complications to the work of the Settlement contact (Lyneke Onderwater).

Participants

There were 19 in person, plus Ronis, Michael and me, and 8 online, plus Thomas facilitating electronically. One of those online does not have email or

internet and connected by phone; she has done this successfully at previous Friends' events, and it worked this time.

Enabling equal participation (as far as possible).

In the Quiet Room we needed 22 chairs in a part circle, such that all could see the screen, and no-one was hidden behind others. The size of the circle meant that these participants weren't easily visible to those connecting online, though we could see them well onscreen. We focused the camera on each person who was speaking, and called them by name, which helped. The person at controls was usually free to pay attention to the camera, though it could be useful to have a roster of volunteers for this job. Those online were asked to indicate a wish to speak by the raised hand function, which seemed to work. If everyone was being invited to contribute, I mostly went to the online group first, to make sure they weren't lost. They have said they appreciated this. When the Friend connecting by phone was present, I called on her specifically.

On Saturday night we showed a film. Murray sent the link to Ronis and Michael, who played it from their home. It was clearly visible on the screen for both groups of participants, but wasn't possible for the phone participant.

Some parts of the sessions involved work in small groups. Those online formed two groups, using the breakout function, later merging into one after their number reduced. There were four in person groups, one in the Quiet Room with Zoom mic and camera off so that this group and the online Friends did not disturb one another, and the others in the lobby, library and dining room. When groups were invited to feed back, each of the 6 or 5 was called on specifically.

There was no use of screen share, material thrown up, or writing on whiteboard. Some material was circulated in advance, and participants were asked to bring or have available part of it. It would have been helpful to have made available the small group discussion topics by screen share / on paper or whiteboard. This fell by the wayside partly because of late changes to the presentations to adjust for Murray's absence.

Online participants necessarily missed out on the opportunities for informal one to one or group conversations during tea and meal breaks, though because the Zoom was left open they reported that they had good informal times together. There was a laptop open in the library for those onsite to chat

with the online group while enjoying their cuppa, but apparently no-one took advantage of this.

Times of worship seemed to work well. I think a good number of Friends are now used to experiencing and contributing to worship on this combined basis.

Suggestions to make future combined seminars less hectic

Advance material needs to be rethought. The trifold leaflet is still adapted to in person participation, and it was difficult to know how to register for online, either with the leaflet or through the Quaker website. So the Settlement contact had to deal with more emails than would have been necessary. For Friends not using email, a postal address for forms continues to be useful. I can see that it's preferable not to circulate the Settlement contact's phone number widely, to keep their workload manageable, but could there be a phone number for facilitators to offer to Friends who can't get in touch electronically?

A clear timetable of sessions needs to be sent out in good time to online participants. It's usually fine for those in person to arrive and take the event as it comes, but those Zooming in need to know how to arrange their lives for the weekend.

Advance reading material can go out attached to email for most people, but there needs to be enough time for postal delivery to those without internet, such as our phone participant. Probably nothing can be done if those without internet register at short notice. It would be a pity to refuse late registrations, which are often for good reason, but people who can't get their material in time to absorb it are at a disadvantage.

People and skills

Depending on the number of facilitators, and their familiarity with equipment such as that at the Settlement, there is likely to be a need for one person to focus throughout on the technical side. It seems unfair to expect Settlement residents to develop skills and to give time to this at every seminar, though they may be able to at times. I suggest that we need to think of regularly offering support (whether just a free weekend onsite, travel costs, or even some pay on contract) to Friends who would be willing to contribute in this way, possibly Young Friends who might be able to pick seminars which interested them, and join in the consideration of topics to the extent possible.

If there are two or more facilitators, who between them have the familiarity with the equipment and its use, they may be able to schedule the event without further assistance, but this depends on the nature of the programme. Someone at the Settlement would need to set up the host facility for them.

During the seminar I had the assistance of a roster of participants to keep an eye on the onscreen people, and check when they were indicating a wish to speak. This seemed very helpful, even though not often necessary. We asked online people to use the raised hand function, though with the small number it was also clear if someone simply raised their own hand. There were a good number of experienced Friends present who gave me cheerful support in many ways.

I was not able to concentrate on how far the less experienced participants played a full part in the whole-group discussions; this is where a second onsite facilitator has a role. However, it seems clear that they were fully active in the small groups.

Registration fees

I think it is very reasonable that Friends taking part by Zoom should be charged a small fee such as this time's \$30, to contribute to the ongoing Settlement costs. Perhaps one fee per screen connected? It would help for this to be explained briefly and simply in the registration materials. Would QEF consider small scholarships for Friends for whom even this amount would be extremely difficult?

Underlying principle

The Settlement is a part of Yearly Meeting, which takes pride in it.

Seminars are part of the ongoing spiritual life of Yearly Meeting, which has a responsibility in making sure they offer the best opportunities to Friends. Some of this responsibility is exercised through the work done by Quaker Learning and Spiritual Development Committee in helping to develop the seminar programme. I suggest that some responsibility may be exercised through financial support to enable the technical aid, by which Friends who can't attend in person can take a very full part online.

The general opinion at the end of the seminar was that the combined pattern had worked successfully. I have not seen any specific comments which may be on the evaluation sheets.

Finally

The Settlement residents are generous hosts of seminars. My thanks for to them all for keeping such a warm and beautiful place for us, and especial thanks to those who gave particular support to our seminar.