

**Worcester Quaker Meeting**

**Friends Meeting House, Sansome Place, Worcester WR1 1UG**

**[worcesterfriendsclerks@outlook.com](mailto:worcesterfriendsclerks@outlook.com)**

7<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Robin Walker  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Robin Walker,

Militarism in schools.

Worcester Quakers are very concerned about the exposure of early teenage local children in Worcestershire to weapons and military careers. This concern is not a merely a reminder of our well known pacifism. It is opposition to the normalisation and the societal implications of handling weapons to pupils to **children as young as eleven years of age**. The event giving rise to our concern was an open evening for upcoming secondary pupils at Tudor Grange school in Worcester in 2017, when a military cadet group were present with weapons. Even parents who do not share our beliefs may well be concerned at the cadet presence in schools and the legitimisation and use of weapons, including rifle shooting training, when there is an understandable concern about the growing number of violent crimes and deaths among teenagers.

Our concern was reinforced by the response to the parent (of a prospective pupil). The context was promotion of military careers for particular social groups, to improve recruitment to the armed forces. You would expect Quakers to be dismayed by this perspective. However, our objection to such official encouragement to **such a young age group** may well be shared by others, particularly given the reported social problems of some when readjusting to a less regimented life style after military service.

We realise you will probably have a different starting point to ourselves but we would appreciate re-assurance that the Government has considered the **downsides** of this normalisation of weapons etc and is sure that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages of exposing the younger age groups to this kind of thinking.

You will note that we are also circulating this letter to others in the local community to alert them to this issue. We look forward to your response and would welcome a chance to discuss this issue with you.

Yours sincerely,

Lea Cowin and Val Brittin  
**Co-clerks of Worcester Quaker Meeting**  
**Part of Worcestershire and Shropshire Area Quaker Meeting**

Cc Brandon Clayton Chair of WCC

Simon Geraghty Leader of WCC and Cabinet Minister for Finance

Marcus Hart WCC Cabinet Member with responsibility for Education and Skills

Revd. Canon Owain Bell (Chairperson Worcestershire Interfaith Forum)

Revd. Mary Austin (Secretary Worcestershire Interfaith Forum)

Bishop of Worcester Rt Revd Dr John Inge

Local Church Groups

Kate Griffiths  
Committee Officer to the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education  
County Hall  
Spetchley Road  
Worcester  
WR5 2NP

**For the Attention of the Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education  
(SACRE)**

**Re: Militarism in schools**

Worcester Quakers wrote to Robin Walker MP and also copied in Marcus J Hart, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, over our deep concern over **Militarism in Schools**. (A copy of the letter is enclosed/attached)

Marcus Hart has now informed us that he has passed on our concerns to you - SACRE.

We are writing to ask how we could contribute to your discussion and explain our concerns. Maybe even sending a Quaker representative to the Meeting when this will be on the Agenda.

We note that your next Meeting is on 15<sup>th</sup> May but don't see this subject itemised on your Agenda. Perhaps it is something you will consider at the next Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> October?

In Friendship

*Val Brittin*

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Co-Clerks of Worcester Quaker Meeting

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