

WHAT HAS FARINGDON PEACE GROUP BEEN UP TO THIS YEAR?

In October Faringdon Peace Group (FPG) held its AGM and celebrated its 37th birthday. It is an achievement and a rarity among small local groups like ours that we have kept going for so many years with regular monthly meetings and activities.

In the past year we have had well attended speaker meetings on a wide range of peace issues, international, national and local: the situation in Cuba, Syria and Yemen, the UN's peace-keeping missions and Trump's foreign policy; prospects for peace after the UK general election in June; dangerous developments at the local USAF base at Croughton, children's experiences of the second world war in Oxfordshire and local regicide Henry Marten from Shrivenham. Upcoming meetings will cover the threat of North Korea's nuclear weapons and Aung San Suu Kyi and Myanmar/Burma.

We held 'Women in Black' vigils to mark Remembrance Day and the situation in Bethlehem, and joined the Royal British Legion and other local groups in laying a wreath of red and white poppies on the War Memorial. We had a good number of people marching under the FPG banner at the annual rally at USAF Croughton.

We have supported national organisations working for peace and disarmament and local refugee support groups. At the AGM over £1000 was pledged to similar groups and also to support an international peace conference in Oxford next year and a Palestinian youth visit to Faringdon and Oxford next summer. The profits from one of our best Grand Peace Fetes ever last July enabled us to be generous in our donations. While the main value of the fete is in gathering kindred spirits together for a lovely day out in a beautiful setting, the proceeds do support all our meetings and activities throughout the year.

We were very sorry to lose two stalwart supporters of the peace group this year; David Morgan and Kath Wallis. They are greatly missed.

Despite very real challenges to peace at home and around the world, we were greatly encouraged by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to ICAN, a coalition of 468 peace, human rights, environment and development groups, for its groundbreaking efforts to achieve a treaty banning nuclear weapons. Although the UK is yet to sign up to the treaty, it gives us the courage to carry on campaigning.

FPG has no formal membership and all meetings are open to the public. Speaker meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month (except August and January) at 7.30pm. in the Friends Meeting House, Lechlade Road. See local press for details.

Karen Vogt