

## **Minute from Stevenage Meeting to Hertford & Hitchin Area Meeting**

*(This minute is presented to enable other local meetings to consider its content for discussion at our next Area business meeting in May)*

### **11:17 Membership**

Following Minute 5:17 from January, we met on 5<sup>th</sup> February to reflect upon the meaning of membership of the Religious Society of Friends. In worship, we shared our personal experiences. The decision to become a member or not had great meaning, and our decision to apply, or not to apply, was the outcome of deep reflection and discernment. However, some of us question what seems to have developed into a two-tier system of Members and Attenders, which can divide and exclude faithful participants in the life of our Meeting.

After our sharing, our discussion focused on the process of becoming a member, and barriers that membership presents to non-members. We concluded that, given changed circumstances since the current system was introduced, and given the extent to which ours and other Meetings depend upon those not in membership, and confusion about who is and who is not included in our worshipping community, further consideration of the process of membership would be helpful.

We send this minute to Area Meeting with the suggestion that the subject of membership be considered at a future meeting.