



GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

22-23 Nov 2008

St. Andrews

Min. 1 Reading

During Meeting for Worship we heard a reading from *Quaker Faith and Practice* 24.11 reminding us that the peace testimony is not a form of words but a way of living.

Min. 2 Welcome

We welcome two former QPSW volunteers, Robert Rhodes and Charlotte Smith, who will speak to us this afternoon.

We welcome 4 attenders to this GM.

We will record the total numbers of all present and add them to these minutes.

East of Scotland	19
South East Scotland	6
North of Scotland	5
West Scotland	<u>7</u>
Total:	41

Min. 3 New Members and deaths

We record the following new members since our last meeting:

David Kelso (W)
Jenni Ellis-Jenkins (E)
Mary Kennedy (W)

We record the following deaths since our last meeting:

Helen Douglas (W)
Will Mudie (E)
John Brown (E)

Min. 4 Reporter

We appoint Mary Latham from West Scotland AM to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask East Scotland AM to report on the next GM.

Min. 5 Scottish Churches Social Inclusion Network

Philip Bryers has reported to us on the work of the SCSIN, an associated ecumenical group with Action of Churches together in Scotland. Those who attend its meetings include normally full-time Church employees, working in communities across Scotland. It is a challenge to discern how Quakers can best contribute.

The network brings together many people working in areas of social deprivation. It supports campaigns, lobbying activities and public consciousness-raising on concerns

regarding inequalities and lack of inclusion. It responds as appropriate to government consultations on these matters. Specific areas of focus are poverty and social justice, debt, homelessness, racial justice, asylum and community regeneration.

Philip invited us to consider how we might engage more actively with the Network. We affirm the importance of this work, knowing that much crucial work is done in quiet circles.

As General Meeting, we do not have specific projects to which we give active support. Is there a need here?

We thank Philip for his report and ask that it be printed in the Scottish Friend. We encourage all Friends and Meetings to keep in contact with Philip on any local activities within this area of concern.

Min. 6 National Quaker week 2008

Robert Thompson, convenor of Outreach Function Group, has introduced a discussion on the work of National Quaker Week 2008, the second annual event of this kind. There were more events across Scotland this year, but there are still some hesitations about this type of activity.

Robert affirmed that the world needs to hear Quaker voices, as we have much to offer in terms of public concerns and ways of understanding and responding to conflicts and sources of violence. How can we raise public awareness of our existence and values?

We are challenged to take risks to make ourselves more visible.

Min. 7 Residential General Meeting – future choices

Our clerk has proposed that we might begin to think about a possible change to the present arrangement for a residential GM to be hosted by an Area Meeting in November of each year and consider whether we could combine the residential weekend at Kindrogan with the necessary business of GM in June of each year.

We ask our clerks to consult with Local Meetings about the location, venue and timing for residential GM in the future and report back. In addition, we hope that all of us can encourage lively discussion and response to the consultation.

Min. 8 Appointments

We agree to substitute the Representative Friend ex officio as our representative to the Members Meeting of Action of Churches Together in Scotland, in place of the GM Clerk.

We agree that the normal period of appointment of Convenor of the Adult Education & Conference Function Group be changed from one year to three years.

We agree to appoint the following:

1. Convenor of the Adult Education & Conference Function Group
Margaret Gladden To December 2009
2. Nominations to Quaker Committee on Christian and Interfaith Relations
Anne Davies May 2009 to April 2010
Margaret Peacock May 2009 to April 2011
(Actual appointment is made by Meeting for Sufferings)

3. World Day of Prayer Committee
Alison Chalmers January 2009 to December 2010
4. Scottish Christian Aid Advisory Committee
Martin Mansell December 2008 to December 2010
5. Clerk of Trustees
Philip Bryers November 2008 to December 2010
6. Examiner of Accounts for 2009
Andrew Marlow

Min. 9 Report from Representative Friend

Pamala McDougall has reported on her work as Representative Friend. Among many other activities (to be reported in Scottish Friend), she and a small support group organised, on behalf of Action of Churches Together in Scotland, a study day on Quakerism at Scottish Churches House in October. The programme had been well received.

Pamala drew our attention to a forthcoming ecumenical conference “Edinburgh 2010 – witnessing to Christ today” in which Friends, as a member of ACTS, will be involved. She will be asking for volunteers to help in preparations for this.

Min. 10 Review of the new roles of Clerk and Representative Friend

It is now about a year since GM agreed to split the role of GM Clerk as it had developed into two elements – that of the business of GM in session, and the preparation for and work arising from it, and that of representing Quakers in Scotland to external bodies.

The Clerk and Representative Friend met recently to discuss how this arrangement has been working over the year. They both feel it has been working well.

We recognise that the Clerk has the support of an Assistant Clerk. Robin and Pamala have suggested that an Assistant Representative Friend, offering the same type of support as an Assistant Clerk, would be helpful to the Representative Friend and to GM. We ask Nominations Function Group to seek a name.

Min. 11 Quaker Peace and Social Witness Placements

We have welcomed Rob Rhodes and Charlotte Smith, each of whom has taken part in the QPSW Placements Programme in recent years.

Rob’s one year placement, from September 2004, was in Belgrade with the Youth Initiative for Human Rights. It was then a small organisation. We learnt that, with the support of QPSW, the organisation has now expanded into the neighbouring countries of the region. Rob’s vivid account of the work he was engaged in has helped us to become much better informed about the complexities of the past and of the present in that region.

Charlotte’s placement was a UK one, with the Oxford Research Group (ORG). She has given us a most interesting overview of the work of the ORG and of the way in which this work is carried out.

Both Charlotte and Rob spoke appreciatively of the time at Woodbrooke and the training they received there before the placement, and of the support they received from QPSW throughout it.

Their presentations have affirmed to us the multi-faceted value of this part of the centrally managed work of Britain Yearly Meeting, and we thank them both.

Min.12 Budget for 2009

Daphne Wassermann has introduced the proposed budget for 2009 and proposed donations.

We agree that:

1. We will not charge individuals for attendance at Residential GMs
2. We will increase the estimated cost of Residential GM to £600
3. We will increase the planned subsidy to GM for the Kindrogan conference to £1000, to make it more affordable for families
4. We will not change the quotas from Area Meetings
5. We will increase the annual donation to the Alternatives to Violence Project to £200.

We accept the proposed budget and donations, as amended.

Min. 13 Meeting for Sufferings

Peter Kennedy has reported on Meeting for Sufferings. They received a report on National Quaker Week 2008 which included imaginative ideas such as a pub quiz on Quakerism.

There was discussion on the Quaker Life Working Group report on its consultation on same-sex relationships. There was support for the revision of chapter 16 of Quaker Faith and Practice on marriage procedures to provide greater clarity of our Quaker understanding of the varieties of committed relationships. We need to make our own practices more consistent throughout Britain Yearly Meeting in relation to celebrations of commitment.

We note that the Meeting for Sufferings Minute included the statement that:

“It is evident from the sharing of the wide variety of experiences recounted in our meeting that the process of discerning and working on our understanding of loving and committed relationships is a necessary and uplifting one. We wish these discussions to continue at local and area meetings and at Yearly Meeting, including sharing patterns and models of celebrating and upholding same sex committed relationships within our meetings.”

On the financial status of BYM, it was reported that the investment situation is as safe as it can be in the difficult situation of financial markets.

Min. 14 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to East Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this GM, and look forward to meeting again on March 7th in Edinburgh.

Robin Waterston

Clerk