

GM Internet Steering Group

1st February 2016 at 7pm, by Skype

Present: Chris Booth (South East Scotland AM), Martin McCaffery (East Scotland AM), Clive Potter (North Scotland AM), Marion Sharkey (GM Administrator), David Sterratt (GM Web manager)

Introductions

We gave brief introductions including our experience of the GM Scotland website and website experience in general:

Clive edits the Aberdeen LM and North AM pages. He set up a static site for Aberdeen in the '90s and knows HTML.

Marion is the GM administrator and has been editing pages on the site since she took up the post last year.

Martin hasn't been involved in the GM website thus far, but has experience of websites, and has also done IT work for Friends House, including QList, which is intended to be a secure directory of Quakers in BYM. He is a PhD student in Computer Science at St Andrews University.

Chris edits the Portobello & Musselburgh LM page. He works as professional web developer, and has extensive experience of developing websites for organisations in the voluntary sector, nowadays using the Wordpress Content Management System (CMS).

David has run the GM Scotland Drupal CMS on a server he co-owns with a friend for about 9 years, but has not been involved with day-to-day editing until now. He works in the School of Informatics at Edinburgh University, but websites are not a major part of his job.

Our remit

We discussed the remit document. Minute of 11 of GM Scotland in June 2015 states that there is a "need to develop the GM website, which has various shortcomings" and also suggests GM website could have a "similar look and feel to the new BYM website". It is not stated how different the developed website should be from our current website. Martin Burnell, Clerk to GM, has suggested that we could produce a trial website that Friends in Scotland could look at for a period of around 6 weeks, which suggests that GM is expecting substantial changes in either or both of the graphic design of the website and the way the information on the site is structured.

David would very much value the insights from a variety of perspectives that members of the Steering Group can provide while the site is being developed.

Sharing our impressions of the QuakerScotland website

We collated the following "Smiles" and "Frowns" about the GM Website:

Smiles	Frowns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a lot wrong with it • Newsletters are good • Documents are good • Minutes are good • Easy to use • Good for finding a Quaker Meeting • Structure is good • Site is “responsive”, i.e. on a tablet or phone the page rearranges so that the text is still legible • Events listing, including advertising AM events in 40 mile radius 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of awareness of the site among Friends • There is a lack of knowledge about what can be done using the site, e.g. adding a page for Dundee Friends Property Trust • There is not much focus on Quaker activities that aren’t Parliamentary Engagement • There should be more links back to the Quakers in Britain website • Looks old-fashioned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Too simple (even by Quaker standards) ◦ Doesn’t look as beautiful as the BYM site ◦ Old-fashioned looking logo ◦ General impression is dour, Scottish ... & Quakerly? • Few photographs • Site could be responsive in a better way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ menus move to bottom of page ◦ table on “Find a Meeting” page • How accessible is the site? • The “Find a Meeting” page could be made more dynamic, by putting the map at the top • Event listing: Many meetings in rural parts of Scotland are >40 miles apart • The site does not use the BYM Q • The introductory text is not very welcoming – could be in a more active voice • The “About Quakers” text needs reworking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ order of items is a bit odd ◦ some of it is quite old ◦ Peace & Social witness page is a bit bare ◦ Advices & Queries have no explanation • Some AMs and LMs would like to have more prominent pages, not buried within the GM Scotland Template. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ It might be possible to put the AM/LM title where “Quakers in Scotland” currently sits. • It would be good to have more informative AM pages – but this is a job

	for AM editors
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- The interface for editors could be made easier

Analysis of web statistics

We had a quick look at the web statistics collected by the AWStats system, which analyses server logs and does not depend on Javascript. There are around 2000-3000 unique visitors per month. Relatively popular pages include the front page, the “Find a Meeting” page, many of the pages in the “About Quakers” section, some LM pages, e.g. Central Edinburgh, and recent news items. The “Statcounter” system (<http://statcounter.com/p10630885/summary/?guest=1>), which uses Javascript rather than server logs, is also operating. Statcounter won’t get full information from people not using Javascript (*note added after the meeting*: though it should get some information, as there is a hidden image in the page).

We thought it would be desirable to use a better stats system. Chris recommended PiWik, which should give better insights into how people use the site. Martin suggested that the reason some links were more visited might be because they were better connected to the main menu.

Ideas arising out of discussion

- Could we have more interaction with visitors, e.g. forms or surveys, or perhaps even via social media, such as Twitter. Marion does not get many enquiries about Quakerism (~1 a month by email), and could deal with more enquiries.
- Does “Engagement” mean much to people or should the link say “Parliamentary Engagement”?

Issues for immediate action

- To raise awareness of the site and its redevelopment, **David will draft & circulate an article for *Scottish Friend*, which we will all then comment on.** The deadline may be in the next two weeks.
- **Chris will do an accessibility audit of the site.**
- **David will send Chris server logs, and Chris will analyse them with PiWik.**

Issues for future discussion

- Design
- Information about Quakerism
- More content, or the impression of more content that isn’t Parliamentary Engagement. For example reports on events.
- How does the QuakerScotland site interact with the BYM website?
 - Do we want to keep people on the Scottish site?

- Maybe Quakers in Scotland will be offered space on the BYM site.
- How do Friends use the site for internal information
 - Is there demand for password-protected areas of the site for less-public information

Next meeting

Our next meeting will be on Monday 29th February at 7pm, by Skype. We will discuss

- the issues of Design and the interaction with the BYM website
- a possible face-to-face meeting.