

GM Website Development Steering Group

29th February 2016 at 7pm, by Skype

Present: Ruth Bacon (West Scotland AM), Chris Booth (South East Scotland AM), Bronwen Currie (West Scotland AM), Martin McCaffery (East Scotland AM), Marion Sharkey (GM Administrator), David Sterratt (GM Web manager)

Prevented: Clive Potter (North Scotland AM)

Worship & Introductions

We welcomed Ruth Bacon, who has been nominated by West Scotland AM to serve on the steering group. Ruth works in a university library and, although not a professional web developer, has an eye for what works on web pages. For this meeting only we also welcomed Bronwen Currie, who is serving on the West Scotland AM website development group.

West of Scotland update

A West Scotland AM Website Group has been set up to consider creating a new Area Meeting website. The group has funding for professional web development. Both this group and the GM Website Development Steering Group agree that we should keep each other informed of our work and should consider how we could work together.

Bronwen Currie summarised the “wish list” the West Scotland AM group has for their site. We discussed how the list compares to the current QuakerScotland (QS) website, and whether it is in line with our aspirations.

1. Rather than producing their own material for enquirers, they would link directly to the BYM “About Quakers” material.
 - On the QS website we thought that removing the current material and linking directly to BYM would be an improvement on the current “About Quakers” section, which is out of date in places. It is probably not worth writing our own “About Quakers” material, when we would be likely to cover very similar ground to the BYM material.
 - This would entail removing the “Read about Quakers on this site” link on the front page of our site. We could then replace our front page with a number of panels with images and teaser text linking to the various parts of the site.
 - We thought that the link to the BYM material could open in a new window, so that it was clearer that it was not part of the QS site.
 - We also thought about having an “About Quakers” page which had links to each of the BYM sections, and a section on the history of Quakers in Scotland; Bronwen had an idea for a potential author of this history.

2. Documents should be available.
 - There is already a system for adding documents to the QS website, which is used by some meetings, including West Scotland AM. However, the ease of use of the system needs to be reviewed.
3. Authentication for Friends so that they could read private documents and minutes.
 - This is technically possible on the QS site, but would require a certain amount of administration in order to set up users. We were not sure that for the number of Friends who would use the private documents, it would be worth the effort of setting up. It might be worth considering training Friends to use alternative services, such as Dropbox or Google Drive.
4. A more effective search facility than the one on the current QuakerScotland site.
 - The current search facility on the QS site only searches HTML documents, not PDFs. It is also probably not very good at determining relevant documents. It would be desirable to have a better search facility.
5. A contact form for every Meeting, as on the BYM site, so that email addresses can be hidden.
 - This would be desirable to set up on the QS site, and looks to be technically possible with the current infrastructure.
6. A list of office holders.
 - This would probably be useful for any Meeting, but some Friends may not wish to have their names attached to particular roles, so might require some sort of login system. It is currently possible to create pages and link to them from Meeting pages, but the pages do not appear in menus automatically. It would be desirable to have a neater, more intuitive way of adding pages.
7. An online chat facility.
 - We felt this was not a priority for the QS site, since there are other services that could offer the same functionality better and with less development effort.
8. Instructions on how to use the site.
 - Always a good idea. The QS instructions for authoring are reasonably up-to-date, but there are no instructions for users.
9. A calendar of events.
 - It is possible to add events to the QS website; see <http://www.quakerscotland.org/south-east> and <http://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work>. Events also appear on Meeting pages within 40 miles of the event. The current layout of events could probably be improved on.
10. Data protection issues would need to be considered.

- It is important to have a good understanding of data protection.

One issue which Friends in South East Scotland have is that currently AM pages (and LM pages) are somewhat buried under the “Quakers in Scotland” banner. One approach to solving this would be to have AM and LM “subsites” within the QuakerScotland site. The website of Pendle Hill AM (<http://pendlehillquakers.org.uk/>) has this structure, and one Friend in South East Scotland felt it would solve the problem of the AM site being buried.

We agreed that both the GM and West Scotland AM groups should keep each other informed of their activities.

What's on the BYM site?

We looked at the “About Quakers” section of the BYM site (<http://www.quaker.org.uk/about-quakers>). We agreed that the material looked attractive, with good use of pictures.

David reported on his discussions with Nik Dardson, website manager in Friends House. Nik has advised us that it's essential to be clear who the site's for and what we want to communicate at the start of the process; this can be summarised in a brief mission statement.

Nik and Friends House can help us by:

- allowing us to use their professional photos of Quakers
- sharing policy documents with us
- allowing us to use elements of their design.

We discussed the logo and font of the QS site. The BYM Q was broadly preferred over the Quakers in Scotland logo, though we did recognise that some Friends had the opposite preferences. We wondered about what each logo conveys. The BYM Q expresses the truth that we are part of BYM; the QS Q expresses the truth that we are a distinct entity within BYM.

We wondered whether using the BYM Q alongside a new, complementary logo that expresses our Scottish identity would be a compromise acceptable to Friends. There is precedent for this, as the QPSW dove-in-star logo is used next to the BYM logo. BYM do not want the BYM Q to be altered, so any extra element would have to go next to the logo. However, having two logos does present a problem for creating a favicon. Nik may be able to help with designer time to produce a design element, but we would need to be clear we would like this to happen before asking.

Face-to-face meeting

We agreed to meet on Saturday 23rd April from 11-4pm in Dundee.

We agreed that at the meeting we would like to decide:

- Who the site is for? e.g. Friends, Inquirers?
- What they want to find on the site?
- How AMs and LMs will fit into the site?

- How the site should be made accessible, i.e. suitable for screen-readers and other assistive technology.
- A design brief.

On the agenda will be:

- Looking at the current site, in particular its structure (site map)
- Discussion of other Quaker websites, in particular Friends in Wales and AM sites
- Analysis of web statistics (Chris)
- Accessibility audit of site (Chris)
- Demonstration of how content is added currently (David)
- Discussion of design, policy documents and photos from Friends House
- Ideally decisions on the questions above

What do we need to prepare for it?

- Look at sites of Friends in Wales, and other AMs.
- Look at material from Friends House, in particular pictures and policy documents. **David will share the documents Nik sent him, and will ask Nik to send us examples of photos.**

Engagement Page

Mairi Campbell-Jack and David have met and agreed some interim changes to the Engagement page. Both Mairi and David felt that “Action” might be a better name for the page. On reflection, we thought that “Our Work” (as used on the BYM page) was a better title. Note after meeting: Mairi agrees, and the title is now “Our Work”.

Find a Meeting Page

We agreed we should experiment with having the map above the table of meeting names. It would also be good to have the links to Area Meetings more prominent. **David will try to arrange this.**

Making notes of our meeting open

We agreed to post notes of our meetings and a brief description of the group’s work on a dedicated page on the QS site. **David will set this up.**