



RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

29th October, 2014

The Smith Commission
7th Floor One Atria
144 Morrison Street
EH3 8EX

Dear *Robert Smith*,

This letter encloses the submission of General Meeting for Scotland of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers in Scotland) to your consideration of what further powers should be devolved to the Scottish Parliament. It is supported by Quakers in Britain, which represents Quakers in England, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

Quakers have a 360 year long history of engagement with national and international affairs, an engagement which is driven by a radical faith rooted in Christianity. We have limited our submission to those areas in which we have been and are engaged and which we feel are immediately relevant to your enquiry.

Our Book of Discipline, *Quaker Faith and Practice*, advises us to 'try to discern new growing points in social and economic life' and challenges us, 'Are you working to bring about a just and compassionate society?' Our experience is that corporate discernment such as this takes time and we note with regret the very short time frame given for this stage of consultation, which means that our response (and we are sure the response of others) has been unduly rushed. We consider that increased consultation at the start of this process, such as through a constitutional convention, would have been a more effective way of both achieving consensus for the longer term and healing post referendum divisions.

We hope that further consultation will follow your consideration of submissions and look forward to engaging with the Smith Commission throughout this process.

In Friendship

Martin Burnell, Clerk: General Meeting for Scotland

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk: Britain Yearly Meeting