**THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

**EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING**

**TRUSTEES’ ANNUAL REPORT**

**AND ACCOUNTS**

**Year ended 31 December 2023**

**CHARITY SC020698**

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)**

EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Scottish Charity Number SC020698**

**Trustees Annual Report and Accounts: 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023**

Those serving as trustees at the date of this report and who served during the year are:

**Trustees:**

 Pam Apted (Clerk of Area Meeting)

 Pam Brunt (Treasurer)

 Peter Cheer

 Marion Sharkey

Gillian Swanson (Released 1 January 2023)

Cathy Kinnear (appointed 1 January 2023)

**Principal Address:** Peter Cheer

Trustee, East Scotland Area Meeting

1 Pitcullen Gardens,

Perth PH2 7EJ

**Bankers:** CAF Bank Ltd

 25 Kings Hill Avenue,

 West Malling

 Kent ME19 4JQ

 *Closed March 2023*

 Bank of Scotland

 1 Queen’s Gardens

 St Andrews

 KY 16 9TD

 *From March 2023*

**Independent Examiner:** Richard Raggett,

Haddo Cottage,

 Forgue

 Huntley AB54 6BX

**1. The Organisation of the Area Meeting**

East Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is an unincorporated association. The governing document was approved at an Area Meeting on 16 May 2009 and duly signed by the Joint Clerks. It is based on “Quaker Faith and Practice”, the Book of Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain.

Trustees have been appointed in accordance with the provisions of the governing document which provides for the Trustees to be drawn from the Clerks, Treasurer, Conveners of Elders and Overseers (where possible) and for representation from each Local Meeting.

East Scotland Area Meeting is a constituent part of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) of The Religious Society of Friends, which is the governing body of the Society in Britain. The Area Meeting is the basic business unit of the Society and within it are Local Meetings. We appoint a representative to serve on Meeting for Sufferings, the standing representative body of BYM.

**2 The Objects of the Area Meeting**

The object of East Scotland Area Meeting (ESAM), as stated in its Governing Document, is “the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain in the area of East Scotland Area Meeting and beyond, as laid down in the Book of Christian Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain”.

Within East Scotland Area Meeting income and property are used, as stated in the Governing Document, “to further the Area Meeting’s object by work such as:

1. Strengthening the life and witness of Quaker meetings in the area of East Scotland Area Meeting and beyond;
2. Spreading the message of Quakers and interpreting and developing the thought and practice of the Religious Society;
3. Undertaking Quaker service for the relief of suffering at home and abroad;
4. Funding the concerns that Quaker meetings in the area of East Scotland Area Meeting or beyond have adopted or agreed to support;
5. Providing for the pastoral care of individual members and attenders including assistance to those in need and for education;
6. Maintaining and developing Quaker meeting houses as places for public worship and from which to carry our witness into the world;
7. Administering and maintaining the organisation of East Scotland Area Meeting and contributing to the support of General Meeting for Scotland and of Britain Yearly Meeting.”

The objects of the Area Meeting deliver public benefit, by virtue of their grounding in the provision of public worship.

**3 Achievements and performance**

**Area Meeting:**

East of Scotland Area Meeting met four times in 2023.

Our meetings included regular updates from our representatives on the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group and from Meeting for Sufferings. We welcomed speakers on the work of Quaker Life, engaging with the Scottish Parliament and how Quakers are organised in Scotland. One highlight was an inspirational talk from a speaker about his life journey of seeking, finding and exploring.

ESAM sponsors and provides financial support for members to attend Quaker events and courses for the deepening of individual and collective spiritual understanding and to keep in touch with developments within the Religious Society of Friends.

The Parliamentary Engagement Officer post is now a permanent post funded by Britain Yearly Meeting. We continue to provide financial support each year to the Northern Friends Youth Events Trust, to Northern Friends Peace Board and to General Meeting for Scotland, the quarterly meetings of which have been attended by members from our area meeting.

***Activities of Local Quaker Meetings during 2023***

***Dundee Local Meeting:***

2023 saw further progress and development in the life of our Meeting. More members and attenders have been returning to Meeting for Worship on Sunday at the Meeting House. We have welcomed a good number of enquirers and visitors during the year. Working groups have been established to carry out the work of MH: Lettings; and Housekeeping; supporting our administrator.

Discussion groups continue which have moved from online to the Meeting House. The second half of 2023 had the return of “Becoming Friends”. Five sessions took place with more being considered for Spring 2024. The monthly Shared Lunch returned during 2023 on the last Sunday of each month providing fellowship.

The Meeting supports Saint Salvador's Food bank and drop in cafe with a number of Friends attending on the first Sunday of the month. Our quarterly charitable collections continue and have supported a number of organisations during the year including the Peace Pledge Union and the Quaker International Education Trust.

***Perth Local Meeting:***

Perth LM is grateful for the cooperation and welcome of the Subud for continued bi-monthly Meetings for worship on the 2nd and last Sundays of the month. The Shared Rota for Eldership for Meeting for Worship (MfW) is working well. The centre has provided cupboard space which has enabled the development of a small library.

Meetings are blended with the discreet presence of the technology (a small lap-top with additional small speakers and microphone – all borrowed or donated) in the corner. Far-flung members (eg. from the Island of Colonsay), visitors and Members (wherever they are & for whatever reason) can be included in MfWs as well as being used for Local Business Meetings and even joining in a singing group.

Children’s Meeting is offered on the second Sunday of the month. Several Non-Blended All Age Worship dates in the Subud were organised, being well attended and appreciated.

Our ‘home in the Subud’ awayday with the Kindlers which had been postponed for the last 3 years took place on a Saturday in March. This was well worth the wait and provided a boost to our spirits and feeling of community.

Members continue with interests in Prison Justice & Chaplaincy, Interfaith, Perth Action of Churches Together, witness in Perth to Hiroshima Day & Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Members join the The Light Group monthly zoom, MfW elsewhere, courses for personal recreation & spiritual exploration, Local Meeting ‘Shared Circles’ for pastoral care (by zoom and also in person) and most importantly taking an active part in the wider Quaker organisations.

**St Andrews Local Meeting:**

Meeting for Worship is held every Sunday throughout the year. There is a meeting for worship in the Meeting House for 30 minutes on Thursday lunchtimes. A children's meeting is held on some Sundays. A fortnightly young Friends group is a recent new opportunity for worship and fellowship.

A meeting was organised in September to give opportunity for sharing of experiences of Meeting for Worship. We had two special meetings to reflect together on whether our premises at 2, Howard Place continue to meet our needs. As a result, we will investigate possible ways of improving the access from the street.

Members of the Meeting continued to be engaged in a range of voluntary activities, strengthened by mutual support within our community. Special collections were held each month for a range of local and international good causes.

Several of our members were actively involved in discussions among Quakers across Scotland on ways of working more simply and sustainably, acknowledging our falling membership numbers.

The Meeting House makes space available to other organisations compatible with Quaker values and is well used during most weeks.

**Sustainability:**

Our Yearly Meeting made a commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and asks us report on actions taken.

Use of blended meetings in Perth and Dundee continues to reduce car miles. Perth Meeting work closely with the Subud to minimize heat loss when we meet, turning down radiators and lights. Perth Meeting successfully hosted both East Scotland Area Meeting and General Meeting for Scotland in Perth Library, where the provided Zoom facility greatly enhanced these two meetings, reducing travel whilst increasing the level of participation.

The gas boiler serving the St Andrews Meeting House and kitchen was decommissioned in February after replacement by electrical infra-red panels for heating and point of use water heaters for the kitchen sink and toilet basin.

From Jan – Dec 2023, overall energy usage was Gas 3663 kWh, Electricity 3929kWh. Both are supplied through Good Energy. Comparisons over time are difficult as usage includes outside room lets and consumption within the rented flat. However, figures for the previous year were Gas 9282 kWh, Electricity 1970 kWh.

The next step is upgrading insulation prior to replacement gas boiler with an energy efficient system.

***Financial Review of 2023***

***Area Meeting***

The reserves retained within the Area Meeting as a whole are held largely within the three Local Meetings (Dundee, Perth and St Andrews). At the year end, Area Meeting itself held £7479.97 (2022: £6,048.00).

The Trustees aim to hold reserves at Area Meeting level sufficient to cover its routine cash flow requirements. Each year they review likely Area Meeting expenditure and income and set a levy to be collected from the three local meetings accordingly.

**Collated accounts**

The collated accounts bring together the transactions of the Area Meeting and its three Local Meetings. Income for the year totalled £52470 (2022: £63,021) Expenditure for the year was £42190 (2022: £61199). The surplus for the year was £10271 (2022: deficit of £1822

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| ***Balance of Reserves*** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | ***2023 Total*** |  | *2022 Total* |
| Dundee LM | *3060.28* |  | ***2,135.93*** |
| Perth LM | *4,094.50* |  | ***4,812.25*** |
| St Andrews LM | *21399.30* |  | ***12,767.23*** |
| Area Meeting |  *7479.97* |  | ***6,048.00*** |
| Total | *36,034.05* |  | ***25,763.41*** |

Reserves are set by the Area Meeting and three Local Meetings after determining spending commitments, cash flows, provision for future needs and potential risks risks. Thereafter, any surplus monies are donated to Britain Yearly Meeting to support Quaker work undertaken under its auspices.

 In 2024, provision needs to be made to upgrade of the heating system at the St Andrews Meeting House . There is uncertainty of the costs involved as Quakers in Scotland work towards creating a single Quaker SCIO in Scotland. Trustees therefore agreed to increase the reserve level and not send a donation to Britain Yearly Meeting.

Signed on behalf of all Trustees

***Peter Cheer, Clerk of Trustees Date: 15 April 2024***

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER’S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING**

**CHARITY NUMBER SC020698**

I report on the accounts of the charity for the period ended 31st December 2022.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

The charity’s trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) 2005 Act and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER’S STATEMENT

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER’S STATEMENT

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention

* 1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
* To keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1)(a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
* To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2009 Accounting regulations

 have not been met, or

* 1. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Richard Raggett Date: 19 April 2024