

PAPER A

PEWG: Review of Core Priorities (Report for GM November 2022)

- 1) **Current Work:** there are three core priority areas (summarised below) covering a wide canvass of often interlinked matters relevant to Quaker testimonies. PEWG seeks to influence the Scottish Government and Parliament on specific topics within these areas, as opportunities arise.

Current Priority areas	Current work focus
Peace and Peacebuilding	Promotion of Peace Education in Scottish schools (Peace at the Heart report and campaign); Scotland's Peace Institute; Enhanced controls over Scottish funding of arms manufacturers
Climate Emergency	Advocacy via Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS); Implementation of the Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings strategy and the Just Transition Fund; Climate Justice;
Economic Justice and Land Reform	Climate Justice – the Loss & Damage fund; Fuel poverty (Heat in Buildings strategy) Land Reform Bill
Other Areas	Liaising with the Community Justice Group where political advocacy needs/opportunities arise; Human Rights: following through via Together Scotland the incorporation into Scottish Law of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

- 2) **Building on existing work – staying the course:** PEWG is keen to maintain focus in areas where doors seem to be opening, namely Peace Education, influencing the development of Scotland's proposed Peace Institute, climate work via SCCS where Andrew currently chairs their parliamentary advocacy group (particularly climate justice and the Loss and Damage Fund), and the implementation of the Heat in Buildings strategy (home retro-fitting) and the Just Transition Fund; likewise, liaising with the Scottish Quakers Community Justice Working Group (SQCJWG) when political advocacy opportunities arise and continuing a conversation with Government on strengthening controls over Scottish funding to arms manufacturers in Scotland.
- 3) **Looking ahead:** the Scottish Government is expected to bring forward two bills during 2023, namely a Human Rights Bill and a Land Reform

Bill. We would expect to respond to consultation on a new Human Rights Bill and to continue to work with Together Scotland on the incorporation of the UNCRC into Scottish Law. We have been greatly helped by a group of Quakers enabling us to respond to the recent Government consultation on Land Reform. We hope to have similar support when the Land Reform Bill reaches Parliament as we do not feel we have sufficient knowledge to engage with this priority area by ourselves.

- 4) **Consultation:** Andrew Tomlinson (PEO) met all four Area Meetings during May to July this year. The convenors met with Paul Parker (BYM Recording Clerk) and with Oliver Robertson (Head of witness and worship (leads on QPSW)) along with Andrew and Grace da Costa (Public Affairs and Media Manager (leads on political advocacy)) to gain a BYM/QPSW perspective and to ensure work is in harmony with the advocacy work aimed at Westminster. These meetings generally affirmed support for PEWG's current work. **Ideas arising from consultation: Area Meetings:** although some welcome suggestions came from individual Friends - refugees and sanctuary, racial justice, poverty (housing and cost of living crisis), increased focus on land reform and Universal Basic Income (UBI) - there was nothing that emerged consistently across AMs as a new focus point for advocacy; **BYM/QPSW:** work is focussed on Peacebuilding and Climate Justice, so there is much common ground here. They are developing new work on Defending Democracy (closely linked to the re-launched Quaker Truth and Integrity Group (QTIG)); **PEWG members:** asylum and migration (limited aspects of this are devolved), criminal justice and the prison system (we work closely with the SQCJWG).
- 5) **How the PEWG works:** we (PEWG and our PEO) are operating at capacity. We must remain focussed. Our job is directed at the Scottish Parliament and is, therefore, limited to matters within Scotland's devolved powers. Working with truth and integrity, listening as well as asking, are foundation stones of our work. We must not underestimate the importance of building relationships with our elected representatives and their officials based on a tone of listening and understanding, on fostering deeper dialogue. We aim to be flexible as opportunities for advocacy arise and to respond to Friends' concerns wherever possible, and we welcome any enabling help. We recognise that our work at any one time can be divided into three levels: points of immediate priority action; points of planned action; areas of watching brief.
- 6) **PEWG's proposal for priorities going forward:** the priorities from January 2023 should remain worded with wide scope as now, enabling PEWG to focus on specific opportunities as they arise. This would mean that our work would look like this:

Core Priority Area	Forward work focus (as currently envisaged)
Peacebuilding	Promotion of Peace Education in Scottish schools Influencing involvement of Scotland's Peace Institute Enhanced controls over Scottish funding of arms manufacturers
Climate Justice	Advocacy via Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) Support of work on Climate Justice and specifically the Loss and Damage Fund and reparations Sustainability and equality aspects of the government's Heat in Buildings strategy and the Just Transition Fund
Economic Justice	Climate Justice – the Loss & Damage fund – as above Fuel poverty (Heat in Buildings strategy) Land reform – addressing a new Land Reform Bill (if capacity and knowledge becomes available)
Other Areas	Working in a spirit of mutual support with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the SQCJWG • other Quaker bodies (e.g. QHT,QTIG, NFPB) • any emerging Scottish Quaker Special Interest Groups on issues that arise with strong advocacy leadings Engaging with any new Scottish Human Rights Bill; following through via Together Scotland the incorporation into Scottish Law of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

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