

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS):  
GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND**

**(Scottish Charity Number SC 012281)**

**Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

**OFFICE BEARERS**

During 2022:

Elizabeth Allen (Clerk)  
Michael Hutchinson (Assistant Clerk)  
Adwoa Burnley (2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Clerk)  
Nigel Dower (Treasurer)  
Pamela Brunt (Assistant Treasurer) until March 2022  
Katrina McCrea (Assistant Treasurer) from March 2022

At the time of the report:

Michael Hutchinson (Clerk)  
Susan Mitchell (Assistant Clerk)  
Katrina McCrea (Treasurer)

**ADMINISTRATOR AND PRINCIPAL OFFICE**

During 2022 and at the time of the report:

Sue Proudlove,  
Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House,  
7, Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, EH1 2JL  
Telephone 0131 225 4825 until December 2022  
Telephone 01383824282 from January 2023  
Email [ScotFriends@gmail.com](mailto:ScotFriends@gmail.com)  
Website [www.quakerscotland.org](http://www.quakerscotland.org)

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER OF THE ACCOUNTS**

Gordon MacKay,  
90 Hammerfield Avenue,  
Aberdeen AB10 7FE.

**BANKERS**

The Co-operative Bank  
Triodos Bank

**TRUSTEES**

During 2022:

Martin Burnell  
Nigel Dower  
Michael Hutchinson  
Margaret Mortimer  
Katrina McCrea from March 2022  
Robin Waterston from March 2022  
Andrew Blackadder from June 2022

At the time of the report:

Robin Waterston  
Katrina McCrea  
Andrew Blackadder  
Malcolm Crosby

*NOTE 1: This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).*

*NOTE 2: In this report "the General Meeting" means General Meeting for Scotland, "the Society" means the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and "the Yearly Meeting" means the Yearly Meeting of the Society in Britain (Britain Yearly Meeting). "Attendees" are persons who are associated with a Local Meeting for Worship, but who are not in formal membership of the Society.*

## **1. The Organisation of the General Meeting**

The General Meeting is a constituent part of Britain Yearly Meeting which is the governing body of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. The Membership of the General Meeting consists of those having Membership in the four Scottish Area Meetings of the Society. The Area Meeting is the basic business unit in the Society, dealing with membership, marriages, pastoral care and property. The General Meeting normally meets four times each year in different parts of Scotland, but during 2022 has been meeting using video-conferencing because of the covid pandemic or using a blended format..

## **2. The Objectives of the General Meeting**

The General Meeting has national responsibilities on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting to represent and advance the life and witness of Quakers in Scotland. The General Meeting shares the basic aims of the Society as a church, promoting its spiritual insights and looking after the interests and welfare of its members. It provides both a policy-making forum for the Society in Scotland and a focus for the consideration of issues of concern and importance to the Society in Scotland.

The General Meeting represents the Society of Friends in Scotland among the other Churches and other faiths, among Scottish organisations and to the Scottish Government.

## **3. Administration**

**Foundation** There is no known founding document. The General Meeting was probably established in the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the Society was first organised, after its beginning as a popular religious movement under the inspiration of George Fox. Following periods of persecution the Society has been recognised as one of the non-conformist churches. Its operation is governed by "Quaker Faith and Practice", its Book of Discipline. As described there, the General Meeting is at all times subject to the discipline of Britain Yearly Meeting.

**Governing Document** Following changes to charities legislation in Scotland, a Governing Document was approved by the General Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2007. During 2021 it was revised since some terminology and procedures were out-of-date and provision for video-conferencing and blended meetings needed to be made.

**Office bearers** Those who serve the General Meeting are normally appointed for (renewable) three-year periods. There are four office bearers: Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. The first three, together with the Convenors of the Nominations Committee and the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group, the Newsletter Editor, the Children and Young People representative and several others with specific roles, form the General Meeting Committee which acts as an executive and arrangements committee.

The Nominations Committee brings forward nominations for various posts and the General Meeting makes the appointments. The Parliamentary Engagement Working Group attends to the GM's engagement with political Issues, with the main focus being on providing guidance for the work of the Parliamentary Engagement Officer. The Children and Young People representative coordinates activities involving

Children and Young People, and this includes weekends for teenagers and families. In June 2021 a new Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group started its work, and a group was also set up to consider 'options' for simplifying the organisation of Quaker activity in Scotland to report back to GM in March 2022; a second Options group was set up and will report in June 2023.

Normally six trustees, including the General Meeting treasurer *ex officio*, serve the General Meeting. Trustees receive no remuneration. Trustees serve renewable three-year terms and are appointed by the whole General Meeting upon nomination by the Nominations Committee. At the beginning of 2023 there was a temporary dip in the number of Trustees because one Trustee resigned and one Area Meeting had failed to put forward a representative. Measures are being taken urgently to rectify this situation.

**Business Method** The Society regards its meetings for business as being held under the guidance of God. It believes that, when the meeting takes place in a spirit of worship, God's will for the meeting can be discerned without the need for divisive voting. The Clerk presents each item of business to the meeting and, after Friends have been heard, and when it seems likely that the meeting has reached unity, the Clerk presents a draft minute. This may be accepted at once or can be amended until all present can unite with it. The minutes are thus approved by the meeting at which they are made.

#### 4. Financial Review of 2022

A major source of the income of the General Meeting is contributed by its member Area Meetings through a quota system. Quotas were increased by 60% in 2015 in order to fund our contribution towards the salary and other costs associated with employing a Parliamentary Engagement Officer. During 2020 steps were taken to refill the post after the first resigned and in October 2020 Andrew Tomlinson was appointed. AMs contributed £6000 towards GM's contribution to BYM of £10,000, but because of the reduced level of activity due to the pandemic AMs were only expected to pay 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the normal general quota (£6667 of £10,000).

Support for the main work of General Meeting continued to be funded through two grants, of £8000 from Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) towards the tasks laid upon it in Section 5.03 of *Quaker Faith & Practice* and £1400 from the Francis Camfield Trust towards the travelling expenses of General Meeting representatives and Friends attending GM and other ways of enabling Friends to be more connected. The Trust had indicated it was happy see its grant used to support meetings through video-conferencing as well. The latter grant is particularly appreciated as it enables us to support the engagement of Friends from distant communities in our work and worship, though this did not happen as much as had been expected because of the continuing pandemic. A bequest from a Friend of £10,000 was received during the year.

Expenditure in 2022 was significantly reduced compared with that of normal pre-pandemic years.

The GM continued to contribute £4000 towards the cost of the PEO post in 2022 as its part of the £10,000 contribution to BYM made by Friends in Scotland via GM (AMs contributing £6000), but unlike the previous three years of such support it was drawn from general reserves and not the Jenny Auld Legacy. During the year it was agreed that, as a new funding model for support from Friends in Scotland for BYM-funded work is developed, we would continue to make a contribution of £10,000 but understood as support not just for PEO work but the work of the Local Development Worker for Scotland Zoe Prosser

The work of the General Meeting has continued to be ably supported by our part-time Administrative Officer, Sue Proudlove, who took up her post at the beginning of 2020, with a salary paid from the General Meeting's funds.

General Meeting for Scotland does not have a primary role as a grant-making organisation, yet it exists both to support Quaker initiatives and to facilitate Quaker participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities in Scotland. One session of General Meeting in 2016 was devoted to revising our guidelines for making financial contributions to external organisations and to considering how we monitor their work through our participation. Our policy remains to offer support primarily to organisations with which we have some direct involvement via appointed representatives. In 2019 GM decided to add three more organisations which it wished to support that year and in future years, and in 2022 it added IDEAS (the International Development Education Association Scotland).

The actual grants paid out each year are reviewed by members at a General Meeting held in November. Among the grants made during 2022 the largest was £2000 for the Northern Friends Youth Events Trust. This organises an annual summer school for Young Friends from northern Britain.

Our printed list of Members and Attenders is produced in alternate years, so one was produced early in 2021 and another book comes out in 2023.

Three funds are currently maintained by the General Meeting treasurer as restricted funds. These are:

- (i) Quaker Link Weekends for teenagers (the funds for this were previously administered by the General Meeting's administrator and held in a separate Bank of Scotland account known as the "QTAA" fund; in January 2020 the funds were transferred to the Coop account to be administered by the GM Treasurer from then on). Some of this fund was used to cover the deficit on this event.
- (ii) (ii) the Parliamentary Engagement Officer role; some money is received from individuals or local meetings earmarked for supporting this role. This money was used as part of GM's contribution.
- (iii) (iii) A General Meeting Fund for Healing, established when the Christian Fellowship of Healing (Scotland) was wound up during 2012. Grants may be made from this fund to support healing of individuals in the broadest sense. Following a decision by the trustees, recommendations are currently brought forward by the trustees of the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust, appointed by South-East Scotland Area Meeting. No grant was made in 2022 nor in the previous four years. GM has subsequently decided to pass this money on to another Quaker charity.

There were several discussions at GM in 2017 concerning the Auld Legacy, and apart from the commitment to use £12,000 of it over three years as GM's contribution the second three-year phase of the PEO post (concluded in 2021), it was agreed that at future meetings in which there will be a general review of GM priorities, it will be decided how the legacy will be used for special initiatives. This is therefore a designated fund (there being no conditions in the bequest that makes it restricted). No further use of the Legacy occurred in 2021.

Income during the year was £39082.32 and expenditure £29082.32. The surplus was £9864.29. However it should be noted that if we exclude the legacy of £10,000 which was not expected or budgeted for, payments and receipts would have more or less balanced. These accounts are presented on a 'payments and receipts' basis. However, if we take into account adjustments (noted in the further notes to the accounts), the actual surplus was £10041.41.

The General Meeting last reviewed its reserves policy in 2011. It was agreed that, in general, reserves should be equivalent to not less than 6 months expenditure. Since our overall balance was at the end of the year £47,558.84, our general reserves, quite apart from the remainder of the Jenny Auld Legacy (c. £13,000) and restricted funds, at c £33,000 are well in excess of what our reserve policy requires (c. £12,000).

## **5. Review of Activities during the year**

### **(a) Meetings of General Meeting itself**

We held four business meetings during 2022. Regular business items include reports and discussion concerning a large variety of charitable endeavours within Scotland, especially those with which the General Meeting has a special relationship (for example, through an appointed trustee or other representative).

Most meetings included a focus on one of two topics in more detail. These covered: (March) receipt of the report from the 'Options for Quakers in Scotland' group plus reports of those working on ecumenical and interfaith relations; (June) meeting members of the Quaker Committee on Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) and receipt of reports of those working in the field of social witness; (September) hearing about the work of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee and receipt of reports of those working on climate justice; and (November) consideration of priorities in 2023 for the Local Development Worker and of gender justice and receipt of reports from those working on peace issues.

### **(b) Other meetings of Scottish Friends organised by GM**

A Quaker teenager link weekend occurred in the spring this year face-to-face as did the very popular residential Families Weekend in the summer. Young Friends from Scotland participated in the annual Summer Shindig which like the previous year was a normal face-to-face meeting (organised by the Northern Friends Youth Events Trust). An Enquirers Day was arranged and took place face-to-face in the autumn.

### (c) Parliamentary Engagement Work

General Meeting for Scotland re-confirmed the areas of focus of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) in November to be climate justice, economic justice and peace-building. The Group, supported and advised by our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, aims to build relationships with MSPs and the Scottish Government in order to influence policy in a direction in tune with Quaker testimonies in areas where Quakers hold clear views. This work is often undertaken alongside other groups in civil society who hold similar ambitions. For example, our work on the climate emergency is largely achieved working in partnership with and through our membership of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS), a coalition of some 60 organisations campaigning in this field.

Highlights of our work in 2022 were:

- Peace-building: Quakers in Britain launched a report, "Peace at the Heart", during the year on approaches to give school children of all ages the tools to resolve for themselves disagreement and conflict between themselves: tools such as peer mediation. This is aimed at supporting work already being done in Scottish schools in line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 4.7: by 2030 "ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development". This report was commended in the Scottish Parliament through around one third of MSPs signing a motion in support of it, and Paul McLennan MSP has agreed to sponsor an exhibition of the work in the Parliament in September 2023.
- Climate Justice: we continue to work closely with SCCS; our PEO chaired the Policy and Advocacy Group of the coalition. This has enabled us to influence climate policy through SCCS's meetings with civil servants and government ministers working on the government's Net-Zero policies. Our focus has been on the slow progress made in policy implementation to meet Scotland's very challenging targets for cutting carbon emissions, and to emphasise the need to ensure that solutions are affordable for the many who cannot afford to make the necessary changes (e.g. home retro-fitting) for themselves. Representatives of the Group met with Patrick Harvie, minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights to discuss and understand better his plans. Through SCCS we also continue to encourage government to become a member of the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance in order to confirm its recognition of the need to phase down oil and gas production.
- Government consultations: the Group submitted responses to consultations on Land Reform and the 4<sup>th</sup> National Planning Framework; we also contributed to a consultation on the establishment of a peace institute in Scotland.

By its nature, little of this work is "one-off"; the Group aims to build influence over a period of years, responding to developments over time as they occur.

### (d) Committee work

Some of the work of Committees was done already online or by telephone conferencing before COVID 19 but COVID 19 has led to a dramatic rise in the use of energy-saving ZOOM and other online conferencing facilities, and generally committees have continued to work online and will continue to do so in the future. We have come to recognise that the use of video conferencing has led to wider participation from Friends, especially those living in remote areas, and that in the future, when we will be able to attend meetings face-to-face, the use of blended meetings will be an important element to this, both continuing to enable Friends to attend who would otherwise not do so and contributing to greater sustainability.

### (e) Administrative support

Sue Proudlove continued to serve as administrator for General Meeting, being employed for eight hours a week to support the work of office-holders and Scottish Friends generally.

### (f) Representation on other bodies

We continued to support representatives on a variety of Scottish bodies including ACTS, the Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund, Scottish Churches Housing Action, the Northern Friends Youth Events Trust, the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre and others, but the amount of engagement has been limited during 2022 because of the pandemic and such engagement has partly been by ZOOM and other forms of remote communication and partly by face-to-face attendance. Following a decision in 2017 we no longer have one 'representative friend': the role is now shared amongst Friends. Adwoa Bittle was appointed in November 2019 to be our representative on ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland)/SCF (Scottish Christian Forum) and continued to serve in that role during 2022.

## **6. Future Intentions**

From May 2021, we had a Local Development Worker in Scotland Zoe Prosser, employed by Britain Yearly Meeting. She has assisted in growing and strengthening our community of Quakers in Scotland during 2022, for instance facilitating the holding of meetings on area such as Eldership and pastoral care or nominations with Friends from all over Scotland attending. In 2023 she will continue in this role.

The main new work anticipated for 2023 is expected to be further development of the General Meeting's work on parliamentary engagement. Our work, currently focussed on the furtherance of economic justice, sustainability and peace in the world, will be continued. To this will be added engagement with community justice issues, through the new Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group set up in 2021. Throughout 2023 we will work with others to ensure that awareness of climate justice issues is maintained in the follow-up to COP 26 in Glasgow, in November 2021 and COP 27 in Egypt in November 2022.

Another significant task before GM will be to determine within the context of a general review of GM's priorities how best to use the balance of the Jenny Auld Legacy (nearly £13,000) as well as the legacy of £10,000 received in 2022 (and a further legacy in 2023 of £2000).

In March 2022 when the first 'Options for Quakers in Scotland' group reported it was agreed to set up a second group which would report in June 2023. It is hoped that we will be able to discern a way forward at that meeting.

In 2023, we anticipate making our meetings more accessible by increased use of 'blended meetings', where some Friends are present in person and others join the meeting remotely.

More generally GM's role continues to be to put together the big picture of what Quakers in Scotland are doing and to let Friends and others know, and to inform, inspire and support them. GM also continues its role in providing an internal forum for sharing and discussing Quaker actions.

## **7. Connected Bodies and Transactions between them**

Apart from the constituent Quaker Meetings and Britain Yearly Meeting, there is no other connected body.

## **8. Approval of Report and authority to Sign**

This Report was approved by the trustees on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023; it was signed on their behalf by Robin Waterston, Clerk to the Trustees:

*Robin Waterston*  
8 May 2023