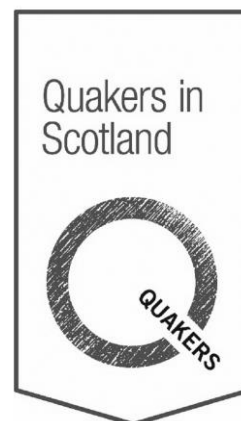


GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

At a hybrid Meeting held at Aberdeen Meeting House, and by video conference, on 7th June 2025



DRAFT MINUTES

for circulation in advance

Draft minutes are circulated in advance to aid Friends during the meeting and to save time in reading parts of or whole minutes of record. Some drafts here are the introductory section of any complete minute to follow during our discernment. All such drafts are subject to the will of the Meeting in session.

25/06/01 Opening worship

During our opening worship our assistant clerk read section

25/06/02 Welcome to all present

We welcome all Friends who are with us today, both by Zoom and in Aberdeen.

The numbers of those present for all or part of the meeting were:

East Scotland AM	xx (x in Edinburgh x on Zoom)
North Scotland AM	xx (x in Edinburgh, xx on Zoom)
South East Scotland AM	xx (xx in Edinburgh, x on Zoom)
West Scotland AM	xx (xx in Edinburgh, x on Zoom)
Visitors	x

Total: xx, including xx attenders and with x children & young people

We thank North Scotland Area Meeting for asking Oriole Hall and Juli Salt to act as elders for us today in Aberdeen. We ask East Scotland AM to provide Friends to act as elders for our next meeting.

25/06/03 Agenda

25/06/04 Reporter to *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*

We thank _____ for agreeing to report on this meeting for *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*. We ask North Scotland Area Meeting to provide the name of a Friend to report on our next meeting.

25/06/05 New members, transfers and deaths

From Area Meeting minutes since General Meeting held 8th March 2025, we record the following membership changes:

(We await minutes of WSAM on 2 June, but there is nothing to record from the WSAM draft minutes)

DEATHS

Geoffrey Alexander	died in 2024	SESAM
John Fox	died 3/2/25	SESAM
Bryan Bowes	died 13/5/25	WSAM
Margaret Paterson	died 5/5/25	SESAM

NEW MEMBERS

Julie Hughes	SESAM
Christopher Holman	SESAM
Gordon Sharp	ESAM

TRANSFERS IN

Roger Robertson	From Mid Somerset AM to SESAM
Connie Wright (Goodwin)	From Friendswood Friends Church, Texas to ESAM

RESIGNATIONS

Derek Morrison	SESAM
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TERMINATION

Conor Watt	SESAM
John Helliwell	SESAM

[ESAM = East Scotland Area Meeting; NSAM = North Scotland Area Meeting; SESAM = South East Scotland Area Meeting; WSAM = West Scotland Area Meeting]

25/06/06 Proposed dates and host meetings for GM in 2026/27

No Area Meeting has indicated any problem with the suggested dates and host area meetings for holding General Meeting in 2026/27. We agree to these as follows:

7 March 2026 - West Scotland AM (already agreed)
6 June - East Scotland AM
19 September - North Scotland AM
7 November – South East Scotland AM
6 March 2027 West Scotland AM

If the transition to Quakers in Scotland occurs within this time frame, we will use these dates for holding that meeting instead.

25/06/07 Trustees Annual Report & Accounts for 2024

Robin Waterston, clerk of General Meeting Trustee, (has introduced) the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024. The report and examined accounts, with the list of donations and affiliations were circulated with our papers as Papers A1, A2 and A3, and these will be filed with our minutes. These documents have been approved by Trustees and are before us primarily for information.

Income during the year was £30,520 and expenditure was £24,452 giving a surplus of £6,068. GM's overall balance at the end of the year was £49,554, more than the reserve policy requirements. Trustees reviewed the situation in 2023 and as Quakers in Scotland are going through a major structural organisational review, it was agreed that additional funding could be required to support this process so the level of reserve can be justified. However, it was agreed on the recommendation of Trustees that the budgeted quota from AMs for 2025 should be reduced from £16,000 to £12,000, and the contribution to BYM for the Parliamentary Engagement Post be increased to £6,500.

25/06/08 Families weekend

Minute 25/03/11 refers. Mary Troup, our children and young persons advocate, (has spoken to us) about the Families Weekend held 2nd - 4th May 2025 at the Atholl Centre in Pitlochry.

25/06/09 Transition to Quakers in Scotland

Minutes 25/03/17 and 24/11/26 refer. Paper B informs our business today. General Meeting for Scotland and Scottish Area Meetings agreed to the establishment of 'Quakers in Scotland' as a potential new structure with a single trustee body for all Scottish meetings.

This trustee body has been set up and would be responsible to a single Quakers in Scotland meeting for business, with General Meeting, the four Area Meetings and the Dundee Friends Property Trust transitioning or joining the new body when or if ready to do so.

We receive minute 2025/05/09 (Quakers in Scotland) of South East Scotland Area Meeting (SESAM) held 6th May 2025 and are pleased to learn of the discernment made at that meeting. We note that SESAM asked the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group (QiSCG) and the Trustees of Quakers in Scotland to offer:

1. Plans for how key issues will be handled following the transfer of responsibilities: specifically sharing of finances; management of property; safeguarding;
2. An outline of whether fewer jobs (other than trustee roles) will be needed;
3. Proposed arrangements for maintaining eldership and pastoral care under any new, more flexible system;
4. Proposed systems to guard against local meetings becoming isolated: from surrounding LMs, from QiS, and/or from BYM;
5. Ideas for how the current Area Meetings might work together, and together with QiS, as an interim measure or for the foreseeable future.

SESAM wishes through this process to reach a position where it can make an informed and guided decision as to dissolving SESAM in order to be part of Quakers in Scotland.

We note that East, North and West Area Meetings, and the Dundee Friends Property Trust are planning to join Quakers in Scotland by the end of this year.

(more to write according to discernment)

1.0 – 2.00 pm LUNCH BREAK

25/06/10 Appointments and Nominations Committee report

No appointments have been made through our between-meetings procedure since our 8th March 2025 meeting:

Nominations Committee has brought us the following nominations:

QUAKERS IN SCOTLAND FACEBOOK PAGE MODERATORS

Martin McCaffery (ESAM) to serve 01 07 2025 – 30 06 2028 (third triennium).

Clive Potter (NSAM) to serve one year 01 07 2025 – 30 06 2026 (second triennium)

ECUMENICAL OFFICERS' FORUM (SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN FORUM)

Mary Woodward (SESAM) to serve 01 07 2025 – 30 06 2028 (second triennium).

QUAKERS IN SCOTLAND TREASURER & EX-OFFICIO QiS TRUSTEE

Kate Gulliver (WSAM) to serve from appointment until 31 12 2027.

To agree on these appointments.

EDITOR, SCOTTISH FRIEND & GM ZOOM HOST

Amer Syed (WSAM) wishes to be released from these posts.

PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

To release on 30 06 2025:

Tanya Jones (ESAM)

We are pleased to hear that Tanya has been appointed as Climate Justice lead for Quakers in Britain which means she has to step down as member of PEWG.

25/06/11 Nominations Committee

Anna Mitchell wishes to be released as clerk to our Nominations Committee.

The procedure for finding a new clerk is to appoint a Search Group with representatives from each Area Meeting.

25/06/12 Meeting for Sufferings Report

There has been no Meeting for Sufferings since our last meeting, when we heard a brief spoken report from our representative, Elaine Millar, on the Meeting for Suffering held 1st March. Her full report was circulated with the March minutes, and is also in the current *Scottish Friend*.

25/06/13 Parliamentary Engagement Working Group report

We receive the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) Report, Paper C, and Carolyn Burch, co-convenor, has spoken to it and given us a flavour of the wider range of the work.

The report includes a number of updates on current activity, including the outcomes of Westminster Meeting House police raid in March and its relevance for Scottish Quaker advocacy; the letter to the First Minister about the new Programme for Government; Parliamentary Engagement Officer and PEWG meetings with party manifesto writers for the 2026 Scottish election and Peacebuilding and Peace Education (including a report on IDEAS - the International Development Education Association Scotland).

We are pleased to hear that Richard Raggett gave his "Time for Reflection" to the Scottish Parliament on 13th May. This happened this was the day of the major debate (and free vote) on the proposed Assisted Dying Bill. So, Richard's message about more honesty and integrity in listening and speaking, and finding kinder ground in debate, proved timely and was referenced during the debate.

Richard Raggett has spoken to a request in the report for additional funding for a key partner in the work: Stop Climate Change Scotland (SCCS). SCCS is PEWG's main ally for general advocacy for climate action. It is a broad-based coalition of 74 organisations which collectively represent hundreds of thousands of members, for example Friends of the Earth, Oxfam, and RSPB. Its financing comes largely from membership fees which cover staff costs, admin costs and a small activities budget. We already gave SCCS £230 as a membership fee. Last year we contributed £500 in addition to the membership fee. PEWG suggest we do this again this year, and the report gives the context and need. Specifically, SCCS proposes a mass lobby of MSPs on 18th September in Holyrood, and Friday 19th September across local constituencies, at which citizens meet their MSPs to explain in their own words why meaningful, rapid climate action is so important to them. A working group has been established to make this happen, drawn from coalition members. Our PEO and/or a PEWG member have attended the early meetings. SCCS has secured £5,000 towards the project's budget of £8,000. PEWG therefore asks GM to consider a donation of £500 towards the target for this project.

We

25/06/14 Wiston Lodge weekend 5th - 7th September 2025

Area and Local Meetings have been circulated about the residential weekend at Wiston Lodge 5th-7th September, organised through South East Scotland Area Meeting. This is open to all Friends in Scotland and provides opportunity for a residential gathering, which was one of the factors deemed missing in strengthening Quaker community in Scotland. The details will be sent with these minutes.

25/06/15 Faith in Community Scotland

Kate Arnot (has given us a brief oral report) on Faith in Community Scotland.

25/06/16 Update on witness to President Trump / Ecumenical / Interfaith Appeal Paper D)

Minute 25/03/14 (Peacebuilding in dark times) refers. At our March meeting we agreed that an informal group could be convened to plan a response to a potential visit by President Trump to Scotland later this year. That group was convened and has been drafting a letter of appeal in conjunction with Scottish ecumenical and interfaith groups. A draft of the appeal has been circulated, but has since been updated. Susan Mitchell (has briefed us) on the appeal and the process.

25/06/17 Finland Yearly Meeting

Mary Woodward of Portobello & Musselburgh LM (has spoken) to her attendance at Finland Yearly Meeting held 16th – 18th May 2025 in Helsinki. The clerk provided a travelling letter.

25/06/18 Local Development Worker – priorities for 2026

Our Local Development Worker (LDW) for Scotland, Zoe Prosser, works annually with her Britain Yearly Meeting line manager and ourselves to determine her priorities for the coming year. In 2023, General Meeting endorsed a mechanism for Friends in Scotland to contribute to this process.

Area and Local Meetings in Scotland and Scottish Friends individually are invited, therefore, to submit suggestions by the end of September, for the priorities of the Local Development Worker's work in Scotland for the following year.

Suggestions will be passed to the LDW for sorting and if necessary, distilling, in preparation for a meeting to select the suggestions to be brought to General Meeting. In mid-October GM Committee or equivalent, the four Scottish AM clerks, the LDW, and the LDW's line-manager will consider the suggested priorities and select those to bring to General Meeting/Quakers in Scotland in November. These suggested priorities will then be put before Friends for their consideration and agreement.

The current priorities agreed by this process last year are:

1. Continue to strengthen and develop support for role holders.
2. Supporting Quaker communities to be loving, inclusive and all age.
3. Pointing the way to information about available resources and materials, including videos and non-traditional resources, to help Quaker Meetings and role-holders identify what they need, and developing and creating further resources where there is a need.
4. Supporting the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to work for change.

Friends and Meetings are now invited to consider what help from Zoe that Quaker communities in Scotland require over the next year.

Suggestions may come to us through minutes, messages or emails. General Meeting on 20th September will hear from Zoe on what she has done and what she sees coming ahead so as to help the process.

25/06/19 Items for Yearly Meeting 2026

We have received the annual invitation to the clerk to help discern the agenda for the next Yearly Meeting from Mary Aiston, clerk to YM Agenda Committee. Yearly Meeting 2026 will take place from Friday 1 to Monday 4 May, and will be held at Friends House, London and online. For reference, the clerk's response from last year has been made available with the agenda papers for this meeting (Paper F). The clerk is invited earlier than usual to a meeting of YM Agenda Committee to be held 26th July, with a paper submitted in advance. Friends and meetings are asked to submit ideas for this paper in advance, by the end of June.

(We have had opportunity) to share experience of Yearly Meeting 2025, held 23-26 May 2025.

25/06/20 Correspondence and further business

a) Interfaith insurance letter to Tokio Marine.

Further to minute 24/03/19d, on 7th April 2025, the clerk signed a follow up interfaith letter, organised through Britain Yearly Meeting, to Tokio Marine insurance company, urging them change their fossil fuel engagement policy. A group of Friends from Scotland have been trying to contact them on this matter but have not yet received a reply.

b) Statement: Debt relief in the global south

Christian Aid have been working with partners and church leaders in Africa to produce a shared statement calling on the UK government to bring in new legislation to compel private creditors to provide debt relief to countries in the global south. The clerk signed this statement on behalf of Quakers in Scotland on 7th April 2025.

c) Scottish Covid Inquiry

Further to minute 25/03/20b, the clerk attended the Scottish Covid Inquiry on 1st May 2025, to give oral submission on the basis of our written submission.

d) Ecocide (Scotland) Bill

On 27th May 2025, The clerk, through our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, Sarah Komashko, signed an open letter in support of the Ecocide (Scotland) Bill which is going through the Scottish Parliament.

25/06/21 Upcoming business

In September, we envisage the main business as being a return to the discernment over the future of Scottish Quaker structures – the 'Quakers in Scotland' proposals. We will also consider our Climate Justice work along with our Parliamentary Engagement work and our support for children and young people, with a Shindig report. We will hear from Zoe Prosser on the discernment process for the Local Development worker priorities for 2026. The Community Justice Working Group

annual report is to come either in September or November. We also await the conclusion of the review of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group' three-year priorities.

25/06/22 Concluding Minute