

1 Parliamentary Engagement Officer (PEO) ; membership and Convenors

Lucy Le Roux (formerly of Christian Aid), is settling into her role as Interim PEO, as Sarah Komashko has begun her parental role. Lucy is undergoing her (rigorous) QiB training, but has already made a great start – some of you will already have received her first email updates - and we hope to introduce her to you in person in Perth next February, agenda allowing. Please note that emails to the PEO should now go to LucyR@quaker.org.uk

On 23rd October we held our online ‘special meeting’ about PEWG work, with a view to strengthening the group membership and looking towards new Convenors being appointable in the near future. The meeting was well supported and we are feeling very positive about the future of the group and its work.

2 Peacebuilding work

(a) Scottish Peace Platform

This has now launched, after a long gestation period. Quakers (our PEO and others) were involved in the early ‘design’ stages and have now been strongly encouraged to join as an organisation. We hope that this can happen with a Friend being appointed to be QiS contact and to keep the group informed of advocacy openings, although advocacy is not a primary strand of the Peace Platform’s work.

(b) ‘Manifesto meetings’ with the main political parties

At the meetings we have had with the teams writing the manifestos for next year’s Scottish election (Scottish Labour, Scottish Greens, SNP), we have highlighted (among other issues) peacebuilding issues, specifically: human rights filters for arms company funding grants, and the multiple benefits of peace education. See more below about the recent SNP meeting.

(c) Funding for arms, Scottish Enterprise

The PEO has met with Amnesty International on how to take forward the dialogue(s) with ministers and Scottish Enterprise. This is in the new context of a speech by the First Minister in September announcing a pause on ‘new awards of public money to arms companies whose products or services are provided to countries where there is plausible evidence of genocide being committed by that country’. In the same speech he also announced that the bar on public funding for munitions is being lifted. In allyship with Amnesty we will continue proposing stronger Human Rights criteria for public funding of arms manufacturers, but clearly there is more work to do here.

(d) The Scottish Peace Platform (SPP)

SPP are open for membership (no cost at present) and have been in touch with our PEO to warmly invite ‘our organisation’ to be a ‘full’ member, as described in this extract from their website:

Categories of membership

Full membership – is open to organisations based in Scotland that are actively engaged in peacemaking, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, or related fields. Eligible organisations include NGOs, civil society organisations (CSOs), academic/research institutes, community-based organisations, networks or coalitions, relevant charities, faith-based groups, and private sector entities.

The Parliamentary Engagement Officer has been the main SPP contact so far, but there is no strong advocacy strand to the SPP, so membership is not a role for the PEWG or PEO to take on. However, both PEWG and other Friends may wish to be kept aware of, and have occasional input into, the work of the SPP, so PEWG hope that Quakers in Scotland will join as a member organisation. Joyce Taylor has expressed willingness to be a contact. We can seek clarification on how and by whom the application can be made, if QiS agree to apply.

3 Other highlights of recent/upcoming work

- In early October we met with the **SNP manifesto-writing team**, at which different members of PEWG spoke to different issues: loss and damage funding; peace education; funding to arms companies; clear public engagement on, and strong implementation of climate policy. Two members of the Community Justice Working Group also attended and spoke about restorative justice and prison reform. We seemed to be well heard and the PEO has followed up with more information as requested by the officials.
- **Loss and Damage motion/debate led by Nicola Sturgeon.** We worked with Global Justice Now, SCIAF (Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund), and Christian Aid to provide text for [motion S6M-19280 on loss and damage](#) which was submitted by Nicola Sturgeon in early October. The PEO wrote to MSPs requesting their support for the motion so that the debate could go ahead as planned on 5 November.
- **Briefing Quakers in Scotland on the May 2026 election manifestos and election:** The PEO will be providing materials to Friends to facilitate their contacting their MSPs and election candidates – this will be in the first quarter 2026 depending on manifesto publications.
- We hope to meet with Quaker MSP Alex Cole-Hamilton, and to include the Community Justice Working Group, later this year, to discuss renewable energy and green skills; Loss and damage funding and issues of prison policy, all of which he has shown interest in or spoken about in Parliament in recent months. As leader of the Scottish LibDems, we hope that Alex will be willing to consider some of our concerns in relation to their manifesto (the party did not have the capacity for a specific manifesto team meeting). We hope also that as a Quaker MSP Alex may be able to advise us on good approaches for Quaker advocacy with the cohort of new MSPs after the election.

4 PEWG's 3-year priorities (2026 – 2028)

See attached paper for Friends' consideration. We have consulted with Friends across Scotland during this year and the paper takes account of what we heard. In practical terms, the upcoming election will be a 'priority' for our PEO over the next 6 months, though within the parameters of our agreed priority areas.

Carolyn Burch and Richard Raggett, Co-Convenors, Parliamentary Engagement Working Group