

North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting

Minutes for Area Meeting on 21 August 2021

Meeting held online, from 10.30am

24 Friends present, representing Inverness, Lochaber & Lorn, Aberdeen, Forres, Orkney, Westray, Shetland

Opening Minute

25/21 In going into worship we heard Advices and Queries No. 17, reminding us of the importance of speaking clearly to our convictions and concerns with respect, kindness, love for others and ready to be informed anew.

Membership

26/21 We have remembered Alan Parker, who died on July 10, 2021 in Edinburgh. Alan had been a member of North Scotland Area Meeting, worshipping in Aberdeen. He had transferred membership to SE Scotland when he and Sandra moved there a couple of years ago.

27/21 We record the death of Dreda Cook (Aberdeen) who died a few years ago but her death has until now not been recorded by AM.

28/21 We have received the report from Clunie Conochie and Piers Voysey on Anne Hitchen's application to membership. Along with her husband John and three sons, Anne is an active contributor to Inverness Meeting and serves as our Children & Young Persons' Advocate. Anne brings an enquiring spirit and a strong sense of the value of community. We warmly welcome Anne into membership.

We ask Peter Heald to liaise with Anne with respect to a literary offering to welcome her into membership.

29/21 We receive the transfer of membership for Pat & Phil Instone from Stafford Area Meeting. They are now living on Yell, Shetland and are already enriching the lives of Friends there.

30/21 We ask Peter Heald to initiate the transfer of membership for Robert Wilson (Orkney) to Manchester and Warrington Area Meeting. We thank Robert for his service to Friends in North Scotland AM, in various roles through many years. Robert will continue as Clerk to Nominations and as part of the AM Planning team until the end of the year or until we find alternates. We wish Robert well in building a new life in more southerly climes and know he continues to take cheerful bursts of energy and considered ministry wherever he goes.

Aberdeen Properties

31/21 AM now records receipt of the minute from Inverness Meeting, dated 18th March 2021. It reads:

“A full discussion was held on the complexities of the future of the properties in Aberdeen and the financial, spiritual and emotional implications for NSAM of undertaking the recommended works in the future, given that the properties are the responsibility of NSAM.

In light of the very differing views throughout NSAM and the emotions surrounding the issue, Inverness Meeting asks the AM clerk to arrange an open threshing meeting in order to facilitate a full and honest teasing out of the issues and find a way forward.

We ask that this threshing meeting be held before Trustees begin negotiations of the tenancy agreement.

The Area Meeting clerk may wish to call on assistance from outwith NSAM to facilitate the threshing meeting.

In response to this minute, AM Clerk, Clerk of Trustees and the AM Planning Group arranged a Meeting of Worship Sharing, held on 22nd May 2021. The Meeting was Supported by Barbara

Davey (East Scotland) and Michael Hutchinson (West Scotland) and was recorded as Minute 17/21. While this Meeting went some way in exploring the issues and feelings around the Aberdeen properties an un-minuted Threshing Meeting will enable a fuller expression of personal feelings

We ask AM clerk and Planning Group to consider arranging a threshing meeting prior to AM on 6th November.

We also ask AM clerk to review how minutes from Local Meetings are brought to AM to ensure they are brought to AM promptly.

32/21 We have received an update from Trustees with respect to the Aberdeen properties prepared earlier in August.

We note that for practical and pandemic related reasons the commercial tenancy for 100 Crown Street is ongoing but with significantly reduced income to AM. This will have budget implications for AM as there will be no surplus to put towards the repairs required for the Meeting House, nor general AM expenditure.

We ask Trustees and Aberdeen Premises Committee to continue working on the future Options for 100 Crown St in advance of AM on 6th November, and to ask AM Clerk for support if additional time and energy is required to research specific options.

We note that quotations are being sought for pressing repairs required to the Meeting House and 100 Crown St, and decisions on these repairs will come to AM if required.

Other matters from Trustees

33/21 The draft amendments to the NSAQM Governing Document, in relation to online Meetings, having been circulated in advance to this Meeting, are accepted.

Nominations

34/21 With reference to Minute 29/21 above, noting that Robert has, in effect, already moved to Manchester (Salford), we release Robert Wilson from service in his roles; as clerk to Nominations & on the Planning Committee, on, if not before 31 Dec/2021.

We note that the Pastoral & Spiritual Care team hope to explore alternative arrangements for Nominations at their Meeting in September, and Robert has offered to speak with other AM nominations Committees. At this stage in anticipating no change to the current ways of working we ask the P&S Care team to find a new name to serve on Nominations and [Nominations to find a new name] for the Planning Group.

AM fo business paused for lunch shortly after 12 and re-convened at 13.30

[Going back into worship we heard Advices & Queries No.33]

35/21 We have heard how the complexities of managing the AM properties and the nature of holding Trustee Meetings online means that David James has asked for an assistant to support him in his role as Clerk of Trustees. We ask Nominations to bring a name forward to AM, by November 2021, for someone to serve as Assistant Clerk of Trustees, either one of the existing trustees or an additional trustee.

We encourage all other AM groups and committees to consider ways to improve the effectiveness of their Meetings by appointing assistant clerks who can support the committee clerk in holding the Meeting and writing minutes. These assistant clerks would be appointed as required by the group. As per AM minute 59/20, Area Meeting is still seeking to appoint 2 more assistant clerks to share the responsibilities with John Hitchen and Andrew Collins.

36/21 Acknowledging the difficulties faced in finding Friends to serve in AM roles and acknowledging the difficulty for a relatively small AM in the far North of Yearly Meeting to relate fully to the business put to Meeting for Sufferings, we ask the GM Working Group to consider a more effective way that Scotland as a whole is represented in MfS. If the function or role of MfS should change in the future we will welcome a review of how Scotland can best contribute to MfS.

Inclusion & Diversity

37/21 We have received a report from Quaker Life Rep Council, presented by Lynden Easterbrook which included feedback from Yearly Meeting on inclusion and diversity.

We endorse YM's commitment to be an actively anti-racist faith community and to lovingly acknowledge and affirm the trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming Friends in our communities.

It is within our power to empathise, find the person behind the label, provide welcome, safety, value their contribution, respect them for who they are and respect their choice of pronoun, doing our best to treat each other equally. We reflected on the need to find empathy for others who are different to us, but more to see things in the way they see them, to be able to put ourselves in their shoes to fully understand their feelings.

We wish to see an end to systemic injustices, speak truth to power and build social systems that are fair.

Our Meeting for Worship for business ended at 15.30 and the minute was digitally signed by the Clerk during the closing silence. We carry forward the following business:

Considerations for actions in the lead up to **COP26** (proposing to have an open Meeting after Meeting for Worship one Sunday in the next 2 weeks.)

Report from AM workshop with the **Book of Discipline Revision** Committee held on 22 July 2021 (This will be circulated to AM as a report).

Piers Voysey - Clerk

(Andrew Collins - Assistant Clerk)