

# North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting

## Area Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2023

Dingwall Community Centre, Tulloch Street, Dingwall, IV15 9JZ

### Friends Attending

Inverness	14
Forres	9
Aberdeen	3
Westray & Papa Westray	1
Visiting Friends	3 (Lesley Richards – Worcestershire & Shropshire, Robin Davis (West Scotland) and Zoe Prosser (Local Development Worker – SE Scotland))

### Friends prevented

Jane Booth (Aberdeen, who is convinced to join the Earth Day demonstration in London), David James (Lochaber and Lorn), Eleanor Fairclough (Inverness), Marian Burrell (Skye)

**13/23** We record the death of Roger Quinn (Inverness). Roger, with his wife Kathleen, was active in North Scotland and Inverness Meetings for many years. Roger died on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. A good number of Inverness Friends joined Roger's family and friends at Contin Church on January 20<sup>th</sup> to celebrate and give thanks for his life. Roger is buried in the Contin churchyard, beside his brother (John), grandson (William) and mother (Phyllis).

**14/23** In our settling in to worship we heard the words of Edward Burrough writing in 1662 (QF&P 2.87) and Barry Morley<sup>1</sup>, inviting us to listen, with love, in fellowship with each other and to seek the spirit of truth and the sense of the gathered Meeting.

### 15/23 Options for Scotland

Lesley Richards gave a presentation from the Options for Scotland Working Group and our Meeting today has been joined by Robin Davis (West Scotland) who was also on the working group.

Lesley's presentation and the report reminds us that any Quaker body, Local Meeting or Area Meeting, needs an organisational structure (people filling roles) to ensure that the needs of the Meetings are met. Put very simply, today we try to fill 290 posts across Scotland, but if we have a single Area Meeting in Scotland we would need to fill 180 posts. The Working Group reached unity on a way forward for Quakers in Scotland: that we move towards a single charitable entity; Quakers in Scotland, probably a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), and that we develop further the use of paid, professional support.

We received written responses from:

- Shetland Meeting
- Aberdeen Meeting
- Westray & Papa Westray Meeting
- Forres Meeting
- Inverness Meeting

Friends are well aware at the moment of just how hard it is to find people to fill crucial roles that enable our Area Meeting not only to survive (legally as well as practically and spiritually) but also to thrive. We do need to reduce the weight of responsibility on individual Friends (e.g. Trustees) that currently burdens our Society.

But within our membership there is not unity on the conclusion of the Working Group.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pendlehill.org/product/beyond-consensus-salvaging-sense-meeting/>

We have heard how there is concern that having a single Quaker body for Scotland could weaken inclusion in Quaker activities for those living in the peripheries of Scotland, particularly on the islands. We are aware that as well as physical isolation, Friends can also be isolated by technological limitations. Some Friends have expressed a preference for Option B in the Report and are more uncertain about Option C.

We wish to retain the value of geographic communities that support Local Meetings with Pastoral & Spiritual Care (especially this), regional events and representation at Scotland and Britain Yearly Meeting events.

We have experienced how technology enables Friends from all parts of Scotland to engage with Quaker work and learning; building communities of function (e.g. safeguarding) as well as worship.

We are asked to ensure that "Quakers in Scotland" remains accountable to all Local Meetings and Worshiping Groups across Scotland, and that we set up the systems to enable this. Friends today have talked about trust and faith in our Quaker processes and celebrate how we have already adapted to the challenges brought about by the pandemic and grown from it.

We support the creation of a single Area Meeting; Quakers in Scotland. Change of this nature requires a leap of faith, but we are optimistic that given our current circumstances a move towards greater simplicity will give us new vigour.

We thank the Options for Scotland Working Group for the considerable work required in researching and preparing the Options for Scotland Report.

## **Membership**

**16/23** Transfer of membership to North Scotland from Oxford and Swindon: Margaret Reeves and Brian Goddard, both in membership, with their attendant children Aisulu and Rosie. They have lived in Shetland for a year now, embarking on a new adventure in their lives. Margaret is a GP and Brian maintains a fluid portfolio of work with the environment and young people. They play an active role in Shetland Meeting and the wider community and Shetland Friends have very much taken them to their hearts. Brian Ashley (Shetland) reports that Margaret wrote to say Shetland Meeting "has been a very big part of how Shetland has become part of our family's story and we are immensely grateful for that. We would like to participate fully in the life of the local and wider meetings, and transferring membership is an important step in doing so." We welcome Margaret, Brian, Aisulu and Rosie to North Scotland, Shetland.

**17/23** Transfer of membership to North Scotland (Aberdeen) from York: Christopher Scaife moved to Aberdeen about a year ago and is well known to Aberdeen Friends. We welcome Christopher to North Scotland.

## **Meetings**

**18/23** Skye Local Meeting has not met as a Local Meeting since 2020, neither in Broadford nor Portree. There is not capacity within our current membership living on Skye to resurrect the Local Meeting, though Friends are still well connected to each other. This minute records the laying down of Skye Local Meeting with Friends on Skye recorded under Inverness Meeting.

**19/23** In 2019 Banchory Local Meeting became a Worshiping Group. Attendance to Meeting for Worship has since declined further and organising Meetings rested entirely on Jane Booth, for whom Banchory is not entirely 'local' either. We record that the Banchory Worshiping Group is not meeting anymore. Its library assets will be offered to Aberdeen Local Meeting library. Banchory Local Meeting funds (£1,000) were transferred to North Scotland Area Meeting in 2019 and Anthony Buxton (Treasurer) will refer to Jane Booth to confirm dispersal of the funds within the AM account.

**20/23** Westray and Papa Westray Local Meeting met for a Meeting for Worship for Business on 26/03/2023, with 5 Friends present, and the first business Meeting with both islands present since just

before lockdown. Friends present at this Meeting feel it is the right time to change from Westray & Papa Westray Local Meeting to Westray and Papa Westray Worshiping Group. In the 1990s there were up to five Members, several attenders, two young people and 2 children in Papa Westray, and five Members, up to nine regular attenders, and seven children in Westray. It was possible for both islands to come together for Meeting for Worship in Papay by hitching a lift on the Minister's boat with the Church of Scotland Minister, or to meet in the West Manse in Westray, but also in the Care Home and in the home of a house-bound Member. It was an active, lively Meeting. Since then, members have moved or died, the young people are at the college stage and we feel the Local Meeting is at the point when we should become a Worship Group.

Area Meeting supports Friends in Westray and Papa Westray in becoming a Worshiping Group rather than a Local Meeting. Friends on Papa Westray and Westray will be supported by the AM Pastoral and Spiritual Care Group. We ask Peter Heald to record the islands' Friends under Inverness Local Meeting.

## **Appointments**

**21/23** We record the following minute made by the AM Clerking team in March 2023:

"We appoint Jane Booth to be our Quaker Life Representative Council member from March 2023 until end of December 2025. Jane's name was brought forward by AM Nominations."

**22/23** Sue Horne has asked to be released from service as our Meeting for Sufferings representative.

**23/23** Lex Ryder's name has now been brought forward to represent us on Meeting for Sufferings. We agree this nomination, to be forwarded to Meeting for Sufferings. We note that Mary Dower continues as our alternate representative to Meeting for Sufferings.

**24/23** To assist AM Nominations in finding names to bring to Area Meeting to serve in AM roles, we have now circulated an Offers of Service Form that we hope Friends will be encouraged to complete by the end of April 2023.

## **Trustees**

**25/23** We receive the annual Safeguarding report that Clunie Conochie also presented to AM Trustees. There are no issues from this report that require AM attention. We thank Clunie for the report and all Friends who participate to make young and/or vulnerable Friends feel welcome, included and respected in our Meetings.

**26/23** We receive and adopt the new (March 2023) General Meeting for Scotland guidelines on safeguarding and we adopt the new Safeguarding Policy as approved by GM Trustees on 13 March 2023 and by AM Trustees.

**27/23** The Clerk gave a summary from Trustees. There is some expenditure required on the Kinmuck burial ground (in the region of £2,000-£3,000) and other property maintenance is in hand. The work of Trustees has been dispersed amongst Trustees and the nomination of a Clerk of Trustees has been put on hold.

With the close of our Meeting we thanked Dingwall and Inverness Friends for their generous hospitality and organising of the community centre venue.

Piers Voysey  
Clerk

Phyllida Sayles and Andrew Collins  
Assistant Clerks