

North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting
Area Meeting held on
19th October 2024
Aberdeen Quaker Meeting House and online

In our opening worship we heard read a message from Kash Quinney in Beirut, Lebanon:

“We are devastated to watch on as Lebanon is drawn further and further into war. With millions displaced and no clear end to the conflict, we have been trying our best to create solutions for the current situation that still align with our values of equality, peace, empowerment, integration and sustainability. I have decided due to various personal and political reasons to remain alongside my friends here. Until our government places a total weapons embargo on Israel, I will remain with the people of Lebanon. I truly believe that as an immigrant in Lebanon, I owe so much more to the country and the people who have given me so much. I also stay so as to bear witness to the ongoing atrocities, the devastating loss of innocent life and the results of international law not being upheld.”

(a newsletter for Wadi AlFikr and the FirstTree Community Centre projects is attached with the circulation of these minutes)

Elders

Anthony Buxton offers to serve as Elder for this Meeting.

Friends Attending:

5 from Forres, 7 from Aberdeen and online; 2 from Forres and 2 from Inverness

Friends Prevented:

Sila Colins-Walden and Lynden Easterbrook are representing us at the Future of British Quakerism conference.

Minutes

Membership

Deaths:

45/24 We record the death of our Friend Peter Heald, who died on 16th September 2024 at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. A memorial Meeting for Peter will be held on 22nd November at Aberdeen Quaker Meeting House. Peter served Area Meeting as membership clerk, assistant treasurer/trustee, and he had also offered to support East Scotland AM as trustee. His good nature and conscientious service to Friends, along with his passion for model railways and opera will be missed by many.

46/24 We ask the Area Meeting Pastoral & Spiritual Care group to appoint names of two or three Friends to prepare a testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of our Friend Peter Heald.

Transfers

47/24 Simon Jackson, previously living in Fortrose, has moved back to Edinburgh and his membership is being transferred to SE Scotland Area Meeting. The Clerk is waiting confirmation from SE Scotland of the receipt of the membership transfer form which we have signed and sent to the SESAM membership clerk.

Minutes from Inverness Meeting

48/24 We record receipt of two minutes from Inverness Meeting from July 2024:

14/24 Donation to NSAQM. We agree that our donation of £1000 offered to NSAQM for residential AM at Pluscarden can be paid from the Inverness “current” account held by AM.

This has been taken forward by our treasurer and I am sure all who were at Pluscarden this year are grateful for this contribution that enabled the Woodbrooke Where You Are tutors to be with us and lead the sessions on Hope as a Practice.

16/24 “Map” of possible relationship of LM in North Scotland area: This map or diagram was fully discussed by Inverness LM and found to be very useful. We ask that this is taken up by NSAQM and used to plan our future ways of working together within ‘Quakers in Scotland’.

This diagram illustrates a way of working between local meetings to support each other at a regional level and the clerk has found it useful for feeding ideas into the alternative patterns produced by the community sub-group of the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group.

Quakers in Scotland - Alternative ways of working

49/24 We are asked to consider in more detail the paper Possible patterns of relationship between meetings of Scottish Friends

The possible patterns/options listed are:

1. Maintaining the status quo.
2. The 'Welsh model' - keeping AMs as they are within a single charity.
3. No intermediate level between local meetings and a Scotland-wide body.
4. A single area meeting for Scotland with a flexible and simpler intermediate levels.

General Meeting in its minute from 21st September states:

"As we evolve our structures around a single charity, our hope is that a flexible system of working together between local meetings will be possible. Our sense is that of the options/possible patterns, number 4 reflects most what we need, and we ask the four Area Meetings for their guidance on this."

North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting would like to endorse pattern 4. We welcome the opportunity to dissolve existing boundaries of Area Meetings and to be able to work flexibly between worshipping communities. We aspire to sustaining the sense of community that we have between Friends in North Scotland, of continuing with our residential weekend and the opportunity to organise other events for spiritual development. For North Scotland we consider that membership and Pastoral and Spiritual Care might be managed at the existing North Scotland regional level.

Clerk's note: In relation to the draft Governing Documents for Quakers in Scotland:

The Co-ordinating Group continues to post occasional updates on QiS-CG progress at <https://quakerscotland.org/general-meeting/qis-news>

Budget for North Scotland AM 2025

50/24 In presenting the 2025 budget our treasurer comments that this is the 3rd year in a row to present a negative budget. Income has declined as we have lost Friends who have been generous and we are not recruiting new Friends to sustain income levels. Reserves, while sufficient for this negative budget, are declining.

We are asked to consider our contributions, and if we are able, to increase our standing orders to support AM funds. The budget as it stands gives us impetus to more closely manage future costs and income. Some of us are generous, and that is welcome, but of 130 Friends, only 50 or so are contributing directly to AM funds. (To cover budget costs this would require those Friends to contribute £220/person/year.)

We are seeing a welcome increase in demand for support to attend courses or events, both from old and new Friends. Less welcome is that insurance costs have shown a dramatic increase. The budget cost for accounting includes book keeping, preparation of consolidated accounts as well as the inspection of the accounts. An option for reducing this cost is to close Local Meeting bank accounts, which may not be suitable for them at the moment.

In consideration of any comments from Trustees, Sue Walton reminded the Meeting that some costs are within our control, others not (such as insurance premiums). Of those costs that are within our control, cutting them may not be welcomed, so we are encouraged to contribute more.

We approve the budget as prepared and we thank Anthony for preparing this budget.

Appointment of Inspecting Accountants

51/24 Appointment of Scholes, Chartered Accountants, Kirkwall, Orkney, as account examiners

Nominations

Founding Trustees for Quakers in Scotland

52/24 We appoint Brian Ashley (Shetland) to serve as a Founding Trustee for the establishment of Quakers in Scotland, to serve as required until 31 December 2025.

53/24 We appoint Andrew Collins, as assistant AM clerk, to serve as Trustee from this date until 31 December 2025.

54/24 We appoint Sue Buxton, Anthony Buxton and Piers Voysey to share the role of reporting on General Meeting in Dundee on the 9th November 2024.

Dates for Future Meetings

55/24 The following dates were recorded for future Area Meetings for business:

- 28th November 2024, 7pm: To consider a report from Aberdeen Meeting 100 Crown St working group.
- 8th February 2025
- 17th May 2025
- 30/31 August 2025 (Pluscarden - to confirm)
- 25th October 2025
- 7th February 2026

In addition we noted the dates:

14th December 2024, 4pm: Area Meeting social for sharing poetry, songs, music

21st September 2025: To mark International peace day - Sila Collins-Waldon to lead on this

Closing

Our meeting for business closed with a period of silence. And lunch, shared and provided by Aberdeen Friends.

Notices

DEC Middle East appeal

Quaker Nominations course - 7 November to 12 December 2024

The live Zoom sessions are at 19:00-20:30 (UK time) every Thursday.

Nominations are at the quiet heart of the way we live together as Friends, when we listen faithfully to the Spirit. We aim to root ourselves in good practices of discernment whilst responding to the particular issues that face us.

Designed to support anyone involved in Quaker Nominations, this course is suitable whether you are exploring this part of Quaker process for the first time or are well acquainted with Nominations.

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/courses/quaker-nominations/>