

## North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting

### Area Meeting minutes from 18 May 2024 Inverness

#### Friends present:

from Inverness: Oriole Hall, Sila Collins-Walden, Heather Simpson, Phyllida Sayles, Alastair Simmons, Jeremy Lax (a),  
from Forres: Lynden Easterbrook, Juli Salt, Alex Page, Anthony Buxton, Piers Voysey, Sue Buxton, William Purser,  
Nairn: Johanna Quinney, Kash Smith (a),  
from Aberdeen: Clive Potter, Nigel Dower, Helen Stephens, Eva Deregowska, Mary Dower, Andrew Collins, Lesley Reynolds (online)  
Orkney: Edmund Holt (online)

**Friends prevented:** Marian Burrell, John Hitchen, Skye Simpson, Jean Thomson, Diana Brockbank, Cathy Priestly

In our opening worship the clerk read 2.18 from Quaker Faith & Practice, “Be still and cool in thy own mind...” & 3.30, “Keep your Meetings in the power of God..”

**13/24** We record the following minute made 'Between Meetings' by AM Clerks and Treasurer:

(11/24) It is agreed to pay Woodbrooke £110 to enable Sila Collins-Walden (Inverness) to attend, online, the QCCIR conference that runs 15-17 March 2024. Sila is active in the interfaith community in Inverness. Note that we are also supporting Juli Salt to attend the conference in person. We will ask both Sila and Juli to report back to AM in due course.

#### Membership

**14/24** We appoint Oriole Hall and Piers Voysey to serve as visitors to Daniel Suda, to prepare a report with Daniel and report back to AM when the time is right.

**15/24** We appoint Juli Salt and Phyllida Sayles, accompanied by Heather Simpson to serve as visitors to Cathy Priestly, to prepare a report with Cathy and to report back to AM when the time is right.

**16/24** We welcome Susan Walton to our Area Meeting. Susan recently moved to the Keith area and is managing to join Forres Meeting when she can. Susan is already a valued addition to the Meeting. We ask our membership clerk (Alex Page taking over from Peter Heald) to return the membership transfer acceptance form to Sussex East AM.

#### Members

**17/24** We receive the the testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Iain Oughtred and we commend it to General Meeting and to Britain Yearly Meeting.

We add that only one of us has experienced building one of Iain's boat designs, but it resulted in deep appreciation both of the boat and the designer. We note that in the way this testimony has arisen and been prepared it is a variation on the norm for a Quaker testimony.

**18/24** In reflecting on the preparation of testimonies we are aware of our desire to record the grace of God as shown in the lives of a number of Friends that we have not been able

to address; John Melling, Roger Quinn, Eleanor Fairclough, Penny Selbie. We ask the Pastoral & Spiritual Care Group to hold these in mind and to bring them forward when the time is right.

We ask Clive Potter and Mary Dower to work with East Scotland AM to progress a testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Peter Kennedy.

### **Nominations**

**19/24** Acknowledging that we are at risk of Trustees not functioning, we ask our clerk to arrange a Meeting of the Trustees, to be joined by Nigel Dower and Lesley Reynolds (Co-convenors of Nominations) and the AM clerking team, and that this meeting be held as soon as possible and certainly before the end of June 2024.

**20/24** Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) conference. North Scotland was well represented at this conference; by Nigel Dower (Aberdeen) who is our representative on the committee, and Juli Salt (Forres) and Sila Collins-Walden (Inverness) whom we supported to enable them to attend the conference, one on-line and one in person. They are all active in ecumenical and inter-faith work in their communities. Juli gave a lively report from the conference and explained the role of QCCIR and the importance of interfaith work in peace building. In recognising the importance of listening and learning to understand others from other faiths, Juli encouraged us to talk together in pairs in order to express our faith story, what brings us to here, now, on our faith journey.

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Our afternoon session of the business meeting for church affairs started with reading 20.23 from Quaker Faith & Practice; "...be of good faith.."

**21/24** An unsigned final annual report and accounts for 2023 have been circulated. We note they have been approved by our Trustees. The signed copy will be circulated by the clerk in due course and added to our North Scotland web-page.

We thank our trustees and treasurer for the work they put into the report and accounts each year, and all those serving us in various roles to help our Meetings flourish.

### **22/24 Area Meeting Communications**

We ask the AM Clerk to initiate a review of our communications, to ask Friends and Local Meetings what works best for them, whether accessing information from websites and emails or notices at Local Meetings. To then bring the feedback to AM at Pluscarden in August this year.

Alongside the existing means of communication (email, website, online noticeboard, Local Meeting notices) there is also the option to arrange additional online Meetings that are more informal than a Meeting for Worship, more social in nature, that might be themed on a topic.

**23/24** We endorse the statement on peace for Palestine & Israel circulated by the American Friends Service Committee, and we ask our Clerk to add our name in support of this statement.

<https://afsc.org/newsroom/different-future-possible-quaker-organizations-share-vision-peace-palestine-and-israel>

We note the requirement for clarification on the definition of "Palestinian territory" (to the Israeli Government 6.)

Also noting that it is easy for us to sign a statement, but the underlying priority is to make the swiftest move towards a binding ceasefire. It does not preclude Quakers from working in a range of ways, in and behind the scenes to bring people to peace.

**24/24** We have reflected on the legacy of George Fox and his foundational work for the Quaker Movement. We are warned against putting another white man on a pedestal; what about all the great female Quaker thinkers? One of the reflections on George Fox might be the discomfort of his words; they are often meant to challenge us. Significant is his focus on the inward revolution, not the outward trappings of our faith. For some the foundations of their faith are underpinned by quotations such as "...answering that of God in everyone." There are many other slightly later Quakers who speak more clearly to us.

**25/24** North Scotland Representation at Events

The Future of British Quakerism. 18-20 October. Hosted by Woodbrooke, online or in Staffordshire. The event description says; "British Quakerism is at a critical juncture and this gathering will be an opportunity to ask and address the pressing questions about its future. This major conference, run jointly by Woodbrooke and Quakers in Britain will acknowledge challenges, reflect on insights, and explore ways to support our communities and deepen our spiritual lives in the face of change.

"The conference will feature four key note presentations from Paul Parker, Rhiannon Grant, Shena Deuchars and Ben Pink Dandelion exploring questions such as: Where is British Quakerism heading?; What do the latest survey results show?; and What does it mean to be a Quaker in Britain today?"

We appoint Lynden Easterbrook (Forres) as our representative and to report back accordingly after the event.

**26/24** Date of Next Meeting

We will meet again over our Pluscarden weekend, 30 August to 1<sup>st</sup> September. Before then we will meet to discuss the Aberdeen properties, specifically a paper from Aberdeen Local Meeting reflecting on their vision for 98 and 100 Crown St and the Trustees' response to this and recommendations. The date and time for this meeting will be 10am on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July.

Piers Voysey  
Clerk

Andrew Collins  
Assistant Clerk

Lynden Easterbrook  
Assistant Clerk

**Clerk's note:**

A big thanks needs to be given to Phyllida and other Inverness Friends, and to Andy and Janet at the Methodist Church for hosting us and arranging for such good refreshments.