

North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting

Area Meeting held online on Saturday 22nd June, 10am.

Present

Anthony Buxton (Forres), Edmund Holt (Orkney), John Chapman (Aberdeen), Peter Heald (Aberdeen), Sandy & William McEwen (Westray), Richard Raggett (Forres), Clunie Conochie (Inverness), Andrew Collins (Aberdeen), Clive Potter (Aberdeen), Helen Stephens (Aberdeen), Anthea Mason (Aberdeen), Sylvia Thomson (Inverness), Harry Horsley (Aberdeen), Lynden Easterbrook (Forres), Jane Booth (Aberdeen), Mary Dower (Aberdeen), Piers Voysey (Forres - clerk), Lesley Reynolds (Aberdeen), Moyra Carlyle (Orkney), Phyllida Sayles (Inverness).

Prevented:

Tom Sayles, Nigel Dower

27/24 Twenty one Friends from across the area meeting have gathered this morning and settling into our meeting for worship for business we heard read the 1st advice from Advices & Queries, that includes the phrase "Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts."

We note that Tom Sayles and Nigel Dower are prevented from joining us this morning and others had prior commitments.

Clive Potter serves as our Elder for this Meeting.

Nominations - Trustees

28/24 We have received the following requests to be released from service:

Tom Sayles (Clerk of Trustees) – received 13/06/2024

William McEwen (Westray) – received 17/05/2024

Edmund Holt (Orkney) – received 17/05/2024

John Hitchen (Assistant Clerk – Inverness) – received 28/05/2024

Jane Booth (Aberdeen) – received 22/05/2024

We thank Tom, William, Edmund, Jane and John for their committed and capable service as Trustees and we acknowledge their release from service.

We ask Nominations to bring forward names of those willing to serve as Trustees, and a Clerk of Trustees, to join the remaining Board of Trustees who are: Anthea Mason (Aberdeen), and ex-officio Trustees Anthony Buxton (Treasurer) and Peter Heald (Assistant Treasurer). We ask all Friends to think creatively and to contact our Nominations Committee co-clerks, Lesley Reynolds and Nigel Dower, with suggestions. We note that Clive Potter is willing to be considered as Trustee.

100 Crown Street, Aberdeen

29/24 We have had an opportunity to consider options for the use of 100 Crown Street as proposed by Aberdeen Friends in their report (App B circulated prior to this meeting);

We have also heard from Harry Horsley and other Friends about some of the factors that would persuade us to sell or retain 100 Crown Street.

In consideration that:

1. all of the local meetings in North Scotland, other than Aberdeen, get by with renting places for their Meetings,
2. the financial needs of the Area Meeting are such that our operating costs other than property maintenance are met without reliance on the rental income from 100 Crown St,
3. the concern felt by many Friends about the responsibility of Trustees for ensuring appropriate care and management of 100 Crown St means that they won't serve as trustees,
4. we need to consider the well-being of the Area Meeting as a whole:

We suggest that north Scotland AM board of trustees is better represented by Aberdeen Friends and collectively Aberdeen Local Meeting takes more responsibility for the Aberdeen properties.

It needs to be acknowledged that it is likely, within a few years, Quakers in Scotland, as a new charitable body, will exist and may be gifted the properties, and Aberdeen Friends will continue their role of caring for the properties.

30/24 We suggest that any proposal to sell the building is deferred for at least a year and that we ask Trustees to continue with leasing the building to Alban Associates.

31/24 We ask that Aberdeen Local Meeting continue investigations for alternative uses of 100 Crown Street, providing Area Meeting with roughly costed options that might include:

1. exploring additional lease options with Aberdeen charities such as the Fairtrade organisation,
2. seeking guidance from NESCAN (North East Scotland Climate Action Network) & ACVO (Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations) on funding and property management,
3. initiating conversations with housing associations to understand their potential interest in the building¹,
4. gifting the building to another charitable organisation, ensuring caveats are in place to retain access to parking, and perhaps use of the basement.

We ask that they report to Area Meeting in November 2024, with a clear plan for making better use of 100 Crown St in line with our principles, with the expectation that they can galvanise the Local Meeting behind such a plan.

32/24 We also encourage Aberdeen Local Meeting to consider the option of establishing a Community Interest Company or SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) to take ownership of the properties and to release Area Meeting from responsibility for the buildings, if that also seems appropriate.

Piers Voysey
Clerk

Lynden Easterbrook
Assistant Clerk

¹ Organisations listed in the Aberdeen options paper: Langstane Housing, Grampian Housing, Castlehill Housing, Aberdeen City Council.