



## GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

11 June 2016

Glasgow

### Min. 1 Worship

During Meeting for Worship we heard a reading from Quaker Faith and Practice 21.06, the epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting, 1991.

### Min. 2 Welcome

We welcome David Wing from The Salvation Army to this GM.

We will record the total numbers of all present and add them to these minutes.

East Scotland	5
South East Scotland	13
North Scotland	1
West Scotland	16

**Total: 35**

### Min. 3 Reporter

We appoint Joyce Taylor from East Scotland AM to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask West Scotland AM to report on the next GM.

### Min. 4 New members and deaths

We record the following new members since our last meeting:

Derek Morrison (SE)  
Jessica Paterson (SE)  
Tim Bennison (W)

We record the following deaths:

Ian Johnston (E)  
Helen Steven (N)  
Sylvia Marshall (SE)  
Marjorie Farquharson (SE)

### Min. 5 Dates and Venues for 2017-18

We confirm the following GM dates and venues for 2017-18:

*South East - 11 March 17 (already agreed)*  
*West - 10 June 17*  
*East - 9 Sept 17*  
*North - 18/19 Nov 17*  
*South East - 10 March 2018*

## Min. 6 Tabular Statement 2015

We note the following numbers of members, attenders and children at 31st December 2015.

	2015			2014	2013	2012	2011
	Members	Attenders	Children	Members	Members	Members	Members
East	94	50	15	101	110	111	107
North	129	143	38	126	127	122	118
South East	254	310	71	236	232	247	254
West	216	193	43	231	223	227	228
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>707</b>

## Min. 7 Amendment to GM Governing Document

We agree to update our Governing Document by deleting the words 'Scottish Executive' and substituting the words 'Scottish Government' and ask the Clerk to Trustees to notify the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator accordingly.

## Min. 8 Enquirers' Weekend

Further to minute 10 of GM on 6 June 2015, we note that SE Scotland AM has organised an Enquirers' Weekend open to all within the General Meeting to be held at the Conforti Institute, Coatbridge from 2-4 September 2016. Pat Lucas has outlined the provisional programme. We thank SE Scotland AM for doing this on behalf of General Meeting.

## Min. 9 Annual Report of Trustees

Robin Davis has introduced the informal Annual Report of GM Trustees for 2015, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. We note that Trustees are currently short of one member from East AM. We thank Trustees for their work during the year.

## Min. 10 Cadet Forces in Scottish State Schools

Elizabeth Allen and Mairi Campbell-Jack have told us about their contact, on behalf of the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group, with Education Scotland regarding the proposed expansion of cadet forces in Scottish schools to be financed by the UK Government from fines levied on banks. The PLFG has asked GM to pass this concern to Meeting for Sufferings.

We agree to take up this concern and forward the minute from the PLFG and a supporting paper to Meeting for Sufferings. We encourage the PLFG, supported by the Parliamentary Engagement Officer, to continue to raise awareness of this issue in Scotland and to promote alternatives of peace education.

## Min. 11 ACTS delegation to Brussels

Pamala McDougall and Joyce Taylor have given us an account of their experiences as part of the recent ACTS delegation which visited Brussels to learn more about the European Community. The aim of the visit was to inform Scottish Churches of the work of the European Commission ahead of the Referendum on 23rd June. Pamala and Joyce have given us an account of the different sessions which covered a wide range of topics and activities of the Commission. We thank Pamala and Joyce for their report.

## **Min. 12 Parliamentary Liaison Function Group**

Elizabeth Allen has reported that in addition to the work on countering the military presence in Scottish schools and the petition which will be presented to the Petitions Committee in the autumn, the PLFG has examined the way in which some local authorities are investing directly or indirectly in the arms trade and has identified a number of opportunities for Scottish Friends to promote peace education over the next two years. An Election Guide was produced to help Friends engage prospective candidates in discussion about issues of concern to Quakers.

The Group are now concentrating on the priority area of economic justice, sustainability and peace and as a start are arranging a symposium on 29th October as part of the Edinburgh Radical Book Fair on 'Inequality in Scottish Society' with a particular focus on tax and land reform.

## **Min. 13 Website Redevelopment**

David Sterrat has provided an update on the work being undertaken by our Website Development Steering Group. His report details the history of the existing website and identifies the different audiences which it is addressing. The Group has identified various areas for improvement including a better introduction to Quakerism, visual improvements and greater use of photographs. The Group hopes to produce a trial website later in the year on which Friends can comment prior to producing a final design.

## **Min. 14 Discussions with the Prison Chaplaincy Advisors**

Further to minute 13 of General Meeting on 5th March this year, Elizabeth Allen has reported that there has not been any response to the paper she submitted.

## **Min. 15 Nominations matters**

Nominations Function Group have brought forward the following names and we agree to appoint them:

### **GM Clerk**

**Adwoa Bittle** (1<sup>st</sup> triennium)

Jan 2017 to Dec 2019

### **GM Assistant Clerk**

**Robin Davis** (1<sup>st</sup> triennium)

Jan 2017 to Dec 2019

### **Parliamentary Liaison Function Group Members**

**Alan Frith** (2<sup>nd</sup> triennium)

Jan 2017 to Dec 2019

**Conor Watt** (1<sup>st</sup> triennium)

Jan 2017 to Dec 2019

**Rosemary Hartill** (1<sup>st</sup> triennium)

Jan 2017 to Dec 2019

**Martin Mansell** (replacing Heather Burns)

Jan 2017 to Dec 2017

### **GM Trustee (South East)**

Jacqueline Noltingk (2<sup>nd</sup> triennium)

Jan 2017 to Dec 2019

### **Northern Friends Youth Events Trust**

Mary Jane Elton (2<sup>nd</sup> triennium)

Jan 2017 to Dec 2019

Simon Harding (1<sup>st</sup> triennium)

Jan 2017 to Dec 2019

### **Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office Advisory Group**

Philip Lucas

Jun 2016 to Jun 2017

## **Min. 16 The Refugee Crisis**

Bob Fyffe led us in exploring the complex reasons behind the global refugee crisis in which 60 million people are now displaced. This issue needs to be understood in a holistic way. It is not just conflict and the actions of the “Western Powers” but also climate driven problems. We were encouraged to consider why the world was reacting the way it is to refugees as opposed to reactions worldwide to previous large movements of people.

Bob told us about a visit by a delegation of members of CTBI to Greece last autumn. He gave us a clear contrast of the realities faced by refugees as opposed to the information we receive from the news networks. His passionate portrayal of the real situation for refugees and migrants who are fleeing their homelands and facing such terrible circumstances affected us deeply. Closing natural migration routes by putting up barriers has enabled criminal gangs to take even more advantage. Killing and robbing for passports, brutally attacking people stuck at these points has become the norm. Women and children are most vulnerable.

10,000 children have recently disappeared. Disappeared for their organs, for the sex trade, for ??? Bob told us about a recent trip of women church leaders led by Cathy Galloway who visited displaced people in Greece. Their report *Women to Women* has many shocking findings. It is available at the CTBI website referenced at the end of this minute.

We shared with each other our considerations on this issue. We felt we need to be in solidarity with people who are being displaced. We need to seek to support Churches in the receiving countries. We are clear that a co-ordinated sensible approach is needed and heard about initiatives already happening across Scotland where Quakers are working with other churches and organisations.

The least we can do is return to our communities, workplaces and local meetings and communicate what we know and have learnt. We need to get to know each other in the things that are eternal, to build relationships, to love our neighbours of all faiths, to reach out.

For more information please visit: <http://focusonrefugees.org/> and <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/> .

## **Min. 17 Closing Minute**

We record our thanks to West Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this GM, and look forward to meeting again in Aberdeen in September where Michael Hutchinson will speak about our BYM structures.

Martin Burnell  
Clerk

## **GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND** **Annual report of trustees for 2015**

This has been a busy year, dealing with business expected and unexpected. Dominant was the Scottish advocacy project. Mairi Campbell-Jack took up at the beginning of the year her appointment as Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer, under a joint venture funded by Britain Yearly Meeting with the support of General Meeting for Scotland (GM); the post is managed by the Advocacy and Public Relations team based in Friends House London.

As you can imagine, this has not been an easy project to oversee. The Yearly Meeting trustees handle the personnel management while our Parliamentary Liaison Function Group (PLFG), under guidance from GM, agrees with the Friends House staff the priorities for the work. There have been some misunderstandings about the way this operates, and tensions between General Meeting and Yearly Meeting. We undertook a joint review of the management at the end of 2015, as a result of which various improvements have been made to working practices. We now know when we have to take advice from Friends House staff on material we put out in the name of Friends, and we have been made better aware of the limitations of the post being part-time. The big question, which we have yet to resolve is the way to communicate better with Scottish Friends in our Meetings, and to enthuse them with the aims of the project. This is a three year project and we will be reviewing it at the end of this year. Should we renew it for another period? How do we fund it?

Another aspect of this is the impact this has had on the PLFG. It has had to reappraise its role, given not only that we have a paid member of staff to help us, but the greater political awareness in Scotland generally. The group meets regularly and needs to have members with the appropriate knowledge and skills.

It is a totally new kind of venture for Friends. GM is living adventurously. However, we must ensure that this does not take too much of our time, energy and money to the detriment of our overall religious purpose. It is only one way of "living out our faith".

We encouraged the GM treasurer to convene a meeting of Area Meeting treasurers, principally to gauge how well members are reacting to the request for additional contributions to help fund the Parliamentary Engagement Officer post, This turned out to be a most useful exchange of views on a variety of topics. Concern remains on how we would fund this post if the pilot project were to be extended. We also persuaded GM central committee to allow time at the GM in St Andrews to discern the value of guidelines for the donations and affiliations. These were accepted as a useful tool.

Marion Sharkey has now been in post since April 20th 2015 as the successor to Bronwen Currie as GM Administrator. We thanked Bronwen for her exceptional service and have been delighted at how well Marion has settled into the post, and become well known to Friends.

We continue to keep an eye on how GM and its various committees function. We have found ourselves coping with the unexpected as well as the expected, coping for example with sorting out a breakdown in relationships between Friends, arising from misunderstandings about the business discipline and the role of particular Friends. It highlighted a gap in our church government about how best GM should handle grievances.

We also continue to fulfil our general obligations in ensuring GM complies with charity law.

We thank those who have served as trustees, both those who have been released at the end of 2015 and those who have joined the group this year.

Robin Davis, clerk  
June 2016

**Those who have served or are serving -**

Trustees 2015

Pam Brunt (East); Robin Davis (clerk); David James (North); Margaret Morton (West); Jacqueline Noltingk (South East); John Phillips (GM treasurer, ex officio).

Trustees 2016

Robin Davis (clerk); Michael Hutchinson (West); Derek McLean (North); Beryl Milner (East) (until June); Jacqueline Noltingk (South East); John Phillips (GM treasurer, ex officio).