



GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

17th November 2018
Perth

Minute 1 Worship

We began with a period of worship during which 28.07 of Qf&p was read. We were led to consider what it is we have to say that is distinctively Quaker.

Minute 2 Welcome to all present

We are glad to welcome everybody, including 7 attenders, to General Meeting in Perth. We will record the total numbers of all present and add them to these minutes.

East Scotland	20
South East Scotland	19
North Scotland	11
West Scotland	15

Total: 65

Minute 3 Elders

We are glad that we have Elders present who are willing to uphold our Meeting for Worship. Our clerk has introduced first timers to some of the discipline of Quaker business meetings and introduced some of the Friends who are currently giving service to GM.

Minute 4 Reporter

We appoint Margaret Roy from West Scotland Area Meeting to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask East Scotland Area Meeting to report on GM in Glasgow in March.

Minute 5 New members

We record the following new members since our last meeting from Area Meeting minutes:
East Scotland Area Meeting - Susan Milne
West Scotland Area Meeting- Louise McKeown

Minute 6 Report on Meeting for Sufferings held 6th October 2018

We thank Mike Shilson for speaking to his report which was circulated with documents in advance and is attached to these minutes. Mike told us about the particular parts of the meeting which struck him. We are grateful to our Meeting for Sufferings representatives at both AM and GM level. It is so important that Friends know what is happening on our behalf amongst Quakers in Britain.

Minute 7 Report on the Family Weekend held 5th to 7th October 2018

We thank Madeleine Harding for the report on this year's family weekend. We thank all the people involved in making such a fruitful event happen. It was held this year at the Atholl Centre in Pitlochry. Families from all over Scotland attended. The theme was 'Stories'. Children present were aged 5 to 16 and at nearly all sessions the young people all stayed and worked together. They built a fantastic community.

Minute 8 Report on the Link Weekend held 12th to 14th October 2018

We thank Madeleine Harding for sharing with us what happened at this weekend. We are glad that such gatherings take place for young people in our GM. We thank the volunteers that enable them to do so. Fourteen young people aged between 13 and 17 met in Edinburgh. A group called Solutions not Sides, that works in schools, led a workshop on the conflict in Israel/Palestine. They looked at how to bring peaceful solutions to the problems that the people who live there must deal with. The depth that was reached by all at the weekend was remarkable and gives us hope.

Minute 9 Minute 11 of GM 15th Sept 2018

(At GM in Glasgow on 15th September 2018 Minute 11 was agreed. I have sought GMs permission to help clarify the minute regarding the Action for Churches Together in Scotland report given at that meeting. GM has agreed to this. As the new minute is substantially different, from Minute 11 agreed by GM, it is in right ordering that we formally agree the following minute which clarifies the information given by Huw)

Huw Lloyd Richards, our GM representative on ACTS, spoke briefly about the THEOS report on Acts. THEOS is a Think Tank in London. Their report galvanised ACTS trustees to set up a Working Group to discern a way forward for ACTS. Huw is on this group. The Group produced a Report which was circulated informally for initial consultation to the constituent churches including GM. Huw thanked those who replied to this consultation for their comments. The September two-day ACTS Members/Trustees meeting was used to discuss the Report with the first day being one of listening and threshing together. The first day was grounded in worship and began with Psalm 139, and Huw read the first five verses of this Psalm to us in his report. This approach enabled the second day of difficult business to be better grounded. We are glad to hear that churches that had not previously been part of these conversations are now involved. Based on the consultation and the two-day Meeting the Working Group will now fill out further details in a revised Report. There are two further streams of work required to complement the main Report on financial affairs and on the changes required to the Constitution. Huw is keeping Marigold Bentley the secretary to QCCIR informed on all these matters. We ask that this minute be sent to Marigold.

The new working title of ACTs is The Scottish Christian Forum, although the title of ACTS will still be in the Constitution.

We are grateful to Huw for his presence on this working group. We know that having Huw, a Quaker, involved has enabled new ways of working and true inclusivity. We look forward to hearing from Huw as to how this moves forward. Huw shared a poem that had been exchanged by members of the Working Group, by RS Thomas:

Via Negativa.

Why No! I never thought other than
That God is that great absence
In our lives, the empty silence
Within, the place where we go
Seeking, not in hope to
Arrive or find. He keeps the interstices
In our knowledge, the darkness
Between stars. His are the echoes
We follow, the footprints he has just
Left. We put our hands in
His side hoping to find
It warm. We look at people
And places as though he had looked
At them. too; but miss the reflection

Minute 10 ACTS update

Huw Lloyd Richards has told us about the progressing situation. At this stage our clerks feel that GM should know that negotiations around ACTS's work and future are at a sensitive stage and that Friends are asked to uphold Huw, the new Enabling Group and our trustees while this work goes on. Huw will keep updating GM clerks, GM trustees, Quaker Committee on Christian & Interfaith Relations and Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees as appropriate. He will bring reports to GM in session, as often as is necessary.

Minute 11 Nominations

Our GM Nominations group has brought us the following names.

William Purser NSAM to serve on our Parliamentary Engagement Working Group with immediate effect until December 2021. Pam Brunt ESAM to serve as GM Assistant Treasurer from January 2019 to December 2019.

These names being acceptable we appoint them accordingly. We thank our GM nominations committee for their work in this service for us.

Minute 12 PEWG priorities discernment

We thank our Parliamentary Engagement Working Group for their report that was circulated with documents in advance and is attached to these minutes. Joyce Taylor, convenor of our PEWG has brought us up to date with some of the specifics of their work. For example, the petition on militarism in schools has got to the stage that at the recent committee hearing it has agreed that the Deputy First Minister needs to provide further clarification on the timeline of the children's rights impact assessment. Further updates of their work will be in their next report.

Martin Mansell told us of the BYM Sustainability Gathering and the growing sense of urgency around climate justice following the recent IPCC report. We were then prompted to consider two questions.

1. Do you support us working further on land reform and in particular land value tax? Are there other areas of land reform about which you think Quakers should have a voice.
2. Do you feel that the IPCC report and the groundswell of concern being expressed by local meetings leads us to ask the PEWG to work on sustainability in relation to the Scottish Government and are there particular things you would like us to focus on?

What sort of Scotland do we want to live in, and leave behind?

What sort of World do we want to live in, and leave behind?

We are clear that the two questions posed by our PEWG are linked and that we wish the PEWG to continue working on both.

This is not about palming off this work on to the shoulders of a few. This is about good communication so that our PEWG can encourage us into action and work, as individuals and as LMs, AMs and GM.

Our distinctive Quaker role, which derives from our Faith, experience and willingness to listen, may be to enable groups of politicians, other Faith groups or interested parties to meet together, hopefully enabling them to discover points of leverage and ways to make changes to policy that in the long term will make a real difference. We encourage our PEWG to continue to seek partners to work with on the matters that concern us.

This work affects us all in all generations. We applaud our PEWG for working with YFGM and know that these issues are on the agenda of next year's JYM.

We are moved by the depth of the discussion today and our sense of leading that drives us to be part of a movement for change that is urgent and vital. We know that it is essential that as individuals and groups we change our lifestyles now. We want to influence our politicians and enable them to make a difference. In Scotland we are fortunate that we have such an accessible government.

We ask David Somervell to bring us a background paper on Stop the Climate Chaos Scotland.

Minute 13 GM Budget and appointment of Examiner

On behalf of GM Trustees, Nigel Dower, our treasurer, has introduced the GM budget which has been approved by our GM Trustees. We appreciate the clarity of this budget and are happy to accept it. We also considered the GM Donations and Affiliations. We are grateful for the additional guidance on reporting back to GM by the contacts/representatives. Our clerk has explained why the planned reporting did not happen as expected for some GMs this year. We hope these reports are included in future agendas where appropriate. We are happy to accept and approve the Donations and Affiliations. We agree to the appointment of Gordon Mackay as Independent Examiner.

We are keen to encourage people to apply to the Treasurer for financial support to attend GM. This year a sum of £500 has been allocated in the Budget for this purpose. Please make this known in your Local Meetings

We ask Trustees to investigate whether some of the donations we make should be reviewed to fit with rising inflation. The Budget is attached to these minutes.

Minute 14 Report on Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre - David Somervell

Although squashed to the end of our time together, David Somervell has spoken to his report that was circulated prior to GM and is attached to these minutes. We are glad of his passion for this work and encourage others to join the Peace and Justice Centre as its work mirrors our values. The appeal for the Opposition to War Memorial (formerly known as the Conscientious Objectors memorial) in Princess Street Gardens will be circulated again via our GM Administrator.

Minute 15 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to East Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this GM, and look forward to meeting again on 9th March 2019 in Glasgow at Renfield St Stephens' Church.

Adwoa Bittle
Clerk

Attachments on same email as Minutes

Sufferings report
PEWG report
Budget
Peace and Justice report

For information

Seven church leaders (I was one of them!) in Scotland have called for the home secretary to grant a Pakistani woman asylum, after she was acquitted of blasphemy. The Right Reverend Susan Brown, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and The Most Reverend Leo Cushley, Roman Catholic Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, are among seven church leaders to sign an open letter which has been sent to Home Secretary Sajid Javid urging him to grant her asylum.

Dates for future GMS

March 9th 2019 Glasgow (already agreed)
June 8th 2019 South East Scotland AM
September 14th 2019 North Scotland AM
November 16th 2019 Perth
March 7th 2020 South East Scotland AM