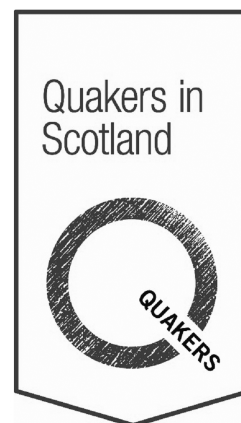


GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

12th September, 2020
Held by Zoom



20/09/01 Worship

We have spent time in worship together during which Quaker Faith and Practice 23.10 was read. We are reminded that by living our lives prayerfully, we will be open to new insights and sustained in our witness. Only God can show us the way out of the mess we have created in the world.

20/09/02 Welcome to all present

We welcome all Friends who are with us today, to General Meeting for Scotland, held by Zoom.

We regret that to comply with Covid19 restrictions, we were prevented from meeting in person in Dundee.

The total numbers of those present will be added to these minutes.

East Scotland	15
South East Scotland	21
North Scotland	8
West Scotland	26

Total: 72, including 3 attenders and 2 visitors.

61 Friends were present in the morning session and 53 in the afternoon.

20/09/03 Elders for this meeting

We are grateful to Friends present who have offered to serve as Elders for this meeting. Their duties are listed on the back of the agenda. Names of those serving for today have been noted. We remind Friends that all of us share the duties of oversight and spiritual care of our Meetings, not just those appointed to carry them out.

20/09/04 Reporter of this Meeting

We appoint Lesley Reynolds from North Scotland Area Meeting to report on this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask East Scotland Area Meeting to report on General Meeting in October.

20/09/05 New members, transfers and deaths

From Area Meeting minutes since General Meeting on 13th June, we record the following transfers of membership:

West Scotland Area Meeting

Transfers in:

Dot and Bob Hay from South East Scotland AM, now Mull and Iona LM

Transfer out:

Caroll Ewen (Dunblane LM) to Belgium and Luxembourg YM

From Area Meeting minutes since General Meeting on 13th June, we record the following new members:

South East Scotland Area Meeting

Anne Macnaughton (Kelso LM)

Bridget Holtom (Portobello & Musselburgh LM)

Emma Milton (Portobello & Musselburgh LM)

North Scotland Area Meeting:

Lesley Reynolds (Aberdeen LM)

Valerie Saunders (Inverness LM)

West Scotland Area Meeting

James Friend (Glasgow LM)

Pam Currie (Ayrshire LM)

Josephine Friederich-Thomas (Castle Douglas LM)

From Area Meeting minutes since General Meeting on 13th June, we record the following deaths:

North Scotland Area Meeting:

Carlin Huddart (Aberdeen LM), on 8th June, 2020

South East Scotland Area Meeting

David Bell (South Edinburgh LM), on 9th May, 2020

Rosalie White (South Edinburgh LM), on 12th May, 2020

Pat Lucas (East Lothian LM), on 5th June, 2020

Alison Moore (Tweeddale LM), on 17th June, 2020

Sheila King (South Edinburgh LM), on 1st July, 2020

Nan Stewart (East Lothian LM), on 20th July, 2020

Ron Halliday (South Edinburgh LM), on 6th August, 2020

20/09/06 Meeting for Sufferings report

Ann Kerr has provided us with a brief written update on Meeting for Sufferings during the Covid19 restrictions. Her written report was circulated as Paper A.

Since February 2020, Meeting for Sufferings has met virtually on 6th June and for the rest of this year, further meetings will be virtual.

We note that Meeting for Sufferings has agreed to reduce the number of times it meets in a year from five to four, subject to review.

The Covid19 pandemic has had a major impact on Britain Yearly Meeting. BYM Trustees reported on the post Covid19 fall in BYM income and the consequential restraints placed on our work.

We thank Ann for her report.

20/09/07 Update on Local Development Worker in Scotland

The General Meeting clerk and assistant clerk, along with clerks of the four Scottish Area Meetings met with Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke staff to discuss recruitment for the job.

GM and AM clerks are clear about range and type of issues for Quakers in Scotland, and earlier feedback from meetings about their needs and aspirations helped.

In exploring what a Local Development Worker (LDW) might do, analogies and models were found to be useful. For instance, the task of the LDW has been likened to that of an engineer who keeps an eye on the whole machine, paying attention to the functioning of all the working parts, some of which move at speed, others less so. The LDW would wait and listen, observe what is working in the Society in Scotland and what is not, then reflect this back to us, so that we can see things clearly and respond.

Current thinking is that the job needs to grow organically, so we should not be too prescriptive.

The LDW post is permanent and is for 28 hours a week. The intention is to recruit at the same time for the four new posts, one of which is in Scotland. The provisional timetable is to advertise the posts in early December, with a view to holding interviews in February and the jobs starting in early April. A job description based on that of the current LDWs will be used. The clerks and staff will continue to work on details of the recruitment process, along with raising awareness of and fostering interest in the Scottish post.

A summary of thinking and decisions to date will be sent to Local Meeting clerks, for sharing with Friends.

20/09/08 Report on Shindig 2020, “Think Global Act Local”

The Shindig Mag was circulated for Friends’ interest, with the papers for this meeting.

We thank Matthew Bittle for his video report on Shindig 2020, which we have just watched. Matthew reminded us that the Northern Friends Summer Shindig is an annual residential event for young Quakers and non-Quakers aged from 11 to 16. Staff saved it from being cancelled this year because of the Covid19 pandemic, by arranging a one-day Zoom event.

There was one theme session led by Helen Minnis and Ellie Koeplinger on white privilege, where it came from and the ramifications of it in 2020. Participants learned of how unconscious biases and stereotypes permeate our society and how small local expressions of racism hold up larger more systemic structures, like incarceration.

Shindig is about personal growth and changing lives and Matthew hopes that this newfound knowledge about racism and white privilege will go deep and lead to action.

We are grateful to Shindig staff and trustees for making it happen this year and for creating the feeling of family closeness at the virtual event.

20/09/09 Update on the Scottish Advocacy Job

Further to minute 20/06/12, with the Scottish parliamentary elections in May 2021 and COP26 in Glasgow, in November 2021, the urgent need for the Scottish Advocacy post to be filled has been accepted by BYM and GM Trustees. The post has been re-advertised on a fixed-term basis until the end of 2021. Interviews will take place on Thursday, 17th September, with a view to having someone in post by the end of October.

Funding for the post is in place for this period but BYM is not at present in a position to commit to a permanent contract, as its income has been severely reduced, post Covid19. It is anticipated that cuts will have to be made to the overall charitable expenditure in the next three financial years.

20/09/10 Parliamentary Engagement Working Group report

The report of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group was circulated in advance of this meeting, as Paper B. Joyce Taylor has updated the report and answered our questions.

Members of the PEWG and BYM staff member, Grace Da Costa have met representatives of the political parties in Scotland to discuss what might be in their manifestos for the 2021 Scottish parliament elections. They made

the spiritual basis of our political concern clear at the outset. They have met with the Scottish Labour Party, the SNP, Scottish Greens and Scottish Conservatives. The Liberal Democrats declined to meet and asked for a written paper to be sent to them. This has been done. The matter of land reform was raised in conversations about manifestos. While there was support for peat land restoration and refraining from planting trees in peat land by all parties, only the Scottish Greens support land tax reform.

Material to help Local Meetings engage with candidates for the 2021 elections, will be posted on the Quakers in Scotland website, under Our Work and Parliamentary Engagement. It will focus on the policies, which help to address our priorities.

We note that following the review of the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office by the Faith Impact Forum of the Church of Scotland, the core tasks are now relationship building and providing information, rather than advocacy.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was launched as part of Scottish Government programme 2020 – 21. The Parliamentary Engagement Group had hoped that the incorporation of this UN charter on the rights of the child might provide an opportunity for further discussions on militarisation in schools but the Scottish Government has taken the view that this is a defence, and therefore reserved matter. However the PEWG will continue to find ways to pursue it.

We thank Joyce for her report and the group for its work.

20/09/11 Action of Churches Together in Scotland report

The report of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) was circulated in advance of this meeting, as Paper C.

Adwoa Bittle, our representative at ACTS Members Meetings, has also been fully engaged in representing us on the Church Leaders Forum, which has been in talks with the Scottish government over Covid restrictions on churches, consulting over Black Lives Matter, and publishing weekly prayers.

We note that the constitutional revision required for the transition of ACTS to the Scottish Christian Forum has been put on hold, due to Covid19.

We thank Adwoa for her report and for her work as our ACTS representative.

20/09/12 Scottish Friend

Electronic distribution

The Scottish Friend is sent out electronically to the mailing list. In addition, 287 paper copies are distributed to Friends by post, four times a year: 36 of these go to Friends who receive an electronic copy. 163 people who are sent a paper copy receive GM minutes and papers by email.

We are concerned about the environmental impact and cost of posting out paper copies of the Scottish Friend. We agree that from now on, electronic distribution will be the norm and paper copies will be sent only on request. We ask Friends to consider carefully if they need a paper copy.

Assistant Editor

Sila Collins-Walden, the editor of the Scottish Friend, has requested that we appoint an assistant editor to share the workload and to build up experience of the job.

We agree to this request and ask our GM Nominations Committee to bring forward the name of a Friend to serve as assistant editor for the next three years.

We thank Sila for the work she does on our behalf.

20/09/13 Training for GM and AM Trustees and role holders

Further to minutes 19/11/08 and 20/06/09, GM trustees have arranged an informal meeting by Zoom for AM and GM trustees on Monday, 12th October. The purpose of this will be to share issues which are currently concerning trustees and to identify any areas where they could work together to support and assist each other. It will also be used to identify any areas where trustees feel further training would be useful. Individual invitations will be sent to trustees shortly.

This will be followed by a more structured training event by Zoom, the provisional date for which is Saturday, 7th November. This will be open to existing trustees and potential new trustees. Further details will be sent to AM Clerks and Clerks to AM Trustees in due course.

20/09/14 Engagement with revision of the Book of Discipline

Mary Woodward has updated us on the work of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, which has been taken forward over the summer months by four sub-groups working virtually, after planned events were cancelled.

Mary co-convenes the Engaging with Friends sub-group. Working in conjunction with Woodbrooke, they have put on four well-subscribed online sessions about revising Quaker Faith and Practice:

- prayerfully
- joyfully
- creatively
- boldly

Similar sessions are offered to LMs, AMs and GM. They are looking for feedback from these sessions to guide them in their work.

The Revision Committee recognise that spiritual insight often comes from our creative side and had planned inviting Friends at Yearly Meeting Gathering to contribute drawings, paintings and writings to “Our Book – Bath 2020”. Instead, with the postponement of the Gathering, Friends across the country are invited to send their creative contributions expressing how they want the new Book of Discipline to be, for inclusion in an electronic book, “Open to New Light”, which will be a resource for the committee. Today, Mary has invited us to draw, colour or scribble something during a short period of worship, focusing on:

Am I open to new light? What might that look like? What is on my heart at the moment?

Friends’ contributions were then captured via “Print Screen”.

We are encouraged to send our completed work to the Book of Discipline Revision Committee. Instructions are on the website www.padlet.com/bdrc/opentonewlight

We thank Mary for speaking to us today and encouraging us to engage with “Open to New Light”.

20/09/15 Enquirers’ Day 2020 report

We have heard that this years Enquirers’ Day, held by Zoom on 18th July, was much appreciated by the 8 participants from different parts of Scotland who took part. Most of them were under 40, and their personal journeys towards Quakerism varied.

We commend the following suggestions for future Enquirers’ Days to the organisers of these events:

- Zoom Enquirers’ Days work well, bringing people from a wide geographical area together, with no travelling expenses and little overall cost.
- If using Zoom, two morning sessions would work as well as a whole day.

- We should expand publicity, especially internet publicity. One participant found Quakers through a YouTube video.
- More small group work would be good but we need better technical support.

There was feedback that information about Local Meetings by Zoom might be difficult to find and meetings are encouraged to make sure their internet publicity is easy to access.

It was suggested that we might consider running Enquirers' Days every six months.

We thank Gill Reid for her report and West Scotland Area Meeting for arranging this event. In 2021, it is the turn of South East Scotland Area Meeting to act as host.

20/09/16 Central European Gathering of Friends

Minute 20/06/08 applies.

We are sorry to hear that the Central European Gathering of Friends, to be held in Litomysl, Czech Republic on 15-18th October, 2020 has been cancelled because of Covid19 travel restrictions.

20/09/17 Climate Justice

We welcome our speakers, Sally Foster-Fulton, Head of Christian Aid Scotland and Mithika Mwenda, Executive Director of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance. Mithika joins us by Zoom from Kenya.

Sally reminded us that Christian Aid has been working in the United Kingdom for 75 years. The three pillars of its work are currently poverty, power and prophetic voice.

Today, Sally focused on the pathology of privilege: how our privilege affects our understanding of and responses to climate justice. Unlike the conventional understanding of privilege which views it as a gift, Sally suggested we might consider it as power taken, regardless of ownership. It is not ours and we must give it back.

With extreme effects of climate change causing ecological disasters and leading to humanitarian emergencies, including community displacement, Christian Aid's work priorities have narrowed down and deepened. They have shifted from long-term sustainability to humanitarian aid.

We heard of models of Christian Aid work in different countries, including Malawi. In all its work Christian Aid tries to build in gender empowerment, as women are often the worst affected by climate change disasters.

Christian Aid always partners with local people, encouraging them to teach each other and share their expertise. Its aim is that when it exits a project no one should know that it was there in the first place.

After her talk, Sally answered our questions.

Mithika has joined us late from Kenya, for technical reasons. He spoke to us about the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, which is made up of more than 1000 organisations. They work with people on the frontline of climate change, especially women in rural settings. They have a bottom up approach, which strengthens the voice of those who are suffering and holds to moral account those in power, requesting that they take action to develop policies and provide resources to meet citizens' needs. Their approach puts the people who are affected at the middle of the solution.

Mithika described the struggle for climate justice through an African lens and the importance of giving a voice to those who have no voice and who suffer the most from climate change.

The Pan African Climate Justice Alliance has seen the blending of diverse groups, with concerns for various aspects of climate justice brought together by common interest and recognition that this is a moral issue.

We have spent a short time in small group discussions engaging with the following questions set for us by Sally:

Privilege is not responsibility bestowed on us; rather, it is power taken from another individual or community. In regards to climate justice, what can we do to restore power and balance?

The Society of Friends has a longstanding tradition of journeying with issues for the long-term. Knowing we have little time, what insight can Quakerism bring to the pressing issue of climate justice?

We recognise that these are very challenging questions and we ask that our discussions and reflections continue in our meetings.

Following our small group work, we have united in worship.

Sally has given us permission to share the text and powerpoint slides of Mithika's and her talk, with Friends. They will be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

We thank Sally and Mithika for talking to us today.

20/06/18 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to the Friends who set up and hosted this GM by Zoom.

There being no further business to bring before General Meeting, we conclude, intending to meet next on 31st October, 2020, if nothing occurs to prevent.

Elizabeth Allen,
Clerk