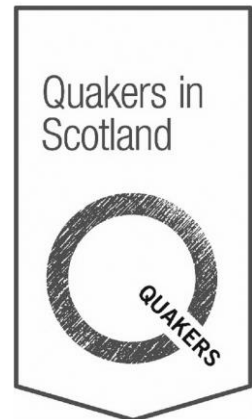


GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

Blended Meeting held in Glasgow at the Quaker Meeting House, 38 Elmbank Crescent G2 4PS, and by Zoom, on 11 March 2023



MINUTES

23/03/01 Opening worship

During our opening worship, our assistant clerk has read extracts from the testimonies received to the Grace of God as shown in the lives of Bobby Locke and Jim Pym.

23/03/02 Welcome to all present

We welcome all Friends who are with us today, both in Glasgow Meeting House and by Zoom.

The total numbers of those present for all or part of the meeting were:

East Scotland AM	12 (2 in person, 10 on Zoom)
North Scotland AM	16 (1 in person, 15 on Zoom)
South East Scotland AM	20 (12 in person, 8 on Zoom)
West Scotland AM	24 (10 in person, 14 on Zoom)

Total: 73, including 4 attenders

We thank West Scotland AM Friends acting as elders for us: Liz Anderton and Robin Davis. We ask South East Scotland AM to provide elders for our next meeting.

23/03/03 Agenda

We adopt the agenda as circulated in advance and as now amended.

23/03/04 Reporter to *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*

We thank North Scotland Area Meeting for arranging for Carolyn Burch to report on this meeting for *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*. We ask West Scotland Area Meeting to provide the name of a Friend to report on our next meeting.

23/03/05 Thanks

We thank Elizabeth Allen and Adwoa Burnley for their service as our clerk and assistant clerk over the last triennial period.

23/03/06 Testimonies

We receive testimonies to the Grace of God as shown in the lives of Bobby Locke and Jim Pym (papers Ai and Aii). These are forwarded to us by minute 083/22 of West Scotland Area Meeting held 5 December 2022 and minute 2023/01/05 of South East Scotland Area Meeting held 16 January 2023, respectively. Copies were circulated in advance of this meeting. We endorse these testimonies and send them to the Recording Clerk to be received at Yearly Meeting.

23/03/07 New members, transfers and deaths

From Area Meeting minutes since General Meeting held 19 November last, we record the following:

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP – IN

Imogen Karas from Sussex West AM to ESAM

Barry Mills from Pendle Hill AM to WSAM

Ian Neale from Northamptonshire AM to WSAM

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP – OUT / INTERNAL TO SCOTLAND

Simon Jackson from SESAM to NSAM

Alison Robertson Morrish from ESAM to SESAM

Amer Syed from NSAM to WSAM

RESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Andrew Phin (ESAM)

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP due to loss of contact

Joanne Clifford (ESAM)

Robin MacFadyen (WSAM)

NEW MEMBERS

David Hendry (SESAM)

Margaret Jacobsen (WSAM)

Alex Taylor (SESAM)

Derek Young (NSAM)

DEATHS

Isobel Taylor (ESAM) on October 20 2022

Auriol Roberts (SESAM) on November 30 2022

Les Dunford (WSAM) on December 7 2022

David Turner (SESAM) on January 4 2023

V. Ann Robertson (ESAM) on January 25 2023

[ESAM = East Scotland Area Meeting; NSAM = North Scotland Area Meeting; SESAM = South East Scotland Area Meeting and WSAM = West Scotland Area Meeting]

23/03/08 Tabular Statement summaries

We note the following numbers of Members, Attenders and children, combined from our four area meetings, as at 31 December 2022, with figures for 2021 and 2020 for comparison. These figures comprise the Tabular Statement, the annual statistical table.

	2022		
	Members*	Attenders: adults	Attenders: children
East	77	63	11
North	131	100	16
South East	240	215	49
West	228	197	20
Total	676	575	96

	2021		
	Members*	Attenders: adults	Attenders: children
East	81	55	8
North	139	102	17
South East	239	200	61
West	228	193	22
Total	687	550	108

	2020		
	Members*	Attenders: adults	Attenders: children
East	81	52	11
North	136	101	18
South East	235	200	70
West	226	197	20
Total	678	550	119

For information the number of members includes Friends recorded as 'i' international members and 'd' members of BYM outwith Scotland

*All members shown in the 2020, 2021 & 2022 columns are adults.

23/03/09 Book of Members & Attenders 2023

The 2023 edition of our Book of Members and Attenders is now printed and is being distributed to Meetings. The cost is £4 each. We thank Sue Proudlove, our Administrator, for managing this considerable piece of work.

23/03/10 Nominations Report

There were no appointments made by between-meetings procedure since our last meeting.

Nominations Committee has brought us the following:

GMS Trustees

To serve as a GMS Trustee from West Scotland Area Meeting, from appointment until 31 December 2025: Malcom Crosby. We agree to this appointment.

Margaret Mortimer has requested to be released from her role as GMS Trustee for South East Scotland Area Meeting.

Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group

Trish Rodgers has asked to be released from the Working Group.

Jenny Copsey has transferred from SE Scotland AM, for which she was appointed to the Group, to West Scotland AM. We agree she may serve as an additional member for West Scotland AM for the group until May 2024.

We thank our Friends released for their service.

We thank our GM nominations committee for their work on our behalf.

22/03/11 Proposed dates and host meetings for GM in 2024/25

We suggest the following dates and host area meetings for 2024/25:

9 March 2024 - South East Scotland AM (already agreed)

8 June West Scotland AM

14 September - North Scotland AM

9 November - East Scotland AM

8 March 2025 South East Scotland AM

We expect to be able to meet in person and that these will be blended (hybrid) meetings. We ask each area meeting to confirm the acceptability of their proposed date, to book a local venue equipped for a blended General Meeting and to inform the General Meeting clerk in time for General Meeting to be held 10 June.

23/03/12 Families weekend 5-7 May at Pitlochry

Mary Troup informs us that the Children & Young Peoples' Advocates group is in the process of organising the next Families Weekend, which is due to be held at the Atholl Centre in Pitlochry from 5-7 May 2023.

Last year's weekend was much anticipated and welcomed by all who were there, and we hope this will be another step in strengthening our

all-age Quaker community in Scotland. The proposed theme will be *Peace at the Heart*, to link the weekend with Quakers in Britain Peace at the Heart report, the associated Teach Peace pack and the travelling Living Exhibition which will be at the Scottish Parliament from 26-28th September 2023. Booking is required and Meetings have been circulated.

23/03/13 GM Trustees annual report

Martin Burnell, retiring clerk of GM Trustees, has spoken to paper B, the annual report of Trustees to the General Meeting. He has alerted us to need to maintain the required number of trustees. Service is interesting and worthwhile.

Trustees support the Treasurer in preparing the annual budget and accounts and by approving the Annual Report and Accounts to be sent to OSCR (the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator). Trustees continue to urge us to consider the best use of legacy funds, and we will return to this in June.

The most important item of work for trustees during 2022 was to review safeguarding policy and guidance, the result of which comes to us later on our agenda.

Martin updated us on the slow progress in establishing the new Scottish Christian Forum, where there is a lack of agreement about the constitution of the new body. It appears unlikely that the new body will be a registered charity, in which case ACTS (Action for Churches Together in Scotland) cannot pass funds to it and might need to continue in existence purely as a grant-giving body. Our representatives continue to stress the need for this matter to be progressed.

Other business has included ensuring that the funding process for our Parliamentary Engagement Officer post is maintained.

The regular meetings between the Clerks of Area Meeting Trustees in Scotland and the Clerk to General Meeting Trustees have continued and

meetings open to all Quaker trustees in Scotland will be held in future from time to time.

Trustees remain grateful to Sue Proudlove, the GM Administrator, for her continued work in support of General Meeting, and we endorse this appreciation.

We thank serving and retiring trustees for their work on our behalf, and Martin for his careful stewardship as clerk.

23/03/14 Serving trustees 2023

We record our General Meeting Trustees serving in 2023 as follows: Andrew Blackadder, Malcolm Crosby, Katrina McCrea (*ex officio* as Treasurer) and Robin Waterston (Clerk).

23/03/15 GM Fund for Healing

We receive minute 4 of GM Trustees held 7 February 2023, recommending that as the GM Fund for Healing is little used, it be donated to the Friends Fellowship of Healing. They have confirmed that they could set up a restricted fund for the benefit of Friends in Scotland. Trustees have consulted with the West Scotland Healing Group. Funds currently stand at £1,627.42. Minute 7 of General Meeting held 17/18 November 2012 refers.

We agree to this recommendation.

23/03/16 Revised Scottish Quaker Safeguarding Guidance

A revised model safeguarding policy and guidance was issued by Britain Yearly Meeting in November 2021. Our Trustees established an ad hoc working group to review these documents and adapt them to conform to Scots law and local circumstances. The group consisted of clerks to Area Meeting Trustees, safeguarding co-ordinators and some General Meeting trustees, led by the clerk to GM Trustees.

We receive minute 3 of General Meeting Trustees held 7 February 2023:

3. Safeguarding policy and guidance

We have heard from Martin that the ad hoc working group have completed their task. The final documents (a 2 page model safeguarding policy, and a 52 page safeguarding guidance) have been circulated in advance. We are grateful for the hard work of the group over the last year.

We agree to forward the documents for GM for adoption. Thereafter they would be forwarded to AMs for approval and implementation. We will return to this at our next meeting to consider Scotland-wide training and any other follow-up actions.

Robin Waterston, clerk

Owing to their combined size and complexity, the documents were placed on the General Meeting for Scotland website for reading prior to this meeting. Comments and queries received since have been forwarded to the clerk of GM Trustees.

Robin Waterston has spoken to the documents. The task was considerable, involving a substantial reorganisation of the model documentation. It has received broad approval from the BYM Safeguarding Officer. On approval, the new policy and guidance will need to be adopted by each Area Meeting.

The new policy and guidance represents a significant tightening up of our approach to safeguarding in the light of the various national investigations into failures of safeguarding within religious organisations. It calls for a wider understanding of safeguarding issues within our Meetings and as such there will need to be a substantial training effort which would be best co-ordinated . Trustees will consider how this can best be carried forward.

We approve the documents, allowing Trustees to finalise amendments of detail in the light of comments received before forwarding them to Area Meetings. We look forward to hearing about the training programme.

We are grateful to the Trustees' ad hoc working group that has spent a year on preparing these documents for us. This allows us to give a consistent approach to safeguarding for Quaker meetings and events throughout Scotland. Safeguarding is all our responsibility.

23/03/17 Parliamentary Engagement Working Group report

We receive a report (paper C) from our Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG), updating us on the work of the group. Richard Raggett has spoken to the report.

Andrew Tomlinson, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer (PEO), left us on 8 February to join Christian Aid Scotland as their Campaigns, Advocacy, Young People and Education Manager. We are grateful to Andrew during his time with us for such a powerful contribution to our political engagement with the Scottish Parliament. He takes our heartfelt thanks with him and he will be missed by PEWG and us all. PEWG will be taking forward the projects, connections and seeds which Andrew has sown with us.

Applications closed on 27 February for a replacement for Andrew and interviews of shortlisted candidates will be held on 23 March. The interview panel comprises David Loxton and Grace Da Costa from Britain Yearly Meeting staff, with Carolyn Burch (PEWG) and Robin Waterston (clerk of GMS Trustees).

Andrew's departure has meant a re-evaluation of priorities for the work planned for this year. The group will be careful to shape its work accordingly, with focus on work reported today. For Peace Education, PEWG has secured dates for two events at the Scottish Parliament: a Peace Education Exhibition (26 to 28 September) based on the "Peace at the Heart" report launched by Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) last year; and, on 21 September, a performance by a Glasgow primary school class on Peace directed by Mary Troup (our Children and Young People's Advocate Support). Closely linked to these events is the planned provision of a travelling exhibition on Peace Education. Our four Area Meetings have received information about this and been asked to contact Zoe Prosser, our Local Development Worker, with any firm

commitments by 27 March if they are able to host the exhibition. Zoe has briefed us about this coordination work. David Somervell has told us that Peace & Justice may be able to give support for the travelling exhibition. We have been reminded how important it is for us to word our input into peace education carefully, testing our assumptions so that those in education can work with us successfully.

PEWG have asked GMS Trustees whether a contribution of £1,000 towards the funding of the exhibition would be possible. Trustees confirm that this would be possible to add to the agreed budget, to be taken from legacy funds. We authorise this expenditure. The majority of the finance required for the exhibition is to be funded by Britain Yearly Meeting or external grants.

PEWG has been encouraging use of Time for Reflection, the 2 minute slot at the start of the Parliament's weekly business at which a citizen of faith or none reads a reflection to the MSPs in Parliament. This is a good opportunity for Quaker outreach to MSPs. Three Scottish Quakers (Lesley Morrison, Mark Bitel and Martin Mansell) have been nominated by their constituency MSPs to lead a Time for Reflection. Further submissions are in the pipeline.

Other ongoing work includes meeting and fostering contacts with MSPs, continuing to be represented with key civil society allies and responding to the Scottish Government's consultation on its Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan.

We are grateful for and celebrate the work of our Group

Afternoon

23/03/18 Options for Scotland

Further to minute 22/09/16, the report of the Options 2 Working Group is about to be published and will be taken by each of the four Area Meetings before coming to us in June. We will then consider the proposals in the report.

22/03/19 Time for reflection: sustaining our Meetings and ourselves

How are we? As we face potential change in our structures, how are our Quaker communities sustaining us and being sustained?

Zoe Prosser, our Local Development Worker, has led us in a period of worship sharing, considering the questions:

How are we feeling about our Quaker community?

How are our Quaker Meetings being sustained?

Zoe spoke to us about some of the things she has seen through her Local Development Worker role. It is important to acknowledge that there is a lot of mourning going on, through the loss of dear and loved Friends and through the changes that we see, with potential loss, in our Quaker community (for example the closure of Woodbrooke Quaker study Centre). We can show tiredness, be overstretched, and worry about questions like “who will do the job?” and “what will happen if no one does it?” The weight of the “should” is being carried – in the sense of feeling that we should all be doing more to uphold the community. This can all be dispiriting.

We know that communities can be many things at once: both a respite and a burden, and showing both hope and fear. A worry comes as we see the importance of what has been built up that we don't want to lose. We live in a time of fear; for our communities, our world, our planet. This can be reflected in our meetings too, so we have to be responsive to each other.

But here is a lot of hope in our communities as well. Clear successes have happened: younger Friends are coming in, there is rejuvenation of Local Meetings; new people are joining us following the pandemic. There are new ways of doing things; new ways to connect to each other in a spirit of worship.

Everywhere she looks, Zoe sees signs of Spring. During our time of worship sharing together this was echoed by Friends, giving instances of

the hope they see and how inspired they are being within our wider Quaker community. Having this sense of hope underpins where we are together: times move on but change doesn't always mean loss. We may have lost Woodbrooke as a centre, but not as a learning resource, and it can come to Scotland to help us. There are more groups working for positive change: people are rising with a vision of what we hope for. Friends spoke of being so grateful for the support given in our communities, by others with us who are engaged with our meetings, working groups and out in the world.

We do have struggles in adapting to change, but we are looking at it head on, taking advantage of what is possible by taking responsibility for our future together. We have flexibility, as has been seen how we use new opportunities like Zoom. We look after each other and share our experiences. There is growth all around us, despite our difficulties.

Today we recognise that we can be a community of transformation as we look to adapt to the change all around us. It won't be easy, and there will be challenging and questioning. But we have each other. We need to think through how we do things, but we have the resource of each other to draw upon. Younger Friends inspire us and show us ways forward, and the rest of us can nurture them in turn.

We thank Zoe for giving us the space to recognise the positives that we have as well as understanding those things we need to work to. We can do that together.

The flowers are coming up all around us and we do have hope.

23/03/20 Meeting for Sufferings report

Ann Kerr has spoken to the Meetings for Suffering held 1-3 December and 4 March (the report to the former circulated in advance as paper Di). The December meeting business included agreement to ask Friends in Britain to drop the use of the term 'overseer', the continuing reviews of Yearly Meeting, Yearly Meeting Gathering and Meeting for Sufferings itself, the Book of Discipline revision, and annual reports from Quaker World Relations Committee and Quaker Committee for Christian and

Interfaith Relations as well as routine matters. In October Meeting for Sufferings was unable to go forward with a working group's recommendation that attenders should be allowed to sit on central committees, as there was strong representation that we should be clearer about what membership means. Area Meetings are now asked to consider this with the aim of considering the nature of membership at Meeting for Sufferings in October 2023. General Meeting may also wish to consider the questions posed:

- Why do we have membership?
- What is it for?
- Is it still necessary?
- If yes, what form(s) could it take?

We hope that Area Meetings will take these forward.

Meeting for Sufferings on 4 March included hearing from the convenors of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee introducing the sample text on nominations and marriage; the formation of a single charity for Wales and the Marches; spirit-led employment; and hearing from Quaker chaplains.

A report on this meeting will be appearing in the *Scottish Friend* in due course.

The papers and minutes of Meeting for Sufferings may be viewed on the Britain Yearly Meeting website.

We thank Ann for her report

23/03/21 Ecumenical and interfaith update

Our March Meeting is when we hear from our representatives and link Friends to ecumenical and interfaith bodies. This year several of these Friends are unable to attend, sometimes as this date clashes with ecumenical activity. In some cases, also, there is little to report. We receive written reports in paper E.

a) ACTS (Action for Churches Together in Scotland)

Adwoa Burnley has let us know that she has nothing to report that is not covered in the Trustees report (minute 23/03/13 refers).

b) Ecumenical Officers' Forum

We receive the Ecumenical Officers' Forum report from Mary Woodward, who today is attending the United Reformed Church Synod residential. We appreciate her lively report that paints a vivid picture of her involvement on our behalf with ecumenical life in Scotland. Much is also reported in the *Scottish Friend*.

c) Religious Leaders Forum (Interfaith Scotland), Interfaith Scotland and Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse.

Kate Arnot is with us today and had given us an oral update on the interfaith work she attends on our behalf. We hope to have a meeting of ecumenical and interfaith representatives and link Friends, and others interested, to share experience. We ask our clerk to ensure this happens by October.

Kate wishes to be released as link Friend to the Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse (Ifgoda), as it is difficult for her to attend its day-time meetings in Paisley.

Currently there are various Christian denominations, Jewish, Muslim and Ba'hai representatives. The group is in the process of finalising plans to spend an unsolicited donation from a charity impressed by our work. We thank Kate for her involvement and ask our Nominations Committee to find the name of a replacement.

d) Iona Community Board

We receive the report on the Iona Community Board from Bob Dixon, who is unable to be with us today. The report updates us on the work of the Board and Friends can engage with the Iona Community through the revamped website on www.iona.org.uk

We thank Bob for his report.

23/03/22 Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees Co-Ordination Group

Further to minute 22/11/16 (Hearing from GM representative on bodies focused on peace), Lynne Barty's report on the Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees Co-Ordination Group was not available at our November meeting, but was sent out with the minutes. Her previous report was in June 2022, not March as the papers for this meeting had indicated.

Lynne flags up to us the forthcoming conference on Saturday, 25 March 2023, from 10:00 – 15:30 at St. Mark's Parish Church of Scotland, Drip Road, Stirling FK8 1RE.

Churches across Scotland have had the opportunity to welcome and journey with refugees and asylum seekers (New Scots) from all over the world. As places of hope and sanctuary churches are at the heart of building community with New Scots.

Information may be found at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/journeying-with-new-scotsbuilding-community-with-refugees-asylum-seekers-tickets-529118797567>

All those interested are welcome to apply for this free day event.

22/03/23 Enquirers days

Further to minute 22/11/17, the clerk, following consultation with the four Area Meeting clerks, suggests that we await the outcome of the June Options for Scotland proposals to see the potential direction of travel for Quaker structures in Scotland and how we might plan for that. It may be better to coordinate any changes so they work for all needs. We agree to this.

South East Scotland AM has this year's enquirer's day in progress, to be held by Zoom on 13 May and in Falkirk on 23 September.

23/03/24 Invitation to join an ecumenical initiative encouraging reflection on Scotland's Constitutional Future

We agreed in November to accept the Church of Scotland's invitation to join an ecumenical project on Christian reflections on Scotland's constitutional future, for which they had been given funding and would act as lead. Minute 22/11/11 refers.

We have since heard that the Church of Scotland has pulled out from this project. We were invited to take it over, but it is too large a project for our resources.

23/03/25 Correspondence and other business

a) Letter to SNP leadership candidates urging prioritisation to combat climate and biodiversity collapse.

The clerk has signed a letter, on 3 March, to the Scottish National Party leadership candidates drafted by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS), to which we belong. Britain Yearly Meeting has also signed. The letter urges the candidates to publicly confirm that they will prioritise action to combat the twin crises of climate and biodiversity collapse.

b) Letter to SNP leadership candidates on commitment to the incorporation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child into Scottish law.

The clerk, after consultation with the clerk of GM Trustees and the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group, signed on 1 March, a letter draft by Together - Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights urging SNP leadership candidates "to reassure us of your ongoing commitment to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill*." We are a supporter of Together.

c) Address to the monarch

The Recording Clerk invited Friends in Scotland to provide the name of a Friend to join a group of twelve Quakers at Buckingham Place on 9 March to present an address to our head of state, along with many other groups. As an ancient 'privileged body', Quakers have right of access to the monarch and have utilised this over past centuries. Friends have used the address to highlight current concerns. On the advice of our Nominations Committee, the clerk sent the name of Angela Stather of Islay & Jura Meeting (West). This was not an appointment. Adwoa Burnley (Perth – East) is also attending as Yearly Meeting clerk.

22/11/26 Upcoming business

On 10 June, the main business is expected to be the report of the Options 2 Working Group, together with the receipt of the Annual Report and Accounts, receiving the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group report and hearing from GM representatives on bodies focused on social witness. We will also hear from the recently formed Quaker Truth & Integrity Group. The Community Justice Working Group report cannot be given in June and will need to be taken later in the year. West Scotland area Meeting has sent us a minute on Race and Privilege, which will be received in June.

22/11/27 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to West Scotland Area Meeting Friends for being our hosts today, for setting up the equipment that enabled this blended meeting and providing hospitality. We also thank our Zoom host for this GM.

There being no further business to bring before General Meeting, we conclude, intending to meet next for a blended meeting in Edinburgh on 10 June 2023, if nothing occurs to prevent.

Michael J. Hutchinson,
Clerk