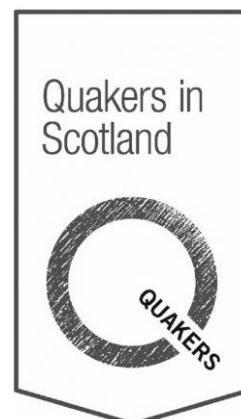


GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

Blended Meeting to be held in Edinburgh at the Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace EH1 2JL, and by Zoom , on 10 June 2023



MINUTES

23/06/01 Opening worship

During our opening worship, our assistant clerk has read part of section 3.06 of *Quaker faith & practice*, which advises us on what we try to do in our meetings for business in reaching unity. We all 'have a continuing responsibility to nurture the soil in which unity may be found'.

23/06/02 Welcome to all present

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

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

East Scotland AM	14 (5 in person, 9 on Zoom)
North Scotland AM	8 (1 in person, 7 on Zoom)
South East Scotland AM	38 (25 in person, 13 on Zoom)
West Scotland AM	17 (7 in person, 10 on Zoom)
Visitors	3 in person.

Total: 80, including 3 attenders

We thank South East Scotland AM Friends acting as elders for us: Alastair Cameron and Esther Shreeve. We ask North Scotland AM to provide Friends to act as elders for our next meeting.

23/06/03 Agenda

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

23/06/04 Reporter to *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*

We thank West Scotland Area Meeting for arranging for Laura McMurtrie (Ayrshire LM) to report on this meeting for *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*. We ask South East Scotland Area Meeting to provide the name of a Friend to report on our next meeting.

23/06/05 New members, transfers and deaths

From Area Meeting minutes since General Meeting held 11 March, we record the following:

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP – IN

Brian Goddard from Oxford & Swindon AM to NSAM

Margaret Reeves from Oxford & Swindon to NSAM

Christopher Scaife from York AM to NSAM

Philippa Killick from Oxford & Swindon AM to SESAM

Anna Levin from Cambridgeshire AM to SESAM

William Essex from Staffordshire AM to WSAM

TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP – OUT

Ella March from SESAM to Oxford & Swindon AM

RESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Ann Forsyth (SESAM)

Paul Slifer (SESAM)

NEW MEMBERS

Norman Alm (ESAM)

Denise Marshall (SESAM)

Toni Carrigan (WSAM)

DEATHS

Roger Quinn (NSAM) on January 4th 2023

Diana Horne (SESAM) on February 8th 2023

Ian Beamish (SESAM) on January 18th 2023

Jenny Robertson (SESAM) on March 9th 2023

Daphne Foster (SESAM) on March 23rd 2023

Patrick Copsey (SESAM) on May 5th 2023

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

23/06/06 Book of Members & Attenders 2023

Further to minute 23/03/09, Sue Proudlove, our GM Administrator, will be producing an update to the 2023 edition of our Book of Members and Attenders later this year. In the meantime, Local Meetings are welcome to send amendments to her by email at any time.

23/06/07 Ecumenical visitor

We welcome James Patron Bell, ecumenical officer for Methodist Church in Scotland, to our meeting this afternoon.

23/06/08 Nominations Report

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

Nominations Committee has brought us the following:

Kate Arnot had asked to be released as representative on the Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse (Ilgoda). Minute 203/03/21c refers. Subsequently Margaret Roy wished to be released as our representative on the World Day of Prayer Scottish Committee.

Nominations Committee bring the following names for service from appointment until the end of 2025:

Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse: Margaret Roy (West – Glasgow)

World Day of Prayer Scottish Committee: Kate Arnot (SE – South Edinburgh).

Nominations Committee also reports that they continue to search for an additional Trustee from each of East Scotland and South East Scotland. They have confirmed with Katrina McCrea that she does not feel the need for an Assistant Treasurer at the moment. They are clarifying with Northern Friends Youth Events Charitable Trust about a change in constitution and to clarify if there is a vacancy they require us to consider. Nominations Committee await nominations to serve on the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group from North Scotland and South East Scotland Area Meetings.

Nominations Committee has been unable to confirm a nomination to serve as Custodian of Records.

23/06/09 Quaker Truth & Integrity Group (QTIG)

We welcome Martina Weitsch, from the Quaker Truth and Integrity Group (QTIG) Steering Group. Martina has spoken to us, inviting us to consider how Friends in Scotland can be engaged in the work of QTIG, the principles of which underpin much of what Friends stand for in public life. We have paper C as an introduction to the work of QTIG.

Martina has explained to us how QTIG began as an informal group of Quakers sharing a deeply felt concern about the state of truth and integrity in public life in Britain. It is now a Quaker Recognised Body of Britain Yearly Meeting. QTIG aims to promote the place of truth and integrity in the public discourse; to discern what role Quakers might have to play in this, either independently or working with other groups/bodies; and to draw the attention of Friends and others to the depth of the problems we face and ways in which they can be countered, for example through

interviews with well-informed individuals. Martina has outlined new work in development by the Group, including initiating a Truth Award.

QTIG's work can be summarised as follows:

- We want to raise up the good examples and create kinder ground
- We want to work with others – within and outside of Britain Yearly Meeting and be open to joint work with other faith groups, other denominations and organisations that come from a non-faith background.
- We want to make sure that the work we do engages Friends across the Yearly Meeting; this can take many forms – some of which have been described already.
- But individual Friends can also become members of QTIG, can join our various working groups (some exist, others are planned); we are also seeking more members of the Steering Group.

QTIG are keen to increase the level of engagement of Friends within the Yearly Meeting more widely, particularly here in Scotland which has no representation, as yet, on the Steering Group.

We have engaged with Martina on her presentation, noting we need to maintain standards of truth and integrity ourselves as well as asking others to do so. But our witness needs to be maintained regardless, requiring this practical action.

We encourage Friends to engage personally with this work, hopefully building local networks through QTIG. We hope that Martina has sowed seeds with us today.

We will circulate Martina's spoken introduction with the minutes, together with the website address.

23/06/10 Trustees Annual Report & Accounts for 2022.

Robin Waterston, clerk to General Meeting Trustees, has introduced the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2022. The report and examined accounts were circulated with our papers as Papers B1 and B2, and these will be filed with our minutes. These documents have been approved by Trustees and are before us for information.

Income during the year was £39082.32 and expenditure £29082.32. The surplus was £9864.29. However it should be noted that if we exclude the legacy of £10,000 which was not expected or budgeted for, payments and receipts would have more or less balanced.

We receive the General Meeting Annual Report and Accounts for 2022 and ask our clerk to sign them on our behalf.

We thank our trustees and treasurer for their work and Robin for his preparation and presentation of these documents today.

23/06/11 Options for Scotland

Further to minute 23/03/18, we receive the report of the Options for Scotland 2 Working Group. This has been before all four Area Meetings in Scotland, and we receive their minutes as follows:

- 035/23 of West Scotland AM held 15 April 2023;
- 15/23 of North Scotland AM held 22 April 2023;
- 2023/05/05 of South East Scotland AM held 9 May 2023;
- 23.05.03 of East Scotland AM held 13 May 2023.

Copies of these minutes and the introductory paper from the Options 2 Group are filed with our minutes.

The recommendations from Options 2 Group both to Area Meetings and to General Meeting for Scotland are that:

- We form a single body, 'Quakers in Scotland' through which we support all our Local Meetings, where our membership is held and which enables us to speak, as Quakers, on Scotland wide issues.
- We form a single charity (a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), to be responsible for the stewardship of all our resources across Scotland.
- We develop further the use of paid professional support to undertake routine tasks and provide advice, easing the load for the Friends we ask to give the greatest practical ministry.

We have noted the area meeting minutes and observe that all understand the need for change. We have heard of the pain caused to some by our process in forming the working group. Also concern about what happens to existing area meetings, and disquiet about some of the implications and nature of the recommendations. In particular, how we maintain our communities of faith and witness, especially through our systems of eldership and pastoral care. We have been reminded of the need for a wider support in maintaining properties, and we have heard of the opportunity to do some things differently. We find we are not in unity over the recommendations at this point but recognise the need to explore further the issues raised today, and in the area meeting minutes. One Friend expressed how we wrestle with the words "faith, trust, hope, realism and practicalities" in relation to the issues before us. We are aware of the real and current difficulties facing us all in maintaining existing structures and of the responsibilities we have for each other. We also need to be clear of how the role of General Meeting, as defined in 5.03 of *Quaker faith & practice*, is maintained.

We agree to extend the life of Options for Scotland 2 Working Group until 16 September 2023 so preparatory work on the recommendations may continue. We agree to set up an Options for Scotland 3 Working Group from that date, to serve until the end of the process, as outlined in the Options for Scotland 2 Working Group document "OfS2 Path for Implementation".

We ask the existing group to bring suggestions to us in September about how we might support current structures where they are in difficulty. We feel that we could unite about moving to a single charity for Quakers in Scotland as a first step, and this might go some way in helping Area Meetings. We ask the group to make clear what would be involved in this.

We ask our Nominations Committee to bring in the names of Friends to serve on the new working group with the following make up:

"About ten Friends to serve, including balanced representation from each of the four area meetings, plus a convenor. Continuity with Options 2 Group would be an advantage. Formal connections are required with the five existing trustee bodies, and Dundee Friends Property Trust, through direct representation or through clear links. The Local Development Worker to be in attendance."

The basic remit of the new group is summarised in the introduction to the Responses to the Options 2 report (paper A2), particularly this paragraph, as modified in this meeting:

There is still much to do to agree how a new single body would function, how we would maintain our local communities, how responsibilities would be shared and undertaken. Sorting out these details is the next stage of the journey, working together on a model for Quaker Stewardship in Scotland, to develop a Governing Document and Memorandum of Understanding for the new single body, to prepare policies and procedures that will support and connect our LMs and maintain our communities, to find ways of working as a single community of Quakers in Scotland.

The group will seek to engage with Friends throughout Scotland, not just through existing formal structures. The group will need to respond to the concerns raised by the Area Meeting minutes and today in this Meeting.

We ask the clerks to draft formal terms of reference to guide Nominations Committee and the members of the new group.

We will return to this matter in September.

We thank Friends on our Options 2 group for their continuing work on our behalf, and express our gratitude and appreciation for their service.

23/06/12 Parliamentary Engagement Working Group report

We receive a report (paper D) from our Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG), updating us on the work of the group.

We're very happy to hear that Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) has appointed a new Parliamentary Engagement Officer (PEO) Sarah Komashko, who will start work with us on 11 July. We hope to welcome her to a GM in the near future. As we now have a new Scottish government leadership team in place, and as the new PEO settles in, PEWG will focus on renewing existing relationships and reaching out for new ones to continue our work.

Plans are making good progress for the two events at the Scottish Parliament in September. The Peace Education Exhibition (26th to 28th September), based on the "Peace at the Heart" report launched by BYM last year; plus on 21st September – International Peace Day - a music and storytelling performance by a Glasgow primary school class, directed by our Children and Young People's Advocate support, Mary Troup (WSAM). Zoe Prosser, our Local Development Worker, is coordinating the 'tour' of the exhibition before and after its appearance in the Parliament. Please do contact her if your meeting can offer a venue.

Responding to the Scottish government's Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan was another main piece of advocacy work. Key issues were to encourage the government to state an unambiguous presumption against new oil & gas exploration and development; to focus urgent public investment on proven renewables in preference to carbon capture and storage, and to be truthful about related issues – for example, the limitations of hydrogen as an energy source. Our response was prefaced by an explanation of how our work – including this response – is grounded in the Quaker testimonies. This statement has been offered to Friends as an opportunity for witness whether in local discussion or in communication with their MSPs.

The Group also been taking part in Stop Climate Chaos's group work, and in the drawing up of their new 'Manifesto', making contributions about Loss and Damage funding and the links between climate breakdown and the need for a humane approach to migration – tying in with current priorities for QPSW and QCEA (Quaker Council for European Affairs). Grace Da Costa from BYM helped the Group in covering these meetings.

Lesley Morrison (Tweedale Meeting) spoke at the Scottish Parliament's *Time for Reflection* on 25 April on 'Are we being good ancestors?' Following this Lesley has been invited to meet with her MSP to discuss work on Climate Justice. Further submissions to the Parliament are in the pipeline. We thank the PEWG and the convenors for their continuing work especially during the recent months of PEO vacancy.

23/06/13 GM Social Witness Reports

We have had circulated Paper E, including reports from the following bodies associated with our social witness work:

International Development Education Association of Scotland (IDEAS);

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights);

Report on Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees;

Faith in Community Scotland;

Inter Faith Group on Domestic Abuse,

These reports will be filed with our minutes.

The International Development Education Association of Scotland (IDEAS) is a network of organisations and individuals across Scotland involved in Global Citizenship Education. GM Scotland joined the network at the end of 2021, as it is directly aligned to Quaker Peace & Social Witness' work promoting Peace Education. Richard Raggett's report gives details of our work with IDEAS.

The "strapline" of IDEAS is "*Global Citizenship in the curriculum*". This framework encompasses a wide range of interconnected themes and approaches across Sustainable Development Education, Outdoor Learning and Global Citizenship. It is aimed at facilitating achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 by 2030, which reads as follows: "*Ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development*".

Last year QPSW's Peace Education team worked with IDEAS to offer resources and advice on how to respond to the war in Ukraine; this work continues. IDEAS has also helped promote to their members the "Peace at the heart" report launched by QPSW last year. In 2023, the Peace Education team interviewed WOSDEC (West of Scotland Development Education Centre) and IDEAS about their work nationally. These organisations will feature in our exhibition, "Peace at the heart of Scottish schools", and in accompanying videos online. The exhibition will be promoted in IDEAS magazine for teachers (STRIDE). Our membership of IDEAS has played a part in bringing our exhibition to fruition. As you know, the exhibition will be in the Members' Lobby in the Scottish Parliament on 26th to 28th September this year. Moreover, on World Peace Day, 21st September 2023, led by Mary Troup, Oakgrove Primary School, Glasgow, will be performing "Wangari's Trees for Peace" in the Parliament for MSPs. This project has been supported by WOSDEC, one of IDEAS' members.

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

Together is an alliance of Scottish children's charities that works to improve the awareness, understanding and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Martin Pippard, as a member of the PEWG is our contact with Together. During the public consultation on a petition presented by Quakers in Scotland (QiS) and Forces Watch to the Scottish Parliament in 2017, Together's response was highly supportive of our call for greater scrutiny, guidance and consultation over military visits to schools, and GM Scotland joined the alliance in 2019. Since then we have supported their championing of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which includes requirements that all learners get the knowledge and skills needed to promote peace, equality and respect for the environment. The Scottish Government passed a law incorporating the UNCRC into Scottish Law in 2021, but despite omission of those parts of the convention that deal with non-devolved matters (including the optional protocol dealing with recruitment to the armed forces) the law was blocked by the UK Supreme Court. The Scottish Government has been committed to resolving these difficulties ever since but has yet to bring the necessary amendments back to Parliament; so, two years' delay and counting.

Report on Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees

Lynne Barty has given us a detailed written report. Work with refugees is now in the context of the Nationality and Borders Act of April 2022 which included the introduction of a discriminatory, two-tier system of refugee 'protection' and the Illegal Migration Bill currently passing through the House of Lords. This will impose a duty on Local Authorities to remove anyone who enters, or has entered the UK without permission, backdated to March 2023. The Bill strips people fleeing war and persecution of their right to seek asylum here and then proposes to punish them, irrespective of their need of protection. This includes unaccompanied minors - that is, children. The UNHCR (the UN's refugee agency) has stated that the 'Illegal Migration Bill', if passed, "would amount to an asylum ban – extinguishing the right to seek refugee protection in the UK for those who arrive irregularly, no matter how genuine and compelling their claim may be, and with no consideration of their individual circumstances". It will breach the UN Refugee Convention of 1951, to which the UK is a signatory, leaving tens of thousands of men, women, and children in limbo - indefinitely detained but denied a fair hearing. It will also fail to provide or expand the safe routes to asylum that are acknowledged to be so urgently required.

Faith groups across Scotland have been speaking out, highlighting the extensive human suffering which the Bill, when it becomes law, will create, standing as it does in direct contradiction to the values which faith communities espouse and promoting hostility instead of compassion and kindness. Statements have been issued by the Catholic Church, Scottish Episcopal Church, Quakers in Britain, The Salvation Army and Church of Scotland. Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, together with religious groups across the UK, is part of a multi-faith coalition led by Together With Refugees. There are several ways Quakers in Scotland can get involved, and Lynne has given

us a range of actions that can involve us, and we ask Friends to review these in the report.

Faith in Community Scotland

Kate Arnot has updated us in her written report after her several contacts with churches, including African led churches, applying for funding to develop or initiate work with asylum seekers and those with refugee status. Faith in Community Scotland is very grateful for the continued support, financial and otherwise of Quakers in Scotland. Like many charities they have declining income but continue to have many volunteers. Their focus continues to be on those living in poverty being the experts on their lives. Kate notes how it is a real privilege to interview groups who, despite difficulties, are providing valuable services to those who may have materially very little but who are rich in creative solutions to the difficulties in their lives. Faith in Action.

Inter Faith Group on Domestic Abuse

Kate Arnot has summarised in her written report current work with Ifgda. The group received a substantial unsolicited donation just before the lockdown, but the work they hoped to develop around children affected by domestic abuse will require more funds to initiate.

23/06/14 Proposed dates and host meetings for GM in 2024/25

Area Meetings have indicated that the proposed dates and host area meetings for holding General Meeting during 2024/25 are agreeable and we approve them as follows:

- 9 March 2024 - South East Scotland AM (already agreed)
- 8 June 2024 - West Scotland AM
- 14 September 2024 - North Scotland AM
- 9 November 2024 - East Scotland AM
- 8 March 2025 - South East Scotland AM

These will be blended (hybrid) meetings. We ask each area meeting to inform the General Meeting clerk in due course, but in good time, on the exact venue.

23/06/15 Correspondence and other business

a) Open letter opposing the UK Parliament's [Illegal] Migration Bill.

On behalf of General Meeting for Scotland, the clerk signed an open letter, on 21 March, requesting the Scottish Government, MSPs, MPs and civil society organisations to oppose the UK Parliament [Illegal] Migration Bill. This letter was organised and drafted by JustRight Scotland and Scottish Refugee Council.

b) Open Interfaith letter on fossil fuel insurance

On behalf of General Meeting for Scotland, the clerk signed, on 22 March, an open letter calling on Lloyd's of London to stop insuring fossil fuel projects. This was at the request of Olivia Hanks, Climate Justice Lead, Quakers in Britain, and our Parliamentary Engagement Working Group.

c) Letter to the Scottish Government on bus travel for asylum seekers

At the behest of Kate Arnot, our representative on the Scottish Religious Leaders Forum of Scottish Inter Faith, the clerk signed on 7 April, on behalf of General Meeting for Scotland, a letter to the Scottish Government urging them to provide bus travel for asylum seekers.

d) Letter to the First Minister on North Sea oil and gas extraction.

With the advice of our Parliamentary Engagement Working Group, the clerk has signed on 6 June, on behalf of the General Meeting, a letter drafted and organised by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland. The letter indicates that the undersigned are encouraged by the recent consultation on oil and gas phase out in the draft of Scotland's first Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan. It urges the Scottish Government to not only match the Labour Party's reported ambition to block future oil and gas extraction, but to go further, and oppose new projects in all undeveloped fields and not just the controversial Cambo and Rosebank projects.

e) Kindlers seek workshop leaders

The Kindlers are an experimental group focused on Quaker spirituality. They work to rekindle the power of Quaker worship by renewing and deepening Quaker spiritual practices. They do this by holding workshops to deepen the spiritual life of Quaker meetings and publishing associated material. They are looking for people to join their team who are enthusiastic about enriching Quaker worship, who want to be part of a team (our workshops are led by a minimum of two Kindlers), and who can offer at least three workshops a year, usually on a Saturday. Ability to travel is required for in-person events; Kindlers also work online. Full training and support is given.

The clerk will distribute the letter, giving contact details, with our minutes.

f) Safeguarding Training

Further to minute 23/03/16 (Revised Scottish Quaker Safeguarding Guidance), Madeleine Harding, our GM safeguarding coordinator, has been considering the training needs arising from the policies. She thinks that induction training for the various posts can be organised at AM level, with some guidance centrally. Madeleine has been in contact with the agency 31:8 who can provide basic training for those working on a regular basis with children and young people. They can tailor the details to be specific to Scotland. It would be online for up to 40 people, at a cost of £675. Trustees have considered this request and support it. Trustees requested authorisation from the GM Clerk for this extra-budgetary expenditure, using between-

meetings procedure, so the work can proceed expeditiously. This authorisation was given on 18 May by between-meeting procedure.

g) Scottish Ecumenical Officers Forum

Mary Woodward, our representative on the Scottish Ecumenical Officers Forum has informed us of the opportunity for Friends to host the Forum on 24 October 2023 at Central Edinburgh Meeting House. This meeting would be the next stage in the transition from ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland) to the Scottish Christian Forum. The cost would be in the region of £200 and our clerk of Trustees feels this is something we could underwrite. We welcome this initiative and agree to act as host on this occasion.

23/06/16 Families weekend 5-7 May at Pitlochry

We are pleased to hear, from Mary Troup, of the success of the Families Weekend, held at the Atholl Centre in Pitlochry from 5-7 May 2023. Twenty children and sixteen parents attended. As we heard in March, the theme was *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.

We are grateful to Mary Troup and the Children & Young Peoples' Advocates Group for organising this joyous event, and for starting on next year's!

23/06/17 Enquirers days

Mariot Dallas has informed us on the first enquirers' meeting this year, held by zoom on 13 May. Nine attended, coming from Argyll, Dundee, Forres and Polmont Meetings. Some were new to Quakers and some of were members, including one very new member. There was sharing on how and why they had found their way to Quakers and talking about what we value, as well as some things which puzzle or irritate us. Someone said that they liked that Quakers use the language of the 18th century, but their beliefs are up to the minute, so we are archaic but also progressive. Someone observed that we are easy with unease, in contrast with some other religious organisations.

Meetings are encouraged to seek enquirers and newcomers they know to attend the *Meet a Quaker* event in Falkirk on Saturday 23 September, 10.30- 15.30, Camelon Church, Brown Street Hall.

23/06/18 Upcoming business

On 16 September, the main business is expected to be continued consideration from the Options 2 Working Group report, work with children and young people (including the Shindig report), receiving the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group report and spending time on our annual focus on climate justice. The Community Justice Working Group report could not be given today and will be taken later in the year.

West Scotland Area Meeting has sent us a minute on Race and Privilege, which will now be received in September. We will return to considering the organisation of Enquirers' Days by November (minute 22/11/17 refers). On 11 November we will also consider the General Meeting Budget and donations/ affiliations, review our peace witness and give guidance on priorities for the work of our Local Development Worker.

23/06/19 Concluding Minute

We record our thanks to South East 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 hosts for this General Meeting.

There being no further business to bring before General Meeting, we conclude, intending to meet next for a blended meeting in Inverness on 16 September 2023, if nothing occurs to prevent.

Michael J. Hutchinson,
Clerk

Susan Mitchell,
Assistant Clerk