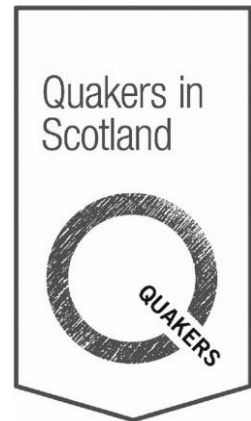


GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

At a hybrid Meeting held at the Spectrum Centre, 1 Margaret Street, Inverness, IV1 1LS, and by video conference, on 21st September 2024



24/09/01 Opening worship

During our opening worship we heard played a recording of a new bugle call composed by our Friend Sally Beamish to mark the UN International Day of Peace today. This has been commissioned by Steve Chettle of Kelso Meeting, who is with us today. *PeaceBugle* is an international music and film project by him, with its objective being to promote and support international peace. He has been able to organise *FirstPeace* to be played on every continent (except Antarctica).

24/09/02 Welcome to all present

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

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

East Scotland AM	15 (5 in Inverness, 10 on Zoom)
North Scotland AM	26 (23 in Inverness, 3 on Zoom)
South East Scotland AM	28 (5 in Inverness, 23 on Zoom)
West Scotland AM	18 (7 in Inverness, 11 on Zoom)
Visitors	1

Total: 88, including 10 attenders

We have elders with us, both in the room and online and ask them to act for us today. We ask East Scotland AM to provide Friends to act as elders for our next meeting.

24/09/03 Agenda

We adopt the agenda as circulated in advance.

24/09/04 Reporter to *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*

We thank Robin Davis for agreeing to report on this meeting for *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*. We ask North Scotland Area Meeting to provide the name of a Friend to report on our next meeting.

24/09/05 New members, transfers and deaths

From Area Meeting minutes since General Meeting held 8th June (and of WSAM held 20th April which was left out last time), we record the following membership changes

DEATHS

Barbara Baird (WSAM) died 9/2/24
Alison Brown (WSAM) died 26/11/23
Isabella Dovaston (WSAM) died 17/12/23
Mary Halliday (SESAM) died 8/5/24
Brenda McGovern (SESAM) died 28/7/24
Derek Young (NSAM) died 20/8/24

NEW MEMBERS

Mark Ballard (SESAM)
Olga Hammock (NSAM)
Tanya Jones (ESAM)
Cathy Priestly (NSAM)
Philip Revell (SESAM)
Daniel Suda (NSAM)
Clare Tyler (SESAM)
Craig Wilson (ESAM)

TRANSFERS

Sue Jenkins – Northamptonshire AM to NSAM
Cathy Smith – SESAM to WSAM
Elaine Smith – Northamptonshire AM to NSAM
Tara Smith – SESAM to WSAM
Cecil Xavier – West Sussex AM to SESAM

RESIGNATION

Anne Macarthur (WSAM)
Joan Torbett-Schofield (SESAM)

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

24/09/06 2025 Book of Members & Attenders timetable

Our administrator, Jane Booth, has explained the process and timetable for producing the Book of Members and Attenders 2025. Each local meeting has a Book Contact Friend and checklists have been sent to them for return by the end of October. Subsequently, a revised list will be sent out for a final check by the end of the year.

24/09/07 Receipt of East Scotland Area Meeting minute

We receive for information minute 24.08.05 (Nominations - in part) of East Scotland Area Meeting (ESAM) held 10th August 2024. The minute describes the situation the AM is currently in as a 'major crisis' owing to the number of posts vacant or about to fall vacant. The very survival of ESAM is in question due to the number of significant AM posts unfilled.

We will return to this under our next item.

We uphold our Friends in ESAM.

24/09/08 Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group

Further to minute 24/06/12, we return to the movement towards a single charity/Quaker body for Scotland (Paper B1 refers). Last year, all four Area Meetings and the Dundee Friends' Property Trust have agreed that we should move towards a single body, but some reservations were expressed by some AMs that needed answering before we formally set up such a charity.

We receive minute 2024/09/07 of South East Scotland Area Meeting (unchecked)

2024/09/07 Quakers in Scotland

Marilyn Higgins, a member of the Community Sub-Group of the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group, has reported on the consultation carried out across Scotland on the relationships between local meetings and the proposed Quakers in Scotland body. A paper has been circulated, setting out four possible models.

The Clerk has received a letter from Michael Hutchinson, Clerk of General Meeting for Scotland, asking us to make clear how we now see the situation, particularly in relation to the process of setting up a single charity for Quakers in Scotland.

We are reminded that at our meeting in February (2024/02/06), we recorded among other things that we were 'uncertain of the wisdom of proceeding to form a single body while certain matters remain unresolved: particularly relating to the ways in which local meetings will work together and relate to one another'; and 'We believe that that work to identify how to strengthen and adapt the Quaker community in Scotland as part of the re-structuring process must proceed with urgency. We hope this will lead to greater clarity in the constitutional areas'. The consultation was intended to address these concerns.

While we have heard much support of the work done in the Quakers in Scotland process, we have also heard expressed much distress. There is much to value in our Area Meeting that we are reluctant to lose. We do recognise that we have privileges: these give us a duty towards others who are struggling.

We agree that it is now appropriate for the QiS Co-ordinating Group to proceed with seeking recognition as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation; we will return to the relationships options when we have had a chance to consider them

more fully. We reserve our position on whether or when we might join the new body.

Alastair Cameron, clerk

We are grateful for this clarity and recognise that the process of change can involve distress. We wish to support each other through this. We also recognise the opportunity given us to evolve a better and more joyful structure for our continuing and much valued community of Friends in Scotland.

There are three main issues involved currently in the process to which we return.

1. How local meetings would work together and relate to each other within a new single body (including how geographical 'boundaries' would be treated and how spiritual and pastoral care would operate).

The Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group, through its Community Subgroup, brings to us Paper B2 *Possible patterns of relationship between meetings of Scottish Friends* and Robert Rayner of the Sub-group has spoken to it. Area Meetings were sent this prior to this meeting with a request that Friends have opportunity to ask questions of, and make comments to, the members of the Sub-group from their Area Meeting. The paper builds on the responses of the extensive survey through a questionnaire made by the Sub-group (which can be found on the General Meeting for Scotland website). Robert has summarised this for us. Key words from the responses to the questionnaire that have come out that relate to what we want to see in maintaining our structures include 'community', 'joy' and 'cherished'. Our structures should relate to our understanding of Quaker discipline and right order.

The possible patterns/options listed are:

1. Maintaining the status quo.
2. The 'Welsh model' - keeping AMs as they are within a single charity.
3. No intermediate level between local meetings and a Scotland-wide body.
4. A single area meeting for Scotland with a flexible and simpler intermediate levels.

We are grateful to all Friends who have taken part in this process through the questionnaire. We are grateful to the Community Sub-group, for their careful work on what love requires of us, and Robert for his introduction. It will not be possible to determine all aspects of how we would work and live together in a single Scottish body in advance, as we evolve the answers as we progress. It seems clear to us, though, that some intermediary level of structure is required between Local Meetings and the Quakers in Scotland Meeting.

As we evolve our structures around a single charity, our hope is that a flexible system of working together between local meetings will be possible. Our sense is that of the options/possible patterns, number 4 reflects most what we need, and we ask the four Area Meetings for their guidance on this. We note that a reservation over potential concentration of 'power' in the single central body has been expressed. In particular, we need to assess what is necessary to be dealt with by an overall Scottish Quaker body, and what could be undertaken by groups of local meetings working together. A summary of how option 4 could work might make this easier to understand.

We ask the Co-ordinating group to work with our clerks to assess how we might support Area Meetings that are facing difficulty in maintaining themselves whilst we continue to work on the wider structural picture. In particular, we ask the clerks to work with Friends in East Scotland Area Meeting so we are enabled to support them over the coming year.

We ask the Co-ordinating group to give us a summary of the process so far and where we are in it for our next meeting, to help us assess more clearly what is happening.

We have a sense today of being energised by the opportunities before us and that we are going forward in trust and faith as a community.

We ask that the clerks and the Co-ordinating Group assess the need for a special General Meeting to be held towards the end of the year to facilitate the ongoing process appropriately.

2. Choosing the SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) model for the potential new Scottish Quaker charity.

Paper B3 *Possible charitable structures* summarises the options to us.

We agree that it is now appropriate for the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to proceed with seeking recognition as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and we ask them to do so.

We ask the four Area Meetings to each bring into General Meeting the name of one or two Friends to serve potentially as trustees of the SCIO, from whom we can appoint four founding trustees representing all of us. We ask our own GM Nominations Committee to work on names of clerk(s) and a treasurer of the SCIO for future consideration. The Co-ordinating group have produced guidance and a job description for a trustee.

3. Whether the draft Governing Document for a new charity is now serviceable as a working document.

Friends were asked last year to arise any issues or concerns on the draft Governing Document with the Co-ordinating Group. Amendments subsequently made are incorporated on the latest draft on the General Meeting for Scotland website. We agree to use the current draft as a working document in the process of establishing the new charity and ask the Co-ordinating Group to take this forward. Friends are asked to send any further comments or questions to the Coordinating Group.

We thank the Coordinating Group and its sub groups for their continued work on our behalf, and for the way they have responded to the equerries and concerns raised.

The Co-ordinating Group continues to post occasional updates on QiS-CG progress at <https://quakerscotland.org/general-meeting/qis-news>

Afternoon

24/09/09 Work with Children & Young People & Shindig report

Seth Hitchen, Joel Hitchen and Elian Densham have spoken to us on their experience of Shindig this summer, which for the first time was held on the Isle of Cumbrae, at the Millport Field Studies Centre. A wide range of activities enhanced the sense of community engendered by the week, culminating in the joyful ceilidh. We give thanks for those who contributed to the success of this year's Shindig.

Mary Troup, our Children and Young People's Advocate Support, has updated us on work with children and young people, giving a word picture of all that is going on, and the potential for future development.

Her report *Growing our All-Age Family in our Quaker Community in Scotland* will be published in the *Scottish Friend* and will be sent out with our minutes.

Our children, young people and families have expressed a clear wish to continue to develop a sense of community and connectedness at local meetings and gatherings, whether locally, or on a regional or national basis.

Mary has indicated how we can look forward to continuing to support each other within our Meetings and across the different area groups in Scotland to nurture our children and young people, and to participate in learning events together in order to strengthen and to celebrate our All-Age Community with sustained hope for the future. It was exciting to hear how there were fifty children and young people and adults at the Wiston weekend organised by South East Scotland AM.

We thank Mary, and Elian, Joel and Seth, for their presentations today.

24/09/10 Appointments and Nominations Report

There have been two appointments made by between-meetings procedure since our last meeting.

ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland) Members Meeting

Alternate: Susan Mitchell (as GM assistant clerk) to serve 18 06 2024 – 17 06 2027 (1st triennium)

Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group

Jane Mitchell (West Scotland AM) from 11 07 2024 in replacement for Peter Christy, to serve until the process is through, or as determined by the General Meeting.

Nominations Committee has brought us the following nominations and a requests for release:

GMS Trustees

Andrew Blackadder (NSAM) to serve a second triennium from 01 07 2025 – 31 12 2027.

Web Manager

David Sterratt to serve a third triennium from 01 01 2025 – 31 12 2027.

Meeting for Sufferings Representative –

Elaine Miller to serve from appointment until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2027.

Meeting for Sufferings Alternate –

Ann Kerr to serve from appointment until the rise of Yearly Meeting 2027.

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (link person) –

Lynne Barty to serve a second triennium 01 01 2025 – 31 12 2027.

Nominations Committee meeting without its clerk brings to us:

Nominations Committee Clerk – Anna Mitchell to serve a second triennium 01 01 2025 – 31 12 2027.

Parliamentary Engagement Working Group

Pete Clarke asks for release from his appointment to serve until 31 12 2025.

Mike Nellis to serve from appointment until 31 12 2027 (first triennium).

Northern Friends Youth Events Charitable Trust

Roz Currie asks for release from her appointment to serve until 31 12 2024.

We appoint our Friends named accordingly and release the Friends requesting that and thank them for their service.

We receive minute Nominations 41/24 from North Scotland Area Meeting as follows:
NSAM appointment to GM Nominations Committee: We appoint Clive Potter
(Aberdeen) to serve on GM Nominations, 2nd triennium, from 1st January 2025 – 31
December 2027.

Piers Voysey, clerk

Outstanding Nominations

A GMS Trustee for ESAM vacancy has been outstanding for a number of months
and Nominations Committee would appreciate the help and support of GMS with this
role. They are also seeking to find a GM Clerk and Assistant Clerk in the near future,
which is a significant role. The support of GMS would be welcomed.

Please approach Nominations Committee with thoughts, questions or support to fill
outstanding roles. Your Area Meeting representative is below.

Members of Nominations Committee:

Anna Mitchell – Clerk

Clive Potter – NSAM

Jill Marshall – ESAM

Margaret Roy – WSAM

Alison Chalmers - SESAM

We thank members of our Nominations Committee for this report and their
continuing service.

24/09/11 Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group

a. evaluation report (Paper C)

We receive the evaluation report (paper C) on the Scottish Community Justice
Working Group (SQCJWG) which was set originally by General Meeting for a period
of three years ending on 31st December 2024. Minute 21/03/11 refers. We thank
Elizabeth Allen and Mike Nellis for this thorough work. Mike has introduced the
report and its recommendations, and we have responded by questions and
comment.

The report summary outlines the work of the Group, which has been considerable.
To date, essentially the work of the SQCJWG has focused on advocacy with
politicians, outreach with Area Meetings, and work with the Scottish Prison Service
Chaplaincy Advisors and Chaplains. It also has a place on the Quakers in Criminal
Justice Committee, a recognised body in Britain Yearly Meeting, operating in
England and Wales. Future plans include developing links with the Scottish Howard

League; learning more about Norwegian attitudes to community justice and models of community justice in action; continuing to support prison chaplains.

Although the SQCJWG was set up as the voice of Quakers in Scotland in community justice matters and as a conduit between the Criminal Justice Network and GMS, its most notable practical accomplishment has been to forge meaningful links with the SPS Chaplaincy Advisors and Chaplains, through meeting their need for a safe space to listen to each other and explore their own issues. Although this work was not envisaged and arose opportunistically, it is very precious, not least because of the trust that has grown out of it. It is important for the work with prison chaplains to continue.

Members of the Working Group identify coming together as a cohesive, supportive group as one of their significant achievements. This reminds us of the essence of all our work: we offer our service in faith, that regardless of our human frailties the spirit will work amongst us and God's work will be done.

The report concludes that the Working Group continues to fulfil all of its objectives, and it is raising the profile of General Meeting for Scotland in community justice matters around the network of Scottish bodies involved in this field.

The report's recommendations to General Meeting for Scotland are that:

1. The SQCJWG continues.
2. Membership of the group is increased to eight: six members, including a representative from each of the four Area Meetings, and two clerks. Appointments should be made on a rolling basis, to retain continuity whilst bringing in new members every couple of years. Consideration should be given to appointing some members for shorter terms of service, to avoid burnout.
3. The remit of the group be extended to allow some flexibility in the work undertaken.
4. A budget is set for the group.
5. GMS formally appoint the representative(s) on Prisoners Week from the membership of the SQCJWG.
6. Considering the intricate relationship between the Working Group and the Network, GMS might consider periodically asking the Network to share some of its reflective work on a wide range of community justice matters.

Recommendations to the SQCJWG and the Network are:

7. The Working Group consider holding regular meetings at times to suit members of the group, but keeping in mind the caveat that much of the success of their work has come from being responsive and setting up meetings at short notice.

8. Minutes are taken at Working Group meetings and circulated timeously.
9. The Working Group and the Network explore effective ways of communicating with each other.
10. The Working Group and the Network might consider doing more work together in a co-ordinated way, perhaps, starting with holding the Scottish Government to account on the lack of progress on delivering their plans for a 'Vision for Justice'. This requires a more clearly articulated Quaker view of what the "Vision for Justice" actually envisages, jointly produced by the Network and the Working Group, and made accessible to all in Friends in Scotland.
11. The Working Group has identified that to use its energy and resources well, it needs to know 'which doors are worth pushing and which are not'. The Network might help assess this and in so doing, assist the Working Group to set priorities.

We accept these recommendations with gratitude and pass those numbered 7-11 to the Working Group. We will return to the budget for the group at our next meeting when trustees bring us the 2025 budget.

We ask our Nominations Committee to bring in names of Friends to serve on the Working Group for the three years from 1 January 2025.

We note the publication of the *Quakers and Prison Abolition: A Conversation* report is now on the GM website under the community justice folder in the 'our work' section.

b. Prisoners' Week (Paper D)

Kate Philbrick, clerk to the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group (SQCJWG) has sent us Paper D to say the Group has re-engaged with Scottish Churches Prisoners' Week (November 17th-24th this year), participating in the planning committee. In the past Quakers were involved in the planning and execution of this Ecumenical initiative which aims to raise awareness of all those who are incarcerated. The Group is grateful that General Meeting continues to make an annual contribution to Prisoners Week Trust and the Group would ask all local meetings to encourage their members to focus particularly on our concern for people who are in prison and their families during this week.

This year it is apposite that Ben Jarman's Swarthmore Lecture also draws attention to those people with long-term gaol sentences, while the SQCJWG has been looking at the inappropriate nature of short-term sentences. This is all against a background of such extreme prison overcrowding that there is great pressure to discharge prisoners before they complete their allotted sentences (in order) to prevent the prisons being completely overwhelmed.

Alongside our financial support and prayer for people in prison and their families the

SQCJWG and the SQCJ Network plan to mount *an event during Prisoners' Week* in November using materials developed by the Prisoners' Week Planning Committee, the Swarthmore Lecture and our own Prison Abolition literature (e.g. Alternatives to Custody and Restorative Justice). We aim to develop an informed and humane approach to people who find themselves at odds with society and the law.

We thank the Working Group for this update and encourage them, and our Area and Local Meetings

24/09/12 Local Development Worker – priorities for 2025

Minute 24/06/20 refers. We receive paper G on our Local Development Worker priorities for 2025, including a report on this year from Zoe Prosser. Zoe has spoken briefly to this paper and the process.

In June, we invited Friends and Meetings to consider what help from Zoe Quaker communities in Scotland require over the next year. Suggestions may come to us through minutes, messages or emails up to the beginning of October. Zoe and her line manager and the clerks will meet to review these and report back on the suggested priorities at GM in November. We are not Zoe's line manager so the final choices will come from the staff.

24/09/13 Gerald Richards bequest book collection

Further to minute 22/9/15, the group appointed to consider the future of the collection of books bequeathed to Glasgow Quaker Meeting has sent their report (Paper H).

The group was asked to triage the books into those that could be disposed of; those that may be of interest to Friends' House library; and those which could go to a charity shop.

We thank Ruth Bacon, Margaret Roy and Nick Trevor for their work and forward the report to Glasgow Local Meeting for action.

We lay down the Group.

24/09/14 YM Agenda Committee

Further to minute 24/06/22, the clerk attended, by invitation, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee on 14th September in London, to reflect on what issues and situations are moving amongst Scottish Friends that could usefully be brought to Yearly Meeting the following year. The clerk wrote a letter in advance of this meeting, and this may be found on the General Meeting website, under 'Documents'. A number of other Friends from Quaker bodies and groups also attended two sessions, following which YM Agenda Committee met on its own for further discernment.

24/09/15 Correspondence and other business

a) Engagement.

The clerks met, along with Quakers in Wales clerks, with BYM Trustees, by invitation, on 6th September.

The clerk has been invited to represent Quakers in Scotland at Holyrood on the 28th September for the 25th anniversary celebration of the Scottish Parliament.

b) Central Committee structure

Friends may be interested in sending response to the BYM Group to Review Central Structures, via Sarah Donaldson at Friends House, on the current structural review of Quaker Life Central Committee and Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee. Responses are needed by 13 October 2024 Some Friends may already have seen a short reference that appeared in *Quake!* On 12th September. The link that you need for the document is:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/grcs-consultation-doc---to-share>

Any Friend or meeting is welcome to take part.

c) Peace education

Sarah Komashko, Parliamentary Engagement Officer, sent a letter on 18th July on behalf of Quakers in Scotland to Jenny Gilruth MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. The letter called upon the Scottish Government to fully implement the UNESCO Revised 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, including specifically by incorporating peace education into the curriculum as a cornerstone of learning for sustainability.

d) Open letter on oil and gas

The clerk, on 19th July 2024, signed an open letter to the First Minister asking to stop exploration for oil and gas. The letter was drafted by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland and Uplift.

e) Statement on the ongoing far-right violence

The clerk signed, on 8th August 2024, a public statement on the then ongoing far-right violence, drafted by the Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (SFAR), Faith in Community Scotland and Interfaith Scotland.

f) Bus passes for asylum seekers

Further to minute 23/11/16c, we note that the Scottish Government has now not provided budget funds to provide bus passes for asylum seekers as initially promised. Kate Arnot, our representative on the Scottish Religious Leaders Forum, signed, on the 23rd August, its statement calling for the Scottish government to reinstate free bus travel for asylum seekers in the budget.

g) Joint Letter on the Scottish Human Rights Bill

The clerk signed on 8th September, with 100 further organisations, a joint letter to the First Minister on Scottish Human Rights Bill. This letter expresses our collective disappointment in the Scottish Government's decision to delay the introduction of the Scottish Human Rights Bill.

24/09/16 Update on the Scottish Christian Forum and ACTS

Minute 24/06/16 refers. We have been asked to endorse the new proposal for the Scottish Christian Forum (SCF) as an umbrella term for the existing bodies of the Scottish Church Leaders Forum and the Ecumenical Officers Forum, in which we already participate. This is set out in the two documents forming paper E; *The Proposal for the Scottish Christian Forum* and the *Nature Purpose and Aims* document which is also included. These documents reflect the work over a number of years to establish a replacement for ACTS [Action of Churches Together in Scotland]. The idea is to have a broader, low key and informal non-charitable structure for ecumenism. Matters had been held up over the future of ACTS, which, unlike SCF, is a charitable body with trustees and holds some resources. The future of these resources continues under discussion, and we [have heard] from Martin Burnell, a trustee of ACTS, on the proposal that ACTS is disbanded and a new charity set up with its resources that can act as a funding charity.

We endorse the working arrangements for the Scottish Christian Forum and recognise it as the ecumenical instrument for Scotland.

We welcome the proposal to replace ACTS by a new funding charity, subject to having sight of detailed constitutional proposals

24/09/17 Upcoming business

On 9th November we expect to return to the proposals for a single Quaker charity/body (Quakers in Scotland). We will return to the Local Development Worker priorities for 2025. We will hear updates on our peace work and receive the GM budget for 2025, as well as taking regular agenda items.

Owing to time constraints, the concluding minute was not read out, but would have been suggested as follows:

24/09/18 Concluding Minute

We record our thanks to North Scotland Area Meeting Friends for being our hosts today, for all the arrangements for our venue in Inverness and their hospitality that enabled this hybrid meeting. We also thank our Zoom hosts, Amer Syed, for work beforehand, and Kate Gulliver, for hosting today.

There being no further business to bring before General Meeting, we conclude, intending to meet next in Dundee and online on 9th November 2024, if nothing occurs to prevent.

Michael J. Hutchinson,
Clerk

Susan Mitchell,
Assistant Clerk