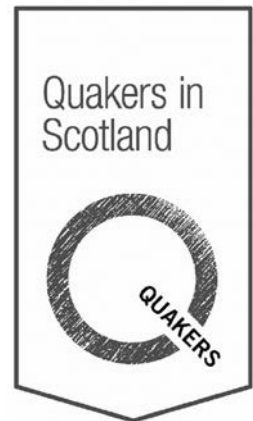


# GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

At a hybrid Meeting held at the Meeting House  
9 Whitehall Crescent, Dundee DD1 4AR, and by  
video conference, on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2024



## 24/11/01 Opening worship

During our opening worship our assistant clerk read section 24.57 from *Quaker faith & practice* where Sidney Bailey explains how peace begins with ourselves.

## 24/11/02 Welcome to all present

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

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

East Scotland AM	20 (14 in Dundee 6 on Zoom)
North Scotland AM	13 (5 in Dundee, 8 on Zoom)
South East Scotland AM	22 (6 in Dundee, 16 on Zoom)
West Scotland AM	17 (6 in Dundee, 11 on Zoom)
Visitors	1

**Total: 73**, including 3 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.

## 24/11/03 Agenda

We adopt the agenda as amended.

## 24/11/04 Reporter to *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*

We thank Anthony Buxton and Piers Voysey for agreeing to report on this meeting for *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*. We ask East Scotland Area Meeting to provide the name of a Friend to report on our next meeting.

## 24/11/05 New members, transfers and deaths

From Area Meeting minutes since General Meeting held 21<sup>st</sup> September, we record the following membership changes

## DEATHS

Peter Heald (NSAM) died 16/9/24

## NEW MEMBERS

Willoughby Densham (WSAM)

[NSAM = North Scotland Area Meeting; WSAM = West Scotland Area Meeting]

### **24/11/06 2025 Book of Members & Attenders timetable**

Further to minute 24/09/06, our administrator, Jane Booth, has updated us on the production of the 2025 Book of Members and Attenders. She appreciates the amount of work going on in Meetings for the new book and will be returning the lists for checking soon. Any further changes sent by the end of the year can be added in.

### **24/11/07 Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group**

Further to minute 24/09/08, we have had a brief update from Jane Mitchell from the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group (QiSCG) in respect of the moves towards establishing a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) for Friends in Scotland. As requested in minute 24/09/08, the Co-ordinating group has been, or will be, in touch with Area Meetings to give them a summary of the process so far and where we are in it, to assist their deliberations.

We await guidance from all four Area Meetings in response to the QiSCG Community Subgroup paper *Possible patterns of relationship between meetings of Scottish Friends*. We expect to have that guidance towards the end of the month and agree to reserve a date for a special General Meeting online to consider it soon and the clerk will notify Friends. QiSCG has posted a summary of option 4 on the GM website.

### **24/11/08 Parliamentary Engagement Working Group report**

We receive the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) Reports, including that held over from our last meeting (Papers C1 & C2). These reports include some focus on Climate Justice and on Peace-building respectively. Richard Raggett, co-convenor, has spoken to these reports, which are filed alongside our minutes. Richard has reminded us who is on PEWG so we know who we contact. We thank Cath Dyer for her four years of service on the group which completes at the end of this year.

Richard has also reminded us that the PEWG priorities (in brief, advocacy for Climate Justice, Economic Justice and Peace-building) are reviewed every three years and come up for consideration at GM in November next year for the period 2026-2028. PEWG will be in touch with Area Meetings early next year to facilitate this process according to this plan. The expectation is that the convenors and/or Parliamentary Engagement Officer (PEO), Sarah Komashko, would visit the four

AMs during the first half of 2025. The purpose of meeting with each AM is to find out what their key hopes would be, for the PEWG work 2026-2028.

Richard has referred to the 'allies' we work with, such as Christian Aid which we heard from at our March meeting (minute 24/03/16 refers). Sarah Komashko's networking skills also help considerably. We heard that the next Time for Reflection by a Friend at the Scottish Parliament will be made soon by Sila Collins-Walden on her interfaith experience. Richard also reminded us that truth and integrity in public life is a key underlying principle guiding the work which the Working Group uses when planning work or writing to MSPs and others. There are vacancies in the Working Group and our Nominations Committee would like to hear from Friends who could consider service.

In the September report, we were reminded that PEWG's focus remains on peace-building and climate justice, including meeting with Scottish Enterprise to learn how it fosters the transition to Net Zero via its funding decisions and how it implements human rights checks, particularly in relation to grants to weapons and weapon components manufacturers; supporting QPSW's peace education work through fostering links to allies in Scotland; presenting PEWG work to the Northern Friends Peace Board; and responding to a Parliament consultation on the new climate targets required to be established. Behind all of this, the Working Group is considering how to foster truth and integrity in parliamentary life and a more open politics.

The paper reminds us that a pitfall with advocacy is that we spread ourselves too thin across an ever-growing list of initiatives which can all be linked back to GM priorities. To get the best from our PEWG work, we must focus on areas where we have already made inroads, done the groundwork. This is easy to write, harder to practice. However, we have allies pushing in a similar direction; we are not alone. We are always asking "Where can we Quakers add something specific?". As well as that work outline above, PEWG looks for engagement over economic justice and climate justice where this is achievable. PEWG responds to consultations and allies with the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) coalition. With SCCS we will push for action to get these done and move to implement the plans.

In addition, PEWG has a strong connection with Christian Aid, meeting monthly (with the GM clerks in attendance too), to build mutual advocacy. PEWG will work closely with them to see where we can add to their advocacy.

The November report refers to the focus on peacebuilding, one year on from the Peace at the Heart [PATH] events in the Scottish Parliament in September 2023. The next Quaker involvement in the Parliament's Tuesday lunchtime Time for Reflection will come from Sila Collins-Walden from Inverness on her Interfaith work.

Peacebuilding work has had two main themes: peace education is one, and the other has been engagement with Scottish Enterprise regarding public funding of companies producing arms. PEWG came away feeling there are still points worth pursuing, if not directly with Scottish Enterprise, then via ministers and parliamentary questions, so they are following up with Business Minister Richard Lochhead and with MSPs who may be willing to raise relevant questions.

PEWG has also worked directly with MSPs on Truth and Integrity in public life, giving them opportunity to respond on how things are going for them and how they are doing. This non-critical approach visibly lifted our MSPs' spirits. If all our LMs or AMs could have similar conversations with their local representatives, we would be making a positive difference. "Being an MSP is one demanding job! Let's listen, understand and then ask, agree and disagree!" PEWG would like to encourage every meeting to meet with their MSPs in similar fashion and also to sign up for Sarah Komashko's fortnightly email update which would highlight things that meetings may wish to follow up with their. We all have an MP as well. We should try to get to know our representatives in the two Parliaments to see what they are like, what led them to stand for Parliament and what work they are particularly interested in - are there any overlaps with Quaker concerns and so on.

We are very glad to welcome online with us today Ellis Brooks, Peace Education Coordinator for Britain Yearly Meeting, who, with Isabel Cartwright and Ben Harper, delivers the Quaker Peace Education work across the Yearly Meeting. This work is undertaken within Quaker Peace & Social Witness department.

Ellis has spoken to us on our shared work and how the influence of Peace Education thinking, closely tied in with BYM work on the same area, is strengthening in Scotland. There is a new online course to be launched in the new year. He has brought us up to date on Quaker Peace & Social Witness' goals for Peace Education in the Quakers in Britain context and for parallel work in Scotland. Ellis has shown us how the work of the PEWG, PEO and Children & Young Person's Advocate Support (Mary Troup), as well as concern from our Meetings, mesh together effectively towards peace education. This involved working with educators and campaigning to promote peace education and to challenge militarism. An example was taking advantage of an opportunity to feed into the Curriculum for Excellence review. Ellis used the analogy of 'harvesting' to describe the results of such networking, allowing the 'mainstreaming' of peace education.

Resource development and sharing is another strand to the work, feeding back into Scottish schools. The context of present cutbacks and budget reductions makes this more difficult, but also gives opportunities to work with others. We had an update on the Peace Institute for Scotland and how peace education will take part in it. After this year's government consultation we hear that forming the full Peace Institute is now on hold, but a Peace Platform pilot will be coming soon.

We have had opportunity for questions and comment, which have shown how our work with peace education, together with that of peace keepers and other organisations, is working in primary, secondary and further education levels and Ellis has shown us how all this is linked together.

We are heartened to hear about this level of engagement and how peace education relates to concern for the Earth in terms of sustainability.

We thank the Working Group for its empowering advocacy work on our behalf and Ellis Brooks for being with us today and giving us greater insight into the work of peace education in the Yearly Meeting. We will send out Ellis' slides with these minutes.

*Afternoon*

### **24/11/09 Appointments and Nominations Committee report**

There have been no appointments through our between meetings procedure since our last meeting.

Nominations Committee has brought us the following nominations:

#### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S ADVOCATE SUPPORT**

Mary Troup to serve a second triennium 01 01 2025 – 31 12 2027

#### **GM REPRESENTATIVE TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS FORUM (INTERFAITH SCOTLAND)**

Kate Arnot to serve a second triennium from 01 01 2025 – 31 12 2027

#### **LINK TO FAITH IN COMMUNITY SCOTLAND**

Kate Arnot to serve from 01 01 2025 – 31 12 2027

#### **THE SCOTTISH QUAKER COMMUNITY JUSTICE WORKING GROUP (SQCJWG)**

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

Jenny Copsey (WSAM) to serve a second period from 01 01 2025 – 31 12 2026

Anneke Kraakman (ESAM) to serve a second period from 01 01 2025 – 31 12 2025

Bob Mandeville (WSAM) to serve a second triennium from 01 01 2025 – 31 12 2027

Mike Nellis (WSAM) to serve from 01 01 2025 – 31 12 2027

Kate Philbrick (Clerk) to serve a second period from 01 01 2025 – 31 12 2026

We agree to vary the terms of reference of the SQCJWG to allow more than one Friend from any area meeting to serve concurrently. Nominations Committee is working to find further names.

We appoint our Friends named accordingly.

## **24/11/10 Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group report**

We receive the report, Paper B, from our Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group (SQCJWG) and Kate Philbrick has spoken to it. The report lists current activities, and a detailed account of these was given in the evaluation report presented to GM in September (minute 2024/09/11 refers).

Currently, focus is on Prisoners Week which this year runs from 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> November, with the theme of 'Hear My Voice'. Bob Mandeville has contributed to the Prisoners Week blogs which you can be found online at [https://www.facebook.com/prisonerswkscot?locale=cy\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/prisonerswkscot?locale=cy_GB) . He has been very active in arranging an Alternatives to Imprisonment stall at the Marketplace before and after the National Launch Service, 17<sup>th</sup> November, 3.00pm, Letham St Mark's Church Rannoch Rd, Perth PH1 2HH. This can be watched live at [www.prisonersweek.org.uk](http://www.prisonersweek.org.uk).

The working group and network are planning a zoom event for Quakers during Prisoners Week to reflect on our Quaker response to the current crisis in prisons in Scotland. They will be considering what Quakers might say on our possible responses, including abolition. Friends are invited to join them. Ben Jarman, this year's Swarthmore Lecturer, will be present. The Zoom link will be available on the GM website for 7.00-9.00 pm on 20<sup>th</sup> November or from [katephilbrick2@gmail.com](mailto:katephilbrick2@gmail.com)

The group is working through the recommendations from the evaluation report referred to it by General Meeting. From these, it suggests the remit of the group be extended to allow some flexibility in the work undertaken. Changes and additions are suggested in italics in the objectives listed below:

### Objectives of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group

- I. to facilitate the work of the SQCJN as a body linked to GM;
- II. to provide initial input and regular (at least annual) feedback to GM on the work of the SQCJN, keeping Scottish Quakers informed on community justice issues;
- III. to represent GM in communicating discerned Quaker views on community justice issues to other bodies and to the Scottish public;

- IV. to work closely with the Parliamentary Engagement *Officer* where community justice matters arise in the Scottish Parliament, always ensuring that such advocacy reflects Quaker positions and priorities which have been appropriately discerned by GM. This will *be aided by* communication between the convenors of the 2 groups at least twice a year to inform each other of advocacy opportunities which arise and agree possible actions which may involve work by the Parliamentary Engagement Officer, depending on priorities and capacity.

*Suggested new objectives*

- V. *to work to support interfaith chaplaincy within the justice system in ways which seem most helpful ;*
- VI. *to facilitate more active engagement of interested Quakers into the working of the Scottish Criminal Justice system, e.g. prison visiting, alternatives to custody, where opportunity arises;*

We agree to these changes.

Members of the Working Group have given us a feel for their advocacy work in the context of the upcoming Prisoners Week. Andrew Collins told us about the discussions held with a Norwegian lawyer that resulted in profitable comparisons between British and Scandinavian penal systems. The latter have a greater emphasis on rehabilitation rather than punishment, and we can learn from this. Another discussion with Maggie Chapman, Green Party MSP and a Friend at Aberdeen Meeting brought out the Party's move towards prison abolition.

Anneke Kraakman began with a minute from Canadian Yearly Meeting, which was approved in 1981 (Minute 93) and still resonates:

*We approve the following Statement on Friends Response to Crime: Friends, partly through their own experiences in the prisons of the seventeenth century, became concerned about the treatment of the accused or convicted. Friends witnessed to their concern for the Divine Spirit in humans by seeing prisons as an alternative to corporal or capital punishment. Subsequently, they worked for reform of these prisons. Today, Friends are becoming aware that prisons are a destructive and expensive failure as a response to crime. We are, therefore, turning our efforts to reform prisons to efforts to replace them with non-punitive, life-affirming and reconciling responses. The prison system is both a cause and a result of violence and social injustice. Throughout history, the majority of prisoners have been the powerless and the oppressed. We are increasingly clear that the imprisonment of human beings, like their enslavement, is inherently immoral and is as destructive to the cagers as the caged. The challenge before us is to use alternatives based on economic and social justice and on the fulfillment of human needs. Some alternatives to prisons have already been developed and more are needed to bring*

*about reconciliation and healing within the community. Friends need to seek out, develop and support such programs. At the same time, we need to foster awareness in ourselves and others of the roots of crime and violence in society to ensure that our lives do not unintentionally reinforce these evils. Prison abolition is both a process and a long-term goal. In the interim, there is a great need for Friends to reach out to and to support all those affected: guards, prisoners, victims and families. We recognize a need for restraint of those few who are exhibiting dangerous behaviour. The kind of restraint used and the help offered during this time must reflect our concern for that of God in every person.”*

Anneke shared Jenny Copsey's report and told us of how the work with prison chaplains, including interfaith chaplains, of holding days for discussion and shared reflection, has been important. Prison chaplains are often isolated and undervalued by prison managers and these days of peer support and creative listening have allowed them to build confidence in their role with prisoners.

Anneke also explained the additional objectives of the Working Group.

Andrew read to us a report from Bob Mandeville, who could not be with us. Bob has also worked with prison chaplains, particularly using creative listening and other techniques to cope with the stresses of their counselling work, He explained how it is not easy in Scotland for a Quaker to be accredited in the chaplaincy system. Bob has been exploring the idea of Faith Hubs, to help offenders to avoid further incarceration.

We have had some time for questions and discussion. We are encouraged to hear from our working group in this way, and ask them to continue to explore their role and responsibilities. We would appreciate hearing, in a future report, how the Working Group and Network progress together. We thank those who served over the initial three years, and for the way the group dealt with the “nerve racking” manner that “even the friendliest evaluations can be”. We have confidence in our working group and look forward to hearing from them regularly at our meetings.

### **24/11/11 GMS budget for 2025, including donations and affiliations**

Our Treasurer, Katrina McCrea, has presented the General Meeting budget for 2025 (Paper A), which was approved by GM Trustees after their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October. The budget projects an income of £30,700.00, and expenditure of £33,730.00, giving a projected deficit of £3,030.00. Continuing the policy set by our Trustees, the budget is made with a view to reduce current surplus funds. We also note that this year we are projected to end with a small budget surplus of about £4,700, as not all budget allocations were used.



We have also received the list of donations and affiliations for last year. We agree to continue our support for the organisations as listed. We note that £300 has been transferred from the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office donation to our Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group, which would increase the committee budget and decrease the list total. The £50 gained from stopping contributing to Together Scotland is moved to Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, bringing their total to £230.

Our affiliation with IDEAS (International Development Education Association for Scotland global advocacy) will cease as it is merging with SIDA (Scotland's International Development Alliance). We agree to join SIDA from 1 April 2025 and pay the increased amount of £90, which would increase the list total by £50.

We expect to review our way of dealing with donations and affiliations in the coming year. An adjusted budget paper will be sent with the minutes.

We thank our treasurer and trustees for their service.

### **24/11/12 Appointment of Independent Examiner**

On the recommendation of GM Trustees, we appoint Graham Morton to act as Independent Examiner for the 2024 accounts.

### **24/11/13 Meeting for Sufferings report**

Elaine Millar, our new Meeting for Sufferings representative, is not able to be with us today, but has given us a written report (Paper D) on Meeting for Sufferings held 5<sup>th</sup> October 2024. This was the first meeting of the new triennium and was held in the context that Meeting for Sufferings will be laid down in May 2026, when we move to the new model of a 'Continuing Yearly Meeting' (CYM). The good news is that all Friends - members and attenders - will be eligible to attend CYM but be reassured that a system of representation and reporting to and fro will remain between Area Meetings (AM), General Meeting (GM) and CYM. We have been reminded to keep abreast of these changes in the context of the recent Future of British Quakerism Conference. We ask the clerks to find agenda time to consider issues related to these points.

Other issues included the language around the conflict in Israel and Palestine, and the recommendation from Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee is that we align with the International Court of Justice rulings that the term apartheid is an accurate description of the situation in occupied Palestine and there is a plausible risk of genocide in Gaza. Robert Thompson, representative to Meeting for Sufferings from East Scotland Area Meeting, has given us a flavour of the intensity of feeling during this discussion.

Quaker Central Life Committee reported back their recommendation that non-geographical membership options (ie outwith Area Meetings) be developed within Britain Yearly Meeting's (BYM) existing structures. Meeting for Sufferings agreed in principle with the QLCC recommendation, asking them to develop concrete proposals to bring to Yearly Meeting as to how non-geographical membership might be achieved.

We need to make sure Quaker Life Central Committee are aware of any specific communities within Quakers in Scotland who may need to come under their consideration, and Area Meetings and General Meeting can contribute to this process.

The Reparations Working Group are ready and keen to share with their findings so far about British Quaker involvement in transatlantic chattel slavery, colonialism, and economic exploitation.

Meeting for Sufferings received minutes from area meetings and other bodies on the Book of Discipline Revision Committee request over the wording of the Quaker marriage declaration and a working group will be formed to work further on this.

We thank Elaine for her clear written report. We also express our appreciation to Ann Kerr for her service as our representative for the last triennium.

### **24/11/14 Racial Justice minute from West Scotland AM: follow up**

Further to minute 24/06/15, we have returned to the question of how to follow up work on Racial Justice as expressed in the minute from West Scotland Area Meeting. Minute 23/09/19 also refers.

Our previous minutes indicate how local meetings could become involved in racial justice, and how it links to the work on climate justice and with children and young people. We also publicised relevant courses put on by Woodbrooke.

Friends interested in taking this work further can join the Britain wide Racial Justice group that meets on Zoom once a month. The Quaker Racial Justice Network is usually held on the second Tuesday of every month 12-1pm on Zoom. To find out more contact the network by emailing [antiracism83@gmail.com](mailto:antiracism83@gmail.com).

The Racial Justice Network is a grassroots group supported by Quakers in Britain staff.

## **24/11/15 Local Development Worker priorities in 2025**

Minutes 24/06/20 and 24/09/12 refer. Following the process detailed in the last two General Meetings, Zoe Prosser, Local Development Worker, working with her line manager and the clerks propose the following as priorities for 2025. Zoe has spoken to the process involved.

It is suggested that the current priorities agreed by this process last year are amended as follows:

1. Expanding role-holder networks.

Change to:

Continue to strengthen and develop support for role holders.

2. Supporting Quaker community building - locally, for families, and for everyone.

Change to:

Supporting Quaker communities to be loving, inclusive and all age.

3. Pointing the way to information about available resources and materials, including videos and non-traditional resources, to help Quaker Meetings and role-holders identify what they need.

Change to

Pointing the way to information about available resources and materials, including videos and non-traditional resources, to help Quaker Meetings and role-holders identify what they need, and developing and creating further resources where there is a need.

4. Supporting the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to work for change.

We support these amendments.

We convey our grateful thanks to Zoe for her work with us.

## **24/11/16 Enquirers days**

We note that it has not been possible to hold enquirers' days this year. We had asked for all area meetings to appoint members to a working group for this task this year and minute 23/09/11 refers. We will return to the organisation for enquirers' events in March, and look forward to some suggestions from West Scotland Area Meeting.

## **24/11/17 Young people at GMS 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025, Edinburgh**

Mary Troup, Children and Young Person's Advocate support, and the clerk have explained plans to engage with under eighteens at General Meeting in March.

## **24/11/18 Correspondence and future business**

### **a) Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill**

Earlier this year, the clerk signed an open letter calling for the Scottish Government to deliver the long-promised Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill. Minute 204/06'23c refers. This Bill was missing from the Programme for Government, but there is still a chance to progress this Bill through Sarah Boyack's Member's Bill. The clerk, on 24<sup>th</sup> September, signed a follow up letter to the First Minister on our behalf, encouraging him to give this his full support.

### **b) Emission Reduction Targets (Scotland) Bill**

Sarah Komashko, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, on 29<sup>th</sup> October signed on our behalf an open letter drawn up by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland calling for specific concrete actions on climate in the wake of the anticipated passage of the Emission Reduction Targets (Scotland) Bill.

### **c) Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty**

The clerk signed, on 17<sup>th</sup> October, an open letter to the First Minister, drafted by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland and Global Justice Now, asking the Scottish Government to endorse the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty - a global exit plan from coal, oil and gas.

### **d) Regional Statement on Lebanon, Gaza and Israel**

The clerk, on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, signed a Regional Statement on Lebanon, Gaza and Israel for a ceasefire in Lebanon, Gaza and Israel, and to end impunity. This was drafted by Crisis Action in collaboration with partners.

### **e) Funding support to companies operating in the defence sector via Scottish Enterprise.**

Sarah Komashko, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, on 29<sup>th</sup> October signed, on our behalf, a letter to Richard Lochhead, Scottish Minister for Business, about funding support to companies operating in the defence sector via Scottish Enterprise. This was part of an ongoing correspondence.

## **24/11/19 Upcoming business**

On a date to be agreed for a special online only meeting, we expect to return to the proposals for a single Quaker charity/body (Quakers in Scotland). On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025 we meet in Edinburgh and online and business will include the report to us from our Trustees, updates on our ecumenical & interfaith work, and the tabular statement (statistical record of members and attenders). We are also likely to have updates from the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group. Other business may arise from the agenda planning meeting the clerks hold in February.

## **24/11/20 Concluding Minute**

We record our thanks to East Scotland Area Meeting Friends for being our hosts today, for all the arrangements for our venue in Dundee and their hospitality that enabled this hybrid meeting. We also thank our Zoom hosts for work beforehand, and Norman Alm, for hosting today.

There being no further business to bring before General Meeting, we conclude, intending to meet for a special meeting online on a date to be confirmed and then next in Edinburgh and online on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025, if nothing occurs to prevent.

Michael J. Hutchinson,  
Clerk

Susan Mitchell,  
Assistant Clerk