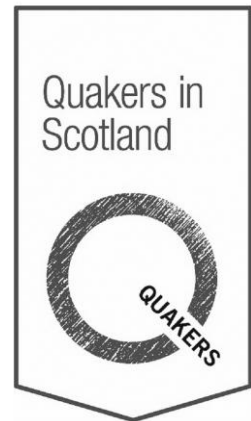


GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

At a hybrid Meeting held at Edinburgh Meeting House, Victoria Terrace, and by video conference, on 8th March 2025



25/03/01 Opening worship

During our opening worship our assistant clerk read extracts from two Swarthmore Lectures: from 2005 (Helen Steven *No Extraordinary Power*) and 2008 (Christine Davis *Minding the Future*) on the importance of prayerful questioning and of upholding underpinning our activism.

The quotes are appended to these minutes for reference. ¹

25/03/02 Welcome to all present

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

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

East Scotland AM	14 (6 in Edinburgh 8 on Zoom)
North Scotland AM	24 (9 in Edinburgh, 15 on Zoom)
South East Scotland AM	38 (33 in Edinburgh, 5 on Zoom)
West Scotland AM	20 (15 in Edinburgh, 5 on Zoom)
Visitors	4

Total: 100, including 11 attenders and with 7 children & young people

¹ From: Helen Steven *No Extraordinary Power* p.34.

There is a crucially important form of activism, that of the prayerful supporter. For years our nonviolent action group was supported by a nun in an enclosed Carmelite order. She wanted to know whenever we were doing an action or had an important decision to make so that she could uphold us in prayer. I believe it strengthened our group and that her prayers were as valid a form of activism as our demonstrations and protests....one without the complimentary activity of the other has an inherent weakness and lack of balance.

From: Christine Davis *Minding the Future* p73.

Amongst the greatest contributions that a Friend can make is the prayerful questioning which prevents any of us becoming complacent. This is where the Quaker community comes into its own. We do not all have to do everything: and we do not continually have to reinvent the wheel.

We thank South East Scotland Area Meeting for asking Cathy Holman and Elizabeth Allen to act as elders for us today in Edinburgh. We ask North Scotland AM to provide Friends to act as elders for our next meeting.

25/03/03 Agenda

We adopt the agenda. We will add a Meeting for Sufferings report if time allows.

25/03/04 Reporter to *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*

We thank Alice Curteis for agreeing 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.

25/03/05 New members, transfers and deaths

From Area Meeting minutes since General Meeting held 9th November 2024, we record the following membership changes:

NEW MEMBERS

Tali Brown (SESAM)
Eleanor Burns (SESAM)
Chris Jardine (SESAM)
Danni Orr (ESAM)
Mary Robinson (WSAM)
Gavin Waterston (ESAM)
Edmondo Zarthruz (SESAM)

TRANSFERS IN

Jane Angel from Devon AM to SESAM
Elizabeth Colwell from Hampshire & Islands AM to SESAM
Jean Kenyon from Surrey & Hampshire Border AM to SESAM
Lindesay & Paul Burton from WSAM to SESAM
Simon Jackson from NSAM to SESAM
Pleasaunce Perry from Lisburn MM, Ireland YM, to WSAM
Althea Stewart from NE Thames AM to WSAM
Nicola & David Beaven from Ipswich & Diss AM to SESAM

TRANSFERS OUT

RESIGNATIONS

Alan Fleming (NSAM)
Margaret Hannah (ESAM)
Sue Lycett (ESAM)
Caroline Wilson (NSAM)

TERMINATION

Sally Blackledge (NSAM)

DEATHS

Catherine Brown (WSAM) died 28/11/24
Marian Burrell (NSAM) died 27/05/24
Pauline Edgar (ESAM) died 10/11/24
Andrew Farrar (SESAM) died 08/01/25
Ann Galbraith (NSAM) died 30/11/24
Mavis Jones (NSAM) died 03/11/24
Lis Nicolson (NSAM) died 07/01/25
Muriel Robertson (WSAM) died 17/02/25

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

25/03/06 2025 Book of Members & Attenders

Further to minute 24/11/06, we are pleased to have the 2025 Book of Members and Attenders now available, and thank our administrator, Jane Booth, for this production.

25/03/07 Proposed dates and host meetings for GM in 2026/27

We suggest the following dates and host area meetings for 2026/27:

7 March 2026 - West Scotland AM (already agreed)
6 June - East Scotland AM
19 September - North Scotland AM
7 November – South East Scotland AM
6 March 2027 West Scotland AM

We expect these will be blended (hybrid) meetings. We ask each area meeting to confirm the acceptability of their proposed date and to inform the General Meeting clerk in time for the General Meeting to be held 7th June 2025. Please could the Area Meeting clerks then book their local venue and ensure it is suitably equipped for a blended General Meeting.

25/03/08 Peacebuilding

At this General Meeting we are taking opportunity to see how much of the activity we carry out nationally as Friends in Scotland contributes to our witness through peacebuilding. This includes peacebuilding in our personal and collective lives, and how that impacts on the wider, troubled world we find ourselves in. So our agenda today aims to reflect the width of our testimony as expressed through our General

Meeting and complements that carried out through individual Friends, Local and Area Meetings and the wider Yearly Meeting.

25/03/09 Parliamentary Engagement Working Group report

We receive the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) Report, Paper A, and Carolyn Burch, co-convenor, has spoken to it and given us a flavour of the wider range of the work. The work seeks to find common ground with those we are connected to. This is how our Quaker response begins, even in difficult circumstances.

Two areas are actively ongoing on Peacebuilding. Firstly, supporting the Quakers in Britain Peace Education work as it gains a strong foothold in Scotland. Secondly, continuing our dialogue with Scottish Enterprise about strengthening the criteria they apply to public funding: in both carbon emissions and human rights terms. The PEWG also continues to look for and support examples of truth and integrity in public life.

Later this year we review the priorities of the PEWG and Carolyn has told us how consultations with area meetings are going forward. Next year sees elections to the Scottish Parliament, so this year PEWG aims to meet with representatives of all the main Scottish parties as they prepare their manifestos. They are working closely with the Community Justice Working Group on these plans.

We note our Parliamentary Engagement Officer (PEO)'s round-up of our work in 2024, which can be found on the Quakers in Scotland website (Parliamentary Engagement page). Friends may also receive regular 'wee updates' from Sarah Komashko to keep them informed.

25/03/10 Peacebuilding rooted in community.

Zoe Prosser, our Local Development Worker, has reflected on peacebuilding rooted in our Quaker community, particularly at local level. Peace making has to start with ourselves, individually and in our meetings. We are rooted in worship, which helps us to know ourselves. The silence gives opportunity to pause and helps when there is conflict and disagreement, as well as strengthening our communities. Our common Quaker experience includes methods for recognising and working through problems to enhance the whole. From that we are more effective in our actions. From our peaceful communities, we can change the world.

25/03/11 Engaging with younger Friends

Mary Troup, our Children and Young People's Advocate Support, has engaged with us on opportunities for younger Friends at General Meeting level (see Paper B). We welcome those with us today for our peacebuilding theme.

The annual Family Weekend in Pitlochry, 2nd - 4th of May, is well supported and

spaces remain. This year's programme will be centred around the theme of Peace, in relation to how we engage with a witness for peace in living our lives in faithfulness to our Quaker values. The Quaker peace testimony reminds us that, "based on our understanding of God's love, our peace testimony is about paying attention to all relationships, from those with family and neighbours to those between nations. It is an opportunity to undo some of the hurt in this world and to build a better future...The promptings of the spirit of love and truth lead us to express our peace testimony through loving, creative and imaginative action."

Mary spoke of a series of other events that will punctuate the rest of this year, providing opportunities for our children young people to meet. In particular, we look forward to welcoming young people from Palestine to Scotland for Summer Shindig. Following the success of the Climate Café session last year, a Peace Café is planned this year, to enable us to focus as a gathered community on aspects of peace activism. Further opportunities include an informal self-organised families' get-together at Comrie Campsite, Braincroft, Crieff, PH7 4JZ from 13th to 15th June; the Wiston Gathering held by South East Scotland Area Meeting 5th to 7th September (open to all Scottish Friends); and the Residential Quaker Earthcare Gathering *Nurturing Radical Worship and Witness* at The Hayes Conference Centre from Friday 24th to Monday 27th October. Information about all of these will be circulated.

25/03/12 Appointments and Nominations Committee report

The following appointment has been made through our between meetings procedure since our 8th November 2024 meeting:

GM TRUSTEE

Kevin Franz of East Scotland AM (Perth Meeting), appointed 30th December to serve 1 January 2025 - 31 December 2027.

ACTION OF CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SCOTLAND (ACTS)

We note that Martin Burnell (SESAM South Edinburgh LM), who was nominated as an ACTS trustee to serve for one year as from 23rd November 2023, has since been reappointed by ACTS.

QUAKER COMMITTEE FOR CHRISTIAN AND INTERFAITH RELATIONS

We note the Nigel Dower is appointed by BYM for a second triennium on to QCCIR, serving until the end of April 2027, to represent the General Meeting.

Nominations Committee has brought us the following nominations:

PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

Kate Aspinwall (WSAM), to serve from appointment until 31 12 2027.

SCOTTISH QUAKER COMMUNITY JUSTICE WORKING GROUP
Chris Holman (SESAM) to serve from appointment until 31 12 2027.

We appoint our Friends named accordingly.

Nominations Committee draw to our attention the outstanding nomination as PEACE AND JUSTICE REPRESENTATIVE. This role has been outstanding for a number of months and Nominations would really appreciate the help and support of GMS with this role. Please approach Nominations Committee with thoughts, questions or support to fill outstanding roles. Area Meeting representative are listed below for reference.

Members of Nominations Committee:

Anna Mitchell – Clerk

Clive Potter – NSAM

Jill Marshall – ESAM

Margaret Roy – WSAM

Alison Chalmers – SESAM

25/03/13 Ecumenical & Interfaith Engagement

We have received reports (Paper C), and noted others that appeared in the *Scottish Friend*, from our Interfaith and Ecumenical representatives which give a clear sense of the nature of the work which has practical elements as well as dialogue.

The following is the list of reports received:

National InterFaith Days – Kate Arnot

Iona Community Board Report - Stella Cranwell

Scottish Faiths Action For Refugees - Lynne Barty

Those in the August 2024 *Scottish Friend*:

Scottish Episcopal Church Synod - Mary Woodward

Report from General Assembly of the Church of Scotland - Mary Woodward, Katrina McCrea and Susan Mitchell

Congregational Federation in Scotland - Kate Arnot.

Those in the June 2024 *Scottish Friend*:

Induction of the Synod Moderator, Lindsey Sanderson, to the National Synod of Scotland of the United Reformed Church - Mary Woodward

Report from United Reform Church Synod - Margaret Munro.

In addition, our Parliamentary Engagement Group, with Sarah Komashko, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, work closely with other bodies, such as Christian Aid, in furthering their work. We had a speaker from Christian Aid with us last year. The GM clerks also attend a variety of ecumenical and Interfaith events, through direct invitation, such as the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and through Christian Aid.

A key purpose of General Meeting for Scotland is to build relationships with other churches and faiths, and hence peacebuilding through building community and in sharing activities in which we have common testimony.

Some representatives with us today have told us, here and in earlier spoken ministry, of an aspect of their work that relates Peacebuilding through ecumenical and interfaith engagement. We are grateful for all stories that are emerging from this.

Nigel Dower has informed us that the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) has set up three working groups, on Interfaith, Inter-church and theological commissioning. QCCIR would welcome any Friend in Scotland who would like to join one of these groups. There is also to be a Woodbrooke-held conference over the 13th -15th March 2026, at the Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire, with the theme being 'Hope for the future in dark and difficult times'. We encourage Area Meetings to find Friends to attend.

25/03/14 Peacebuilding in dark times

We welcome our Recording Clerk, Paul Parker, who reflected on peacebuilding and social cohesion in these dark times, drawing on Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) experience and what he sees going on around the Yearly Meeting. Paul sketched out a picture of our current world situation, which feels even more destabilised owing to the recent political changes that have shown up starkly the change in the world order.

It is a dark picture but we shouldn't give in to it. Paul showed clearly all which goes on in our name that works towards peacebuilding with social justice. He went back to George Fox (*Quaker faith & practice* 19.32) who reminds us to:

Spare no place, spare no tongue nor pen, but be obedient to the Lord God and go through the world and be valiant for the Truth upon Earth. Tread and trample all that is contrary under!

How do we work to that? Above all, we must remain grounded, as a people of faith. In our Meetings we can be upholding of each other and be active in participation. We know that peace making starts with ourselves and then in our communities. Only then are we able to be effective in action and true to our insights and experience in trying to make for a peace based on justice. So we all have a role to play in making for this stronger community and stronger voice in the world.

We are grateful to all that goes on in our name, in Scotland and through our Yearly Meeting, linking up with valiant others. In searching out that which in our own lives contains the seeds of war, we can more justly point to those seeds more widely.

We have had time before and after lunch to comment and ask questions, of Paul and each other. We have also had time in worship sharing.

We have heard from a Friend who observed first-hand how the teachers at Brummana, the Quaker school in Lebanon, used their everyday lives in commitment to their students to show there are different values to those causing the destruction and war that is their context. Everyone can use their lives in acts of resistance to the darkness we find all around us.

Paul told us how Britain Yearly Meeting reacted quickly by producing a video in which Caroline Nursey, a Friend with a background in overseas aid work, speaks of the really drastic effects that the recent cutting of the UK aid budget, whilst increasing that of defence, will have. Another act of resistance. In maintaining our Society we have a stronger voice.

In our time together in open worship sharing, we have been grateful for the sounds of laughter in the street outside, reminding us to be grateful for what we've been given. We all have stories that remind us to remember what to live by.

We have reflected on the meaning of the changing times on us and what we stand for. We will be challenged. Isaac Penington is helpful in reminding us (*Quaker faith & practice* 24.21) that the 'power of the Gospel' begins within us as individuals in finding the 'better state' we aim for.

It has been notable how again and again we come back to seeds of peace being within ourselves as individuals, from which we can seek ways to transform our communities and through them the world. This involves being able to offer the hand of friendship where it is needed.

A Friend has asked us if we have opportunity together to cultivate acts of resistance when American President Donald Trump visits the King in Scotland. The clerk will arrange for an online informal meeting for those interested in taking this idea further.

We have been reminded that it is beholden on us to listen to others and understand where they come from. Listening is crucial in peacebuilding, even when it is one of the hardest of things to do. We need to hear each other in order to find ways forward that work.

We have also been helped to understand the duality that sometimes we need to be the ones who stand up and speak truth under concern, and at other times we need to open the door and invite others to come and sit with us and listen. Even if we are with companions who don't want to be companions, how do we reach out to that of God in people who may not want peace?

We thank Paul for being with us today and helping us reaffirm our commitment to peace with justice, beginning in ourselves. But we are together and we know we can be guided.

The text of Paul's talk will be circulated with these minutes.

25/03/15 GM Trustees annual report

Robin Waterston, clerk of GM Trustees, has spoken to paper D, the annual report of Trustees to the General Meeting. As usual, Trustees supported the treasurer in preparing the annual accounts for 2023 and the budget for 2025. Trustees compiled and approved the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts (TARA) for 2023 and submitted them to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and Britain Yearly Meeting. We are pleased to see our Trustee body is now up to strength.

Further to minute 24/06/16, Robin updated us on the continued difficulties over the replacing of ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland) by the Scottish Christian Forum. Trustees received a report from Martin Burnell, as a Trustee of ACTS, in which he reported that the Church of Scotland are not supporting the creation of a new charity to disburse the funds of ACTS. There is something of a paralysis as a result. This is causing stress and distress to those involved. Trustees recorded their support for his efforts to achieve a fair and legal outcome for the laying down of ACTS and the use of its financial reserves.

Trustees have been in continuous touch with the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group and support the direction of travel. Trustees also liaise with the four Area Meetings trustees.

We receive the following minute from our Trustees:

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND TRUSTEES

Minutes – Weds 19 February 2025 by zoom

2. Reserves policy

Our reserves policy is to hold funds equivalent to 6 months operating costs. Our current balance is well in excess of this. We recommended last year that because of uncertainties about future organisation of Quakers in Scotland, we did not propose transferring any surplus to BYM. We agree to retain this position this year.

However, in view of the amount of the surplus, we agree to recommend to GM that we reduce the funds requested from AMs in 2025 from £16000 to £12000.

We also recommend that the contribution to BYM towards the PEO post be increased by £500 to £6500 and to keep the figure under review annually.

Robin Waterston, clerk

Robin has explained that both recommendations are a consequence of a financial surplus of just over £6000 in 2024. We agree to this.

We thank trustees for their work on our behalf.

25/03/16 Serving trustees 2025

We record our General Meeting Trustees serving in 2025 as follows: Andrew Blackadder, Malcolm Crosby, Kevin Franz, Katrina McCrea (*ex officio* as Treasurer), Neil Turner and Robin Waterston (Clerk).

25/03/17 Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group update

We have had a brief update on the work of the Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group. We await continuing discernment from South East Scotland AM in response to the proposals towards a single charity and Quaker body for Scotland and prayerfully uphold them in this. The foundation Trustees have been working with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) on the governing document. OSCR has given helpful advice to make that document easier to use. The Trustees have now submitted the application to OSCR to register Quakers in Scotland as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). Once the charity was set up there would be no pressure from OSCR for any Quaker body to join immediately. Further to minute 24/09/08, we are reassured that both East Scotland and North Scotland AM are able to function for the time being.

We expect to return to the continuing discernment at our June Meeting.

25/03/18 Tabular Statement

We receive the Tabular Statement summaries for Scotland (Paper E):

	2024			2023			2022		
	Members	Attenders (adults)	Attenders (children)	Members	Attenders (adults)	Attenders (children)	Members	Attenders (adults)	Attenders (children)
East	68	49	8	69	47	11	77	63	11
North	131	98	15	133	102	6	131	100	16
South East	248	233	46	237	223	58	240	215	49
West	233	156	9	231	181	24	228	197	20
Total	680	536	78	670	553	99	676	575	96

All members included above are adults (16 and over)

Last year, the clerk was asked to extend backwards in time the Tabular Statement figures for Scotland so we had an overview of the changes over a greater period of years. We receive this paper for reference, and it is posted on the General Meeting for Scotland website. We thank the clerk for the work on this paper.

25/03/19 Providing for Enquirers

Further to minute 24/11/16 (Enquirers Days), which noted that it had not been possible to hold enquirers' days last year, we receive the following minute 108/24 (Enquirers event) from West Scotland Area Meeting held 2nd December 2024, together with the paper by Laura McMurtrie and Zemirah Moffat (Paper F).

West Scotland Area Meeting
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) West Scotland Area Meeting
Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs
by Video Conference
Monday 2nd December 2024

108/24 Enquirers event

Laura McMurtrie introduced the paper (paper A) suggesting how Enquirers events might be organised in the future to make them fit our current lifestyles and be more accessible to enquirers throughout the whole of Scotland. The suggestion is to hold quarterly events, either hybrid or online, with a panel of Friends able to respond and support these events. Once established it could provide a rolling programme of activities.

We thank Laura and Zem for their paper and the thought they have put into how we could take this forward.

We recognise that we need to adapt how we support newcomers enquiring about Quakerism and value the idea of a structured series of events.

The other body supporting newcomers is Discovering Quakers, which many local meetings have signed up for. There is also the Exploring the Quaker Way run by the Local Development Workers and we have heard of the learning opportunities offered by the Area Meeting Learning Group.

The responsibility for Scotland wide enquirers events is held by General Meeting and each year it asks an area meeting to hold events. West Scotland was asked to organise an event for 2024 with the support from Friends from the other area meetings. Unfortunately this did not materialise and Laura and Zem developed the paper instead.

We send the report to General Meeting and ask them to consider it in light of our experience this year.

Kate Gulliver, clerk

Paper F also contains a summary of the historical background to how General Meeting

for Scotland laid down its Outreach Function Group and asked South East and West Scotland Area Meetings to undertake the organisation of enquirers events for the whole of Scotland.

We have considered how we take forward the recommendations from West Scotland Area Meeting and, in view of the potential changes in Quaker organisation in Scotland, we forward the ideas in this minute to the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group for its Community Sub-group. We will leave the organisation of a separate Scottish enquirers event just now.

We have also been made aware of *Discovering Quakers*, a Quaker Recognised Body. It is a grassroots Quaker outreach initiative that provides those curious about Quakers easy to digest information and online events they can readily join.

Zoe Prosser, our Local Development worker, told us in addition about *What is the Quaker Way?* This is a monthly series of informal sessions for newcomers, led by staff from Quakers in Britain. Anyone new to Quakers is welcome.

We ask that information on both of these is sent to our Local Meetings.

We will return to this topic when we at the right point to look at the wider picture. We have been reminded that outreach is not something other people do.

25/03/20 Correspondence and further business

a) Open Letter: The Real Climate Impact of Peterhead-CCS

On 21st November, the clerk signed an open letter drafted by Friends of the Earth Scotland in relation to the issue of truth-telling about Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) at the proposed new Peterhead power station. This was done as part of the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) coalition.

b) Scottish Covid Inquiry

Having submitted a lengthy form, the GM clerks had over two hours in interview with a representative of the Scottish Covid Inquiry on 17th December 2024, on the effects of the pandemic on Quaker communities. A number of local meetings had supplied information which was very helpful. Following the interview, we await confirmation of the written submission to the Inquiry.

c) Carbon Capture Usage and Storage

On 19th December 2024, the clerk signed a letter to the UK Climate Change Committee on the risks of an over-reliance on Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS). Quaker Peace & Social Witness also signed, as did many other organisations.

d) Human Rights Bill

On the 8th of January 2025, the clerk signed a letter drafted by the Human Rights Consortium Scotland to the Scottish and UK governments on furthering our support for the Human Rights Bill in Scotland, whilst calling on the UK government to support Scotland's human rights efforts by ensuring they have appropriate powers.

25/03/21 Meeting for Sufferings Report

We have had a brief report from our representative, Elaine Millar, on the Meeting for Suffering held 1st March, concentrating on the move to a Continuing Yearly Meeting. Her full report will be circulated with these minutes.

25/03/22 Upcoming business

In June, we envisage the main business as being a return to the discernment over the future of Scottish Quaker structures – the 'Quaker in Scotland' proposals. We will also note the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts, confirm dates and venues for next year and initiate discernment process for the Local Development worker priorities for 2026. The Community Justice Working Group annual report is to come in September or November.

25/03/23 Concluding Minute

We record our thanks to South East Scotland Area Meeting Friends for being our hosts today, for all the arrangements for our venue in Edinburgh Meeting House and their hospitality that enabled this hybrid meeting. We also thank our Zoom hosts for work beforehand, and David Sterratt for Zoom 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 Aberdeen and online on 7th June 2025, if nothing occurs to prevent.

Michael J. Hutchinson,
Clerk

Susan Mitchell,
Assistant Clerk