

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

20th November 2021

A blended meeting held at the Quaker Meeting House,
7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, and by Zoom



21/11/01 Worship

We have spent time together in worship, during which we heard read an extract from the introduction to Chapter 18 of Quaker faith and practice – Faithful Lives. We are reminded that the faithfulness of our Society is a product of our own faithfulness.

21/11/02 Welcome to all present

We welcome all Friends who are with us today, to General Meeting for Scotland, held in Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House and by Zoom. This is the first blended meeting of General Meeting for Scotland.

The total numbers of those present will be added to these minutes.

East Scotland	11 (on Zoom)
South East Scotland	25 (15 on Zoom, 10 in Meeting House)
North Scotland	9 (on Zoom)
West Scotland	22 (17 on Zoom, 5 in Meeting House)
Other AMs	2 (1 on Zoom, 1 in Meeting House)

Total: 69, including 2 attenders

21/11/03 Elders for this meeting

We are grateful to Friends present who have offered to serve as Elders for this meeting. Their duties are listed on the back of the agenda. Names of those serving for today have been noted. We remind Friends that all of us share the duties of oversight and spiritual care of our Meetings, not just those appointed to carry them out.

21/11/04 Reporter of this Meeting

We appoint Alastair Reid from West Scotland Area Meeting to report on this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask South East Scotland Area Meeting to report on General Meeting on 12th March 2022.

21/11/05 New members, transfers and deaths

From Area Meeting minutes since General Meeting on 11th September, we record the following:

TRANSFER IN

Jeanne Davidson-Steinhardt, from Oxford and Swindon AM to SESAM
Michael Ashman, from Sheffield and Balby AM to NSAM

NEW MEMBERS

Keith Tanner (SESAM)
Tessa Thomas (SESAM)

RESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Ian Bonner Evans (NSAM)

21/11/06 General Meeting for Scotland report to Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (YMAC), October 2021

The annual paper from General Meeting for Scotland to YMAC to help the process of their discernment on issues that might come to future Yearly Meetings was submitted in October. This year we were invited to suggest the next steps for BYM's work on anti-racism, climate justice and gender diversity, and to contribute our thoughts on issues and topics that are beginning to surface. Our clerk, Elizabeth Allen, spoke to the paper. YMAC has sent us the relevant minutes from their October meeting.

21/11/07 Central European Gathering of Friends 2021 - report

Further to minute 21/06/08, Busa Cochrane-Muir attended this gathering on behalf of General Meeting for Scotland. Her report was circulated in advance of this meeting. We thank Busa for representing us and are glad that she found it a joyful and worthwhile experience.

21/11/08 Message of encouragement from Iona Community

We have received a message of thanks from the Iona Community for signing the Glasgow Multi-faith Declaration for COP26. Names of the signatories were read out in Iona Abbey during the Scottish Interfaith Week Service 2021. We are encouraged to pray for our planet, and with our community, to continue to take action for climate justice.

21/11/09 COP26 feedback

For many months, Friends across Scotland have been engaged in activities relating to COP26 in Glasgow. This morning we have shared highlights of our involvement, and reflections on the COP. We rejoice in

the wide range of actions we have taken together and with others. This has been a truly integrated interfaith fortnight.

We are particularly grateful to Friends in Glasgow Local Meeting for their work to make the Meeting House a welcoming space during COP26.

We express our thanks to Martin Mansell, Janey Andrews and others for their committed work with the COP26 Hub Group and the COP26 Coalition.

Although COP26 did not deliver enough, we need to keep our hope alive and faithfully continue our climate justice work.

We ask our clerk to attach letters of thanks and reflection from Lindsay Fielder Cook and Zoe Prosser, to this minute.

Letter from Lindsey Fielder Cook, Representative for Climate Change, Quaker United Nations Office

*Dear Janey, Mary Alice and Martin,
I am so grateful for all the work you, fellow Glaswegian and wider Friends have done in these last weeks, months and year(s). You created a home in Glasgow, a safe and nurturing space for so many in this intense time. All COPs are rollercoasters, yet this one, for me at least, felt upheld in ways I have not experienced, from the family of Quakers to the family of humanity that marched the streets and called for accountability, honesty and action in their leaders.*

I will not get to Meeting today, I am sorry. It was a late night after many long days, and I have a chance to walk in the hills before leaving tomorrow – a need to be with nature after weeks in rooms.

All COPs are imperfect, and none deliver all that one wants, yet this one had achievements I hope you, in the UK, can own. The UK negotiation team was respected, and they focused on 1.5C, and kept strong on the science when some States have worked hard to degrade the science. The thanks expressed last night – for the UK Presidency and the kindness of Glaswegians – was repeated over and over and genuine. This COP finalized the Paris Agreement Implementation Rulebook after some 4 years of arguing, and if we hadn't achieved this here, the Paris Agreement would be seriously hindered. There were such strong calls to support Loss and Damage that, despite major shortcomings, pathways are opening. A turning point on accountability for promised finance, the lack of which culminated here. A needed showdown on sidelining observer access. A success integrating more rights language in text than we imagined possible. And clarity on what was NOT discussed and will define next stages - ensuring oil and gas

get focus (not just coal, the poor man's energy, thus a big inequity challenge in this COP and why India/China protested).

Much work, yet many steps forward and I sense Glasgow will be remembered as the most hopeful and productive COP since Paris in 2015.

You have made a huge contribution. And thank you for all your support, encouragement, and chances to share.

Love,

Lindsey

Hope and sorrow at COP

Reflections on the work in Glasgow by Zoe Prosser, Local Development Worker for Scotland

I dragged myself out of bed as the call started. Ensuring both the camera and microphone were off (I have no wish to be a cautionary tale) I had a quick shower and dressed as I listened to my colleagues' early morning meeting to discuss their work on COP. It had been a late night for me, getting home at midnight after meeting Young Friends in worship at Glasgow Meeting House.

Fortified by the (now) lukewarm coffee my housemate had delivered I tuned in properly to realise the mood was grim. In the last week and a half my colleagues had become a well-oiled machine, tracking developments, assigning roles and identifying opportunities in the 30 minute meetings we had every day. Today there was a palpable air of grief as my tough, experienced colleagues discussed how COP26 is going. As you can imagine, it could be going better.

I am no expert on COP, climate change or social action. I go to these meetings as a local staff member who can provide on the spot support for those who are. However, as someone who is not an expert, there are some bits that I picked up that I wish that I had known before.

Things I think you may want to know about COP26:

- This COP has been a hard one for observers to observe. Observers are charities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) who have been approved to attend in restricted areas. There is a strict quota for this and organisations are vetted thoroughly before being permitted inside.*
- At this COP, despite the vetting and their snazzy name badges, there are times when observers are literally not being allowed in the door. This matters. Last week there was a meeting to discuss one of the several strands of the negotiations. It was an unobserved meeting and after it took place people found that human rights language had been removed.*

- *Climate change projections of how much we will warm the earth at our current trajectory are bad now, they were a lot worse even 3 years ago. We are improving, it's just slow. Too slow.*
- *Offers of support to countries in the Global South often come in the form of loans, creating mountains of debt and increasing inequality.*
- *People are more informed than ever. People care more than ever. People are holding their leaders to account and the pressure is working.*

What are we asking for?

Obviously everyone would like to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees. However there are two things that the team of Quakers, Quaker United Nations Office staff and Quakers in Britain staff who make up these early morning meetings are championing:

Recompense for Loss and Damage

Wandering about Glasgow – and indeed any major city in Europe, you can see evidence of the wealth created by the industrial revolution. We all are at least a bit aware of the fact that it was the industrial revolution that started this glorious roll towards the cliffs of climate change. Currently it is countries in the Global South that are more significantly affected by climate change. When destruction happens, countries in the Global North helpfully step in with offered loans to rebuild. Plunging devastated countries into greater debt with credit repayments.

Friends are calling for a fund for countries already struggling with the unavoidable impacts of climate change, paid for by the polluters.

That we get rid of fossil fuels

No more financing or subsidizing fossil fuels. We are asking for funding for a just transition beyond fossil fuels.

How do we do it?

This work requires system wide and government level changes required. We cannot as achieve what we need to as individuals alone. However there are things that you can do:

- *Work together to call on our governments to build recompense for Loss and Damage. Make them aware that you are taking note, not only of what they promise, but also of what they actually deliver. Support organisations that are doing the same.*
- *Consider the systems that promote inequalities, how can we challenge or disrupt them? Whose voices can we amplify? Who can we learn from, or ally with?*
- *Challenge any finance and subsidy of fossil fuels and help to hold our government to account.*

As the Local Development Worker for BYM in Scotland I have been privileged to be on the periphery of the work on COP. Over the last

week and a half I have sawn sticks for placards in a B&Q carpark, been welfare friend at the soggy, joyous Global Day of Action march in Glasgow, sat in Glasgow Meeting House – where tea, coffee, cake and conversation have been generously provided and attended a number of talks and events.

I have witnessed the hours put in by Friends and staff members. I have felt the care and the passion, the hope and the fear.

Now isn't the time to lose hope. COP is unlikely to give us what the world needs. As one Friend said to me recently "this is not the final fight, it is one battle that will need to be fought again and again over the next hundred years". We need to band together in hope. Find faith in our worship and communities and continue to push for fairness, kindness and change.

If you are interested in finding out more from COP then please go to <https://www.quaker.org.uk/climatejustice> you can also consider signing up to the Quaker Faith in Action Climate newsletter – available via the climate justice website

21/11/10 GM Budget 2022

Our Treasurer, Nigel Dower, has presented the GM budget for 2022, which was approved by GM Trustees at their meeting on 11th October 2021. The budget projects an income of £28,600.00, and expenditure of £29,155.00, giving a modest deficit of £555.00.

We note the following points:

- In 2021, the Area Meetings' contribution to GMS was reduced: two thirds of the £10,000.00 general quota has been paid. GM Trustees agreed to waive the remaining one third, as there have been significant reductions in costs during the pandemic.
- Although BYM is moving to a new model to fund the Parliamentary Engagement Officer Post and other work through increased contributions from Friends in Scotland, we are in a transition period. In 2022, as a guarantee that the cost of the post will be covered, GMS has budgeted £10,000.00, £6000.00 of which will come from AMs pro rata. However, should there be the anticipated increase in direct contributions to BYM, the guaranteed payment will be reduced.
- Britain Yearly Meeting has confirmed that the £8000.00 requested by General Meeting for Scotland will be paid.
- The cost of printing and posting the Scottish Friend is still high and we encourage Friends to switch to using the online version.

- Payments for special events will be made in accordance with minute 21/03/13 Funding of Enquirers' Day and other GM Events, and not as stated in Notes to Budget 2022 number 6.

Donations and Affiliations

We have received the list of donations and affiliations for 2022.
We agree to continue our support for the organisations on the list.

Michael Hutchinson has given us a brief summary of the work of Quaker Service (Northern Ireland), which contributes to reducing violence, suffering and disadvantage in the community. More detail can be found on the website: quakerservice.com/

The Parliamentary Engagement Working Group has asked GM to join the International Development Education Association of Scotland (IDEAS) to help further the group's work on peace education, and Joyce Taylor has spoken to this.

Working with partner organisations increases our capacity and IDEAS has a large network and is connected to organisations working in Scottish schools.

We agree to join IDEAS and note that the BYM Peace Education Programme manager has offered to act as contact person.

We accept the budget, a copy of which will be attached to the minutes of this meeting.

We thank Nigel for his work as our treasurer.

21/11/11 Appointment of Independent Examiner

On the recommendation of GM Trustees, we appoint Gordon Mackay to act as Independent Examiner for the 2021 accounts.

21/11/12 Parliamentary Engagement Working Group report

The report of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group on its work and activity since we last met, was circulated in advance of this meeting as Paper A. Joyce Taylor has spoken to it.

We thank Joyce for this report and the group for its on-going work. We are grateful to Joyce for her service; this being her last report to us.

21/11/13 GM Community Justice Working Group

An interim report of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working

Group was circulated in advance of this meeting as Paper B and Kate Philbrick has spoken to it.

We are pleased to hear how the group has continued to meet alongside the thriving informal Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network. The shared focus is on creating a more compassionate community through more empathy and communication with those who commit crimes and those who are harmed by them. This involves more recognition of how differently people who have experienced trauma respond, and therefore how inappropriate traditional punishment models are as a way of responding to criminal behaviour.

We thank Kate Philbrick for this report and the group and network for its work.

21/11/14 Hearing from GM representatives on bodies focused on peace witness

We receive GM Peace Witness Reports, circulated in advance of this meeting as Paper C.

a) Scottish CND

Janet Fenton Co-Vice Chair of Scottish CND, has written the report to GM on her work with Scottish CND 2021. In her absence, Joyce Taylor has spoken to it. We appreciate the personal insights into her faith that Janet has expressed so well in her report.

We note how the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons gives opportunity for further Friends' witness.

We also note that Scottish CND could find space for one or two Quaker ex-officio executive members or volunteers who would help with employment matters and governance. Interested Friends may contact Janet Fenton directly.

Janet also indicates that it would be helpful to have a working relationship with the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group, with a view to complementarity.

We thank Joyce and Janet for their reporting on this important work.

b) Peace & Justice

David Somervell, a trustee of Peace & Justice has spoken to his written report on what, until it reframed itself last year, was known as the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre. David is very conscious of our testimonies and how our witness in peace and justice stems from them.

The centre steadfastly continues to uphold its core values of nonviolence, human rights, justice, and protecting the earth, through a range of programmes and activities that include conflict resolution work, challenging systemic injustices, advocating disarmament, and challenging militarism.

We thank David for his report and encourage Peace & Justice in its continuing work.

21/11/15 Nominations

We are grateful for the work of our GM nominations committee. They have brought us the following names:

To serve from 1st January 2022 to end of December 2024:

GM Nominations Committee Convenor

Anna Mitchell (Central Fife LM) - 2nd triennium

Parliamentary Engagement Working Group – Joint Convenors

Richard Raggett (Forres LM) - 1st triennium

Carolyn Burch (Forres LM) - 1st triennium

Web Manager

David Sterratt (Central Edinburgh LM) - 2nd triennium

Northern Friends Youth Events Charitable Trust

Ken Latham (Central Edinburgh LM) - 2nd triennium

Assistant Treasurer

Pam Brunt, (St Andrews LM) – to continue serving until June 2022

Editor of the Scottish Friend

Amer Syed (Aberdeen LM) – to serve from 1st January to end of December 2023 (1st triennium)

These names being acceptable, we appoint the Friends named accordingly.

21/11/16 Meeting for Sufferings report

Ann Kerr has reported on Meeting for Sufferings on 2nd October, which was a blended meeting. Her written report was circulated as Paper D.

We note the following points:

- On the matter of safeguarding in Quaker meetings, MfS heard that the report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse had criticised faith organisations for their lack of national records. Although this enquiry applies to England and Wales and

we have an on-going separate enquiry in Scotland, the point made applies here too. Records are kept by AMs and a procedure for annual reporting to BYM needs to be set up.

- The report from Quaker Concern on the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT), asked for more active support and we encourage Friends to consider whether they are able to give this.
- The Meeting for Sufferings review has been put aside for present.

We thank Ann for her report.

21/11/17 Eldership and Oversight

We have spent time together in groups to consider the question, “What are the spiritual and pastoral needs in our Meeting, and how can they be met?”. Following this we have had the opportunity for Worship Sharing together, to share our findings. Where possible we have asked each other to speak from our own experience. The individual group points recorded are collated and included in these minutes.

The nature, and structure for eldership and oversight in our meetings is currently evolving to meet our present situation. Our area meetings reflect this change in how they meet the provision. Our consideration today is a first step in the process of learning and adaptation and has practical implications for training provision. How we respond to the spiritual and pastoral needs in our Meetings also gives opportunity to reflect on the joy found in service and in how we provide those fundamentals that build our faith community.

What has come to us is a sense of how much diversity there is amongst us. There are so many different experiences from the last two years in using or not using Zoom, and in how Friends have been so creative. Nonetheless, we are also aware of Friends that have been left out.

To move forward we need to adjust to these new circumstances. Some of us missed small study groups during the pandemic. We may not have recognised the needs of others, even when amongst us, and need to be sure we have the organisation in place that can respond and hold us all in our spiritual journeys.

We see the wisdom once again of our old query "How does Truth prosper among us?" We have to tackle that to answer our present needs.

We will ponder these issues further when we have had a chance to look at the collated notes from our groups and return to them in the future.

We thank our facilitators today for their service.

COLLATED NOTES from small group discussions

What are the spiritual and pastoral needs in our Meeting, and how can they be met?

Spiritual Needs

The Meeting for Worship is central to all we do, so we need to enable Friends to experience a truly gathered meeting, to allow the sense of being gathered to be fully understood and felt. The practice of discernment in our meetings for church affairs depends on this - are we always truly led? We all need to learn to listen deeply and be present for the other. Our spiritual journey is important.

We need to be part of a loving caring community, with whom we worship. During the pandemic, people may have broken their rhythm of attendance and feel disconnected from their meeting.

The fact that our meetings have a disproportionately large ageing membership and few young people, affects their needs. It could provide major opportunities for us to share the hope and joy of the message that the light of God in everyone makes each one of us worthy.

Children and new attenders need help to gain knowledge, understanding and experience of Quaker practices. This can be more difficult if we only see them on Zoom. Learning groups have been missed over the past 2 years with most going into abeyance. They need to be revived. Friends spoke of how their deepest understanding of Quaker ways came from being alongside Quakers living out their faith. Do elders communicate to us and show the way by example?

It is important to feel connected to something larger than our own local meeting. There is a need to rebuild deeper Quaker connections especially for small, isolated meetings, where perhaps, Quaker knowledge is lacking.

We need to make sure that the spiritual and pastoral needs of Friends serving on committees are met so that Quaker service is rewarding.

Pastoral Needs

Some Friends are controlled by fear from listening to bad news, but at present our pastoral needs are scarcely met and we are rarely fully nourished. We need to rebuild trust in our Quaker community: many of

us are relying on non-Quaker support. To do this, our Quaker communities need to be strengthened.

To grow, we need to support new Friends and be aware of their needs, including those who only attend by Zoom.

Meeting by Zoom creates particular needs and challenges in building a sense of community. Without separating the 'Zoomers' from the others, how do we hold ourselves together as one community and how do we reach those unattached Friends who roam Zoom meetings? How do we give practical support to Friends who were previously involved in our local meeting, and are joining online from their new home?

How are these needs being met?

Meeting for worship

We make sure we provide a welcoming, comfortable setting for Meeting for Worship, which is suitable for all. However, what our Meetings offer and how they operate on a daily/ weekly basis is still influenced by the pandemic. We continue to hold Meetings for Worship using a variety of models, most involving the use of Zoom. This has often strengthened the sense of connection for isolated Friends and those who are housebound, but everyone does not embrace online worship, and some Friends suggest that online there is less spoken ministry. A number of Friends find online Meetings difficult or even impossible, so Meetings are trying to make provision for them in a variety of ways, but it adds to the responsibilities for elders and overseers.

By making it easier for Friends to hold evening meetings and to include people from larger geographic areas, Zoom has been good for business meetings, helping us to feel part of 'something larger'.

Our Community

Friendships can be engendered in small groups of people given a particular task but geographical scatter makes it difficult for some to embark on such projects. We know that Friends sharing practical tasks, acting on concerns together, and joining in social activities or study groups, strengthens our community. Glasgow Meeting was enriched by the COP26 experience of all working together to keep the Meeting House open. The challenge for them will be to find a way to build on that momentum. There are also various spiritual practices and processes, including Quaker Life's "RESTORE" process, which will help strengthen our meeting.

Keeping in touch is important but chat after Zoom Meetings for Worship has dwindled. There are many ways of doing this: one meeting has an hour set aside each day for Friends to chat, either on Zoom or in

person; another makes sure those in care-homes or who are housebound are sent a card every week; some meetings ask from time to time if anyone has been in contact with an absent Friend; a few local meeting clerks have been sending a summary of what happened in meeting to absent Friends. Even some members who never attend may value a regular online newsletter.

It is also important to reach out beyond our meeting: Mull has made its discussion group and regular meetings for worship by Zoom available to others in the same county, and elsewhere.

Elders and overseers

Our perception of appointing elders and overseers varies. Some Friends are ill at ease with particular people in our meetings having status, since in a healthy meeting, everyone will be looking out for each other and for the spiritual growth of the meeting. Others believe that named role holders can prevent issues or people being forgotten about. Is it helpful to see elders and overseers as the oil that lubricates the cogs, rather than, or as well as being upfront? Elders and overseers may have lists of Friends in their care but some Friends object to this. There is a need for transparency about lists.

Most roles do not exist in isolation and some meetings have joint elders/ overseers. To conflate the roles of eldership and oversight, or treat elders and overseers as one group doesn't suit everyone and there can be problems with cohesion of the group. Although there is overlap between the roles of elders and overseers, how much is known or appreciated about the distinctive responsibilities?

New ideas

New models for pastoral care are being tested: small pastoral care groups sharing responsibility for each other; dividing the meeting into 4 circles of oversight which meet online as small groups to chat. Small Meetings might share responsibility for elders and overseers roles, without Friends being appointed to the specified role or being given the title - it is a corporate undertaking. There are also examples of Friends stepping forward, to organise things, not dependent on roles.

21/11/18 Correspondence and other business

Friendly FolkDancers

We have received a request from Meri Goad of St Andrews LM asking for support to host a visit of Friendly FolkDancers to Scotland, in Autumn 2022. A briefing was circulated with papers for this meeting, detailing the support needed, and Meri has spoken to us today.

We send this request to local and area meetings in Scotland for their consideration and ask them to respond to the General Meeting clerk.

Notice from West Scotland Area Meeting concern group on gender-based violence

We have been asked to draw Friends' attention to the UN 16 days of action on Violence against Women (25th Nov - 10th Dec). Action includes 'Thursdays in Black': leaflets are available from Margaret Roy.

We are pleased to hear that 'A Women's Perspective on the Climate Emergency' was a success. Copies of the conference booklet "Women Do Count" are available from Margaret Roy.

21/11/19 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to South East Scotland Area Meeting Friends for being out hosts today and for setting up the equipment that enabled this blended meeting. We also thank those Friends who acted as Zoom hosts for this GM.

There being no further business to bring before General Meeting, we conclude, intending to meet next on 12th March 2022, if nothing occurs to prevent.

Elizabeth Allen,
Clerk