



GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

9 June 2012

Edinburgh

Min. 1 Reading

During Meeting for Worship we heard a reading from the Statement on Equality approved recently by Meeting for Sufferings, calling on policy makers to uphold the values of justice and equality in responding to the economic crisis.

Min. 2 Welcome

We welcome 5 attenders to this GM. We also welcome as a visitor Fr Raphael Pavouris of the Orthodox Church, and our speaker Judith Moran.

We will record the total numbers of all present and add them to these minutes.

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| East Scotland | 6 |
| South East Scotland | 25 |
| North Scotland | 6 |
| West Scotland | <u>11</u> |
| Total: | 48 plus 2 visitors. |

Min. 3 Reporter

We appoint Beryl Milner from East Scotland AM to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask South East Scotland AM to report on the next GM.

Min. 4 New members and deaths

We record the following new members since our last meeting:

Susan Wood (W)
Meri Goad (E)
Claire Broadhurst (E)

We record the following deaths since our last meeting:

Barbara Haywood (E)
Arthur Cathro (E)

Min. 5 Dates and venues for 2013-14

We confirm the following GM dates and venues for 2013 -14:

West – 2 March 13 (already agreed)
South East – 15 June 13
East – 7 Sept 13
North – 16/17 Nov 13
West – 8 Mar 14

Min. 6 Financial Report for 2011

We have received the examined annual report and accounts for 2011 from our Assistant Treasurer, Pamela Brunt. Total receipts were £20315, payments £17346, giving a small surplus of £2969.

Given this modest surplus, the AM quota has not been increased this year whilst donations have been increased by about 20%, as agreed in Minute 6 last November.

The report and statement of accounts is attached to these Minutes.

Min. 7 Report from Trustees

The Clerk has read a report on the work of GM Trustees. They have worked on updating our policies on reserves and grants, health and safety, and safeguarding. They have overseen the GM estimates and approved the accounts. They have monitored changes in employment law, and have undertaken a triennial review of the Administrator, Bronwen Currie. They have done their best to monitor the activity of GM Function Groups. They request that Function Group convenors ensure that their meetings are properly recorded and that the Clerk of Trustees is sent a copy of all such records.

We understand that the work on the safeguarding policy is continuing.

Min. 8 World Conference

We have heard a report from Jasmine Perinpanayagam and Alastair Reid on their attendance at the World Conference of Friends in Kenya last month.

There was a full programme of keynote speakers, thread groups, home groups and special interest groups. They discussed very many aspects of the varieties of Quaker experience. The daily worship was vibrant, varied and inspiring. Both programmed and unprogrammed worship were moving and uplifting. There is a real opportunity for mutual enrichment between these branches of Quakerism.

Quakerism is the largest growing religious group in Kenya. Hearing of the traumas experienced by some participants from war, genocide and violent civil conflicts highlighted the importance of peace work, which was a deeply felt priority for all those present.

Over 850 Friends were present, on the theme of "Being Salt and Light". The personal encounters across continents and across different interpretations of our faith were profoundly real and life-changing.

We thank Jasmine and Alastair for sharing their enthusiasm and experiences from the conference with us. We shall return to this topic at our meeting in November.

Min. 9 Quaker Advocacy and the Scottish Parliament

Elizabeth Allen and Phil Lucas have introduced the report of the small working group set up by GM in March 2012 to investigate ways we might strengthen the Quaker contribution to decision-making in the Scottish Parliament. They have given examples where there have been important legislative issues under consideration on which Quakers have a distinctive viewpoint, but there is no existing mechanism to express an official view on behalf of Quakers in Scotland.

The group propose that GM establishes a Parliamentary Liaison Function Group of four plus one person serving as Co-ordinator ex-officio, and to re-designate the existing Parliamentary Liaison Officer as Parliamentary Adviser, ex-officio on the Group. It is further proposed that the Co-ordinator of the Group might be paid for 6-8 hours per week.

We agree to accept in principle the recommendation to establish the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group and ask our Nominations Committee to bring forward names of four Friends (not necessarily geographically-based) to our next meeting. We will ensure the report of the working group is made available on the GM website.

We encourage Friends who are interested in this work to make themselves known to the Nominations Committee.

We ask Trustees to consider the implications of establishing a part-time Co-ordinator post and to investigate funding possibilities.

Min. 10 Meeting for Sufferings

Margaret Peacock has reported on the work of Meeting for Sufferings. The Statement on Equality, initiated at Yearly Meeting Gathering last summer, was agreed and published in March. There has been discussion about how and when it is appropriate to issue public statements; about the refurbishment of the Large Meeting Room in Friends House; and about advocacy. It has been decided to increase the priority given to advocacy. The Loyal Address to the Queen gave opportunity for a delegation to present an open statement expressing Quaker values, although there was some controversy about the principle of this.

We thank our two outgoing representatives, Margaret Peacock and Peter Kennedy, for their faithful work over many years. We note that Jane Pearn is our new representative, with Kevin Franz as alternate.

Min. 11 Appointments and Representatives

Nominations Function Group have brought forward the following proposals and we agree to them:

Rep to Scottish Episcopal Church Synod 7 - 9 June 2012 Edinburgh (retrospective)
Eva Deregowska

Rep to Methodist Church Synod 28 April 2012 Dundee (retrospective)
Sue Mansfield

Web Manager June 2012 - December 2015
Peter Kennedy (first 6 months alongside Neil Turner)

Appointments for 2013

Assistant Clerk to continue Jan 2013- Dec 2014
Martin Burnell

Children & Young People's Function Group Convener Jan 2013- Dec 2015
Madeleine Harding (2nd triennium)

Newsletter Editor Jan 2013- Dec 2015
Margaret Peacock (3rd triennium)

Min. 12 The work of Quaker Social Action

In our afternoon session Judith Moran, Director of Quaker Social Action, has described the work of her organisation. Quaker Social Action was founded in 1867 in memory of Peter Bedford, a Quaker philanthropist. It has Quaker trustees and has 7% of Quaker funding. It works primarily in East London providing a variety of services to alleviate poverty including: furniture re-use; supporting homeless people moving into the private rented sector; helping low-income families to cope through coaching and support; and projects to build community spirit. Quaker Social Action employs 25 paid staff plus a large number of volunteers, and has a turnover of £800,000 pa.

East London has long been an immigrant area with inadequate housing and poverty, contrasting with the wealth of Canary Wharf and the City of London. Over a period of time, levels of personal debt have increased enormously as a percentage of income. The *Made of Money* project provides opportunities for families to share their experience of living on low incomes and assists them to develop coping strategies. Poorer communities find it harder to exploit the opportunities that are available.

The *Knees Up* project aims to encourage communities to help themselves and exploit their own resources, starting with a street party. A further project *Down to Earth* tries to support families who have been bereaved, guiding them through the practicalities of arranging an affordable funeral. The *Made of Money* project has won a number of awards for innovation, and is now being replicated in other parts of the UK, including Glasgow.

We have been stimulated by taster sessions of some of the exercises Quaker Social Action undertake with families to encourage them to explore their attitudes and values.

We thank Judith for her informative and enjoyable session.

Min. 13 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to South East Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this GM, and look forward to meeting again in Nairn on 8 September when our speaker will be Sandra Berry from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre.

Robin Waterston
Clerk

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS):
GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND**

(Scottish Charity Number SC 012281)

Report for the year ended 31st December 2011

NOTE 1: This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

NOTE 2: In this report "the General Meeting" means General Meeting for Scotland, "the Society" means the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and "the Yearly Meeting" means the Yearly Meeting of the Society in Britain (Britain Yearly Meeting). "Attenders" are persons who are associated with a Local Meeting for Worship, but who are not in formal membership of the Society.

1. The Organisation of the General Meeting

The General Meeting is a constituent part of Britain Yearly Meeting which is the governing body of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. The Membership of the General Meeting consists of those having Membership in the four Scottish Area Meetings of the Society. The Area Meeting is the basic business unit in the Society, dealing with membership, marriages, pastoral care and property. The General Meeting normally meets four times each year in different parts of Scotland.

2. The Objectives of the General Meeting

The General Meeting shares the basic aims of the Society as a church, promoting its spiritual insights and looking after the interests and welfare of its members. It provides both a policy-making forum for the Society in Scotland and a focus for the consideration of topics of current importance to the Society in Scotland.

The General Meeting represents the Society of Friends in Scotland: among the other Churches and other faiths; among Scottish organisations; and to the Scottish Government.

3. Administration

Foundation There is no known founding document. The General Meeting was probably established in the latter part of the 17th century when the Society was first organised, after its beginning as a popular religious movement under the inspiration of George Fox. Following periods of persecution the Society has been recognised as one of the non-conformist churches. Its operation is governed by "*Quaker Faith and Practice*", its Book of Discipline. As described there, the General Meeting is at all times subject to the discipline of Britain Yearly Meeting.

Governing Document Following changes to charities legislation in Scotland, a Governing Document was approved by the General Meeting on 10th March 2007.

Office bearers There are five office bearers: Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Representative Friend (for Action for Churches Together in Scotland), Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. In 2011 these were Robin Waterston, Kevin Franz (replaced by Martin Burnell from September 2011), Leslie Stevenson, John Phillips and Pamela Brunt, respectively. The first four of these Friends, together with the Convenors of the Function Groups, form the General Meeting Committee which acts as an executive and arrangements committee. The Function Groups deal with particular aspects of the business. Each has one representative from each Area Meeting and other members as required.

Trustees The following trustees were appointed on 10th March 2007 and were serving at the date of approval of this Report: Pamela Brunt, Philip Bryers and Martin Burnell. Additional trustees at this time: David James (from March 2010), Robin Davis (from June 2010) and John Phillips (from January 2011). No additional trustees served during the period covered by this Report. Trustees receive no remuneration.

Business Method The Society regards its meetings for business as being held under the guidance of God and believes that when the Meeting takes place in a spirit of worship, God's will for the Meeting can be discerned without the need for divisive voting. The Clerk presents each item of business to the Meeting and, after Friends have been heard, and when it seems likely that the Meeting has reached unity, the Clerk presents a draft minute. This may be accepted at once or can be amended until all present can unite with it. The Minutes are thus approved by the Meeting at which they are made.

Principal Address The General Meeting and all the office bearers may be reached through the Administrator at the following address.

Bronwen Currie
Taigh na Torraig
Bruichladdich,
Isle of Islay
PA49 7UN

Telephone 01496 850 006
Email ScotFriends@gmail.com

4. Financial Review of 2011

The income of the General Meeting continued to be healthy with grants of £6365 from Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) towards administrative expenses and £1400 from the Camfield Trust towards travelling of General Meeting representatives, and outreach. The total of the quotas requested from Area Meetings was reduced from £11000 to £10000.

Our expenditure, which had been low in 2010, increased again this year. Although our annual Spring Conference was laid down after 2010, General Meeting has continued to meet the costs associated with holding the annual residential Meeting (held in Edinburgh in November 2010). Our list of Members and Attenders is now produced in alternate years; the most recent version was distributed in 2011.

The general level of grants made to external bodies was increased (and will be increased further in 2012 following decisions made in November 2011). The only major grant awarded was £1400 for the Northern Friends Youth Events Trust which organises an annual summer school for Young Friends from northern Britain. It remains our policy only to support organisations with which we have some involvement via representatives or otherwise.

In 2010 the accounts of the Conference Function Group (which used to run the annual Scottish Friends Spring conference) were merged with those of the General Fund when the decision was made to discontinue the Spring Conference. The trustees also agreed during 2011 that the accounts of the Quaker Link Weekends for teenagers (administered by the General Meeting's administrator) should be merged with those of the General Fund; this has been done for 2011 by including an accounting period of 19 months for this additional fund.

There was an overall surplus during 2012 of £2969, further increasing the reserves held by the General Meeting.

The General Meeting reviewed its **reserves policy** at its meeting in November 2011. It was agreed that in general reserves should be equivalent to not less than 6 months expenditure. At present our reserves are nearly £20000, equivalent to over 12 months expenditure, and it has been agreed that this level should be reduced over a number of years.

5. Review of Activities during the year

We held four business meetings during 2011 in different venues across Scotland. In addition to regular business items, they included discussion on the topics of the End of Life (Assistance) Bill, how Quakers make decisions (introduced by Young Friends), Experiment with Light (on Quaker spirituality), and Economics and the Quaker Way. In addition, we now report on Quaker teenagers' Link Weekends: most recently, events have been held in October 2010 and 2011 on the themes of "Looking at Relationships" and "Creating Connections", respectively.

Our administrator, employed for 8 hours a week to support the work of office-holders and Friends generally, worked effectively on a variety of organizational tasks. Events were organized by local Meetings throughout Scotland in October to mark National Quaker Week 2011.

We supported representatives on a variety of bodies including ACTS Members Meeting, the Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group, the Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund, Scottish Churches Housing Action, Northern Friends Youth Events Trust, the Alternatives to Violence Project, the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre, and others.

6. Future Intentions

No major changes are anticipated in 2012.

7. Connected Bodies and Transactions between them

Apart from the constituent Quaker Meetings, and the Committees and Function Groups of the General Meeting, there is no other connected body.

8. Approval of Report and authority to Sign

This Report was approved by the trustees on 3rd March 2012; it was signed on their behalf by Philip Bryers (clerk to the trustees):

Signed: Philip Bryers 3 March 2012

This Report and the Statement of Accounts for 2011 were presented to a General Meeting held in Edinburgh on 9th June 2012 and the Clerk of the General Meeting was authorised to sign them.

Signed:

Robin Waterston
Clerk of General Meeting

Date: 9 June 2012