



GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

6 June 2015

Aberdeen

Min. 1 Reading

During Meeting for Worship we heard a reading from Quaker Faith and Practice 23.02 and 23.01 on our responsibilities to work as citizens for a better society, and have been asked to consider our responsibilities as members of General Meeting for Scotland.

Min. 2 Welcome

We welcome one attender to this GM.

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

East Scotland	8
North Scotland	18
South East Scotland	12
West Scotland	7
Total:	45

Min. 3 Reporter

We appoint Robin Baker from East Scotland AM to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask North Scotland AM to report on the next GM.

Min. 4 Appointment of new General Meeting Administrator

We note that Marion Sharkey of Dundee Meeting has been appointed as General Meeting Administrator to replace Bronwen Currie whose impending retirement was recorded in the minutes of our March GM. Marion took up the post on 20th April and we wish her well in this new appointment.

Min. 5 New members and deaths

We record the following new members since our last meeting:

Conor Watt (SE)
Cath Dyer (SE)
Hilary Patrick (SE)
Joan Torbett-Schofield (SE)
Anna Lawrence (SE)
Mairi McCormack (SE)
John Cassie (SE)
Susan Bhaumik (W)
Robb Quin (W)

The Clerk has suggested that since responsibility for membership matters rests with Area Meetings, we should re-consider our current practice of recording new members (but not transfers in) and deaths (but not transfers out or resignations). He has proposed that those attending GM for the first time should be welcomed in the same way we welcome attenders to GM, and that deaths should be noted where there is relevant ministry in our opening worship or where a minute is received from the relevant Area Meeting. We agree to reflect on this and return to the subject at a future General Meeting.

Min. 6 Dates and venues for 2016-17

We confirm the following GM dates and venues for 2016-17:

East - 5 March 16 in St Andrews (already agreed)

West - 11 June 16 Venue to be confirmed

North - 10 Sept 16 in Aberdeen

East - 12/13 Nov 16 in Perth

South East - 11 March 2017 in Edinburgh

Min. 7 Archives

Paul Burton, our custodian of records, has advised that the following GM records have been deposited with National Records for Scotland:

*Minute book of the [Scotland] General Meeting of Minister and Elder for Scotland
1860 - 1906.*

*Society of Friends General Meeting for Scotland. Ministry Committee Minute Book no.1
1907 - 1928.*

*Minutes of the Half-Yearly Meeting of Women Friends for North Britain [1789 - 1888].
Includes copies of Epistles 1788 - 1818 written in from back.*

*Society of Friends Minute Book of the General Meeting for Scotland [1916 - 1957].
Includes letter, etc. tipped in and separate index.*

Digest of births, marriages and burials Scotland.

We note that further records will be deposited in the near future

Min. 8 Representations re recognition of non-Scottish civil partnerships.

We note that following discussions within the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group and with Friends House, the Clerk submitted a letter to the Scottish Government on behalf of General Meeting making representations on Government proposals to permit the recognition of civil partnerships which were registered outwith Scotland as marriages under Scottish law. The letter supported the general intent of the consultation paper, but suggested that there should be reciprocal arrangements between Scotland, and England and Wales to give backdated recognition in the same way as applies where the civil partnership and conversion takes place within a single jurisdiction. A copy of the letter is attached to these minutes.

Min. 9 Annual Report from Trustees

Robin Davis, Clerk of Trustees, has presented a report on the work of GM Trustees. They met three times over the last twelve months, concluding the agreement with BYM Trustees regarding the funding and management of the Parliamentary Engagement post, making arrangements to appoint a new GM Administrator, reviewing our safeguarding policy and dealing with financial matters.

We thank Trustees for their work and Robin Davis for his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Min. 10 Future of the Outreach Function Group.

Further to minute 9 of our March General Meeting, the Clerk has heard from South East Scotland Area Meeting and West Scotland Area Meeting that they would be willing to organise occasional one day or weekend events for enquirers and new members, and to open these to people throughout Scotland. West Scotland Area Meeting has no outreach function group itself, but has asked Glasgow Meeting to organise such an event. On this basis we agree to lay down the GM Outreach Function Group.

Min. 11 General Meeting Website

Further to minute 9 of our March Meeting, the Clerk has had discussions with Jane Dawson of the Communications Department at Friends House regarding the scope for co-operation between BYM and GM over website development. As a matter of policy, the new BYM website will not host any content other than that originating within Friends House. If we wish the GM website to have a similar look and feel to the new BYM website, they are happy to make available their design templates, although the content management system they are using is different to that used by the GM website. They are open to the possibility of the GM website linking to specific features of the BYM website such as 'Find a Meeting' and they will include a link from their website to ours.

We agree that there is a need to develop the GM website, which has various shortcomings. However, we also feel that there should be space within the BYM website to record Scottish matters and ask the Clerk to pursue this matter with the Recording Clerk. We agree in principle to establish a steering group consisting of at least one representative from each Area, the Web Manager and the GM Administrator.

Min. 12 Parliamentary Liaison Function Group

Elizabeth Allen has reported on the work of the Group, membership of which is slowly changing to become more geographically representative. The Parliamentary Engagement Officer is now circulating regular updates on parliamentary matters of interest to Friends. Feedback from Meetings and individual Friends would be particularly welcome, either to the Parliamentary Engagement Officer or the PLFG Convenor.

The First Minister was contacted to ensure that the Scottish Government's position on Trident was firm, and it is proposed to issue a letter to newly-elected Scottish MPs enquiring

as to their individual views. The PLFG also suggests that representations should be made to MSPs for their support in urging that the pension fund for MSPs divest itself of unethical investments. We agree that these letters should be sent and ask the Convenor of the PLFG and Clerk to finalise the text.

Min. 13 Impressions of Yearly Meeting

Jenny Copsey has described her experience of attending Yearly Meeting in London for the first time. It gave her a sense of belonging to the wider community of Quakers and of being enveloped in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. She found the quality of silence as Friends gathered for worship in the newly-renovated Large Meeting House very impressive.

Alison Burnley spoke about some changes in method of clerking. She particularly appreciated the epistle from JYM and minutes from the various young people's groups, and the Swarthmore Lecture which included the phrase "If war is the answer, it must be a very stupid question".

We thank Jenny and Alison for their account.

Min.14 Offer of service as Quaker prison chaplain

East Scotland Area Meeting have sent to General Meeting minute 15.20 of their meeting on 9th May which records an offer by Robin Baker to serve as a Quaker prison chaplain within their Area. They welcome this offer and forward his name to GM since such appointments have to be notified to the Prison Service through General Meeting. They are to consider further the question of a support group for him. We agree to notify governors of all prisons within the area of East of Scotland Area Meeting in accordance with QFP 13.46.

Min.15 Congregational Federation Assembly

Robin Baker attended on our behalf the Congregational Federation Assembly held in Glasgow on 25th April. A copy of his report is attached to these minutes.

Min. 16 ACTS - sale of Scottish Churches House

Alison Burnley as our representative on the ACTS Members Meeting participated in the decision to approve the sale of Scottish Churches House to the Fusion Group which has been leasing and operating the building as a country hotel and restaurant. Consideration is now being given to the best use of the capital arising from the sale.

Min. 17 Appointments

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

Parliamentary Liaison Function Group (member East)

Joyce Taylor (1st triennium) January 2016 to December 2018

GM Web Manager

David Sterratt (1st triennium) January 2016 to December 2018

GM Trustee (East)

Beryl Milner (1st triennium) January 2016 to December 2018

GM Trustee (North)

Derek McLean (1st triennium) January 2016 to December 2018

Clerk of Trustees

Robin Davis (extension to end of calendar year) March 2016 to December 2016

Northern Friends Youth Events Trustee

Anthea Mason (2nd triennium) January 2016 to December 2018

Scottish Friends Newsletter Editor

Margaret Peacock (extension for one year) January 2016 to December 2016

The Retreat York, Member

Megan Davies with immediate effect to December 2018

Faith in Community Scotland Action Fund

Lynne Barty (2nd triennium) January 2016 to December 2018

Min. 18 Militarisation

Mairi Campbell Jack has introduced us to the reality of the creeping militarisation of our culture. She is keen for Quakers in Scotland to contact her if we feel she can be of any use as a source of information or support with this issue, now or in the future. Her details are at the end of these minutes.

We are urged to look out for a petition being organised to be sent out to the Scottish Parliament calling for better records to be kept in relation to visits to schools by the military, to find out whether parents are fully informed of the visits and to find out how much of this is happening in primary schools. In our AMs and LMs we are in a good position to have local conversations with schools in our area about this.

David Gee from Forces Watch showed us a powerful set of pictures depicting the reality of the results of war. He enabled us to see clearly the different pictures of war. The real one: war is horrific, extreme violence on a massive scale. It is to control territory, politics, resources and economies. It is for the elite interests - the wealthy choose the war and the poor fight it.

The second picture encouraged by militarisation: war is a risky and heroic endeavour. It is for freedom and peace. It is for the security of ordinary people.

David gave us some positives, talking about Veterans for Peace and how their voices are being heard.

Both Mairi and David made the point that the reason for this creeping celebration of the military is to ensure that enough people in Britain will support our armed forces and support government spending on defence and give support for the wars that they choose to be involved in.

We thank Mairi and David for their stimulating and informative talks.

Min. 19 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to North Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this GM, and look forward to meeting again in Glasgow on 12 September when Richard Murphy will be speaking at our afternoon session on the subject of tax justice.

Martin Burnell
Clerk

Contact details for Mairi Campbell-Jack, Parliamentary Engagement Officer
Email: mairic@quaker.org.uk Tel: 07419 991246 Twitter: [@ScotPolQuaker](https://twitter.com/ScotPolQuaker)



RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

19 March 2015

Simon Stockwell
Family and Property Law
Scottish Government
Room GW.15
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG

**Marriage And Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014: Section 9
Changing Civil Partnerships Registered Outwith Scotland To Marriage In Scotland**

Dear Simon Stockwell,

I refer to the consultation discussion paper outlining the Scottish Government's proposals in relation to making an Order under section 9 of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act") which will allow persons in a civil partnership registered outwith Scotland to change that civil partnership into a marriage in Scotland. We have seen the discussion paper through our membership of the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office.

While Quakers in Scotland have not been consulted directly on this, we feel that as one of only two Christian denominations actually conducting same sex marriages, we should submit comments ourselves, especially as other churches may not share our general approach.

We have already celebrated one same sex marriage under the new legislation and anticipate others soon. We have at least one couple who have had a civil partnership registered outside Scotland and may wish to marry in Scotland. We also anticipate that there may be others in due course.

In general, Quakers wish to support the possibility of converting civil partnerships registered outside Scotland into marriages recognised by Scottish law, providing the couple appreciate the complications that could arise in terms of recognition if they subsequently move away from Scotland.

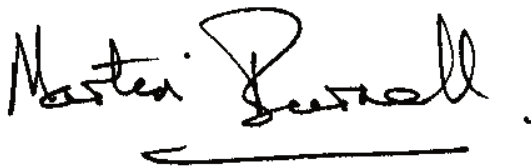
Quakers support the principle of backdating the marriage to the original date of the civil partnership as is the case where civil partnerships are registered in Scotland, while recognising there are practical and legal problems where the civil partnership was registered outside the United Kingdom.

We feel strongly that within England, Wales and Scotland there should be full reciprocal recognition of civil partnerships, irrespective of the country in which they were registered. We note that the Civil Partnership Act 2004 was **UK-wide** legislation, establishing the right to register a civil partnership in England, Wales and Scotland. It would seem to be a breach of equalities for some marriages to be backdated and others not according to the part of the United Kingdom in which the civil partnership was registered. We believe that it should be possible for the registration authorities in England, Wales and Scotland to come to some arrangement for the sharing of information and for some agreement to be reached as to the status of the civil partnership when it has been converted to a marriage in a different part of the United Kingdom.

The majority of difficulties outlined in paragraph 49 of the consultation paper apply to civil partnership registered outside the United Kingdom and not to those registered in England and Wales.

We ask that we are included in the consultation about the proposed draft Order, in line with section 9 of the 2014 Act. We also request that the Scottish Unitarian Association, who are also conducting same sex marriages, should be consulted on this draft Order.

In Friendship,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Burnell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath the name.

Martin Burnell

Clerk: General Meeting for Scotland,
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

Annual report of the trustees June 2015

Who are your trustees? We have one trustee from each Area Meeting, plus the treasurer (ex officio) and a clerk, all appointed by General Meeting in session. We can each serve for up to three triennia. This extended period is to allow for continuity. This year the trustees have been Pam Brunt (East), David James (North), Margaret Morton (West) and Jacqueline Noltingk (South-East), with John Phillips as treasurer and myself, Robin Davis, as clerk. We have met three times, shortly before a General Meeting, in November, February and May.

Essentially we are here to serve the meeting, ensuring General Meeting operates “in a manner that is consistent with its object” - in other words as laid down in Quaker Faith and Practice which the charity regulator has accepted as our “governing document”. We have to act with “due care and diligence” - we deal with the detail - and we make sure we abide by current legislation. You discern the priorities. That is why we have spent many hours over the last two years working out how best to take forward General Meeting’s desire to have a member of staff who would help us put our view to Scottish parliamentarians. As you know this led to an agreement with Yearly Meeting Trustees for a post to be created as part of the centrally managed Advocacy team but working here in Scotland, a post that has been called Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer. This is at this stage a three- year post. Mairi Campbell-Jack was appointed and she has already started work on a number of tasks, under the supervision of the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group.

Our administrator, Bronwen Currie has stepped down from that post after six years, serving the meeting with zest and efficiency, for all of which we are extremely grateful. Bronwen demonstrated you can be of service even when living on an island off the West coast. Her successor is Marion Sharkey from Dundee, whom we welcome warmly. Formally the trustees are her employer and so it fell to us to undertake the process of recruitment.

Other matters dealt with during the year have included a review of how our policy and procedures for safeguarding and the protection of vulnerable adults is working, and of course the rather important subject of finance. It is the trustee body that agrees the annual report and accounts, has these properly examined, and then presented to the General Meeting - and the charity regulator. Towards the end of the year we look at the budget, including suggested grants and donations. This year we have had to urge Friends to give that bit extra in the funds to support the employment of the Parliamentary Engagement Officer. What you may not realise is that we also keep an eye on how our committee system is working. receiving reports from the Function Groups on their activities, and making recommendations to the central committee and to General Meeting as necessary.

It is engrossing work but rewarding in the overview it gives of the health of our religious society in Scotland and the breadth of its activities. We thank you for upholding us.

Robin Davis, Clerk.

**Report to General Meeting for Scotland
On The Scottish Congregational Federation Synod 2015
24 April 2015**

The synod was held in West Glasgow with members of the Federation from all over Scotland and guests, including myself, from other churches in Scotland and from England and Ireland. The morning was taken up with church business, including the appointment of a new PRESIDENT? and other officers. It was clear from the nature of the business that the federation had been through some considerable trauma over the past few years. It appeared that there is light at the end of the tunnel and the newly elected officers are looking forward to rebuilding.

All the visitors, including me, were introduced to the delegates and were warmly welcomed. After lunch and the remainder of the business the guest speaker, Lorretta Minguela, CEO of Christian Aid talked of what motivated her in her role. She spoke movingly of a story of Love Money and Death.

The story of love was of her upbringing in Glasgow and her parents' separation. She told us of her mother's unfailing love despite the pain of betrayal and separation. She said that this left her with an overwhelming sense of peace and love.

The story of money was that of her career moving from a role as a financial services lawyer to become Head of the Financial Conduct Authority. She told us how finding and "writing a cheque" for £14bn over one weekend, to bail out Bradford and Bingley, led her to question why if the money was available for that why was it not available for good causes.

The death was that of her brother, Anthony Minguela, the film director in a random attack. This led her to the realisation that it was the Humanity, the individuality of the loved one that you miss not their achievements.

All of this led her to the realisation that she needed to change direction. She asked who would get a job like the CEO of Christian Aid, Her daughter said that if she didn't apply she would never know if it was her. The rest is history. She went on to illustrate the work of Christian Aid through personal experiences. These covered countries all over the world and illustrated how Christian Aid works to help alleviate the root of problems not just the symptoms.

I was impressed by the passion and care for both the individual and for those of all races, creeds and gender. This confirmed my decision to personally support the Christian Aid "70 Munros Challenge".

Finally I would like to say that I was personally surprised to find the similarity with Quakers sense of the priesthood of all and the difference in the response to that shared vision. I felt very much at home with the federation whilst finding their form of worship very alien and uncomfortable.

I thank General Meeting for the chance to represent GM for Scotland to their Synod.

Robin Baker
June 2015