

**Portobello and Musselburgh Local Meeting  
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business,  
Bellfield, 28 August 2022**

**MINUTES**

**1. Attendance, worship, reading, minutes of the last meeting**

**Friends attending:** Robin Liebmann (co-clerk), Cathy Holman (co-clerk), Ian Edwards, Marian Willoner, Fabian Camus, Jacob Frankau, Alastair Cameron, Chris Holman, Mary Jane Elton, Mark Ballard, Heather Stacey

**Prevented:** Fiona Paterson, Ross Campbell, Lesley Reid

Opening reading: In the opening silence, Ian Edwards read from James Lovelock's autobiography

Minutes of our meeting on Sunday, 22 May 2022, have been circulated, signed and placed in the minutes book.

**2. Clerking**

Fiona Paterson requests to be released early from service as clerk. We thank her for her wonderful service over the past four years. We ask our elders & pastoral care team to look for a new co-clerk. Cathy Holman has stepped forward as co-clerk for today's business meeting and reminded us of how we should hold our Meetings for Worship for Business and part of QFP 3.02 was read.

**3. Matters arising**

- a. **"Becoming Friends"**: Alastair Cameron and Fabien Camus will be running this group for Friends who want to explore Quakerism in greater depth, starting later in the year. The group will meet for around 8 weeks probably in the evening but details will be decided with the group. Please contact these Friends if interested and a date to begin will be decided
- b. **Meeting for Eating**: a small summer picnic was held after meeting at Bellfield on 24 July. The small hall has been booked in Bellfield for shared lunches on second Sundays commencing in October..

- c. **Travel fund** for our young people to visit other Scottish meetings: At our last meeting, we decided to reinstate a travel fund for our young people. A fund exists of up to £750, which our young people can use to visit other Friends and Quaker Meetings in Scotland. We will evaluate how this is used, throughout the year. We ask the young people to use their free bus passes where possible, to check their travel plans with clerks before they travel, and to keep tickets and receipts for Chris Holman

#### **4. Membership matters**

Our Friends Jane Ditchfield and Ross Campbell were accepted into membership at Area Meeting on 25 June 2022. We extend our warmest welcome to them.

#### **5. Financial update**

We thank our treasurer, Chris Holman, for the financial update, which was sent out with the agenda and is appended to these minutes. The Meeting is overall running to budget at present.

#### **6. Representatives for Area Meeting at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House at 7 pm on Wednesday 7 September (blended) and General Meeting on Saturday, 10 September at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House (also blended)**

We are still looking for a Friend to represent us at Area Meeting and Chris Holman will represent us at General Meeting. A very short report for each meeting will be provided for notices.

#### **7. Quaker Week 2022**

Quaker Week is an annual event to help Quaker meetings attract new people and share their faith. This year it runs from Saturday 24 September to Sunday 2 October and the theme is “Welcoming families as part of an all-age community”.

This is a great opportunity to welcome families to our local Meeting. There is a group at AM looking at what might be done during this week and Ian Edwards is involved with this.

“Bring a friend or family” to Meeting might be something we could do, encouraging young people to bring a friend and adults to bring a family. A suggestion of an all age Meeting during this time was made and an introduction will be required at the beginning of worship for newcomers. We recognise that we have not got a lot of time to organise this, as we will have Wiston W/E in between now and Quaker week.

The two meetings we will hold during Quaker week are 25<sup>th</sup> September and the evening Meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> October. We ask Ian Edwards, Mary Jane, with ECO group to take this forward, liaising with the Children and YP meetings and will welcome ideas from all.

## **8. Appointment of non-members to key roles**

This question has come to us from SE Scotland Area Meeting.

In response on 26 June 2022, Portobello and Musselburgh Quakers held a conversation in small groups in the spirit of worship-sharing on the topic of “What membership of the Quakers means to me”. Friends were asked to discuss whether they were members and why they had made that choice. Secondly, Friends were asked what membership means to them and whether certain jobs, such as eldership, should be reserved for members. This summary is based on the feedback.

We recognise that there is a difference between identifying as a Quaker and formal membership of the Religious Society of Friends. When we gather together in worship, we are all Quakers and have a contribution to make. We value Quakerism’s inclusiveness and its ability to bring together people with different beliefs and to encompass our own changing beliefs as they develop throughout our lives

We recognise that for Quakerism to continue to flourish, we need to have Quaker discipline. There needs to be a core of people who know, understand and are committed to Quaker ways, and membership may help to ensure that such a core exists. From a legal point of view, South East Scotland Area Meeting is a charity and we need to have members to assume certain roles such as trustees and treasurer.

We welcome the freedom to choose to become members or not. Some see little point in formal membership, other than to be able to take on particular roles. For others, the choice to become a member is an important step on our spiritual journey, an outward sign of an inner commitment.

We note the vital contribution made by non-members in roles previously reserved for members, without which it would be difficult for our meetings to survive.

We feel that there is a lack of awareness even among long-term attenders about how to apply for membership and this conversation is something we should encourage in all our Local and Area Meetings. “

The local meeting Friends at Business Meeting were concerned that we were not answering the question put to us from AM with the summary above. This is a complex question for us as individuals and the Society, recognising that we need to evolve and change as a spiritual organisation. Having a society with members and non-members in key roles may allow us to evolve.

We are aware that long-term attenders often have valuable experience of the Society, which members do not have and they are prevented from being appointed to roles such as Elder. This can result in members and non-members feeling uncomfortable.

We should be mindful of what it means to Friends to be an attender as well as a member.

While recognising that we have not given a definitive answer we will send the summary of our “Conversation with Friends” session and the minute to the AM for further discernment.

## **9. Priorities for the Scottish Local Development Worker in 2023**

The reports of the recent work of our Local Development Worker, Zoe Prosser has been circulated by email and we are asked if we have any priorities as a Meeting for her in 2023.

We had a short time together to look at this and hope this will spark some ideas with Friends. The following came forward today:

- How members and attenders find time to do things that make our Local meeting work?
- How we meet with Friends in other meetings without having to attend a Business Meeting – facilitation of meeting Friends from all over Scotland?
- How do we simplify the bureaucracy?
- SESAM do have an informal CYP group – can this be developed?

We will put this question of priorities for Zoe Prosser in our notices, to see if any further ideas come forward and we will ask our YP group.

This minute will be sent to Area Meeting

## **10. Closing Worship**

We closed our meeting with silent worship.

# PORTOBELLO & MUSSELBURGH QUAKER MEETING

## Statement of Accounts 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31 July 2022

Opening Balance 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022: £3868.37

### Income

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Jan – 30<sup>th</sup> April:

Donations via SESAM	1438.65	
Collection at Meeting	116.00	
<u>Total</u>		<u>1554.65</u>

#### 1<sup>st</sup> May – 31 July:

Collection at meeting	162.05	
Sale of QF&P	28.00	
<u>Total</u>		<u>190.05</u>

**Grand Total** **1744.70**

### Expenditure

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Jan – 30<sup>th</sup> April:

Room Hire at Bellfield	753.75	
Annual Zoom Subscription	143.88	
Bank Charges	18.00	
<u>Total</u>		<u>915.63</u>

#### 1<sup>st</sup> May – 31 July:

Room Hire at Bellfield	675.75	
Catering	38.40	
Bank Charges	18.00	
<u>Total</u>		<u>732.15</u>

**Grand Total** **1647.78**

**Excess of Income over Expenditure to date** **96.92**

**Donations received towards Wiston costs** **100.00**

**Closing Balance 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022:** **£4065.29**

Notes:

As before, we are doing fine with our expenditure about balanced by income.

Once again, there is a gradual rise in the cost of room rental as we increase our booked time. Having access to comfortable space for Meeting for Worship and related activities is clearly essential, and the increase in expenditure is more than compensated for by the lack of any other significant outgoings so I don't suggest we should cut back.

We all knew this year would be unpredictable when we agreed to retain a large reserve at the start of the year and I am not suggesting any need for economies: indeed, Friends should remember to ask to be reimbursed for expenditure they may make for the Meeting. We need for the longer term to keep in mind the overall plan that our regular outgoings should not exceed our income.

The 'adoption' of the Wiston weekend by SESAM means I am dealing with the accounts for thjs. We have received two donations of £50 from Friends to support the costs of Wiston weekend, in addition to £500 from SESAM and whatever support individuals have received from SESAM. The contributions made by Friends and the support from SESAM mean Wiston too is about breaking even.