

**Portobello and Musselburgh Local Meeting  
of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)  
Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business,  
Zoom, Sunday, 20 February 2022**

**MINUTES**

**2022/02/01 Attendance, worship, reading, minutes of the last meeting, use of chat function**

Friends attending: Robin Liebmann, Fiona Paterson, Chris Holman, Joanne Power, Alastair Cameron, Mary Jane Elton, Joanne Power, Mark Ballard, Olin McGill, Lynn Mayer

Prevented: Cathy Holman, Marian Willoner, Lesley Reid, Wade Robertson

Opening reading: In the opening silence, Joanne Power read from Quaker Faith & Practice, Chapter 12, "Caring for one another".

Minutes of our meeting on Sunday, 21 November 2021, have been circulated, signed and placed in the minutes book.

Robin Liebmann has asked Friends not to use the chat function in Zoom, unless they are more comfortable with contributing in writing rather than speech. In this case, Friends who wish to contribute should raise their hand as usual. When addressed by the clerking team, they should indicate in some way that they wish to write rather than speak, then send a message to everyone.

**2022/02/02 Matters arising**

**(1) Meetings for Learning.** We held our first meeting for learning on Sunday 30 January. During after-meeting refreshments, Harris Grothey gave a presentation on re-wilding and distributed questions for small groups to discuss. The next Meeting for Learning will be held on 27 February. Robin Liebmann will facilitate and the topic will be "What is our understanding of god?"

**(2) Becoming Friends.** Alastair Cameron has reported that he and Katrina McCrae are seeking dates to revive the Becoming Friends course. Further information will be available in the next few weeks.

**2022/02/03 Membership matters – Memorial minute for Ida Turner**

"Ida Turner (Ida Isobel Jones at birth) was born on 4 February 1929 in Troon, South Ayrshire, and died on 24 January 2022 at Wallace View care home in Stirling.

Ida went to school in Troon and spent time as a child in Glasgow. She met David Turner, and they married in September 1951. At that time, they were Church of Scotland: they joined Quakers in 1971 when they lived in the Borders.

Ida was the centre of a busy family: they had six children. At the same time, she was involved in much voluntary work, spending periods as a playgroup leader and advisor, offering marriage guidance and carrying out community mediation. She was a generous host and an excellent baker, though she often apologised that she hadn't got the recipe quite right.

Ida and David lived in Nairn for three years, attending Inverness Meeting and smaller local worship group. They moved to Edinburgh in 1986 and attended South Edinburgh local meeting, making close friends there; they were also active in both Area Meeting and General Meeting for Scotland.

When Portobello & Musselburgh meeting started, Ida moved to the meeting local to her, though she maintained loving contact with her many friends in South Edinburgh. Despite declining health, she took daily walks on Portobello Prom, and many of us have fond memories of stopping for a chat as she took a seat on the wall. She always kept up with the issues of the day, using her imaginative turn of phrase to comment on political matters.

Ida and David moved to Stirling in September 2020 to be nearer family members: she spent her last months in hospital, then in Wallace View. Covid rules restricted visits, but in September 2021, she was nonetheless able to celebrate her 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with David and the family."

We ask our clerks to forward this minute to Area Meeting.

**2022/02/04 Representatives for Area Meeting in Polmont on Saturday, 26 March (in person) and General Meeting on Saturday, 12 March (probably by Zoom)**

We appoint Joanne Power and Mary Jane Elton to represent us at Area Meeting on Saturday, 26 March, and Alastair Cameron to represent us at General Meeting on Saturday, 12 March (probably by Zoom – to be confirmed). We ask them to submit a very short report for inclusion in the notices.

**2022/02/05 Financial update and budget for 2022**

1. Chris Holman has updated us on the Meeting's financial position at the end of 2021, which is the end of our Financial Year, presenting a summary of our draft accounts and a proposed budget for this year (both appended to these minutes).

Last year was unusual because of the impact of Covid: we had no room rental costs before April; zoom costs were much less than room rental. The Meeting agreed significant donations to local charities who were struggling because of Covid, and to

support the appointment of a Quaker Parliamentary Engagement Officer: these contributions accounted for the potential surplus, and we ended up spending slightly more than our income over the year. This was easily met by our existing reserves. We therefore ended last year with a slightly reduced but still significant reserve in our account.

The proposed budget for this year lists known commitments (most importantly, room rental) and makes an allowance for likely bursaries and other costs. In view of the current inflationary pressures nationally, Chris has allowed for 3% inflation on likely costs. Assuming similar income to last year, the budget anticipates a moderate surplus over the year.

Accordingly, the Meeting's financial situation is very secure at present, and we have the resources to fund reasonable expenses to support our Quaker activities and vision over the year.

2. Chris has also reminded Friends that AM treasurers have recently sent out invitations to each of us, inviting us to review our regular financial contributions through AM, or to set them up if we have not done so already. Contributions given in this manner allow Trustees to plan with more confidence as they have a more predictable income. Friends are able to " earmark " elements of their contribution to be assigned to P&M meeting, to Britain Yearly Meeting, to Area Meeting and to the John Wigham Enjoyment Trust. While P&M Meeting has been financially secure during the pandemic, both BYM and AM have suffered significant loss of income through room rentals, and will struggle to support their current levels of activity in future: BYM in particular is aiming to balance its budget by 2023, and estimates it will need to receive £240 per year from each active Quaker to allow them to operate at the current level.

Alastair Cameron proposes that one of our after-meeting conversations be held on the topic of Quaker money: where does it come from and what do we do with it. We agree to forward this proposal to ECOs.

3. Chris has told us that there is a mechanism by which small donations made to the collection at Meeting for Worship can attract GiftAid – but that this would require a more detailed accounting of the takings than we currently make. The collection would have to be counted and recorded in detail each time, and two friends would have to sign for this. Potentially this would allow us to claim back about £75 on collections made if last year's take is representative. Chris would usually be available to count the money himself and would simply need one other Friend to check it. We agree to this proposal.

#### **2022/02/06 Charitable causes**

At the moment, we choose a new charitable cause to support every six months. Robin Liebmann suggests that we select one or two charities to support over a longer period and with whom we could form an ongoing relationship.

Friends agree to this, and ask us to consider a relationship with a charity based on more than money, such as skill-sharing, and ask us to find ways of raising awareness of what the charity actually does in practice.

We will discuss possible causes at our next Meeting for Business in May, including Failte Edinburgh and Jock Tamson's Gairden / Dr Neil's Garden. We will extend our collection for Shakti until then.

#### **2022/02/07 Use of the word "overseer"**

In the context of our response to the City of Edinburgh's consultation on the Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review, concerns have been raised about our use of the term "overseer".

We find that the term "overseer", in addition to having connotations of slavery, can be unclear. We are also aware of the danger of speaking for those who can speak for themselves. We ask our clerks, Mark Ballard and Jen Shepherd to research terms used in other Yearly Meetings for this function and to come back to our next business meeting with a proposal. We also ask our clerks to forward this minute to other local meetings in our area to make them aware of discussions at Portobello & Musselburgh.

#### **2022/02/08 Future of the Wiston Weekend: proposed arrangements**

At a very positive open meeting on Monday 24 January 2022, a total of 17 people (from nine local meetings and three area meetings) met online to discuss the future running of the annual Quaker Weekend at Wiston Lodge. Those present felt it important for Scotland's largest residential gathering of Quakers to be organised as an official Quaker event and no longer run informally by a group of people with the funds going through their personal bank accounts; turnover of the event is approximately £3,000 to £4,000. Four volunteers – Rici Marshall Cross (South Edinburgh), Clara Moore (West of Scotland), Sarah Martin (Portobello and Musselburgh) and Robin Liebmann (Portobello and Musselburgh) – came forward to coordinate the event and several more people offered to run major elements of the weekend.

Rici, Clara, Sarah and Robin have now approached Portobello and Musselburgh Meeting with the following proposal for us to approve and forward to Area Meeting. They suggest that the Wiston Weekend be run as a South East Scotland Area Meeting (SESAM) event, in line with SESAM policies (i.e. data protection, child protection, financial governance and any other relevant policies). Portobello and Musselburgh Meeting, as the local meeting that currently draws the majority of bookings, would officially host the event, with funds going through its bank account; Chris Holman (Portobello & Musselburgh Local Meeting Treasurer), Jackie Noltingk (Area Meeting Treasurer) and Alastair Cameron (Area Meeting Clerk) have agreed to this in principle. As a last resort, Portobello and Musselburgh Meeting would cover any loss. The event has never previously made a loss and in fact usually makes a small surplus that goes towards the deposit for the following year. This year, as for the previous three years, Area Meeting has provided a grant of £500, and the organisers are

considering supplementary fundraising such as crowdfunding or a social event. In addition, Mark Ballard has told us that the sum of [approx. £,1500] in money remaining for 2021 has already been paid to Wiston as a deposit for 2022.

We ask our clerks to forward the proposal below for consideration by Area Meeting:

- The Wiston Weekend will be run as a SESAM event, in line with SESAM policies (i.e. data protection, child protection, financial governance and any other relevant policies).
- Portobello and Musselburgh Meeting will officially host the event in 2022, with funds going through its bank account.
- As a last resort, Portobello and Musselburgh Meeting will cover any loss.
- Rici Marshall Cross (South Edinburgh), Clara Moore (West of Scotland), Sarah Martin (Portobello & Musselburgh) and Robin Liebmann (Portobello & Musselburgh) will run the Wiston Weekend on behalf of SESAM in 2022.

### **2022/02/09 Blended meetings**

The issue of whether we should hold blended meetings was raised again at our last Meeting for Worship for Business. Friends were asked to try out blended meetings such as Central Edinburgh and we asked elders, clerks and overseers (ECOs) to consider the matter again.

ECOs have forwarded the following minute from their meeting on 20 January:

“Local Meeting has asked us look at how other Meetings have found holding blended Meetings. The experience seems to have been mixed. Those present feel we have not yet established a need for holding blended Meeting for PortyMuss and we feel that perhaps the time is not right at present. If we do identify people who may find it difficult to attend Meeting in-person we should consider ways in which we can include them, perhaps by holding Meeting for Worship in their home.”

We agree to let the issue of blended meetings rest for the time being.

### **2022/02/010 Arrangements for our next meeting for worship with attention to business**

Our next business meeting will be held at 11 am on 15 May 2022 by Zoom if we cannot meet face-to-face without wearing masks and on Sunday 22 May 2022 in person if we can and if we can find a suitable venue in time. We ask Robin Liebmann and Fiona Paterson to clerk.

**Signed:**

**Robin Liebmann**  
Co-clerk

**Fiona Paterson**  
Co-clerk

# PORTOBELLO AND MUSSELBURGH QUAKER MEETING

## Statement of accounts 1st January – 31st December 2021

Opening balance 1st January 2021: £4266.56

### Income 1st January – 31st December:

Book of Members	£67.50
Meeting Collections	£301.70
Transfer from SESAM	£2883.05

**Total Income for this year** £3252.25

### Expenditure 1st January – 31st December

Room rental	£1274.25 <sup>1</sup>
Zoom Licence	£143.88
Book of Members (x21)	£73.50
Charitable Donations	£1850.00 <sup>2</sup>
Bursaries	£220.00 <sup>3</sup>
Expenses for catering	£16.81
Bank Charge	£72.00

**Total Expenditure for this period** £3650.44

**Excess of Expenditure over Income** £398.19

**Closing Balance 31st December 2021: £3868.37**

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<sup>1</sup> Monthly room rental April to December

<sup>2</sup> Wm Gunn Charity; Beach Wheelchairs; Thistle Foundation; Dr Bell's; Parliamentary Engagement Officer

<sup>3</sup> Shindig bursary; Financial support

## PORTOBELLO & MUSSELBURGH QUAKER MEETING

### Budget for 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022

<b>Expected Income:</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>(2021)</b>
Contributions transferred from SESAM:	£2900	(£2883.5)
Collections at Meeting:	£300	(£301.70)
<b>Total Unrestricted Income for the year:</b>	<b><u>£3200</u></b>	
<b>Expected outgoings:</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>(2021)</b>
Room Rental:	£2118.75 <sup>1</sup>	(£1274.25 <sup>2</sup> )
Admin/Catering Expenses:	£165	(£16.81)
Bank Charge	£76 <sup>3</sup>	(£72)
Books	£90	(£0)
Bursaries	£360	(£220)
CYP meeting	£150	(£0)
Wiston	£300	(£0) <sup>4</sup>
<b>Total Outgoings for the year</b>	<b><u>£3258.75</u></b>	
<b><u>Anticipated surplus/(deficit) for 2022</u></b>	<b><u>(-£58.75)</u></b>	<b><u>(-£398.19)</u></b>

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<sup>1</sup> Current monthly rental plus 3%: increased hours

<sup>2</sup> We did not rent for the first three months of the year

<sup>3</sup> Allowing 3% inflation

<sup>4</sup> £750 given in 2020

## **PORTOBELLO & MUSSELBURGH QUAKER MEETING**

### **Budget for 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

#### Notes:

This budget is produced at a moment in economic time which is quite abnormal for our Meeting, for Quakers nationally and for the country: it is unusually difficult to predict any aspect of our budget, or what financial support various elements of the Quaker world will be able to give one another in the coming year.

SESAM has lost all income from lettings in the past two years, and are uncertain how much may return: the worst possible outcome is that it is not possible to maintain the Meeting House in Victoria Street. Although they are committed to continue providing financial support for Local Meetings where they can, they are under unprecedented pressure to review all outgoings.

BYM has also lost rental income and their large budget is under great pressure: there have already been redundancies at Friends' House and all central work is under scrutiny.

While our own income and costs are relatively predictable, inflationary pressures will apply to individuals in the Meeting, who may be able to contribute less than they have, and to the Meeting as rents and other costs are likely to rise. It is important for us to manage our funds in a manner which best supports the Meeting and its members, sustaining individuals and the Quaker Community through what may be difficult times.

Under these circumstances it is my recommendation our significant financial reserves, which amount to about 18 months predicted outgoings, can be treated as a valuable asset rather than an unjustified accumulation. It is likely that both AM and BYM will be in need of financial support during this year – indeed, BYM has already said that it needs the equivalent of £240 from each person attending meetings across the UK to sustain its current work. We may feel called to contribute at some point in the year to support elements of Quaker work in our area or nationally.

Accordingly I have (hypothetically) assigned money against a range of local costs which I hope allows us to support Friends to participate in the life of our Local Meeting and the wider Quaker world. I have not allowed sums for any large project (such as have been suggested in the past year or two) except for a commitment to Wiston which is clearly an important event in the life of our Meeting. My proposed allocations see us break even for the year and protect our reserves so they can be used to meet emerging issues over the coming months.

I have applied 3% inflation to our major predictable outgoings.

I have left in place budget headings which have been used in the past couple of years, to prompt us to think of the range of activities in which we would normally expect to participate as a Meeting, and support discussion of our Budget plan for this year.

Chris Holman

Feb 2022



