



GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

12-13 Nov 2011

Edinburgh

Min. 1 Reading

During Meeting for Worship we heard a reading from *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.46 on the need to question some of our assumptions and prejudices regarding social injustices.

Min. 2 Welcome

We welcome 16 attenders to this GM. We also welcome as visitors Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Michael Hutchison, Assistant Recording Clerk, and Tony Weekes from Ireland YM who is one of our speakers.

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

East Scotland	3	
South East Scotland	35	
North Scotland	8	
West Scotland	<u>22</u>	
Total:	68	plus 3 visitors and 16 attenders.

Min. 3 Reporter

We appoint Christine Davis and Margaret Boland from West 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:

Beth Laidlaw (W).

We record the following deaths:

Ray Barnes (W).

Min. 5 Financial Policies

Our treasurer John Phillips has presented draft policy statements for our consideration on financial reserves, awarding of grants, and expenses. They are a clarification of existing practice, with the exception that John proposes that we move to gradually reducing our reserves to a level sufficient for about 6 months normal expenditure. We agree to this and to the other statements of policy. The policies will be put onto our website for ease of reference.

Min. 6 Donations

We have considered proposed donations for 2012 and the future. We agree to:

- (a) Increase our donation to Scottish Churches Housing Action from £200 to £300 p.a.
- (b) increase all our other donations by approximately 20%, suitably rounded,
- (c) donate £50 p.a. to the Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse
- (d) make a one-off donation now of £100 to Quaker Social Action in lieu of expenses of one of our speakers.

Min. 7 Treasurers Conference

John Phillips has put forward a proposal to organise a Treasurers Conference in Scotland sometime in 2012. We warmly support this proposal.

Min. 8 Budget for 2012

John Phillips has presented budget proposals for 2012. He projects an expenditure of £20 500, with projected income of £17 935. This will result in a reduction in our reserves of £2 565 to £15 848.

Proposed donations for 2012, incorporating the decisions taken in Minute 6 above, amount to £5 150. We accept the budget and the proposed donations, and will attach them to these Minutes.

We appoint David Crosbie as Examiner of the accounts until further notice.

Min. 9 Quaker Housing Trust

We have received a report on the work of the Quaker Housing Trust from Jenny Brierley. The Trust is a loan and grant making body which witnesses to the Quaker concern about housing. It does not directly provide housing but supports those who do. It gives grants to smaller projects and loan assistance to larger ones.

Lack of access to adequate housing is an indicator of deep injustices in our economic system. Quaker Housing Trust is supported by voluntary donations and uses these to assist those in acute housing need. They try to support needs to which other organisations find it difficult to respond. They encourage the supported projects to maximise their energy efficiency and sustainability.

The Trust is hoping to expand its work in Scotland. Application proposals for assistance towards projects in Scotland will be welcomed.

Min. 10 Consultation on same sex marriage

We welcome the consultation by the Scottish Government on same sex marriage. Further to GM Minute 7 of 10 Sept 2011, Phil Lucas has presented a draft response to this consultation together with a proposed introductory statement. We have considered the statement, and agree to make the following textual changes:

- (a) In first sentence of paragraph 2, add the word historic so that the sentence reads “The principles of integrity, equality and religious liberty have always been at the heart of our faith, the latter reinforced by our historic experience of being a persecuted minority” ,
- (b) In first sentence of paragraph 7, change the wording so that the sentence reads “It is fundamental to Friends understanding of the solemnisation of marriage that those who are marrying should make their marriage promises in the presence of God and in front of their worshipping group, seeking God’s blessing on their union.”
- (c) In the first sentence of the last paragraph, delete the last phrase so that the sentence reads “We do not wish to see our own discernment of what is right imposed on those of other religious faiths.”

With these changes, we support the draft response and the statement and ask the Clerk to forward them to the Government on behalf of GM. We thank the Working Group for their diligent and thoughtful work on our behalf.

Min. 11 Economics and the Quaker Way (1)

Our afternoon session has been a consideration of a Quaker approach to economics and society. Tony Weekes held the Ferguson Fellowship in Woodbrooke from 2007-2009 and the document *Economics and the Quaker Way* was the product of his time there.

The Quaker heritage is one of engagement with society, offering a radical vision. Tony emphasised that economics is a social construct derived from human interactions, not a set of immutable laws. The current quantitative approach tends to dehumanise people as 'labour' and is based upon a number of flawed assumptions, including the belief that growth is automatically good.

We should exercise a healthy scepticism - competition is not an end in itself. Tony suggested an economy which respected creation would see solar power as the only reliable source of energy and would recognise the importance of interactions within the eco-systems which maintain life on earth. Human beings have individual abilities, needs and aspirations, and human well-being, rather than growth, should be the objective of the economy.

Annie Miller has described how there has been an increase in inequality within our society with growth benefiting the top 40% and the poorest being no better or worse off. This has occurred through downward pressure on wages and the existence of tax reliefs and loopholes which benefit the rich.

She has spoken in more detail of her concern to promote the concept of a Citizen's Income, a fixed benefit paid to all which would replace existing benefits and tax reliefs. This would avoid the disincentives of means-tested benefits, lengthy form-filling and the mistrust of claimants. By removing tax reliefs for the rich it would help to reduce inequality. Annie provided an example of how such a scheme might work.

We have explored through questions aspects of the Citizen's Income proposal, and encourage Annie to proceed with this work. We should not be afraid of appearing idealistic when our political scene is so lacking in vision. We thank Tony and Annie for their contributions this afternoon.

We have also heard something of the response of the Economic Sustainability and Peace Sub-Committee of QPSW to the Occupy demonstrations.

In our discussion we have ranged over various topics including the need for housing development on brownfield sites; empty properties and ownership of second homes; and the problem of vested interests. We recognised the need for international co-operation on many financial issues.

Some Friends are involved in local co-operatives and credit unions. We can make a difference by choosing institutions for investment and banking which operate on ethical principles. There is also value in working together with other churches and faiths, and with other bodies working for economic reform.

In Scotland, the most productive action we as Quakers can take as a group might be to seek to influence the Scottish Government as it pursues increasing fiscal autonomy.

Min. 12 Economics and the Quaker Way (2)

We have continued our discussion on Sunday morning, seeking to understand how the principles of our Quaker faith should lead us to contribute through testimony and personal action to the reformation of our current economic system. We note that Britain Yearly Meeting is supporting the campaign to introduce a tax on financial transactions, the Tobin Tax. We have identified a number of contributions we can make individually, bearing witness to a less materialist lifestyle and ensuring that our savings are put to productive use.

Within the debate which is taking place in our wider society, including the Occupy demonstrations, we see the need to uphold a non-violent approach and to work in a constructive way with other faiths and like-minded groups. We see the increasing inequality in our society and the growth of unemployment as a challenge both to our Quaker principles and to social stability.

We are called to go into the silent worship of our Meetings, to listen for God's guidance, to discern how best each of us can respond to this great challenge of our time, and how, by being ourselves transformed, we can contribute to the transformation of our world.

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 Perth on 3 March 2012 when our speaker will be Katie Frost from Friends House on links between local Meetings and work done centrally on our behalf.

Robin Waterston
Clerk

SCOTLAND GENERAL MEETING - DONATIONS FOR 2012 - APPROVED BY GM ON 12TH NOVEMBER 2011

Organisation	2011 Actual	2012 Proposed	Contact name	Notes
Scottish Churches Racial Justice Reference Group (formerly SCARJ)	300	350	Rachel Frith	ACTS employs racial justice officer. Extra £100 agreed at GM 20 June 2009
Quaker Service (Northern Ireland)	200	250	Mary Alice Mansell	
N Friends Youth Events Charitable Trust	1400	1700	Bronwen Currie	
Alternatives to Violence Project (Scotland)	250	300	Derek MacLean	
Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre	200	250	Sue Robertson	Formerly donated to Scottish Centre for Non-violence
Scottish Churches Housing Action	200	300	Kate Arnot	Donation increased to £300 at GM November 2011. Pay in February each year.
Scottish Inter Faith Council	50	50	Anne Davies	Subscription plus £5 for newsletter costs
Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office	250	300	Leslie Stevenson	Employs full-time staff member
Scottish Churches China Group	200	250	Margaret Anderson	Employs full-time staff member
Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund	500	600	Pam Brunt (Trustee)	Donation increased to £500 p.a. at GM 4 June 2011. Encourages faith communities to take social action.
Jubilee Scotland	100	120	David Turner	Re-instated August 2008.
Scotland's for Peace	150	180	Mary Alice Mansell	Agreed GM September 2008
Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse	0	50	Kate Arnot	Agreed GM November 2011.
QCEA travel study bursary	0	250	Daphne Wassermann	Proposed for every two years
Miscellaneous / contingency	0	200		
Total	3800	5150		

Note that our policy is to support organisations on which we have a representative

SCOTLAND GENERAL MEETING - BUDGET FOR 2012 APPROVED AT GM ON NOVEMBER 12TH, 2011

Item	Budget 2011	Estimate 2011	Budget 2012	Notes
	£	£	£	
RECEIPTS				
AM Quotas - general	11,000	10,000	10,000	SEE NOTE (1) BELOW
Newsletter - sale to AMs & donations	0	0	0	Now supplied free to AMs. Donations from individuals included in general
Lists of Members and Attenders	2,500	1,500	0	NOTE (2)
Grants and donations	7,700	7,765	7,700	NOTE (3)
Donations	200	0	200	
Interest	5	25	5	
Residential GM	30	0	30	
Enquirers weekend	0	0	0	This would be self-financing.
TOTAL	21,435	19,290	17,935	
PAYMENTS				
Staffing costs	4,200	4,200	4,400	Salary costs
Grants and subscriptions	3,875	3,800	5,150	NOTE (4)
ACTS expenses	600	500	600	Subscription paid by BYM
Residential GM	650	400	650	To be supported by GM in future - free to participants.
Lists of M & A	2,500	1,500	0	Cost reclaimed from AMs. Only supplement to be prepared in 2012, next 2013.
Administration - Travel and meetings	3,500	2,500	3,500	Expenses claims are low at present.
Administration - Post, telephone etc.		included above		
Newsletter cost (<i>Scottish Friend</i>)	4,000	4,500	4,500	NOTE (5)
Enquirers' Weekend	0	0	0	Should be self-financing
Conference for Treasurers	0	0	200	To be organised during 2012
Miscellaneous / contingency	1,000		1,500	NOTE (6)
TOTAL	20,325	17,400	20,500	

BALANCE IN HAND				
AT END OF PREVIOUS YEAR	16,523	16,523	18,413	
SURPLUS/DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	1,110	1,890	-2,565	
BALANCE AT END OF YEAR:	17,633	18,413	15,848	

NOTES

(1) NOTE ON QUOTAS:

The AM Quotas were reduced slightly in 2011 compared with the budget.

The proposal is to keep the quotas for 2012 at the same value as for 2011.

(2) Assumes that the next List of Members and Attenders will be published during 2013.

(3) We have been receiving an annual grant of over £6000 from BYM to assist with our administrative expenses.

GM has also been receiving a generous annual grant from the Camfield Trust.

(4) See the list on the separate page.

We only make donations to organisations on which we have an active representative.

(5) The Scottish Friends newsletter is sent free to Members and Attenders.

(6) We expect to purchase a new computer for our administrator at some time in 2012 or 2013.