



GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

15/16 November 2014
Glasgow

Min. 1 Reading

During Meeting for Worship we heard read an edited version of the testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Alison Joan Gean Davis.

Min. 2 Welcome

We welcome 4 attenders to this GM plus Robin Baker of Milton Keynes Meeting.

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

East Scotland	5
North Scotland	2
South East Scotland	17
West Scotland	37
Other	1
Total:	62

Min. 3 Reporter

We appoint Diana Brockbank from North Scotland AM to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask West Scotland AM to report on the next GM.

Min. 4 New members and deaths

We record the following new members since our last meeting:

Sila Collins-Walden (N)
Lex Rider (N)
Justin Kenrick (SE)
Gwen Falla (W)

We record the following death:

Audrey Hebborn (N)

We also note one termination of membership:

Helen Patel (E)

Min. 5 Post Referendum Service of Reconciliation

As agreed at last GM, the Clerk and Assistant Clerk attended the service of reconciliation in St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh. The Assistant Clerk has given a brief account of this event.

Min. 6 Progress report on parliamentary engagement post

Robin Davis has told us that Trustees are close to reaching agreement with Friends House on the wording of a formal memorandum of understanding regarding the respective roles of BYM Trustees and General Meeting Trustees with regard to the post. Elizabeth Allen has told us there were 32 applicants, some of whom were shortlisted for interview and the process is ongoing. The Parliamentary Liaison Function Group are continuing to work on setting priorities for the post.

Min. 7 Implementation of Marriage and Civil Partnership Act 2014

The Clerk has reported receipt of a letter from the Scottish Government advising that an order is being laid before the Scottish Parliament this month which will authorise the Society of Friends to conduct same sex marriages in the same way that we are currently authorised to conduct opposite sex marriages. This authorisation will take effect from 16th December 2014. It will not be possible to give notice of a same sex marriage until this date, so in practice the first date on which a same sex Quaker marriage could take place is 31st December 2014.

Same sex couples who are already in a civil partnership registered in Scotland, can have a Quaker wedding to convert their civil partnership to a marriage, backdated to the original date of the civil partnership, but backdating is not currently available for civil partnerships registered outside Scotland - this may come later next year.

Advice on the detailed procedures has been issued to Registering Officers.

Min. 8 Smith Commission on Further Devolution

The Clerk has reported receipt of a letter from the Smith Commission dated 2nd October seeking our views on further devolution of powers to Scotland and requesting a response by 31st October. In view of this timescale, he asked the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group to prepare a response which was submitted on behalf of General Meeting by the Clerk and endorsed by the Recording Clerk on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting. The response, a copy of which is attached to these minutes, concentrated on areas of concern in which Quakers have historically been involved and in which we are currently active. We thank the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group for their work on this.

Min. 9 Budget for 2015

Our Treasurer, John Phillips, has presented budget proposals for 2015 which incorporate the additional cost of GM's contribution to the new post of Parliamentary Engagement Officer. To cover this cost in 2015, AM quotas have been increased from £10,000 to £16,000 in total and £4000 will be drawn from reserves.

Provision has been made for printing a new edition of the Book of Members. John has also presented a list of proposed donations for 2015, following a very similar pattern to 2014. With these changes, he projects an expenditure of £29,650 and income (excluding the withdrawal from reserves) of £25,650. Our reserves, after withdrawal of the £4000, are projected as £16,480.

We accept the proposed budget, a copy of which will be attached to these Minutes, subject to further consideration of the proposed donation to Scotland's for Peace.

Min. 10 Militarisation in Society

David Somervell has spoken to the attached minute from SE Scotland Area Meeting drawing attention to the climate of increasing militarisation, promoted both directly by government and indirectly in the way that the First World War is being commemorated. We encourage all area and local meetings, and individual Friends, to review the briefing provided by QPSW (www.quaker.org.uk/militarism) and other resources, and to consider what action they can take to oppose visits to schools by the military; to challenge Armed Forces Day (27th June 2015); and to support the Armed Forces Watch campaign against recruitment of those under 18 into the Forces.

We ask the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group to give priority to this issue, including representing our views on militarisation to MSPs and the Scottish Parliament. We ask the editor of the Scottish Friend to consider giving publicity to this issue.

We note that so far our Nominations Function Group has only been able to identify one person to serve on the working group established under minute 11 of our meeting on 13th September 2014 to consider how we might commemorate the introduction of conscription in 1916. We agree to delay the establishment of this working group until the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group has considered how best to proceed. We ask the PLFG to report further to our March General Meeting on the whole issue.

Min. 11 Braemar weekend

Madeleine Harding and Duncan Wallace have reported on the successful family weekend at Braemar. It was particularly aimed at families who have no other children in their Meeting and to support children hoping to attend the Summer Shindig for the first time. 34 Friends and children attended. The programme of discussions and activities brought everyone together and the event was felt very worthwhile by those who came. We thank those involved in organising this event.

Min. 12 Report on Meeting for Sufferings

Jane Pearn has reported on Meeting for Sufferings held on Saturday 4th October. Most of the day was intended to be reflective, in small groups and worship-sharing. The Meeting reviewed its response to issues of environmental degradation, and its own response to concerns brought to it, including one from Devon Area Meeting about supporting politicians

through regular prayer at 9 pm each night.

Min. 13 Nominations matters

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

1. GM Representative Friend

Christine Davis

November 2014 to June 2016

2. GM Representative to ACTS Members Meeting

Alison Burnley

November 2014 to June 2016

(Note: Margaret Peacock has asked to be released as GM Representative Friend. The position has been divided into two separate appointments until the end of her triennium)

3. Representative Friends Pool

Kate Arnot (1st triennium)

January 2015 to Dec to December 2017

4. Ury Group

Pamela Affleck

1st January 2015 for duration of group

Min. 14 Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network

Elizabeth Allen has reported on the Annual Meeting of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network with particular reference to Quaker prison chaplaincy work. The Network has asked General Meeting to agree that discussions be held with Scottish Prison Chaplaincy Advisors with a view to increasing Quaker involvement in prison chaplaincy. We agree to support such discussions taking place and ask Elizabeth Allen and Robin Baker to make an initial approach to the Scottish Prison Chaplaincy Advisors.

Min. 15 Yearly Meeting Gathering

In our main afternoon session we have heard from Friends of all ages who attended the Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath. Some 2000 Friends (including 300 children) from Britain and abroad took part in a multitude of meetings and activities centred on the gathered worship in the Big Top. Friends have spoken of the sense of togetherness and of belonging to the wider Quaker family. For many, Ben Pink Dandelion's Swarthmore Lecture brought them back to a spiritual centre.

Min. 16 Future of the Outreach Function Group

The Clerk has reported that Pete Stuart wishes to be released as convenor of the Outreach Function Group. The Group has not met for some time and Pete has expressed the view that as most outreach events take place at area or local meeting level, there may not be a

need for a group at general meeting level. We agree to release Pete from this responsibility, but feel that this matter needs further consideration. We agree to come back to this at our meeting next March. In the meantime we will ask Area Meetings for their views.

Min. 17 Long-term Framework 2015 - 20

We have discussed in smaller groups the questions posed by Meeting for Sufferings to assist in the development of a new Long-term Framework for 2015 - 20. Among the themes which have emerged are that the essence of Quaker distinctiveness is the willingness to listen to one another in an open way - key to our business method. We need to build community within our own Meetings, We are the structure, and from this flows the work.

One of the strengths of Quakerism is its fluidity and ability to change as new discernments arise. Communication between the different levels within the Society has to remain two way - local initiatives may need central support, but central work needs local engagement. We value the international witness enabled through the central work and realise that much of our credibility comes from the effective Quakerly communication of this.

Min. 16 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to West Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this residential GM, and look forward to meeting again on 7th March in St Andrews when Madeleine Harding will lead a session on *Children in our Changing World*.

Martin Burnell
Clerk

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Submission to the Smith Commission

General Meeting for Scotland is part of Britain Yearly Meeting, which unites Quakers in Scotland, England, and Wales.

Our submission includes five proposals for increasing devolved power, all of which reflect areas of concern in which Quakers have historically been involved and in which we are currently active. There has been an active Quaker presence in Scotland since the birth of Quakerism in the mid-seventeenth century.

PEACE

Quakers are best known for their peace testimony, which derives from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and all human beings are equal in the eyes of God, and that we must live in a way that reflects this. Quakers are involved in a wide range of peace activities from practical reconciliation work in areas affected by violent conflict to the development of alternatives to violence at all levels from personal to international.

Proposal 1: Process for Approving Military Action

The requirement for parliamentary approval before the government commits to military action is currently a Westminster prerogative. No consideration of the views of other national parliaments and assemblies or exploration of peaceful alternatives, currently need to be taken into account.

We consider it would greatly strengthen the constitutional settlement if approval were to come from all national parliaments and assemblies in the United Kingdom. We also request that, when deciding on military action, ways of 'exporting peace' must also be identified and considered.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Quakers recognise the equal worth and unique nature of every person. Our longstanding work on human rights is rooted in our testimony to Equality and Peace and dates back to our work with refugees and prison reform over three hundred years ago. Quakers in Britain work at all levels from the grassroots with local organisations to the international with the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva and New York to support the promotion and protection of human rights. We have frequent dialogue with the United Kingdom and other governments on ways that human rights can be appropriately embedded in legislation and practice.

Proposal 2: Consistent Application of Human Rights Legislation

A key requirement for devolved powers should be that human rights are maintained or even enhanced. If the Human Rights Act were to be abolished by the United Kingdom government, public bodies operating under the UK government in Scotland would not have to respect it. If the Scottish Government tried to maintain or extend human rights legislation as it exists at the moment there would be a fragmented application of these important laws between public bodies.

We ask that Human Rights legislation passed by the Scottish parliament should apply to all public bodies operating in Scotland to ensure consistency of application and to give the Scottish Government freedom to enhance human rights.

Proposal 3: Additional Assistance for Asylum Seekers

Quakers have campaigned for better conditions and rights for asylum seekers for many years. In our submission to the Home Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into Asylum we expressed concern that the findings of the Joint Committee on Human Rights, that the Government is practising a deliberate policy of destitution, have not been remedied.

At the moment in Scotland, the Scottish Government has limited powers to prevent the risk of destitution for asylum seekers.

We ask for powers to be transferred to Scotland that would allow for improvements in living conditions of asylum seekers. For instance these could include ensuring that asylum support rates are adequate for needs and that applicants for asylum are allowed to work pending the resolution of their case.

EQUALITY

The Quaker vision of equality springs from our profound sense of the worth of every human being. Every person's life is sacred and in this we are all equal. Nor can wealth be true riches if it is based on unlimited personal enrichment

Proposal 4: Tailoring Equality Laws to fit Scottish Circumstances

In our 2014 Statement on inequality we expressed concern about the growing inequality of wealth and income in our country. Devolution of powers offers an opportunity to adjust actions to tackle inequality in Scotland more closely to local circumstances.

We ask (in common with a number of equality organisations) for the devolution of equality laws, which would allow them to be tailored more closely with already devolved areas like housing, health etc. We note that Northern Ireland already has this legislation, which has been beneficial in creating a more equal society. Providing minimum standards are met, a Scottish government should be able to create additional protection and so promote the more equal society that we would like to see.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Quaker recognise our moral duty to cherish creation for future generations. We understand that climate change due to human activities is a symptom of the greater challenge of how to live sustainably and justly on this Earth and have committed ourselves to work towards being a low carbon community.

Proposal 5: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by matching performance standards with fossil fuel industry regulation

Quakers in Britain have committed themselves to working to combat the effects of climate change on both the United Kingdom and the world. We recognise that current and unprecedented rates of greenhouse gas emissions, if left unchecked, are predicted to lead to global mean temperature rises of extreme detriment to human beings.

At the moment the Scottish government can set emission performance standards but the regulation of fossil fuel industries has not been devolved. For instance we currently have no right to object to fracking underneath our homes.

We ask for powers of regulation of fossil fuel industries operating on Scottish soil and in Scottish territorial waters to be transferred to the Scottish Parliament. Having the competence to limit the increased extraction and use of fossil fuels, would increase our ability to combat climate change.

ATTACHMENT 2

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND - BUDGET FOR 2015

Budget for GM's General Fund, excluding Teenagers Link Weekends and the GM Fund for Healing

For approval by GM on 15th November 2014

	Budget set for 2014 £	Budget proposed for 2015 £	
RECEIPTS:			
General income:			
AM quotas	10,000	16,000	Increased for Parliamentary Officer BYM support, Camfield Trust
Grants and donations	7,900	8,000	
Sales, special funds:			
Lists of Members & Attenders (sales)	0	1,600	To be published early 2015
Special events	0	0	Such as Families Weekend
Other income	50	50	
Withdraw from reserves	0	4,000	Support for Parliamentary Officer
TOTAL INCOME	17,950	29,650	
PAYMENTS:			
General Meeting activities:			
Parliamentary Engagement Officer	0	10,000	New joint initiative of GM and BYM
Grants, donations	5,270	5,320	See below
Scottish Friend	4,500	3,880	Note that postage costs are decreasing
Costs of meetings	650	1,000	Includes residential GM
Other	1,400	850	Outreach, Representative Friend
Administration:			
GM administrative officer	4,600	4,700	
List of Members & Attenders	0	1,600	
General admin, insurance etc	2,300	2,300	Travel, office costs
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	18,720	29,650	
BALANCE AT END OF PREVIOUS YEAR	21,250	20,480	
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR YEAR	-770	0	
WITHDRAWN FROM RESERVES	0	-4,000	
BALANCE AT END OF YEAR	20,480	16,480	

GM grants proposed for 2015

	£		£
ACTS Racial Justice Group	250	Northern Friends Youth Events Trust	1700
Scottish Churches China Group	150	Alternatives to Violence Project (Scotland)	300
Faiths in Scotland Community Action Group	600	Quaker Service (Northern Ireland)	250
Scottish Churches Housing Action	500	Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse	50
Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office	300	Jubilee Scotland	120
Interfaith Scotland	200	Scotlands for Peace	200
Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre	250	Prisoners Week Trust	250
		Contingency	200
TOTAL proposed for 2015	£5,320		

Extracts from the notes of discussion groups on the Framework Agreement 2015 - 20

What is distinctive about Quaker work and witness, to us and to others?

A quietness - a stillness - based on worship

The Quaker business method - trust that we are willing to give up an initially held position. Ability to trust that what we are listening to is from God, and that it will be given to us even though we don't know what it is. Come in expectation and willingness to listen.

Faith will lead to action. Witness and work are totally integrated.

We test our discernments. Focus as a Meeting on what needs to be discerned.

It is the 'HOW' for which people listen to us. Quaker process means investing in community, seeking the fundamental, working together to **see**, and that is **how** things will come.

What is your vision of the ministry that your local meeting and Quakers in Britain are called to, now and in the future?

"I pin my hopes to quiet processes and small circles in which vital elements take place" Rufus Jones.

Community is an essential part of the life of the Society. In Scotland the residential part of General Meeting is important.

What are we led to do together?

International work - Quaker work in Brussels, Geneva, NY, UN. Working at ground level.

Witness for Peace. Fair society. Sharing strong community.

Our business method can be used in 'outside' groups (Jesuits do it!)

Learning from others to help us e.g. chaplaincy work

How could Quaker structures and networks help Quakers in Britain to flourish?

Quaker Meeting for Worship for Business may need to be more integrated with Worship.

Witness should arise from the Meeting - bottom up. Friends House can co-ordinate. We need to tell Friends House what we are doing. Use the structures.

Use the [GM] website effectively - be inclusive - include both ends of the age range.

Edited by Martin Burnell: Clerk