



GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND 14/15 November 2015 Edinburgh

Min. 1 Reading

During Meeting for Worship we heard read the testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Peter McCaffery.

Min. 2 Welcome

We welcome 4 attenders to this GM .

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

East Scotland	7
North Scotland	4
South East Scotland	23
West Scotland	11
Total:	45

Min. 3 Reporter

We appoint 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 member since our last meeting:

Barbara Naumann (SE)

We record the following death:

Isabel Fairweather (W)

Min. 5 Pitlochry Family Weekend

Marian Grothey has presented the report of the Children and Young Peoples Function Group on the successful Family Weekend held at Pitlochry Youth Hostel from 9th to 11th October. The original purpose of these weekends, of which this is the third, was to enable young

people to get to know each other before attending Summer Shindig, but it achieves much more than this.

There was an active programme of walks and activities, and time for reflection and worship. 18 adults and 22 children attended and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The young people particularly enjoyed being outside. The adults felt it was especially valuable for young people who were the only Quaker in their local area. Volunteers to help with future weekends are needed. We thank Marian for her report, and those who organised the weekend.

Min. 6 Budget for 2016

Our Treasurer, John Phillips, has presented budget proposals for 2016 which envisage expenditure of £28,300 against income of £24,250. General Meeting has previously agreed that there should be a planned reduction in reserves over a three year period and this is being used to reduce the impact on Area Meetings of the costs associated with the post of Parliamentary Engagement Officer. In 2016 John expects the reserves to reduce from £19,527 to £15,477. Income and expenditure broadly follow the pattern for 2015 once printing of the Book of Members and one-off events are excluded.

Donations

We agree to withhold for the time being our affiliation to *Scotland's for Peace* and to the *Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group*, and to leave the other figures as they are for the moment. We will arrange an afternoon session at a future GM to consider donations and affiliations following a meeting which the Treasurer is to have with AM treasurers, further advice from Trustees and information on the aims and outcomes of the bodies concerned.

We have received an invitation from the *Scottish Joint Committee on Religious and Moral Education* to join their Committee. The annual membership fee is £60. It has also been suggested that we should affiliate to *Stop Climate Chaos Scotland*. We will consider these suggestions at our planned afternoon session.

We will ask our representatives on external bodies to report back to General Meeting on the value of our continuing association at least every two years, or when the circumstances of the organisation change.

We accept the proposed budget as amended by the above decisions. A copy is attached to these Minutes. We ask that next year budget papers and accounts be circulated by email in advance of GM. We thank John for his report and for his work as Treasurer.

Min. 7 Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre

We ask our Nominations Function Group to bring forward the name of a Friend to represent us on the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre.

Min. 8 Refugee Crisis

The Clerk has reported receipt of a letter from the Convener of the Church and Society Council of the Church of Scotland advising of the establishment of a Scottish Churches Steering Group to co-ordinate the response of churches to the refugee crisis. They had taken on responsibility for this after being advised that ACTS did not have the resources to do so. Nominations were sought within one week and the Clerk replied that although supportive of the objectives, General Meeting could not appoint someone within that timeframe. We ask our Nominations Function Group to bring forward the name of someone to serve on the Steering Group.

Min. 9 Appointment of Convener of the Nominations Function Group

The Friends appointed at our last meeting to bring forward the name of a convener for the triennium commencing January 2016 have recommended that Alyson Buchan serve for a second term of three years. We agree to this.

Min. 10 Issues of Death and Dying

We welcomed Anne Hosking and Patsy Wilson from *Quaker Concern on Death and Dying*. The aim of their session was to get us talking about living and dying and to enable us to go back to our Meetings and be able to help others to talk on this subject.

Firstly we looked at personal loss, what was helpful and what was unhelpful at such times. We then looked at practical ideas, shared resources and information about living wills, advanced directives and other priorities that could help us be prepared. We also heard each others thoughts on what would be important to us towards the end.

One thought that stood out was that we have had a life of doing; at the end it may be the time to just be.

We would like to thank Anne and Patsy for a very thought-provoking session and look forward to looking at their resources and buying some books.

After a cup of tea we learnt about Death Cafes and had a chance to experience how they work. We shared deeply in small groups questions around our own deaths.

Min. 11 Quaker Meeting Houses Heritage Project

A request has been received from the Recording Clerk that General Meeting take part in the Quaker Meeting Houses Heritage Project, the purpose of which is to carry out a nationwide survey of property in the ownership of each Area Meeting and currently used as a Quaker Meeting House.

The purpose is to record the significance of the meeting house:- its history, contents, setting, use, management and the impact of change; and to enable BYM to construct a new property database. It does not cover property owned by Area Meetings that is used for other purposes, nor historic meeting houses no longer in the ownership of the Area Meeting. General Meeting is asked to appoint a co-ordinator to liaise with local meeting volunteers and with the consultants who will be carrying out the survey.

We agree to participate in this project and to appoint Marianne Butler to act as GM Co-ordinator for the duration of the project.

Min. 12 Parliamentary Liaison Function Group

Elizabeth Allen has reported on the work of the Group and of the Parliamentary Engagement Officer. Research is in progress on the military presence in Scottish schools and it is planned to petition the Scottish Parliament in the New Year. Contacts are being made with sympathetic MSPs.

White poppies and an explanatory leaflet have been sent to all MSPs. This latter project was in partnership with BYM, the Peace and Justice Centre and the Scottish Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Patrick Harvie MSP is to sponsor an event in the Scottish Parliament around the anniversary of the first Military Service Act at the end of January and has asked for significant Quaker input. We agree in principle to make GM funds available to meet part of the costs of this event.

Letters to Scottish MPs on Trident and to MSPs on their pension scheme have received a number of supportive replies. An election guide is being prepared to alert Scottish Friends to issues which they should consider in the elections for the Scottish Parliament next May.

The next focus for the work of the Group is economic justice, sustainability and peace and a work programme will be drawn up at their next meeting. It will centre on an exploration of the use of taxation to create a more equal society and a consideration of fracking issues.

We are pleased to hear of the extensive work of the Group, but feel efforts need to be focused on priority areas.

Min. 13 Conversion of Civil Partnerships to Marriage

The regulations allowing conversion in Scotland of civil partnerships registered outwith Scotland came into effect on 31st October. Jane Pearn has reported through the Clerk that Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements Group has forwarded minute 9 of our meeting on 12th September to Paul Parker, Recording Clerk. It has not yet come to Sufferings as there has been no meeting. Paul will raise the various issues with the UK government, but feels there is no real political momentum behind this now. He suggests that personal stories from those who are, or might be, affected might engage people and perhaps encourage a local MP to take up the issue.

Min. 14 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to South East Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this residential GM, and look forward to meeting again on 5th March in St Andrews.

Martin Burnell
Clerk