



GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

7 Sept 2013

Perth

Min. 1 Reading

During Meeting for Worship we heard a reading from Quaker Faith and Practice 22.80 and 17.06 on Quaker responses to bereavement. We have held in our prayers the family of Alison Gean Davis whose funeral is today.

Min. 2 Welcome

We welcome six attenders to this GM. We also welcome as a visitor Rev Scott Burton, Minister of St. Matthews Church, Perth, and our speaker Paul Parker, Recording Clerk.

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

East Scotland	18
South East Scotland	8
North Scotland	5
West Scotland	<u>12</u>
Total:	43 plus 2 visitors.

Min. 3 Reporter

We appoint John Phillips from South East Scotland AM to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask 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:

Caroline Wilson (E)
Marian Burrell (N)
Lynda Mitchell (N)
Laura Dunkel (N)
Philip Sanders (SE)

We record the following deaths:

Robert Steven (E)
Mary Donald (W)
Billy Johnstone (W)
David Sainty (W)
Alison Gean Davis (W)
John Fleming (SE)

Min. 5 Alternative World War 1 Commemoration

Bryan Bowes has described his interest in World War 1 due to his family and religious background. In Scotland, the Jimmy Reid Foundation has formed a committee to consider alternative ways to commemorate World War 1, and Bryan has attended a meeting of this committee. There is no memorial in Scotland to those who resisted the war on grounds of

conscience. One proposal from the committee is that Quakers in Scotland host an event in August 2014 to represent non-militaristic perspectives on the centenary.

We have heard that Northern Friends Peace Board have produced a pack on this topic and are hoping to work in schools to promote reflective discussion.

We suggest that Bryan works with Area Meetings through their NFPB representatives to consider the matter further and how the work of NFPB can be strengthened. If any Area Meeting does not have a representative to NFPB, we ask that they consider filling the post.

Min. 6 “Working through Difference” conference

Jan Lethbridge has reported on a conference organised by the Quaker Committee on Christian and Interfaith Relations on “Working through Difference – problem solving in interfaith work”.

Many Meetings across Britain have been involved in ecumenical and interfaith work, but aspects of this can be divisive within Quakers as they are for other Churches. Jan referred to the decisions on same sex marriage, the EAPPI programme, and the boycott of Israeli products from the occupied territories in Palestine. The programme included informative visits to and participation at worship in a Serbian Orthodox church or a Sikh temple.

How should challenging situations in interfaith work be handled? We have to embrace difference. We have to be open to learning more about other histories, to looking for common ground, to practice real listening, and to persevere.

Min. 7 Parliamentary Liaison Function Group

Further to Minute 8 of June 2013, Elizabeth Allen has reported on the draft letter on Trident that the Function Group have prepared. The letter will be sent to all Scottish MPs and MSPs. Local Meetings will then be invited to use the content of the letter as the basis for face to face meetings with their parliamentary representatives.

Further comments on the draft may be submitted by 14 September, after which the letter will be finalised and sent out, signed by the GM Clerk.

Min. 8 Meeting for Sufferings

We have heard from the Clerk of the proposal that Regional Gatherings be held throughout BYM organised by Meeting for Sufferings staff. The aim is to explore and strengthen the relationship between area meetings and Meeting for Sufferings. In our case, this would most efficiently be done at the level of GM. We support the proposal in principle and ask the Agenda FG to take the matter forward.

Min. 9 Summer Shindig

Bronwen Currie has reported on the very successful Summer Shindig event at Ackworth School on the theme of “Who Decides?”. The talks, events and worship had been memorable and powerful.

The innovation of a pre-weekend gathering for Scottish young people had been very valuable in increasing the confidence of first timers.

The idea of resuming a summer family weekend to help strengthen these bonds was raised, and we welcome this in principle. We ask Bronwen Currie and Madeleine Harding to take soundings and to develop a proposal.

Min. 10 SOLAS festival

The SOLAS festival is “an arts festival with soul”. It is rooted in the broad Christian tradition. Pete Stuart has reported on the event which took place near Perth earlier this year. As well as individual Quaker contributions to the Festival, we were involved for the first time through organising two Meetings for Worship. This allowed us to contribute to the overall programme, and to raise awareness of our existence and principles. These Meetings for Worship fitted in well to the ethos of the event and were much appreciated. We are pleased to hear of this involvement, and hope that it will continue in future years.

Min. 11 Statement on Syria

Paul Parker has reported on the statement on Syria that was issued from Friends House prior to the Westminster parliamentary vote on British involvement. The statement had attracted a lot of media interest, and had been used by Friends in contacting their MPs. We are encouraged to make further contact with our MPs, bringing to bear Quaker experiences in international conflict situations and alternatives to violence.

Min. 12 Archives Deposition

We note for the record, as advised by our archivist Paul Burton, that a catalogue of Scottish Quaker archives already deposited with National Records of Scotland is held by the GM Administrator, by Pat Lucas (for South East Scotland AM), Philip Bryers (for East Scotland AM), Paul Burton (for West Scotland AM) and Clare Trinder (for North Scotland AM). We will record further depositions when they are made.

Min. 13 Appointments and Representatives

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

GM Clerk

Martin Burnell Jan 2014 to Dec 2016
(Note: Martin will be released as a GM Trustee in Dec. 2013)

Examiner of Accounts

Paul Kenny (1st triennium) Jan 2014 to Dec 2016

Northern Friends Youth Events Charitable Trust

Mary Jane Elton (1st triennium) Jan 2014 to Dec 2016

Parliamentary Liaison Group

Alan Frith (1st triennium) Jan 2014 to Dec 2016
(note: to replace Robin Waterston who has asked to be released)

Iona Community Board

Alastair McIntosh (3rd triennium) Jan 2014 to Dec 2016
(note: as this is an ‘external’ appointment, not a GM appointment, and Alastair is able and willing to contribute to the work of the board more than is normally expected of a representative, we think that a third triennium is acceptable in this case)

Scottish Interfaith Council
Barbara Potter (1st triennium)

Jan 2014 to Dec 2016

Jimmy Reid Foundation – WW1 Committee
Brian Bowes

for duration of project

ACTS Members Meeting Representative

Pamala McDougall

Sep 2013 to Jun 2016

(note: Margaret Peacock has been asked to remain a Trustee of ACTS and cannot be our representative as well)

Custodian of Records

Paul Burton (2nd triennium)

Jan 2014 to Dec 2016

(note: the Consultative Group on Archives will be laid down)

Min. 14 Why it's exciting to be a Quaker today

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting, has described how he came to Quakerism, and his excitement at its potential for making new connections between our understanding of God and the world as it is today.

The composition of the Religious Society of Friends has changed greatly over the last few decades and many now come to Quakerism from other Churches, or from no Church, in their spiritual search. We need to be able to explain to others why we are Quakers, and to do so in a way that is accessible to those who may not share our historic Christian heritage.

Many people see Quakers as a closed and rather peculiar group, and we need to make sure people know who we are, can find us, and are welcomed. We must be careful of the impression we can create that Quakers are middle class, well-educated professionals aged 45 and above, and ensure that we welcome everyone to our Meetings.

In our Meetings we should ask ourselves 'what is our ministry?' The answer will be different from Meeting to Meeting, but fundamentally will be about relations between people and an understanding of community.

We pursued this question in small groups, recognising the great difference in size and character of our Meetings and the differences between England and Scotland. We recognised the power of shared silence as a foundation for our witness.

We thank Paul for sharing his enthusiasm and energy.

Min. 15 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to East Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this GM, and look forward to meeting again in Aberdeen on 16/17 November when our speakers will be Suzanne Ismail of QPSW Economic Justice group and Val Brown of Christian Aid, Glasgow.

Robin Waterston
Clerk