

Local Development Worker's Report 2024

Supporting Quaker Communities Across Scotland

Hello Friends,

I am Zoe Prosser and I am the Local Development Worker for Quakers in Scotland. As Local Development worker I support Quaker communities across Scotland. This role is managed and paid for by Britain Yearly Meeting (the central body for Quakers in Britain).

I am the first Local Development worker for Quakers in Scotland. As such I work alongside Quaker communities, supporting their work, enabling them to share their wisdom and helping them to overcome any blocks or conflicts that they might face. All of my work within this role is rooted in worship and Quaker spiritual practice.

It is important that I ensure that my work is both welcome and responsive to the needs of Scottish Quakers. I also appreciate guidance as to how to prioritise requests for support.

For the past two years Quakers in Scotland have helped me with this, by suggesting what they feel I should prioritise for the year ahead. I hope that you will do the same this year.



My gloriously sunny visit to Pluscarden Abbey for North Scotland residential area meeting

Reflecting on Priorities for 2024

In 2023, General Meeting for Scotland suggested that I prioritize the following areas of work:

- **Expanding role-holder networks**
- **Supporting Quaker community building - locally, for families, and for everyone**
- **Pointing the way to information about available resources and materials**
- **Supporting the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to work for change**

Below, I share the progress made in each of these areas throughout 2024. For more information you could also review my quarterly newsletters, which are available at

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>.

Expanding role-holder networks

I have continued to develop and support network meetings for:

- Elders and Pastoral Care Friends (bi-monthly)
- Nominations Friends (quarterly)

This year, I also initiated new network meetings for:

- Clerks of Local Meetings (bi-monthly)
- Trustees of all Quaker Area Meetings and Dundee Property Trust (bi-monthly)

Impact of Network Meetings

These networks have fostered:

- **Collaboration:** Sharing experiences and advice has helped role-holders across Scotland learn from each other. For example, the Elders and Pastoral Care network benefited from hearing about Central Edinburgh Meeting's efforts in revitalising spiritual nurture.
- **Change:** Practical changes in meeting practices have emerged from these discussions.
- **Identification of Gaps:** We have collectively identified areas where we need more understanding or resources, leading to more targeted support.
- **Community Building:** Friendships have deepened across Scotland as we work together.
- **God and Quaker Processes:** We are able to support one another to root our work in the spiritual side of our Quakerism, avoiding our work becoming process or outcomes led (for example, reminding ourselves of the need for worship and discernment within our nominations meetings).

“You go to a lot of time and trouble to lead the meetings. You do them very well. Interesting and informative. I learn a great deal.”

– Friend attending the Elders and Pastoral Care Meetings

Looking Ahead

In 2025, I plan to maintain and support the existing networks rather than expanding further. I need to be sure that we have the best format for the clerks and trustees networks and that they are working well before I consider expanding further.

Supporting Quaker community building - locally, for families, and for everyone

Workshops and Community Initiatives

One of the highlights of my year has been the further development of a **Gifts Workshop**. This session, which can be held after a meeting, provides an opportunity for Friends to discover and celebrate their unique gifts in a supportive environment.

Additionally, I have supported a local meeting in launching an experimental series of **All-Age Worship and Children's Meetings**. I am very excited about these, and I will use the learning from this experience to support other meetings with doing the same work.

Celebrating Existing Community Strengths

We should recognise that Friends in Scotland are very good at community building without my help. Events like the Children and Families weekend and the Wiston Weekend builds a sense of community across the country. In some cases I have participated in these events as a joyful attendee, rather than in a support role, which speaks to the existing strengths of our community.

Pointing the way to information about available resources and materials, including videos and non-traditional resources, to help Quaker Meetings and role-holders identify what they need.

Pointing the Way to Learning and Growth

A key part of my role is connecting Quaker Meetings and role-holders with the resources they need. This has been particularly evident in my comprehensive network meeting notes and quarterly newsletters, where I frequently share useful materials, including videos, articles, and non-traditional resources.

Addressing Gaps in Knowledge

This year, alongside General Meeting for Scotland's Safeguarding Coordinator, we developed a workshop for Meetings to run themselves, offering a simple guide to safeguarding. This resource should be available by the end of the year (although we hope it will be sooner).

Supporting the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to work for change

Working for Change Together

I have valued the opportunity to support the work of the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group and their community subgroup. It is important to ensure that my role is clear; while I support the work of the group, I am not an appointed member and so I make sure to work within appropriate boundaries.

Achievements

I am particularly proud of helping to establish the community subgroup and distributing their questionnaire, which has been instrumental in gathering feedback from Friends across Scotland.

Additional Work and Personal Growth

Learning and Development

Beyond the core priorities, I have focused on learning more about reconciliation, conflict resolution, and how we can disagree well together. This journey has taken me to various inspiring places, including Corrymeela in Northern Ireland, Coventry Cathedral, and St Ethelburga's in London, where I engaged with Christian peacemakers and faith leaders through the reconciliation pilgrimage Journey of Hope.

This learning has not been abstract; I've applied it in discussions and support requests from Friends who are navigating disagreements within their meetings.

Other Contributions

- Supported Friends and role holders across all area meetings in Scotland.
 - Clerked two threshing meetings.
 - Co-developed and facilitated sessions on Quakers and Class for Woodbrooke, in collaboration with colleagues from the Faith in Action team.
 - Had the joyful experience of visiting Quaker meetings on the Scottish mainland, as well as Shetland and Orkney!
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Looking Forward to 2025

This year has been incredibly rewarding and I am so grateful to Friends in Scotland for your continuing support, friendship and enthusiasm. I am excited about what we will achieve together in 2025.

Thank you again. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

In Friendship and Service,

Zoe Prosser

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My (and my family's) visit to Shetland Local Meeting