

SESAME

Number 231: September 2020

AM on 2 September by Zoom / AM dates for 2021/NFPB/BDRC Update / Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty (*the latest accessions*) / 'The Seeker' (*a poem*) / Black Lives Matter / AM June Minutes / 'Just Transition' (*discussion notes*) /



Blake Paterson at the Kelpies – see pages 13-14 & 19.

Published by South East Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Material for the next issue should be sent to Alan Frith (email: ar.frith@btinternet.com) or by post to 10, East Parkside, Edinburgh EH16 5XJ, to be received at the latest by **Tuesday 17 November**. The Editors reserve the right to condense articles. If possible, please submit articles by email sending as an attachment *and* in the body of the email. An email version of *Sesame* is available in PDF format. Contact the Editor.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of Saturday 27 June 2020
3. Matters arising from the minutes
 1. *Yearly Meeting Gathering* (2020/06/03.2 refers)
 2. *Update on 7 Victoria Terrace* (2020/06/03.3 refers)
 3. *Black Lives Matter* (2020/06/04.2 refers)
4. Receipt of Annual Report from Trustees, and Accounts for 2019
5. Membership matters
6. Appointments
7. Proposed dates and venues of Area Meetings in 2021 [*see opposite*]
8. News from local meetings
9. Reports
10. Correspondence
11. Conferences & events
12. Closing minute

Alastair Cameron
AM Clerk

CORRECTION – It was mistakenly stated in the last *Sesame* that the online session to take the place of Yearly Meeting 2020 would be happening in September. The correct date is **Sunday 15 November**. Further details will be given in due course at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym>.

PROPOSED DATES FOR AREA MEETING IN 2021

Based on 2020 dates: currently under consultation with relevant Local Meetings

Monday 18 January, 7.00 pm, 7 Victoria Terrace

Saturday 20 March, all-age, all day, [hosted by East Lothian LM]

Tuesday 11 May, 7.00 pm, 7 Victoria Terrace

Saturday 26 June, all-age, all day, [hosted by South Edinburgh LM]

Wednesday 8 September, 7.00 pm, 7 Victoria Terrace

Saturday 27 November, all-age, all day, [hosted by Central Edinburgh LM]

Area Meeting Nominations

Before lockdown, Nominations Committee had contracted to members mainly based in Edinburgh, Portobello and Musselburgh because there was hesitation in requiring people to come from Central Fife, Kelso and Polmont for meetings. Thanks to Zoom, we are now hoping to be a fully representative committee with the additional knowledge of the skills and experience in those more distant meetings.

In addition to committee members from Central Fife and Kelso, we are looking for an Area Meeting Assistant Clerk, an Assistant Editor of *Sesame*, and a representative for Quaker Life Representative Council. I can give more details of what these positions entail to anyone who asks.

Rachel Frith

[Contact details in the Book of Members]

“It is hard to keep joyful”

Around thirty Friends participated in a meeting by Zoom on Saturday 22 August, organised by the Northern Friends Peace Board to take the place of an event scheduled to have happened at Yearly Meeting Gathering. The majority were present or former Board members, but there were a few others, interested to hear about its work in (to quote from the remit given it in 1913) ‘*the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth*’.

Most of the time, however, was given over to an extended version of the Members’ Forum which is a feature of the regular meetings, a sharing of what Friends are doing locally; and, on this occasion, a time to discuss responses to

our strange times. I felt that Ruth Johnston, of Dunblane Local Meeting, whose words I have borrowed as my title, spoke for many. One Friend had been affected personally by the pandemic, his wife (now fortunately recovered) having been hospitalised with COVID-19 and sepsis. Till Geiger, the Board member who convened our small group, is from Disley LM in East Cheshire, where a Black Lives Matter banner outside the meeting house had been set on fire. There was, predictably, dismay and anger expressed about the failings of governments in Washington and Westminster.

Nevertheless, and despite the restrictions of lockdown, work for peace has continued: we heard about commemorations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, BLM demonstrations, Extinction Rebellion actions, and work with refugees. Several participants are involved in PECAN [the 'Peace Education Campaigning and Networking' subcommittee of QPSW] and spoke about that. A number of Friends expressed concern at the slick recruitment advertisements for the armed forces ("Born in Blyth, Made in the Royal Navy", and the like), which target both young men and women, giving a glamorized view of skills-acquisition, comradeship and exotic travel as the essence of military life.

For several years the Board has had a project on 'Rethinking Security', and Philip Austin, the NFPB co-ordinator, provided an update on this when we came back together from our groups. A new group, Secure Scotland, was formed following a conference in April last year, and Janet Fenton gave us details; an article by her, written ahead of January's Holyrood debate initiated by Emma Harper MSP, on Women Peace and Security, can be read at: <https://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2020/01/08/secure-scotland-towards-peace/>

Geoff Tansey, a Board member formerly at the Quaker UN Office in Geneva and now an honorary teaching fellow at Lancaster University, has a particular interest in sustainable food systems. He drew our attention to an April post on his blog, 'It's time to turn swords into ploughshares, bombs into bread and soldiers into good Samaritans', accessible online at: <https://geofftansey.wordpress.com/2020/04/23/its-time-to-turn-swords-into-ploughshares-bombs-into-bread-and-soldiers-into-good-samaritans/> and to a talk by Paul Rogers of the School of Peace Studies at Bradford (at <http://www.foodsystemsacademy.org.uk/videos/paul-rogers.html>): 'The crucial century 1945-2045: Transforming food systems in a global context'.

Tracey Martin from Leeds is leading a Woodbrooke course of four webinars on *Living the Peace Testimony*, in September/October. It looks in turn at how Friends have sought in the past to stop war and the issues we need to focus on today, at conscientious objection, at peace in society, and finally at the interaction of peacemaking with concerns over climate change and social injustice. Further details are on the Woodbrooke website at: <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/item/living-the-peace-testimony/>.

The Northern Friends Peace Board is next due to meet on 7 November – in Preston, if meetings in person are by then a possibility.

Book of Discipline Revision Committee August 2020 update:

Working with the 'Dream Team'

Our last full committee meeting was at the end of April. It was our first by Zoom, and therefore shorter than our usual all-weekend meetings. During it, four sub-groups were set up, including the one I'm co-convening with Jess Hubbard-Bailey, *Engaging with Friends*.

The other three groups are working on specific topics: identifying where Church Government is (and is not) in *Q.F.&P.* and starting work on the chapters on Eldership & Oversight and Marriage. All four sub-groups will report back to our next committee meeting in October.

Regular zooms with the clerking team and the convenors of the sub-groups enable us to check in with each other and report progress *etc.* Our most recent Zoom meeting highlighted people's widely-differing responses both to the work and to the whole lockdown situation. Some Friends' personal circumstances meant they had been unable to give much time to their sub-group's work, while others found isolation, and working by themselves on their writing, very difficult. One of the positive but unexpected outcomes of working in the sub-groups is that the convenors were able to keep an eye on the others in their group and, when necessary, offer help and support. Another more obvious outcome was not only hearing how the other groups were getting on but also being inspired about one's own work by telling others about it and hearing their reactions.

Our group had a brief and a timetable somewhat different from the other three. Our initial thought was to try to run something virtual during the week that Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG) would have been held, while also working out how to make best use of the rapid expansion of the use of Zoom among Friends to offer virtual sessions to LMs, AMs and other groups; either stand-alone or as part of LM, AM, *etc.*

Following an approach by Rosie Carnall, one of the co-clerks, to Simon Best, Head of Learning at Woodbrooke, our plans changed dramatically. Jess and I zoomed with Rosie and Simon, and it was agreed that, with help and support from Woodbrooke, we would offer four online sessions based on those we had planned to offer at YMG, inviting Friends to join us in *prayerfully, joyfully, creatively, and boldly revising Quaker Faith & Practice*.

Woodbrooke offered us technical support during the sessions and advertising through their usual channels. We approached those committee members who had offered to facilitate the Special Interest Groups at YMG to see if they'd be happy to facilitate a Zoom session, and worked on the content, expanding what would have been a one-hour session into a ninety-minute one and making best use of the fact that we would now be meeting virtually.

A set of slides was produced, outlining the 'who, what, when, why, where, and how' of the committee and its work, to give each facilitator a basis for the beginning of their session. These were 'road-tested' by one of our group at her AM, where she had been invited to speak about the committee and its work: her feedback on this was very valuable, both as to the slides and the content of the session.

Much discussion, both by email and by regular zooms, fed into the preparation of a 'lesson plan' outline guide to how the sessions would run (introduction, discussion in small groups, Q&A session), as well as the order and dates/times of the sessions, and how they fitted into the rest of Woodbrooke's offerings over the summer.

At the same time, we began discussing the possibility of having an electronic version of what had been planned as a physical book: *Our Book – Bath 2020*, to which we would have invited Friends at YMG to contribute drawings, writings and/or recordings of their thoughts about how they would like their new Book to be. Anya, our teenage member, spent a lot of time researching possible websites and eventually advised us that padlet would be our best option, as it would permit moderation of contributions before they were posted. The title *Open to New Light* was agreed. (www.padlet.com/bdrc/opentonewlight if you want to have a look!)

We wrote the text for the web page and discussed how to make the project known to Friends; Woodbrooke would not be advertising this for us. We had to ensure that using the padlet site, which is based in the US, was approved by Friends House: confidentiality / data protection issues were a potential drawback, as US regulations are not as stringent as European ones. We also needed to set up arrangements for contributions to be submitted by email or letter for those Friends who didn't want to post directly on to the site. (opentonewlight@quaker.org.uk or write to BDRC/Open to New Light, at Friends House)

Once padlet had been approved, Anya worked very hard to set up *Open to New Light* (it looks fantastic!) and we set about the work of making its presence more widely known. The facilitators of the four Woodbrooke sessions would mention it, but this would only reach the participants. A press release was sent to the news desk of *The Friend* and resulted in a news item in the 7 August issue. We also got an advertisement into the issues of 7 and 14 August, and a mention in *Quake!*

Both the Woodbrooke sessions and *Open to New Light* have been posted on our various social media channels by members of the committee's Communications team – one of my contributions to *Open to New Light* has appeared on Instagram! We also ensured that the rest of the committee is kept up to date with our work, invited them to take part in the online sessions and to contribute to *Open to New Light*, and asked them to spread the word by all the means at their disposal.

Dora Czibik at Friends House has been supporting our sub-group's work in the absence of our secretary Michael Booth, still on furlough. With our agreement, she circulated the news of our work to other BYM committees, and this resulted in an invitation from Jude Acton, Children & Young People's Officer, to run sessions at the virtual Yearly Meeting for young people (aged 11-17). Anya, Sally, and Rosie gladly agreed: the sessions took place on 3 August, and I'm eagerly awaiting finding out how they got on: what they did there could be adapted for use with Friends of all ages.

I had thought that once the Woodbrooke sessions began my work would mostly be over, and I could have a rest while the younger members of the sub-group took over all the whizzy IT stuff. Not so! Emails continue to fly through the æther in a glorious tangle of different threads, and I've had to spend hours at my PC sorting them into subjects and chronological order, to ensure that nothing gets missed, everything is followed up, and I feel I know what's going on!

Three of the Woodbrooke sessions will have taken place by the time you read this (28 July, 11 & 25 August); one (on 8 September) is to come. So far they have been well-received. The first session was a sellout (60 people), and numbers were increased for subsequent ones. Many people have booked for all four – an interesting mixture of well-seasoned Friends and people new to the revision process. We will be looking at Friends' response to both the Woodbrooke sessions and *Open to New Light*, to see what recommendations for the future we should bring to our October committee meeting, including inviting interested Quaker groups to contact us if they would like us to provide similar information and discussion sessions, either by Zoom or, where possible, in person.

It's been a lot of work, but it's been a joy to be in the company of such loving and inspiring women – regular zooms have not only progressed our work, but kept us all connected and inspired to do the work. At our first meeting in April, one of our members jokingly called us the *Dream Team* – I don't think she knew how prophetic that was!

Mary Woodward

Nan Stewart

Having seen her and her daughter Sheila at a Zoom meeting for worship the previous Sunday, it was a shock to hear in July that Nan, the oldest member of our Area Meeting, had died. She was 101. Before moving as a widow to North Berwick, and East Lothian LM, she, and her husband Alf (who died in 2005) had been active members of St Andrews meeting since the mid-70s, and, before that, of Dundee meeting. *The Guardian* carried an obituary by Gregor, her youngest son, which can be read online at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/aug/02/annie-stewart-obituary>

Alan Frith

Seventy-five Years On

On 6 August, three states marked the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima by ratifying the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This took to 43 the number of accession states; 50 is the threshold required to bring into force the accord which outlaws nuclear arms and establishes a legal framework for their abolition.

Ireland, one of the chief proponents of the treaty when it was negotiated in 2017, as previously of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968) which the new one reinforces, legislated to accede to it last year. Simon Coveney, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, wrote in the *Irish Times*:

I am proud that Ireland today ratifies the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons ... It honours the memory of the victims of nuclear weapons and the key role played by survivors in providing living testimony and calling on us as successor generations to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Nigeria, with a population of 206 million, is now the largest nation to have ratified, and the fourth African country after Namibia, Lesotho, and Botswana. The President, Muhammadu Buhari, has urged all nations to follow suit without delay; Nigeria is pledged to “continue to engage other nations” on the need for it, as “an important global instrument for the promotion of international disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation”, calling its negotiation in 2017 “an epic accomplishment”, especially in view of the “minimal progress” made in recent years towards disarmament.

Niue – a self-governing state in the Western Pacific, though not a UN member – has followed Palau, New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, Kiribati, and Fiji in acceding to the treaty. More than 300 nuclear test explosions were conducted in the Pacific between 1946 and 1996, with devastating long-term health and environmental effects, as the Premier, Dalton Tagelagi, noted in a statement marking ratification. He said the “catastrophic impacts” of nuclear testing in the region are still being felt today, and urged more states to “join us in this united commitment to enter this treaty into force in the near future and eliminate nuclear weapons”.

Three days later, on the anniversary of the Nagasaki atomic bomb, **Saint Kitts & Nevis** also ratified the treaty. Mark Brantley, the minister of foreign affairs, said: “The bombing of Nagasaki was the apogee of human cruelty and inhumanity. As a small nation committed to global peace, Saint Kitts Nevis can see no useful purpose for nuclear armaments in today’s world. May all nations work towards peace and mutual respect for all mankind.”

Saint Kitts and Nevis is the eighth member of the Caribbean Community to ratify the nuclear weapon ban treaty, following Guyana, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Dominica, Antigua & Barbuda, and Belize. Its ratification helps strengthen the global norm against the worst weapons of mass destruction.

Meanwhile ...

After it had inadvertently been revealed in Washington in February that the UK government, without having consulted Parliament, was lobbying in support of the development by the Americans of a new Trident warhead known as W93, a letter came to light in the week before the Hiroshima anniversary which, according to *The Guardian*, “casts further doubt on the genuine independence of the UK deterrent ... and the commitment of both countries to disarmament”¹.

The Trump administration has withdrawn the United States from three nuclear accords; the New START treaty of 2010, due to expire next February, is the last major bilateral arms control agreement still in force. Ending the legal curbs on increasing its stockpile has accompanied higher military spending: the total cost the US nuclear modernisation programme is expected to exceed a trillion dollars (\$1,000,000,000,000). It is hard to reconcile such expansion with the USA’s commitment under Article 6 of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to take steps to disarm. The same undertaking was given by the other nuclear-weapon states – Russia (then the USSR) China, France, and, of course, the UK – as encouragement to the other states not to acquire their own weapons of mass destruction, and so the UK too can be seen as being in bad faith. The warheads currently deployed on British submarines, derived from the American W76, are six times as powerful as the Hiroshima bomb; the W93 surpasses the previous billion-dollar upgrade, the W88. (If produced, the US Navy will deploy W93 missiles as well as, rather than instead of, W76 and W88 missiles.)

Monica Montgomery, Program Assistant for Nuclear Disarmament and Pentagon Spending at the Friends Committee on National Legislation², wrote about the proposed development of W93 in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*; the article is available here:

<https://thebulletin.org/2020/03/proud-to-be-an-american-what-an-american-admiral-forgets-about-nuclear-war/>

On behalf of British Friends, Meeting for Sufferings issued ‘An Appeal to all men and women’ in 1955, after it had been announced that the UK was to develop hydrogen bombs. Its concluding sentence still speaks for us:

To rely on the possession of nuclear weapons as a deterrent is faithless; to use them is a sin.

[in *Quaker Faith & Practice*, 24:41]

Editor

1. See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/01/uk-trident-missile-warhead-w93-us-lobby>

2. The FCNL, established in 1943 by 15 of the Yearly Meetings in the US, lobbies legislators and policy-makers on Friends’ behalf.

A Minor Poet of the Eighteenth Century

Matthew Green (1696-1737) is one of the four Minor Poets of the 18th Century in the 1930 Everyman collection of that title, edited by Hugh l'Anson Fausset. According to Cousin's Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature, he "appears to have been a quiet, inoffensive person, an entertaining companion, and a Quaker". Despite its being unpublished in his lifetime, he was famous for his long poem The Spleen, on depression and its prevention and cure; Alexander Pope admired it, while Thomas Gray praised its "profusion of wit". He was not a professional literary man, but worked as a customs officer.

THE SEEKER

When I first came to London, I rambled about
 From sermon to sermon, took a slice and went out.
 Then on me, in divinity bachelor, tried
 Many priests, to obtrude a Levitical bride;
 And urging their various opinions, intended
 To make me wed systems, which they recommended.

Said a lech'rous old friar skulking near Lincoln's-Inn,
 (Whose trade's to absolve, but whose pastime's to sin;
 Who, spider-like, seizes weak Protestant flies,
 Which hung in his sophistry cobweb he spies;)
 "Ah! pity your soul, for, without our church pale¹,
 If you happen to die, to be damn'd you can't fail;
 The Bible you boast, is a wild revelation:
 Hear a church that can't err if you hope for salvation!"

Said a formal non-con², (whose rich stock of grace
 Lies forward exposed in shop-window of face,)
 "Ah! pity your soul: come be of our sect:
 For then you are safe, and may plead you're elect.
 As it stands in the Acts, we can prove ourselves saints,
 Being Christ's little flock everywhere spoke against."

Said a jolly church parson, (devoted to ease
 While penal law dragons guard his golden fleece,)
 "If you pity your soul, I pray listen to neither;
 The first is in error, the last a deceiver:
 That ours is the true church, the sense of our tribe is,
 And surely *in medio tuttissimus ibis.*"³

Said a yea and nay Friend with a stiff hat and band,
 (Who while he talked gravely would hold forth his hand,)
 "Dominion and wealth are the aim of all three,
 Though about ways and means they may all disagree;
 Then pr'ythee be wise, go the quakers' by-way,
 'Tis plain, without turnpikes, so nothing to pay."

1. Jurisdiction 2. Nonconformist 3. "You will go most safely by the middle course"

Black Lives Matter: Quaker Study Groups

On Midsummer Day 2020, South Edinburgh Local Meeting identified a concern to learn more about our implicit role in systemic injustice – especially that experienced by people of colour here and across the world. This concern was adopted by South East Scotland Area Meeting on 27 June 2020.

Friends and Attenders were invited to express interest in joining a group and 22 have so far done so. Four “Best Times” have emerged as preferred:

- A Mondays: 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm
- B Thursdays: 6.00 pm to 7.30 pm *OR* 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm
- C Fridays: 10.30 am to 12 noon
- D Fridays: 6.00 pm to 7.30 pm *OR* 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm

Additional Expressions of Interest are now invited from others who would now like to join one such group – probably meeting once a month between September to December. Sessions may be 90 minutes or 2 hours, to be decided by the group members, who will also determine which short video/book/articles might be discussed initially.

The presumption is that we will start with the book *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race* by British writer Reni Eddo-Lodge; the expanded paperback edition was published by Bloomsbury in 2018, ISBN 978-1-4088-7058-7 (or, as an ebook, ISBN 9878-1-4088-7057-0).

It is planned to keep groups smaller than eight.

Please register your Expression of Interest via this link:

<https://bit.ly/SESAMBLM>

David Somervell

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 27 June 2020
by remote videoconferencing**

2020/06/01 Worship and introductions

During worship, we have heard a reading from the Jewish tradition, a reading before *Kaddish*. It reminds us that in the face of death we should live our lives fully, seeking to be close to the source of all life. We have heard read the names of those who have died since our last Area Meeting.

We have ensured those present know each other's names and local meetings. The attendance will be recorded in the concluding minute.

We appoint [*two Friends*] to serve as Elders for this meeting.

[The full minutes are included in both the print edition of Sesame, and in the PDF emailed to Members and Attenders on the circulation list, but are redacted in this publicly available version. – Editor]

[*Redacted*]

2020/06/08 Closing minute

54 Friends (46 members, seven attenders and one visitor) have been at all or part of this meeting. We thank David Somervell (South Edinburgh) for assisting in planning the meeting, and Kate Whitaker of Friends of the Earth Scotland for her contribution to our discussion.

Local meeting attendance is indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 21	Central Fife 3	East Lothian 5	Kelso 2	Penicuik 1
Polmont 6	Portobello & Musselburgh 6	South Edinburgh 7	Tweeddale 2	<i>Visitor</i> 1

We next meet on Wednesday 2 September 2020, by Zoom at 7.00 pm. It may be possible to have a small number of participants meeting together at 7 Victoria Terrace [but see page 2].

(Signed)
Alastair Cameron
Clerk
Cath Dyer
Assistant Clerk



SAY THEIR NAMES: Stephen Lawrence; Christopher Alder; Jimmy Mubenga; Smiley Culture; Mark Duggan; Sheku Bayoh; Sarah Reed; Edson Da Costa; Rashan Charles; Nuno Cardoso; Julian Cole; Shukri Yahye-Abdi; Belly Mujinga – questionable deaths, 1993-2020. (Julian Cole is not dead, but remains in a vegetative state since a violent arrest in 2013 for which three police officers were dismissed by Bedfordshire Police and a fourth reprimanded.)

Discussion Notes from Area Meeting

Discussion at Area Meeting of the 'Just and Green Transition' that is looked for after the COVID-19 crisis took place in small groups – Zoom 'breakout rooms'. Each took as its topic a single one of the five 'areas of focus' identified to the First Minister in the letter from representatives of civic Scotland. Groups were asked to identify key demands (termed, more politely, 'asks'); to consider their own responses to the asks; and then, what might we do to progress them. Each group took flip-chart notes, reproduced here with minimal editing (the expansion of some abbreviations). Editor

Breakout Room 1: Public Services

- Provide essential **public services** for people, not profit:
- Expand public ownership of public services and boost investment, incl in social care,
- Strengthen the NHS and cradle-to-grave education, and
- Create zero-carbon social & cooperative housing instead of buy-to-let.

Q. 1 Initial responses to these asks:

- (Under)funding: Libraries are social service, fortunately have not been cut in East Lothian, but always aware of threat. Scotland is bad, but could be worse (in Social Services). But it's not just about money - organising in a different way, which involves the community could help.
- Frustration: things are going back. Lack of public loos affects mobility.
- Equality of conditions
- Housing: wealth inequality, affects housing. Low rents: quality of housing.
- Quality of public services – they *can* be good: Vienna public housing, Lothian Buses.

Q.2 What could we do to progress these asks?

- Change the narrative about public services and taxation being a burden.
- Use "community" when we talk about services - national services are just the community scaled up.
- Social & health care: we need to pay more for it as a society, paying workers better and providing a better quality of care.
- Social & health care should be not for profit – it should be brought into the public sector (or perhaps 3rd sector).
- We object to companies who own care homes avoiding taxes or profiteering.
- Recognising the importance of how services / issues interact with each other.
- We should have as much reverence for work of councils in social care & housing.
- Recognise that health is not just a product of the NHS, but also caused by other things such as housing, inequality & education

Breakout Room 2: Redistributing Wealth

- Protect the marginalised & those on low incomes by **re-distributing wealth**.
- Provide adequate incomes for all instead of bailouts for shareholders,
- Significantly raise taxes on the wealthy,
- Ensure all public workers receive at least the real Living Wage, and
- Strengthen health, safety and workers' rights, incl access to flexible home working.
- Investigate and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and social distancing on women, children and young people, disabled people, LGBTI people, people of colour, key workers, unpaid carers, private renters, and those on lower incomes.

Q. 1 Initial responses to these asks:

- These asks really speak to our Testimony on Equality
- Huge challenge for society facing massive recession – where to begin?
- Feeling overwhelmed and slightly despairing
- Wealth has a much wider meaning to me - not just economic wealth
- Reflect on how Joanna Macey's Three Levels - the Psycho-Social impact
- These are very human centred asks - remember also the wider voices / interbeing
- Can we demand Regeneration not simply Recovery?
- We are sitting on the cusp of Economic Crisis - beyond Health Crisis
- Painful time in our lifetime ... it will hit many very hard – it bothers me
- Yes to redistribution / but how to inspire people to accept this?
- Hard to hold the vision - need to fix the Tax System – Justice
- Needs clear devices to deliver these aspirations - needs prioritising
- Deeply pessimistic despairing about the popular moves to just continue as before
- How to move beyond the Rhetorical - support people's needs now
- Important to recognise the break line/the fragility of so many public services
- Lets try and do something practical
- Let's get the differential between lowest

Q.2 What could we do to progress these asks?

- Need to press for a Universal Basic Income to catch those impacted
 - Support Annie Miller's Basic Income – but must start with:
 - Don't just give up and do nothing
 - Needs a spiritual level and well as practical one
 - Quakers still not yet clear on whether UBI is a solution?
 - How can we engage with the Pilot projects for UBI?
 - How can we advocate for Tax Justice?
 - Redefine the meaning of wealth and call out exploitation
-

Breakout Room 3: Transform Society & Economy

- Provide new funds to **transform our society and economy** to meet Scotland's Fair Share of climate emissions cuts and greatly enhance biodiversity.
- Create and protect jobs in sustainable travel; renewable heat; affordable local food; and energy efficiency; with ambitious green employment opportunities for young people and support for retraining where whole industries are affected.
- Put measures in place to ensure all government programmes tackle inequality, public health and the just transition away from fossil fuels,
- Exclude rogue employers, tax avoiders, major polluters and arms manufacturers from bailouts.

[No comments under 'Initial responses']

Q.2 What could we do to progress these asks?

- Need to make sure tax is at appropriate level and collected fairly
 - Recalled the Lucas Aerospace Shop Stewards Plan for Arms Diversification
 - Local councils shouldn't outsource
 - Emphasis on cooperatives
 - Support for Scottish Land fund
 - ??? Fund available for supporting local projects
 - UBI
 - Promote positive messages about the benefits of green recovery.
 - We should write to MSPs and MPs. "If you do this green stuff, it will be good for you politically, as well as the rest of the world"
-

Breakout Room 4: Democracy and Human Rights

- Strengthen **democracy and human rights** during these crises.
- Withdraw new police powers, surveillance measures and restrictions on protest as soon as possible.
- Enable full scrutiny of planning and policy decisions.
- Create an independent Recovery Commission founded on participatory democracy to engage and empower communities, trade unions and civil society.
- Introduce fundamental human rights into Scots law so that safety nets are always in place for the most vulnerable.

Q.1 Initial responses to these asks:

- The new police powers surveillance measures and protest restrictions should be withdrawn as soon as possible. We need further clarifications on new restrictions.
- Peaceful protest should not be restricted even if we need to be mindful of Covid-19.
- We are concerned about the creeping effect of introducing permanent restrictions through the back door.

- Recovery from Covid should be independent from political parties but the process should not be allowed to stall in bureaucracy.
- People should have a say on who is appointed to the Commission. What power should such a Commission have?
- People should be able to learn from previous mistakes, especially relating to specific communities.
- People also need better data to allow informed decisions.
- Human rights should not be reduced by leaving the European Union.

Q.2 What could we do to progress these asks?

- Stage 1 - get ourselves far better informed.
 - Get in touch with our local Scottish MPs and ask them questions.
 - Remove the emergency police powers as soon as possible
 - Must be cross party and not party-political Recovery Commission
 - Need better data to make decisions
-

Breakout Room 5: Solidarity across Borders

- *Offer solidarity across borders by proactively supporting an international Coronavirus and Climate Emergency response that challenges the scapegoating of migrants, centres on the worst affected, bolsters global public health, development and environmental bodies, and ensures equitable access to COVID-19 treatment.*
- *Use UN climate talks in Glasgow to push for robust implementation of the Paris deal,*
- *Platform the voices of indigenous and frontline communities and advancing climate finance and global debt cancellation.*
- *Ensure coherence of domestic policy/global sustainable development outcomes.*

Q. 1 Initial responses to these asks:

- Know the facts, not just woolly-minded do-gooders.
- Swimming against the tide / Daunted
- International dimension
- Be in touch with those who disagree with us, so we can move together
- Moved from 'couldn't' to 'could'. When compelled, governments can make a huge difference e.g. debt cancellation, reluctance to rule-out

Q.2 What could we do to progress these asks?

- Challenge assertions without basis – particularly Boris Johnson's.
- Contact local MPs (Tommy Sheppard)
- Co-operation of the like-minded / Form connections where we can – form alliances.
- Green businesses will be a part of the answer
- Support the Scot Govt for further devolution of power re e.g. migration.
- Migrants and minorities disproportionately affected. ('purchaser of first resort' - Westminster for PPE). Political gain marring desire for equal and just recovery.

Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland

South East Scotland Area Meeting has nine 'Local Meetings' (formerly Preparative Meetings: worshiping groups which meet regularly and conduct some of their own business). During the COVID-19 emergency, six have begun meeting by Zoom. Friends are welcome at any of these; for login details, please contact the **named person** – details are in each case in the Book of Members – or centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk for Central Edinburgh. (The 'early bird' and midweek meetings which normally take place at the Edinburgh Meeting House are NOT being held during the emergency.)

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Time (Day, if not Sunday)</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Central Edinburgh <i>(All-age meeting on 1st Sunday in the month.)</i>	11.00 am	[centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk]
Central Fife <i>(Now meeting in person at The Old Kirk, Old Kirk Wynd, Kirkcaldy K1 1EH on every Sunday EXCEPT the 3rd in the month; access by Zoom is still available.)</i>	10.30 am	Laurie Naumann
East Lothian <i>(Sunday meetings in person and possible venues are being explored)</i>	7.30 pm (Wednesdays)	Di Simcock
Penicuik <i>(1st Sunday in the month ONLY, and still only by Zoom.)</i>	11.00 am	Mark Hutcheson
Polmont <i>(Zoom Meeting preceded by Children's Mtg, 10.00-10.30. Also Weds., 8.00 pm)</i>	10.45 am	Mariot Dallas
Portobello & Musselburgh <i>(It is hoped to start meeting in person soon; contact Mary Jane Elton (clerk) or Fiona Paterson (asst clerk) for up-to-date information. Zoom will no longer be available.)</i>	11.00 am	Mary Jane Elton
South Edinburgh <i>(Weekly as usual, by Zoom only for the moment.)</i>	10.30 am	David Somervell
Kelso Meeting House is still closed, but contact Marianne Butler for updates; for information on Tweeddale LM, contact Anna Lawrence .		

The Quaker belief contacts for the University of Edinburgh, and also for Heriot-Watt, Edinburgh Napier and Queen Margaret universities, are Rachel Howell and Bridget Holtom; their contact details are in the Book of Members, and soon, we hope, on the Chaplaincy website.

Distribution of Sesame and Scottish Friends Newsletter

The current practice is to distribute one copy of *Sesame* and the *Scottish Friends Newsletter* to every Member and Attender household. Contributions to the costs of *Sesame* are always warmly welcomed by the Area Meeting Treasurer. An email version of *Sesame* is more ecological and is free; if you would prefer to receive it this way, or to change the address to which a paper copy is sent, or if you would like to get one by post and currently do not, please contact the Editor. A large print version is also available on request. Published by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, South East Scotland Area Meeting, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. Scottish Charity No. SC019165. This issue has been produced at 7 Victoria Terrace, and we thank the managers and Majk Stokes for their co-operation.