

SESAME

Number 257: November 2024

Area Meeting, 23 November/Seasonal arrangements/Treasurer Team *update*/Christian Aid *news & events*/Wiston Lodge/General M^{ts}, *Inverness & Dundee*/NFPB/Days of Action/M^{ts} for Sufferings, *June & October*/Life in the West Bank/EIFA/Book review: *Philip Pullman's apocryphal gospel*/Future of British Quakerism: *conference report, minute* etc/Woodbrooke courses/BDRC/Glen-thorne 2025/Ada Salter: *a biography*/Prison Abolition: *a booklet*/Climate Justice *news*/Ecocide/Spiritual Roots of Quaker Testimony – *Woodbrooke event*/Statement of Concern: *banks & the Climate Crisis*/AM September Minutes/*&c.*

I am a peace lover
I speak to my family calmly.
I am a peace lover
I teach my children well.
I am a peace lover
I respond steadily
To heated arguments.
I am a peace lover
I can apologise
Even when I am not wrong.
I am a peace lover
I try to mediate
When trouble arises.
I am a peace lover.

Peter, 11

A poem from Zimbabwe – see page 3.

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

The next Area Meeting will be on Saturday 23 November 2024, at 2.00 pm at Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello EH15 2BP, and online.

Refreshments will be available from 1.30; all-age worship will start at 2.00. There will be tea and home baking at the end of the meeting, expected to be around 5.00 pm; and – weather permitting – a bonfire on Portobello beach (a short walk from the venue) until around 7.00.

All are welcome; there will be a children's session during our business, centring on darkness and light. We will play games and build lanterns and torches. There will be marshmallows, sticks and sparklers at the bonfire.

Item 3 will present the spiritual review recently carried out by Portobello & Musselburgh LM; there will be small group discussion in the room and online. (The review is available at <https://tinyurl.com/3weptr6z>).

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of 18 September 2024
3. Presentation by Portobello & Musselburgh LM – *spiritual review*
4. Matters arising from previous meetings
 1. *Work that reconnects*
 2. *Appointment of manager, Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House [see page 4]*
 3. *Date of Area Meeting, November 2025*
 4. *Ecocide* [see page 39]
5. Decisions by between-meeting procedure
 1. *Christian Climate Action* [see page 41]
 2. *Appointment of visitors to applicants*
 3. *Michael Mears play*
 4. *Young Friends General Meeting in Edinburgh*
6. Membership matters
 1. *Reports on membership visits*
 2. *Transfers*
 3. *Death*
7. Quakers in Scotland – *possible models for the future*
8. Matters from local meetings
 1. *Polmont* [see page 15]

2. *Central Edinburgh – warm space at 7 Victoria Terrace* [see page 6]
3. *Kelso – Establishment of a worship group in Berwick-upon-Tweed*
9. Appointments: from Nominations Committee
10. Financial matters
 1. *Contribution to BYM funds*
 2. *John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust*
11. Reports and correspondence
 1. *Failte Edinburgh*
 2. *Wiston 2025: 5-7 September*
12. General Meeting matters – report [see pages 7-12]
13. Closing minute

I look forward to seeing you on the day.

Alastair Cameron
Clerk

Seasonal Arrangements

Central Edinburgh LM: It is hoped that there will be a meeting for worship on Zoom (at least; and possibly in person) on the morning of 25 December; but there will be **NO** Midweek Meeting at lunchtime on that day, nor on 1 January. Further details will be circulated nearer the time.

East Lothian LM, which usually meets on the last Sunday in the month, will meet on the **22 December** (with the children's meeting) and **NOT** 29 December.

South Edinburgh will hold a meeting for worship by **Zoom ONLY** at 10.30 am on 25 December. Sunday meetings are unchanged.

THE POEM ON PAGE 1 *won the prize in the first of the Peace Poem competitions organised by Cloud Maboudi and Accucilia Chitongo, the husband and wife recipients of the **Carnall Peace Award 2024**, for “spreading the work of peace through football and poetry” with young people in Zimbabwe. The award, made annually by Peace & Justice (this was the fourth), commemorates our Friends Geoffrey Carnall and Elisabeth Seale Carnall who in 1980 founded the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre, precursor of the present organisation. It was marked by an event on 28 September, at which Jane Carnall, the elder daughter of Geoffrey and Elisabeth, read this, and three other winning poems by children aged 12, 14 and 15. Those present at the event – some forty in person, and more online – also heard poems by Mario Relich, Jenni Daiches and Jim Aitken, as well as news of Peace & Justice projects: Bridgend Peace Garden (see Sesame 256), the recent Peace Camp at Camas on the Isle of Mull, and ‘51 Strangers’ – addressing the widespread problem of loneliness in modern society. (See <https://peaceandjustice.org.uk/projects/> for more on all these.)*

South East Scotland Area Meeting Treasurer Team

In view of the changes in the AM treasurer team on 1 October, we thought Friends might like to know who does what.

Jonathan Riddell is Treasurer (and an AM Trustee *ex officio*) using the email address sesamtreasurer@gmail.com;

Jacqueline Noltingk (Jackie) remains on the team with a new email address, jn.sesamtt@gmail.com; and

Philip Corrie-Hawes also remains on the team. His email address hasn't changed: pch.sesamtt@gmail.com.

Roles:

Jonathan will deal with 'headline' finances and will provide information for trustees; will have regular contact with our accountant, Heather Hartman, including over matters relating to payroll; will be involved with some premises matters (particularly Kelso, and as contact for our architect over the Quinquennial Reviews currently taking place); will run our bank accounts, and more.

He will also handle requests for bursary payments.

Jackie will support Jonathan where necessary and will continue to be the treasurer team representative on the Edinburgh Meeting House Management Committee. She will deal with queries from Central Edinburgh's treasurer, as she remains a signatory for the Local Meeting's account as well as for the Area Meeting's.

Philip is another a signatory for the Area Meeting's accounts and so will sign off on some payments Jonathan has set up. (All our payments have to be authorised by two people).

He will continue to be the main contact for most Local Meeting treasurers, and particularly for Polmont whose day-to-day financial transactions are now handled through the SESAM account. He will, as in the past, collect in the end-of-year returns from LMs.

Philip's term of office ends on 30 June 2025, and the Nominations Committee will be seeking a successor to him.

Ross Campbell is treasurer for the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust, and pays in monies for and keeps Jonathan and Jackie informed about charities being supported by Midweek Meeting. He will continue to deal with those after the end of his formal term on the treasurer team on 31 December.

SESAM Treasurer Team

New Managers at Edinburgh QMH, 7 Victoria Terrace

Sammi Searle and Andy Tucker (working as a job share) have been appointed to manage Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House, starting on 9 November.

Christian Aid – news and forthcoming events

DEC Middle East Humanitarian Appeal

As a member of the Disasters Emergency Committee, we'd like to thank everyone who has supported this appeal, launched on the 17 October.

Over £2 million has been raised in Scotland. This money will allow Christian Aid and the other DEC members responding in Gaza and Lebanon to continue to deliver life-saving work including distributing food, medical supplies and psychosocial support.

Prayers for Peace in the Middle East – Zoom Meeting

Join Christian Aid and our partners on 24 November as we continue to pray for peace in the Middle East. This will be the last Prayers for Peace event of 2024. We will be joined by Shirabe Yamada, Executive Director of Sunbula Fairtrade Crafts, a Palestinian non-profit organisation. Shirabe will talk about Sunbula and the effect of the war on producer groups in Gaza and the West Bank. Learn more and sign up at:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/prayers-for-peace>

Scottish Government funding for Christian Aid in Zimbabwe

We're grateful to the Scottish Government for a £175,000 grant from its Humanitarian Emergency Fund to support our partner the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, as they distribute food vouchers to communities struggling in the face of prolonged drought. Coupled with work to improve water access, income diversification and tackling gender-based violence, this support is a lifeline to the most vulnerable.

Christian Aid Carol Service 2024

Wednesday 11 December, 6.30 pm, New Town Church, Edinburgh EH2 2PA

With a theme of peace, this special service will include carols led by Siskin Green and Fischy music. Our keynote address will be delivered by hymn writer John Bell of the Iona Community. Plus, we'll be hearing from some of Christian Aid's partners in South Sudan and the Middle East.

To register your interest to attend in person (to help us with mince pie catering), or to receive a link to join us online, go to:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/events/christian-aid-carol-service-2024>

All are welcome: the more the merrier!

Prophetic Activist Bootcamp

Saturday 1 February, Augustine United Church, Edinburgh EH1 1EL

Christian Aid is running a 1-day introduction to the Prophetic Activist scheme, which is open to 18-30 year olds. It's completely free with lunch provided, and we can even help with travel expenses! Anyone interested can sign up here:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/prophetic-activist-bootcamp-sign>

Wiston Lodge Weekend: 13-15 September

WAKING UP with the dawn chorus, and careful not to disturb my room-mate, I crept to the showers, and then, dried and dressed, headed downstairs with knitting in hand. Children's voices murmured in the Lego room. I settled down and breathed. I was Home. Surrounded by nature and my new family of Quakers, on retreat at Wiston Lodge.

Joy, deep deep joy is my abiding memory of the connection I felt amongst Friends. From the first meal, on Friday night, I knew I was in for a treat. Deep conversations combined with delicious food and knowing I was going to have a weekend of being cooked for (with healthy fare) was bliss.

After the meal it was time to get to know names. A game of connections. We threw a ball of wool between us based on what we share in common. The children, in the middle of this web, laughing and joyous.

Wonderful activities were planned, options such as stomping up Tinto Hill – I believe no-one blew away, and all came back rosy-cheeked and smiling. A cacao ceremony; *Xiang Gong* exercises on the lawn; playing with the most gorgeous clay brought from a Friend's garden; a writing workshop, held by the leader with such open space for connections and creativity to occur; and the building of an absolutely epic model Quaker town. There was time spent outdoors in the woodland space with children returning, whistles in hands and mouths, sharing their happiness in music. And then a sending off ceremony returning the clay to mother earth on boats launched onto the pond. With some of the figures created, then speaking loudly to the children and asking to be launched with glee for a moment to fly before joining the rest, settling into the depths of the water.

Saturday evening we shared in deep connection around a campfire, children darting like fireflies, lighted shoes flashing, through the trees surrounding the circle, stories and poems and singing shared.

Sunday morning, separating to pack, with some returning to a deep connection over how we experience that spiritual essence shared between Atheist, Non Theistic through to Quakers of Faith.

Then into Meeting for Worship, joining together with the local meeting. We sat, gathered, children settled on the rug, reading in the centre of our worship, exactly as they had been at the very centre of my gathered experience through our whole weekend.

Tali Brown

Planning has already begun for Wiston 2025 – see Minute 2024/09/03.1, page 43.

Warm Space Initiative at Edinburgh Meeting House: January/February

*It is planned to repeat this in 2025 – please contact **Lynne Barty** for more information.*

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

Inverness: 21 September

On World Peace Day, 21 September, 40 people were in Inverness in person for General Meeting, and 48 more joined online, together with one visitor. During the opening worship, Friends in the room heard the bugle call 'FirstPeace' by Sally Beamish. Intended as a counterpart to 'The Last Post', familiar to most of us from its use in military commemoration ceremonies, it is hoped that 'FirstPeace' will become just as recognisable, and so may be, as Steve Chettle, who commissioned it, says, "a tool that can be used at peace vigils and rallies and to mark particular events such as International Holocaust Memorial Day, 27 January, and Remembrance Day, 11 November." You can listen to 'FirstPeace' at:

<https://www.arts-uk.com/peacebugle/downloads/recording/FirstPeace>

[%20sally_beamish_2024_bugle%20_call_player_caroline_guirr_peacebugle.org.mp3](#)

(Unfortunately for online participants at GM, the recording was inaudible because Zoom filtered it out as background noise!)

Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group

Our AM minute **2024/09/07** (see page 49) was read; and General Meeting minuted as follows:

We are grateful for this clarity and recognise that the process of change can involve distress. We wish to support each other through this. We also recognise the opportunity given us to evolve a better and more joyful structure for our continuing and much valued community of Friends in Scotland.

The GM minute continued (this is the full text of the remainder of GM minute **2024/09/08**):

There are three main issues involved currently in the process to which we return.

1. How local meetings would work together and relate to each other within a new single body (including how geographical 'boundaries' would be treated and how spiritual and pastoral care would operate).

The Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group, through its Community Sub-group, brings to us Paper B2 Possible patterns of relationship between meetings of Scottish Friends [see Sesame 256, pages 31-36] and Robert Rayner of the Sub-group has spoken to it. Area Meetings were sent this prior to this meeting with a request that Friends have opportunity to ask questions of, and make comments to, the members of the Sub-group from their Area Meeting. The paper builds on the responses of the extensive survey through a questionnaire made by the Sub-group (which can be found on the General Meeting for Scotland website). Robert has summarised this for us. Key words from the responses to the questionnaire that have come out that relate to what we want to see in maintaining our structures include 'community', 'joy' and 'cherished'. Our structures should relate to our understanding of Quaker discipline and right order.

The possible patterns/options listed are:

1. Maintaining the status quo.

2. *The 'Welsh model' - keeping AMs as they are within a single charity.*
3. *No intermediate level between local meetings and a Scotland-wide body.*
4. *A single area meeting for Scotland with a flexible and simpler intermediate levels.*

We are grateful to all Friends who have taken part in this process through the questionnaire. We are grateful to the Community Sub-group, for their careful work on what love requires of us, and Robert for his introduction. It will not be possible to determine all aspects of how we would work and live together in a single Scottish body in advance, as we evolve the answers as we progress. It seems clear to us, though, that some intermediary level of structure is required between Local Meetings and the Quakers in Scotland Meeting.

As we evolve our structures around a single charity, our hope is that a flexible system of working together between local meetings will be possible. Our sense is that of the options/possible patterns, number 4 reflects most what we need, and we ask the four Area Meetings for their guidance on this. We note that a reservation over potential concentration of 'power' in the single central body has been expressed. In particular, we need to assess what is necessary to be dealt with by an overall Scottish Quaker body, and what could be undertaken by groups of local meetings working together. A summary of how option 4 could work might make this easier to understand.

We ask the Co-ordinating group to work with our clerks to assess how we might support Area Meetings that are facing difficulty in maintaining themselves whilst we continue to work on the wider structural picture. In particular, we ask the clerks to work with Friends in East Scotland Area Meeting so we are enabled to support them over the coming year.

We ask the Co-ordinating group to give us a summary of the process so far and where we are in it for our next meeting, to help us assess more clearly what is happening.

We have a sense today of being energised by the opportunities before us and that we are going forward in trust and faith as a community.

We ask that the clerks and the Co-ordinating Group assess the need for a special General Meeting to be held towards the end of the year to facilitate the ongoing process appropriately.

2. Choosing the SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) model for the potential new Scottish Quaker charity.

Paper B3 Possible charitable structures summarises the options to us.

We agree that it is now appropriate for the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to proceed with seeking recognition as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and we ask them to do so.

We ask the four Area Meetings to each bring into General Meeting the name of one or two Friends to serve potentially as trustees of the SCIO, from whom we can appoint four founding trustees representing all of us. We ask our own GM Nominations Committee to work on names of clerk(s) and a treasurer of the SCIO for future consideration. The Co-ordinating group have produced guidance and a job description for a trustee.

3. Whether the draft Governing Document for a new charity is now serviceable as a working document.

Friends were asked last year to arise any issues or concerns on the draft Governing Document with the Co-ordinating Group. Amendments subsequently made are incorporated on the latest draft on the General Meeting for Scotland website. We agree to use the current draft as a working document in the process of establishing the new charity and ask the Co-ordinating Group to take this forward. Friends are asked to send any further comments or questions to the Coordinating Group.

We thank the Coordinating Group and its sub groups for their continued work on our behalf, and for the way they have responded to the enquiries and concerns raised.

The Co-ordinating Group continues to post occasional updates on QiS-CG progress at <https://quakerscotland.org/general-meeting/qis-news>

(This concluded the morning's business.)

Children and Young People

Three of the participants, Seth and Joel Hitchen and Elian Densham, told General Meeting about Shindig, which this summer for the first time had been held on the Isle of Cumbrae, at the Millport Field Studies Centre. A wide range of activities enhanced the sense of community engendered by the week, culminating in the joyful ceilidh.

Mary Troup, Children & Young People's Advocate Support, updated Friends on work with children and young people; her report, 'Growing our All-Age Family in our Quaker Community in Scotland', will be published in the *Scottish Friend*.

Appointments and Nominations

David Sterratt was appointed to serve a third triennium as Web Manager for the GM site, <https://www.quakerscotland.org/>; and **Lynne Barty** for a second triennium as our 'link person' to Scottish Faith Action for Refugees (SFAR). Both will serve 1/1/2025 – 31/12/2027. Among other appointments, **Jane Mitchell**, of West Scotland AM, was confirmed as having taken over (on 11/7/2024) the role with the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group of Peter Christy, whose death was noted in *Sesame* 255; "to serve until the process is through, or as determined by the General Meeting."

Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group (SQCJWG)

Mike Nellis presented the report written by himself and Elizabeth Allen evaluating the work of the Group, set up in 2021 to be a link between GM and a newly established Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network (see: <https://www.prisonersweek.org.uk/blog/scottish-quaker-community-justice-network>) which as an informal grouping of interested Friends had no standing to speak or act on behalf of Scottish Quakers. The Working Group's role has expanded over its three-year existence, to include advocacy to politicians, outreach to AMs, and work with the Scottish Prison Service chaplaincy ad-

visors and chaplains, the last of which – not envisaged, and arising opportunistically – has proved particularly valuable. The report made six recommendations to GM: chiefly, that the SQCJWG continue, with its membership enlarged from six to eight, its remit extended, and with a budget. To the Working Group and the Network, it made a further five recommendations, on co-ordinating their respective activities. The former were accepted, and the latter, passed on to the two bodies.

General Meeting noted the publication of *Quakers and Prison Abolition: A Conversation* [see page 35].

The Meeting also heard about plans for **Prisoners' Week** (17-24 November).

Local Development Worker – priorities for 2025

Since Local Development Workers are employed by Britain Yearly Meeting, setting their priorities is not a matter solely in the hands of Friends in the 'locality' where they work – although General Meeting does have a say in the process of setting them for our own LDW, **Zoe Prosser**, who reported on her work so far in 2024. This matter will be continued next time.

Britain Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

The clerk had attended YM Agenda Committee on 14 September; the paper he wrote on "what is moving in Scottish meetings and with Scottish Friends" is at <https://www.quakerscotland.org/general-meeting/documents> as 'GMS Report to Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee 2024'.

Correspondence and other business

The meeting heard about work undertaken on its behalf by the clerk, including the signing of various joint letters and statements.

Scottish Christian Forum and ACTS

Over several years, work has been going on to find a new structure for ecumenism in Scotland to replace ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland), the body established as part of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland in 1990, which unlike earlier bodies has included the Roman Catholics but has been felt to be unwieldy. Two documents were received: 'Proposal for the Scottish Christian Forum' and 'Scottish Christian Forum – Nature, Purpose and Aims': SCF is envisaged as a broader, low key and informal structure, and – unlike ACTS – not constituted as a charity with trustees. A new body is proposed to take over ACTS's role as a funding charity. The meeting welcomed this (subject to having sight of detailed constitutional proposals) and endorsed the working arrangements for the Scottish Christian Forum.

Pressure of time meant that not all the scheduled business was put before the meeting; the concluding minute, included in the written minutes, was not agreed in the meeting.

Dundee: 9 November

70 members and three attenders were at November's General Meeting, the majority online. Preliminary business included an update from Jane Booth, GM administrator, on the progress of compiling the new Book of Members and Attenders, due to be ready in the New Year.

Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group

Jane Mitchell reported briefly for the group; a special General Meeting will be held online to receive guidance from Area Meetings on the document *Possible patterns of relationship between meetings of Scottish Friends* [see *Sesame* 256, pages 31-36]. This will be on **Saturday 30 November, 4.00 – 6.00 pm**; the Zoom link will be sent out nearer the time.

Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG)

Two reports were received, the first held over from September; Richard Raggett, co-convenor of the PEWG spoke to both. The September report reminded Friends that PEWG's focus remains on peacebuilding and climate justice, with examples of work furthering these concerns, including meeting with Scottish Enterprise to learn how it fosters the transition to Net Zero and how it implements human rights checks, particularly in relation to grants to manufacturers of arms and/or weapons components. Much of what the group does is in co-operation with others: it supports QPSW's peace education work, and Stop Climate Chaos Scotland and Christian Aid are particular allies in advocating for climate justice. The November report gave updates (much of the detail known to *Sesame* readers from Sarah Komashko's report to the Northern Friends Peace Board in the last issue).

Ellis Brooks, QPSW Peace Education Coordinator, joined the meeting online: a year on from the 'Peace at the Heart' exhibition at Holyrood, he noted a chance to feed into a review of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence to 'mainstream' peace education, and the benefits of networking.

Appointments and Nominations

Among other appointments, **Kate Arnot** was re-appointed to serve a second triennium as GM representative to the Religious Leaders Forum of Interfaith Scotland (1/1/2025 – 31/12/2027), and appointed to be our 'link person' to Faith in Community Scotland for the same period.

Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group (SQCJWG)

Kate Philbrick spoke to the Group's report. As changes to the Group's way of working, it was proposed that it liaise directly with the Parliamentary Engagement Officer (rather than through the PEWG); and that its remit include the new objectives of "*work[ing] to support interfaith chaplaincy within the justice system*" and "*facilitat[ing] more active engagement of interested Quakers in the working of the Scottish Criminal Justice system*", prison visiting and alternatives to custody being suggested as areas for such involvement; all of these were agreed. The Group looks abroad – to Norway and Canada – for other models of penal policy; members reported on these.

Financial matters: Budget for 2025

The Treasurer, Katrina McCrea, presented the budget, as already approved by GM Trustees; a deficit of £3,030 is projected, to reduce a current surplus.

Meeting for Sufferings

A written report of the October meeting was received from Elaine Millar, the new GM representative at Meeting for Sufferings. [See Jane Kelly's report on page 19.] Ann Kerr, Elaine's predecessor, was thanked for her service.

Racial Justice minute from West Scotland AM: follow up

West Scotland Area Meeting forwarded to General Meeting its minute on 'Race and Privilege' (reprinted in *Sesame* 253) almost two years ago; other business repeatedly edged it off the agenda until June, when the issue was essentially referred to local meetings and individual Friends to take action. As it was again. The Quaker Racial Justice Network was commended to those concerned; it may be contacted at antiracism83@gmail.com.

Local Development Worker – priorities in 2025

Zoe Prosser, in consultation with her line manager at Friends House and the GM clerks, proposed the following amended priorities for her work in 2025. Current priorities, agreed by this process last year, are shown below in italics (*thus*), with the new priorities in bold (**thus**):

1. *Expanding role-holder networks.*

Change to:

Continue to strengthen and develop support for role holders.

2. *Supporting Quaker community building – locally, for families, and for everyone.*

Change to:

Supporting Quaker communities to be loving, inclusive and all age.

3. *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.*

Change to:

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, and developing and creating further resources where there is a need.

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

Unchanged.

General Meeting supported these amendments and minuted its thanks to Zoe for her work.

Other Business

Plans to engage with under-18s at GM in March; possible Enquirers' days; and details of letters and statements signed by the clerk were reported. The next regular General Meeting will be in Edinburgh on 8 March 2025.

Notes on both meetings prepared by the Editor from the GM minutes.

Northern Friends Peace Board: 28 September

For our autumn meeting, the Board was at Penrith Meeting House, which we last visited in 2016 – when, to many of us, ‘Zoom’ meant a rocket-shaped ice lolly from the 1960s, and participants were present in person or not at all. In 2024, almost half of those attending were online. Not for the first time, we considered the pros and cons of blended meetings: in 2025, our main meetings will take this form, but will again, as this year, be augmented by online-only meetings and regional in-person gatherings.

The Iona Community

Our guest speaker in the morning was Ruth Harvey, who, as well as being a member of Penrith Local Meeting, is a minister in the Church of Scotland, and since 2021 has also been the Leader of the Iona Community: she spoke of its work for peace and justice, some of which was known to Friends through hearing John Bell as a broadcaster, or from contact with our late Friend Helen Steven. [*Also, the AM Library has a copy of Iona: God’s Energy (1999), by Norman Shanks, a previous Leader of the Community.*] It was a stimulating presentation and led to a wide-ranging discussion.

Grace and Grit – play reading

An Israeli doctor questions her patient, a rabbi, as to how he came by the wound she has just treated, disbelieving his story of a fall – in fact, he was stabbed while demonstrating in solidarity with Arab villagers threatened by illegal Jewish settlement – and a Palestinian mother in the Occupied Territories tries to dissuade her daughter from taking part in protests that may end in violence. These two fraught conversations form the main part of a forty-minute play by Board member Jo Alberti for five voices. (The fifth is a narrator, who acts as Chorus: as she says, what is presented is a fleeting glimpse into real tragedy – unfolding before us, if we look in that direction.) It was read for us by five local actors, having been performed at the Theatre by the Lake, Keswick, in August, and it led into a discussion of the issues raised and what outsiders can do to uphold those working for peace and justice. [*Meeting for Sufferings has also been wrestling with this – see the statement on page 17, and the reports on pages 18-20.*]

Members Forum

Friends shared news of the variety of peace work in their meetings.

In recent years, the disruption of rail and road travel by storms has seriously impeded attendance at our winter meeting, and so this year it will be online only: on Zoom on **Saturday 30 November, 9.30 am – 12.30**. Board meetings are open to all; anyone wishing to participate should contact Philip Austin at nfpb@gn.apc.org for the link. There is no clash with the special online session of General Meeting for Scotland taking place the same day, which is happening in the late afternoon.

Alan Frith

Days of Action

Monday 25 November – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent and pervasive human rights violations. Globally, almost one in three women have been subjected at least once to partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both. For at least 51,100 women in 2023, this violence ended in their murder. That means a woman was killed every 10 minutes.

This scourge has intensified in different settings, including the workplace and online, and has been exacerbated by conflicts and climate change.

The solution lies in robust responses, holding perpetrators accountable, and accelerating action through well-resourced national strategies and increased funding to women's rights movements. See:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/16-days-of-activism>

Sunday 1 December – Prisoners for Peace Day

For over 60 years, **War Resisters' International** (WRI) have, on this day, made known the names and stories of those imprisoned because of their actions for peace. Many are conscientious objectors, in gaol for refusing to join the military. Others have taken nonviolent actions to disrupt preparation for war.

This day is a chance for you to demonstrate your support for those individuals and their movements, by writing to those whose freedom has been taken away from them because of their work for peace. There is guidance on writing cards and letters at <https://wri-irg.org/en/inprison>, where the list of prisoners will appear.

Tuesday 10 December – Human Rights Day

On this day in 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed at the time as "*a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations*", towards which individuals and societies should "*strive by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance*".

The Declaration sets out a broad range of fundamental rights and freedoms to which all are entitled. It guarantees the rights of every individual everywhere, without distinction based on nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, language, or any other status.

Although not a binding document, the Declaration inspired more than 60 human rights instruments which together constitute an international standard of human rights. Today the general consent of all UN Member States on the basic Human Rights laid down in the Declaration makes it even stronger and emphasizes the relevance of Human Rights in our daily lives.

For this year's theme for the day, see:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/get-involved/campaign/hrd2024>

Polmont Meeting moves to Falkirk

Polmont Quaker Meeting has moved and we are now meeting every Sunday at Trinity Church in the centre of Falkirk. We sought a new venue as Falkirk Council were parting with the Greenpark Community Centre – our home for more than 30 years! Trinity Church have welcomed us warmly and we have a downstairs room for our Meeting, and an upstairs room for the children.

Our last meeting at Greenpark Centre took the form of worship sharing, remembering the people who have been part of our meeting and celebrating special moments, including our lively 30th birthday ceilidh and establishing a Peace Pole for a permanent and visible presence at the nearby Helix Park.

We hope that our vibrant and growing Meeting will flourish in our new town centre venue.

All welcome! Sundays 10.30 to 11.30 am, followed by cuppas and biscuits.

Falkirk Trinity Church, Manse Place, Falkirk FK1 1JN

For more information, contact **Anna Levin**.

If you're bringing children please let us know in advance so we can be ready to welcome them. Contact **Denise Marshall**.

[Contact details in the Book of Members]

Portobello & Musselburgh LM: Meeting on Third Sundays

In September, P&M Local Meeting began holding meeting for worship at a new time in a new place. As well as meeting in the morning on the second and fourth Sundays in the month, and at 7.30 pm in the evening of the first Sunday, we will henceforth be meeting on the **THIRD** Sunday as well – at **Hollies Community Hub, 183 High Street, Musselburgh EH21 7DE**
7.00 – 8.00 pm

(As with the other evening meeting, there is no provision for children.)

The venue for all our meetings *except* the one on the third Sunday is still:

Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello EH15 2BP

For further information, contact one of the clerks: **Robin Liebmann, Sarah Martin** or **Marian Willoner**. Email: portymussclerks@gmail.com.

We do not meet on the **FIFTH** Sunday in the month (e.g. 29 December 2024).

SPONSORED WALK IN MEMORY OF PAT LUCAS

[See Sesame 256, page 40.]

Thanks to those who sponsored Phil Lucas. **£1,460** was raised for Macmillan Cancer Support. The justgiving portal has now closed, but it is still possible to donate at <https://donation.macmillan.org.uk/>.

The Life and Times of George Fox

On Saturday 5 October, 44 Quakers from across South East Scotland and beyond, joined by two members of the wider ecumenical community, gathered together to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of George Fox and learn about our Quaker history and origins. We were expertly guided by Ben Pink Dandelion of Woodbrooke, through Fox's life and the society and milieu of his formative years in order to understand the circumstances that the Religious Society of Friends was founded and flourished.

Ben engaged us all with facts, readings and humour for ninety minutes on the origin story, and after a refreshing tea with heaps of cakes, we sang Happy Birthday to the man! Ben then resumed his session for a further ninety minutes with great insights into how our ways, beliefs and customs developed, and how they are presenting themselves in our world today. This gave us much to reflect on.

The event was made possible with the generous funding of the Sylvia Marshall Bequest Fund. Funding included purchasing Fox related materials for the Meeting House window display. Bridget Ramsay loaned a much cherished stone sculpture of George Fox and Margaret Fell that she had inherited from her Quaker mother to add to the display.

We actively tried to engage leaders from other nearby churches, and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rev. Dr Shaw James Paterson sent his apologies and good wishes for the event. Tim Gee, General Secretary of FWCC, added details of our event to the global list of commemorations (<https://fwcc.world/event/fox/>) and issued a press release which included information about Fox's time in Scotland; see <https://www.scotsman.com/community/quakers-celebrate-400th-birthday-of-founder-4789612> Did you know that Fox was banished from Scotland in October 1657? Inevitably his beliefs brought him into conflict with the authorities, as did his decision to disrupt a gathering in the capital about burning a witch.

The event was a good community building event, helped by a soup and bread & cheese lunch (provided by Tony Gross and Mark Bitel) and lots of cake over afternoon tea generously brought in by Friends.

The event was free of charge but substantial donations were collected for Meeting House funds. The following day, All Age Meeting for Worship took place with a George Fox theme.

What will Friends do in Edinburgh to celebrate George Fox's 500th? None of us knows, but let's hope that Quakerism is spared.

Mark Bitel

It is probable that Archbishop Laud and John Wesley died equally persuaded that he in whose name they had made themselves famous on earth would receive them in Heaven with open arms. George Fox the Quaker would have had ten times their chance ...

George Bernard Shaw: from the Preface to *Androcles and the Lion* (1916)

Israel/Palestine: *Our Commitment to the Truth*

INVOKING OUR COMMITMENT TO THE TRUTH, Quakers in Britain [i.e. BYM] has come into alignment with International Court of Justice (ICJ) rulings on Israel and occupied Palestine. In October, it was accepted that ‘apartheid’ is an accurate description of the situation in occupied Palestine. It was also affirmed that there is a plausible risk that the Israeli government is committing genocide in Gaza.

The decision by Meeting for Sufferings, followed months of deep thought and prayer. In recording its decision, the Meeting quoted the Book of Discipline: “The first skill [in addressing conflict] is naming: being clear and honest about the problem as I see it.” (*Quaker Faith & Practice*, 20.71)

Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights experts and lawyers have said for years that the Israeli government is maintaining a system of apartheid against Palestinians in occupied Palestine. In July this year, the ICJ determined that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory is “illegal” and must end “as rapidly as possible”. It also found that Israel is in breach of article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. This article prohibits racial segregation and apartheid.

Quakers have direct witness of the discrimination being experienced by Palestinians having worked on and in Palestine and Israel for decades. This includes different roads for different peoples, different justice systems, and different systems and permits for all aspects of life, including to access work, build homes, receive medical treatment, go to school, and worship.

Paul Parker, recording clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting, said:

“We are not naïve to the difficulties of building true peace, one where love and respect for those on the other side of metaphorical and literal walls abounds. The work required for this is long and hard.

“Our decades – centuries – of peacebuilding and reconciliation experience also tells us that speaking uncomfortable truths with love, including to friends who find it distressing and painful to hear, is a necessary step on that journey to true peace.

“We don’t have to wonder what horrors might happen if this situation continues unchanged. The violence of the last seven decades, the attacks on October 7, continued rocket attacks into Israel, the Israeli military campaign over the last year in Gaza – at risk of being deemed genocide by the ICJ – and the West Bank, and now the widening of that violence into Lebanon and the surrounding region show us all too clearly.

“It is beyond time for this unbearable situation to end. We pray that steady heads and loving hearts prevail, fast.”

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/quakers-align-with-icj-on-israel-and-occupied-palestine>

[See also <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/international-work/quaker-engagement-with-israel-and-palestine-1>]

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS

1 June

The papers for the meeting are at:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2024-06-00-calling-letter-agenda--papers-package>

and the minutes are at:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2024-06-follow-up-package>

Katrina McCrea attended the morning session on our behalf; she writes:

There were three quite intense items.

First, the re-registration of **Quaker Concern over Population (QCOP)** as a recognised body. [*Some Friends are uncomfortable that regarding population growth in the Global South as problematic is connected to racist tropes, if not in itself racist.*] We agreed to re-register QCOP for two years while further work is done to clarify and better express its intention. Possibly even more important, we agreed to initiate work to clarify the process of registering as a recognised body and how to deal with situations if registration is questioned. Arrangements Group will be asking some Friends to clarify the issues for us.

Second, we received a **report from the Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees** challenging us to disagree with one another in such a way as to build up our community rather than to break the ties of solidarity. The Pauline epistles provide plenty of evidence that this is an issue with which we have been struggling since the days of the early church. "*Part of the creative experience of a community is learning how to deal with conflict when it arises, and Friends are not usually good at this. 'Speaking the truth in love' is a Quaker cliché [from Ephesians 4:15], but 'papering over the cracks' is the principle more commonly acted upon. Conflict met in 'brokenness' of spirit can take a meeting a long way on its spiritual journey, whereas unresolved it deadens the life.*" (*Quaker Faith & Practice* 10.22)

Third, we heard about our work in **Palestine and Israel** and have begun to consider whether our work in this area needs to adapt, in particular looking at the language that is used in relation to the conflict. We minuted:

We have been reminded that EAPPI [the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel] envisions a future in which the military occupation of Palestine has ended and both Palestinians and Israelis enjoy a just peace with freedom, dignity, and security based on international law. EAPPI attempts to provide a protective presence, to monitor human rights violations, to stand in solidarity with local peace and human rights groups, and to influence our governments on policies in the region.

Our stand of principled impartiality, acknowledging that all individuals caught up in this conflict, including terrorists, freedom fighters, conscripts, volunteer soldiers, and innocent victims are children of God cannot devolve to a neutrality that fails to acknowledge the abuses committed against the population of Palestine.

We recognise that human rights violations in this region are overwhelmingly against Palestinians, as documented over the years by both Palestinian and Israeli human rights groups. While the language articulating these violations is emotive and may be distressing, we may need to use it to be faithful to the truth of the situation. In particular, what do we specifically mean by particular words, such as genocide and apartheid, and what is the likely impact of using them.

We acknowledge the powerful work that has been done and recognise the need to protect it. We must be conscious of the effect of the language we use on the vulnerable situation of people living in Palestine and Israel.

In a situation where hope seems absent, we pray for miracles.

5 October

The papers for the meeting are at:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/meeting-for-sufferings-2024-10-agenda-papers-package>

and the minutes are at:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2024-10-follow-up-package>

Jane Kelly attended as our representative, and writes of her experience as follows:

Beginning in break-out rooms was a good way for those of us on Zoom to feel we were 'in the Body of the Kirk'.

As **the conflict in the Middle East** continues, the anniversary of 7 October and the start of the atrocities was imminent.*

We were reminded of the importance of naming the situation as we see it, and agreed to align ourselves with the terminology of the International Court of Justice in describing the situation in occupied Palestine as one of apartheid and recognising the plausible risk of genocide in Gaza [see page 17.] We heard that, despite EAPPI witnesses having had to leave Palestine, there are still Quakers, along with people of other faiths, working for Peace in the Middle East.

We discussed **New Ways of Belonging** to the Society of Friends. This would mean possibly granting membership to non-geographic attenders, but not to all associated bodies. There is more work to be done on this, but various possibilities are being explored.

An excellent report from the **BYM Trustees** made me realise the financial difficulties faced by the Society. It isn't possible to do all the work we used to do in the days of legacies, so now everything, including Friends House has to pay its way. Sufferings was being held in a smaller space to allow for a chess tournament using the Large Meeting Room, 'The Light'.

We still mourn the loss of Woodbrooke Quaker College but better understand why it had to go. Of course, it still exists online.

Scotland and Wales General Meetings are only too aware of the strains on

* See <https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/october-7-one-year-on-a-quaker-statement>

resources both financial and human.

I was impressed by the progress being made by the **Reparations Working Group** who, for the last year, have been working methodically on the subject. The group would be happy to give talks and share their findings regarding the British Quaker involvement in transatlantic slavery, colonialism, and exploitation. They can be contacted at equity@quaker.org.uk.

The **Marriage Declaration** change of wording is still being considered. Friends are not yet of one mind but there is a will to come to a decision. Responses to the consultation can be read at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/marriage-declaration-responses-to-consultation-mfs-oct-2024>

Life on the West Bank

KAIROS PALESTINE (<https://www.kairospalestine.ps/>) is a Christian Palestinian movement which advocates for ending the Israeli occupation and achieving a just solution to the conflict. Committed to peace and peaceful methods, Kairos names the injustices to Palestinian people of all faiths. It declares *“that the military occupation of Palestinian land constitutes a sin against God and humanity. Any theology that legitimizes the occupation and justifies crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people lies far from Christian teachings”*.

Mays Nassar works for Kairos Palestine, and she visited us last month, giving us an insight into life on the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where she lives. From her bedroom window, she can see the settlement where Israelis have carried out a land grab – years ago. And she tells us of the continuing and increasing boldness of the illegal settlement expansion in the West Bank amidst the current genocide on Gaza.

Mays first stayed with us, along with another Palestinian, in 2005. They were in Edinburgh as schoolgirls, part of the Stars of Bethlehem company, presenting their play *Diaries through the Wall* at Venue 40, the Quaker Meeting House. That play told the realities of life under the Second Intifada – anxiety, fear and hopes for peace. It was based on the diaries kept by pupils at their school, recording the shooting, violence, injuries and deaths they had witnessed and experienced.

Mays came to us this year having met the previous week with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, to advocate for stronger action by the world’s churches. You can read about her visit here:

<https://tinyurl.com/yc2b2v6t>.

She came to Edinburgh for some rest and relaxation: I hope we were able to help, and she was certainly able to indulge her love of high-quality coffee in one of Portobello’s many coffee shops. But it was hard not to quiz her about life on the West Bank during the Gaza genocide, and she was

keen to share. She also spoke of her daily life as part of a large and active family, all committed to living on in Palestine despite the hardships – her grandmother’s gardening, her young nephew Andrew, her mother’s cooking and Palestinian-inspired silver jewellery making. I hope to get her Mum’s recipe for za’atar [*a savoury spice mix*] once she’s home.

Mays left on the long journey back to Bethlehem, via Heathrow and Amman in Jordan. She has extracted from us a promise to visit her and her family before long. Despite the hardships at home, she is positive and resilient; she looks forward to setting up her own coffee roasting business – “when Palestine is free”.

Alastair Cameron



Alastair Cameron, Mary Jane Elton and Mays Nassar (photo by Alastair Cameron)

Nobel Peace Prize 2024: Nihon Hidankyo

An article by **Janet Fenton** celebrating the award of this year’s Peace Prize to the organisation of *Hibakusha* (survivors of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki) is at

<https://www.thenational.scot/politics/24651351.happened-met-nobel-prize-winners-nihon-hidankyo/>

Janet met some of its members in New York in 2023, at the second meeting of states party to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Edinburgh Interfaith – Celebration and AGM

The Edinburgh Interfaith Association (EIFA) celebrated its 35th anniversary and AGM with an evening at the City Chambers attended by representatives of several different faiths and addressed by the Lord Provost, who is Honorary Trustee. EIFA has come a long way since it was founded in 1989. Before that there was a small, predominantly Christian interfaith group which met regularly in South Edinburgh during the 1970s and early 1980s, but regular dialogue between the different faiths that existed in Edinburgh at that time had yet to be achieved. Today, EIFA is a thriving network of different faith groups which co-operate to encourage appreciation of diversity and to promote harmony in what often seems an increasingly fractured world.

Among other initiatives over the past year have been the ‘Religion and Belief’ roadshows and interfaith panels for primary and secondary pupils, and the Holocaust Memorial Day programme, this year held at three different venues. Over fifty young people attended the launch of its Anti-Racism Youth Champions programme, with Sir Geoff Palmer and Bishop John Ames as guest speakers. (A far cry from forty years ago when the term ‘anti-racist’ was criticised as being highly inflammatory in a report on multicultural education I co-authored with Habib Hashmi.)

At other events during the autumn of 2023 keynote speeches were given by Irene Mosota, Chair of the Edinburgh Slavery and Legacy Commission and Debora Kayembe, Rector of Edinburgh University. Both urged us to be more proactive in challenging racism in society which, in light of the appalling anti-immigration riots that occurred in several cities this summer, could not have been more prescient.

At this year’s AGM the speaker was Nazila Ghanea, who is Professor of International Human Rights Law at Oxford University and the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Her (unpaid) role as special rapporteur is to support the commitment of 173 countries to Article 18 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights: *“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”*

Special rapporteurs typically conduct fact-finding missions inside countries to investigate allegations of human rights violations. They can only visit countries that have agreed to invite them. Aside from fact-finding missions, rapporteurs regularly assess and verify complaints from alleged victims of human rights violations.

Prof. Ghanea said that her main work so far has been to intervene in situations where Article 18 is in danger of being violated, though she thinks her advocacy has limited efficacy. Her role is to remind countries of their legal

obligations, “to keep things on the radar”. She believes that people working at the grassroots level can help make a difference in situations of religious intolerance and cited some of the local, positive reactions in response to the violence in Southport as an example. She argued that we are too prone to viewing “the other” with automatic suspicion instead of reaching out to understand them. This only leads to a greater polarisation of beliefs. She works closely with other rapporteurs, particularly those involved in the field of human rights abuse, and admitted that to date they have not succeeded in opening up a dialogue in Russia though she remains hopeful. She thinks religiously-justified violence is both worse and more long-lasting than non-religious aggression, and that non-violent advocates for Peace can certainly make a difference. Organisations such as EIFA can therefore be very influential in helping maintain religious tolerance.

The evening continued with a video presentation by Maggie Lennon, first winner of the Prof. Frank Whaling Memorial Prize for Interfaith Studies. Frank Whaling, who died in 2022, was one of the founders of EIFA.

Her dissertation, *A Symptom of a Deeper Malaise: The ‘World Religions’ Paradigm in Scottish Non-Confessional Secondary Education* explores secondary education as a site where the World Religions Paradigm (WRP) is continually being reproduced. It shows that the WRP morphs religion into a shape that suits the purposes of the Scottish education system. What emerges is that this widespread implementation is symptomatic of how Scottish state and society understand religion, and how they understand the importance of religious education. Unfortunately there was no opportunity to ask questions after her presentation.

At the end of quite a long evening we all enjoyed refreshments including optional slices of a 35th anniversary sponge cake generously laden with jam and cream, which I reluctantly declined!

There are many ways to become involved with EIFA: for example through the **Befriending Project**, **Fringe Care Fest in Care Homes** or by joining the annual **Peace Walk**. The website is at www.edinburghinterfaith.com.

Lynne Barty

THE BOOK OF MEMBERS & ATTENDERS

The new edition of General Meeting’s *Book of Members & Attenders* will be published in the New Year. It gives the name, address and contact details of everyone associated with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Scotland, whether a Member of the Society or an Attender at one of our meetings, the names grouped by Local Meeting within the four Area Meetings (North, East, South-East, and West). It is however a **confidential document**, only available to those included in it.

It is assumed *Sesame* readers have access to it.

The Quest for the Historical Jesus

Philip Pullman – *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ* (2010)

Canongate, ISBN 978-1-78689-195-2 (paperback)

The Quaker tradition is 'rooted in Christianity' though many modern British Quakers sit light to traditional Christian theology and not a few would hesitate to call themselves Christian. I share this hesitation because of all that is identified with taking that name; but both the teaching and the life of the man from Nazareth are important components of my lived faith. So how do I distinguish this life and teaching from the mythology which, from the earliest days, shaped the credal systems that have fed the Christian church and illuminated such a wealth of Christian artistic outpouring? Many have wished to explore this distinction, of course. Albert Schweitzer, physician, musician, musicologist and theologian, made a significant contribution when he wrote *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1906). This quest was pursued in depth by Jesus theologians in the twentieth century. A recent and provocative contribution has come from an unlikely place: Philip Pullman, the novelist best known for the trilogy *His Dark Materials*.

The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ appeared in 2010 but I have only recently come across it, despite its being, so the cover blurb says, a *Sunday Times* N°1 bestseller. It starts with an imaginative take on the familiar Christmas narrative. Mary, married to the elderly Joseph, is visited in the night by a young man, an angel, resulting in her pregnancy. In the stable at Bethlehem, she gives birth to twins: one very healthy, Jesus, and one rather sickly, who comes to be called Christ from what some visiting shepherds say about him.

Pullman now retells in lively fashion many of the stories of Jesus gleaned from the four gospels. He portrays Jesus as a remarkable, wise, outspoken and loving human being, who earns great respect both for the stories he tells and for his integrity, courage and caring humanity. Christ stays in the background, shadowing Jesus at a distance, watching and recording what he sees and sometimes meeting with an unnamed mentor, who encourages him in his work. It is he who records as miracles some of the stories about healing and helping people. Christ is portrayed as an ambivalent figure who, encouraged by the unnamed stranger, can't help himself embroidering what he has witnessed, turning factual accounts into the paranormal, making a remarkable man of great spiritual authority into the Son of God.

My own spiritual journey has taken me from being a disciple of the Church's Jesus Christ to one who finds the man of Nazareth a man, a compelling teacher and exemplar, who lived out and died for what he believed. So this former Baptist minister finds himself a Quaker, still a Christian by his own definition, trying (and often failing) to live what he believes. Philip Pullman's scandalous account speaks to me.

Phil Lucas

The Future of British Quakerism: 18-20 October

This conference, jointly organised by Woodbrooke and Quakers in Britain, and held at Yarnfield Park in Staffordshire, was attended on our behalf by Alastair Cameron.

Hang-gliding for beginners

WE'VE heard Quakers are on a cliff-edge; at this point, we can feel the spirit of the wind; let's use the wind to jump off the cliff – be hang-gliders! This was the thrust of Rhiannon Grant's Saturday-evening contribution to the conference 'The Future of British Quakerism' in Staffordshire in October.

Earlier, we had heard some stark statistics from the 2023 survey of British Quakers. The survey had met with a good response: 4,783 replies, representing 27 % of adherents (*i.e.* members, attenders and under-16s). This gave Shena Deuchars plenty to tell us about ourselves, combining survey detail with data from the annual Tabular Statement.

There is a risk that our numbers across Great Britain will drop below ten thousand in the near future, unless present trends change. three-quarters of survey respondents are aged over 60; and nearly two-thirds over 70.

During Saturday morning worship, we heard ministry that our forms of organisation are not forever: they are the trellis on which our spiritual practice is built, and as gardeners, we must adapt the trellis to changes in our environment.

Our conference speakers were three stalwarts of current Quakerism – Ben Pink Dandelion, Paul Parker and Rhiannon Grant.

Ben revisited his 2014 Swarthmore Lecture, *Open for Transformation*, identifying four key features of what he calls 'our collective mystical faith':

- The experience of a direct encounter with the divine
- Our form of worship, based on silent waiting
- Our practice of discernment
- The service and witness that derives from that.

Ben, whose roles include honorary Professor of Quaker Studies at the University of Birmingham, sees a low sense of identity with Area Meetings and Yearly Meeting. He wants Quakers to address our inherited infrastructure: we should be prepared to cast away what we cannot cope with. Managing our property is taking over from our worship practice and spiritual wellbeing. Releasing the resources tied up in property would give us the potential to 'put our money where our minutes are'. We have committed to establishing a reparations fund, recognising wealth of today that comes from involvement in slavery: how else are we to build this up?

Ben reflected on how nowadays we love John Woolman and Elizabeth Fry – but their Quaker contemporaries did not. Who are the people amongst us today who are making us uncomfortable?

Though 80-90 % join as adults, we have no standardised induction pro-

gramme. Our role-holders are often pressed into service, creating anxiety both for them and for our nominations committees. To achieve greater simplicity, Ben used the example of Alcoholics Anonymous fellowships: they try not to have money; they don't have property; they have a clear structure; and every member commits to regular attendance.

We have to put worship at the heart of what we do: how elastic can we be about meeting and belonging? In the 17th century, Quakers had no need of membership – it was obvious if you were committed, from your dress to how you spoke. The first lists of Quakers did not come in until 1737; membership visits are a 20th century development.

Regarding how we make practical our testimony to equality and diversity, Ben set out an exercise done in his meeting: *“If we wanted to keep people away, what would we do?”* They applied this to total newcomers, to families, to young people, to people living with poverty. They found that many of the meeting's actual practices were already doing that: failing to advertise, meeting only on Sunday mornings, having no preparation for unexpected children, and so on...

He ended with two statements: *“there's no 'they' in Quakers – just 'we'”*; and *“always choose change over fear”*.

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting, followed. He presented us with two scenarios for Quaker meetings in 30 years' time: one where a long-standing Friend is closing a meeting for the last time, having experienced years of dwindling numbers; the other where the meeting is thriving, engaged in the local community and bringing new people in.

At a time of acute climate breakdown, more wars, increasing poverty, culture wars, and more mental distress, there is more need for us than ever. Yet there remains a mentality of 'we want things to be different yet we don't want to change anything'.

Most Quakers today have never been young Quakers, yet George Fox was 28 years old in 1652.

Paul sees green shoots where others see a gloomy outlook:

- The establishment of the continuing Yearly Meeting structure, adopted this year, should lead to new ways of working
- Though it does not show up in the tabular statement, online worship has become important, and allows us to reach new groups
- The new book of discipline is in preparation, and the first draft is expected in 2027
- We are finding new ways of worship, not just on Sundays
- Our structure of Local Development Workers is making an impact
- We are getting better at outreach, and learning what works: 86% of those attending for the first time say it's because someone brings them
- Some meetings are growing; we need to understand how, and to nurture good practice

- We have a new Woodbrooke
- We are working on new structures in Wales & the Marches; London; and Scotland
- We are positively affirming the presence and contribution of trans people: this is not the only minoritised group we should be welcoming
- Our witness to peace and climate justice is thriving.

Paul sees Quakers today as at a 'rebalancing point': we are both a movement and an organisation. Movements have a tendency to flourish and burn up quickly; organisations have a tendency to ossify. For nearly 400 years, Quakers have swung between these tendencies.

Rhiannon Grant is Programme Coordinator for Modern Quaker Thought at Woodbrooke. Her contribution took us through three stages: facing the cliff edge; feeling the wind of the spirit; and taking off with our hang-glider.

The cliff edge had been well-examined earlier in the conference: losing numbers and energy; getting lost in our procedures; meeting houses that are more liability than asset; conflict within meetings, often not dealt with; anxiety over whether or not we are religious.

The spirit gives us the opportunity for lift: our experience of worship, helping us explore what is 'real' beyond the material, and leading to a diversity of response; our communal and experiential approach; combining eternal principles with the sense of the moment; our sense of the mystical. 'God is love, and if we reflect that in our communities, that's the wind that lifts us'.

The step off the cliff is our joy, curiosity and experiment. By choosing change, we surrender to transformation.

Referring back to the ministry of the trellis, Rhiannon reminded us that our structures exist to support our growth – so must adapt to the conditions. To make meeting for worship more accessible we might: respond to what people are looking for rather than saying this is what there is; vary how and when we meet; be better witnesses to our experience; ditch burdensome roles, which are sometimes exploitative of volunteers.

Her final image was from Australian cattle farming: 'if you want to keep your herd together, don't build a fence, dig a well'.

Workshops during the weekend covered five themes:

- *Membership, Commitment and belonging; what is required to belong to a Quaker community?*
- *Theology and Identity; How does our theology relate to our Quaker identity?*
- *A Confident Quaker voice; How do we share the Quaker way with confidence?*
- *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: How do we make our Quaker communities truly equitable?*
- *Resource: What resources do we need to nurture our worshipping communities?*

I chose Membership, and was a bit disappointed: we didn't dig very deep, and I came away not having found anything lasting.

The Sunday morning worship was impressive, clerked by two Scots, Elizabeth Allen and Adwoa Burnley. We spent an hour reflecting on the weekend, and putting forward ideas for the future. A 30-minute period of 'upholding the table' in silence proved not enough time to distil our contributions, so we were released for a short coffee break. The draft was read when we reconvened – we haggled over elements, and, finally, agreed our minute: a coherent message to take back to Quaker Life.

Since the event, I have been discussing its themes with others. When I outlined Paul's idea of the tension between movements and organisations, one friend asked: "And where does community fit in?" This resonates with me: whatever else we are doing as Quakers, we must be seeking to build and sustain healthy communities which support old friends and bring in new ones.

As Paul Parker put it: "We need to decide to thrive".

*A new page on the Woodbrooke website carries resources and information from the conference: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/FoBQ. These resources are password protected, as they are currently intended only for those who attended the conference and the wider community of Quakers in Britain. The password to access the resources is: **FoBQ2024***

The page has the minute from the conference, with a preamble written by the clerks of the event, Elizabeth Allen and Adwoa Burnley [see below], and there is a page of links and references to provide context for particular points.

It also includes an 'Update from Woodbrooke' and an 'Update from Quaker Life', written in response to the various questions raised over the weekend, as well as recordings and transcripts of the keynote presentations and the preliminary results of the 2023 British Quaker Survey; the minute includes the additions mentioned by the clerks, especially the contributions from Young Friends General Meeting.

An event will be held online in January, with the exact date to be announced shortly. This session is designed as a follow-up for those who attended The Future of British Quakerism conference in October 2024. In their time together, participants will have opportunities to discuss how to share feedback from the conference with Area Meetings and the wider Quaker community, as well as exploring ways to enact some of the ideas from the conference in local and national Quaker spaces.

Minute from the Conference, 'The Future of British Quakerism', 18–20 October 2024

Preamble

To inform our discernment, over the weekend we heard contributions from four Friends. The first was Shena Deuchars, who talked us through the initial results of the British Quaker Survey, distributed to Friends in Britain in 2023.

We then heard a moving and inspiring talk from Ben Pink Dandelion. He shared with us his discernment on who we are as a people following a spiritual path, all seeking encounter with the Divine. He reflected on his 2014 Swarthmore Lecture, 'Open for Transformation': Being Quaker.*¹ Looking to the future, he spoke about how we might grow and flourish and encouraged us to tell our stories and be able to speak our truth as Quakers, using our own words, and to share this widely.

Next we heard from Paul Parker, our Recording Clerk, with more thoughts on the reality of where we are as a Religious Society in terms of numbers and resources, both human and financial. Again we were asked to think deeply about how we can grow our own strength of conviction, and share it to enable growth in our local meetings, area meetings, and Britain Yearly Meeting.

We all attended workshops in the afternoon. A summary of what happened in these was brought to us on Saturday evening by Rhiannon Grant, as she reflected back to us what we had heard so far, in her session on Looking for Leadings. We were moved by the analogy she gave of being at the edge of a cliff and feeling the movement of the wind – a precarious situation, but what if we had a hang glider? If we jumped off the cliff supported by a hang glider, the wind would be our power and the hang glider would hold us and guide us. What might our hang gliders look like? What if we surrendered to transformation, took a leap, and trusted the Spirit?

Over the weekend we shared our worries and hopes. There was a sense of positivity and realism. On Sunday morning we held a worship sharing session focusing on the next steps. The following minute captures the ministry heard in this session. We ended the weekend with a final Meeting for Worship.

Sunday morning session on Next Steps

About 250 Friends gathered, some at Yarnfield Park, some online. We came together to seek the will of God, looking for leadings on the future of British Quakerism.

The figures in the Britain Yearly Meeting Tabular Statement are not encouraging. If we carry on as we are, we'll dip under ten thousand members in a small number of years' time. We are seeing small meetings closing, and many are struggling. Looking ahead, to continue as we are is unsustainable. The recent British Quaker Survey suggests three-quarters of us are over sixty, and nearly two-thirds are over seventy. Even if lots of new older people keep joining us, that can't last – and numbers seem likely to fall further before they rise. Will we find ourselves losing our geographic spread?

We can't talk about the future without making sure we sort the present and we must ground everything we do in worship, seeking God's guidance.

We have heard of the importance of doing what is easy and possible, in small steps – a shared lunch after meeting, Friends House cards² with contact details and Quaker badges are examples.

When we let our lives speak and take action, it can have unexpected and positive consequences, which help us grow.

We can be sowers of seeds. Let us not keep our precious seeds in our pockets.

* Notes 1-4 are at the end of the minute.

Young Friends General Meeting held at Brighton on 18–20 October shared with us their hopes and blessings for the future of British Quakerism:

I hope for discipline, integrity, radical acts for our vulnerable communities

I hope we are connected joyfully and lovingly

May we do the work for systematic change

I want to plant a seed of simplicity and renewal

May British Quakerism in the future actually make significant positive change

May there still be a world to live in

I'm hoping for a more diverse space where trans and non-binary people are included

I want to plant a seed of spreading awareness and being unafraid of explaining what

Quakerism is, and is to us

May future British Quakerism stop having committees about committees

May British Quakerism in the future grieve and let go of what it needs to, in order to

flourish and grow

I want to plant the seed of doubt in our current methods of operation and business

I want to plant a seed of listening and compassion

May British Quakerism continue to be a source of comfort and inspiration

I hope that Quakers of the future will continue to embrace change and seek to improve

I hope that Quakerism continues its history of building a better world for real

I hope that we continue to act from a position of love and care

May Quakerism change to love more

I want to plant a seed of love and hope

We value our children, our young people, and their parents, and we must find ways of showing them this in future. Can we find new ways of supporting and nurturing our meetings and events so that they may fully include and welcome our younger Friends? More Youth Development Workers have been suggested.

Let us remember the commitments we have already made to do Quaker work in the world, and make sure we tell people what we are doing.

Transition to a new future is going to be challenging and exhausting. We need to love and support those involved and those grieving for the loss of what they hold dear.

We need to provide adequate practical support. We are reminded of resources we have used in the past³, 'Becoming Friends' and 'Equipping for Ministry'. It has been suggested that the 'Simpler Meetings Project' and the Quaker Meeting Houses Heritage Project might be useful.

We need to make space for conversations, to share our stories, and listen to one another on those things about which we disagree. Are we feeling brave to share deeply, to listen to what we may find difficult, to hear the meaning behind the words?

The good news is we can go anywhere we are led. We are all ministers, all here to discern God's leadings. We all need to reconnect with the Spirit, we are not here in our own power. We need to set self aside, sometimes

surrendering ourselves to discomfort, to leave ourselves open for transformation.

We have trust in the Spirit, the process and each other.

1. Ben Pink Dandelion: Swarthmore Lecture at University of Bath, 2014. Available to watch at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRO-lGD9emM&t=65s> [There is a copy of the printed version in the AM Library.]
2. These cards (also available in Welsh) give six answers to the question 'What do Quakers say?' and details of how to obtain a free information pack. Packs can be requested at quakercentre@quaker.org.uk or by telephone from 020 7663 1030.
- 3 . Please see 'Updates from Woodbrooke' for more information about Becoming Friends, Equipping for Ministry and the Simpler Meetings Project.
4. The Quaker Meeting Houses Heritage Project is a national survey of Quaker meeting houses covering properties still in use as meeting houses and those owned by meetings, but not used specifically for that purpose. <https://heritage.quaker.org.uk/>

Also at the conference was **Craig Barnett**, of Sheffield & Balby AM, the BYM Local Development Worker for Yorkshire, and author of *The Guided Life: Finding purpose in troubled times* (in the 'Quaker Quicks' series) – he shares his thoughts at:

<https://transitionquaker.blogspot.com/2024/10/the-future-of-british-quakerism.html>

and see also, for his reaction at the time to Ben Pink Dandelion's 2014 Swarthmore Lecture, *Open for Transformation*:

<https://transitionquaker.blogspot.com/2014/08/some-thoughts-on-swarthmore-lecture-6.html>

Woodbrooke Courses: December 2024 & into 2025

DETAILS of events and courses commencing or taking place before the end of November were in *Sesame* 256.

Unless marked otherwise, events are online. Many are FREE or 'pay as led'. It is necessary to book (at <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/our-courses/>) as places are limited. If a price is shown, it is the **standard** fee, and a **50 % discount** is usually available to participants aged 18–35.

Fancy a PhD ?

Tuesday 3 December: 15:00-16:30 GMT

'Ben' Pink Dandelion

Business Method Surgery

Tuesday 3 December: 19:00-20:30 GMT

Rachael Swancott

George Fox and the Gospel of Mary: Transformed by Vision

£36

2 sessions: Tuesdays, 3 & 10 December: 19:00-20:30 GMT

David Curtis

Creatively Visioning the Future: A Winter Retreat

£25

Saturday 7 December: 10:15-16:00 GMT

Linda Murgatroyd

Simpler Roles: Doing Things Differently

£10

Monday 9 December: 19:00-21:00 GMT

Jonathan Carmichael

Being a Quaker Trustee

£85

4 sessions: Wednesdays, 11 & 18 December, 8 & 15 January: 19:00-20:30 GMT
Sarah Donaldson, Ursula Fuller

Story Weaving With George Fox: Christmas

Friday 13 December: 19:00-20:30 GMT Till flo* Krapoth

Clerking in a Nutshell

£35

Saturday 14 December: 10:00-16:00 GMT Heather Rowlands, Chris Skidmore

Pendle Hill Seminar: Embracing Spiritual Gifts

Saturday 14 December: 19:00-20:30 GMT Adria Gulizia, Simonne Wood

Meeting for Worship Through Dance

Sunday 15 December: 08:00-09:00 GMT Robin Bowles, Ann Bettys

Conversations With Our Children: Being Part of a Quaker Community

Tuesday 7 January 2025: 20:30-21:30 GMT Rachael Swancott

Conversations With Our Children: Anti-Racism

Tuesday 18 February 2025: 20:30-21:30 GMT Rachael Swancott

An Adult Faith: Paul's Letter to the Philippians

£54

4 sessions: Monday, 24 February – 17 March 2025: 18:30-20:00 GMT
Timothy Ashworth

Bursary help with the cost of participating in events may be available; speak to a Pastoral Friend, or email sesamtreasurer@gmail.com for further information.

The Editor welcomes participants' reports for possible inclusion in Sesame.

Book of Discipline Revision Committee – October 2024

A full report by **Mary Woodward** will be in the next *Scottish Friend*, which all *Sesame* readers should also receive. The **key messages** from the latest meeting are:

1. *We have now met for twenty-one meetings. Thank you for upholding us all in our work. We are on track to present a complete first draft text in late 2026 for consideration at Yearly Meeting 2027.*
2. ***What do Advices & Queries mean to you?*** *We have been reflecting on this question for ourselves as we consider how best to prepare for the revision of Advices & Queries that we will begin to draft in July 2025.*
3. *We are thinking about the table of contents for the new book and have been exploring different ways of grouping and ordering topics for a variety of readerships.*
4. *We recognise that people have different preferences and requirements for accessing information and publications. Planning for accessible formats for the book of discipline has begun.*
5. *We have been using suggestions sent through our submissions system and thank everyone who has helped us in this way. We continue to look for text, images, music, and other materials which express a wide range of Quaker experience of all aspects of life, today and in previous generations. Please keep sending ideas.*

Events, Courses and Special Interest Holidays 2025

GLENTHORNE, the Quaker Centre and guest house at Ambleside in the Lake District, offers a wide-ranging programme of events and courses in 2025; some offer discounts to younger participants. There are more details of each event at <https://glenthorne.org/events-programme-2025/>, and the programme can be downloaded as a PDF from:

<https://glenthorne.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Sih-2025-brochure-1-rev-5.pdf>

These events are only available for bookings made by telephone (call **015394 35389**), by emailing info@glenthorne.org, or by writing to **Glenthorne Quaker Guest House, Easedale Road, Grasmere, Ambleside, LA22 9QH**. Booking for courses run in association with Woodbrooke (marked [W]) is now done through Glenthorne, and these courses **cannot be booked online**. Please contact Glenthorne by telephone or email as above.

Anyone aged **18-35** can book a Woodbrooke course for **half the listed price** and there is a reduction of £100 for young people **under 35** on the fees for the two courses marked **YPR**.

Climate & Extinction Emergencies

15+ places, £310 **YPR**
Friday to Sunday, 21–23 February
Led by Rupert Read

Writing Retreat [W]

12 places, £565
Monday to Friday, 10–14 March
Led by Ben Pink Dandelion
& John Gray

Springtime Song & Silence

15+ places, £505
Monday to Friday, 31 March–4 April
Led by Meri Goad

Boot, Boat & Goat

14 places, £565
Monday to Friday, 7–11 April
Led by Terry Winterton
& Grace Ogilvie

Margaret Fell: Mother of Quakerism [W]

14 places, £285
Friday to Sunday, 25–27 April
Led by Stuart Masters

Time with the Texts [W]

14 places, £285
Friday to Sunday, 30 May – 1 June
Led by Ben Pink Dandelion

Circle Dancing

15 places, £500
Monday to Friday, 9–13 June
Led by Anne-Lise Kryger

Tai- Chi and Chi Kung Silk Reeling

15 places, £300
Friday to Sunday, 13–15 June
Led by Kim- Noy Jackson

Life, Death and Afterlife

12 places £525
Monday to Friday, 23–27 June
Led by Rhonda Riachi

Guide to the Blissful Way of Life

15 places, £300
Friday to Sunday, 27–29 June
Led by Adam Dacey

Connecting with Plants

12 places, £530
Monday to Friday, 7–11 July
Led by Letta Jones

Exploring T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets

12 places, £480
Monday to Friday, 21st – 25th July
Led by Barbara Windle

Continued overleaf

Walking with the Alexander Technique

12 places, £435

Friday to Monday, 25–28 July

Led by Hilary Cook

Sketching & Mixed Media Painting

12 places, £530

Monday to Friday, 28 July – 1 August

Led by Sue Ford

Trees

12 places, £310

Friday to Sunday, 1–3 August

Led by Letta Jones

Dru Yoga

12 places, £535

Monday to Friday, 4–8 August

Led by Julia Slater

Interpreting Jesus

12 places, £250 YPR

Friday to Sunday, 15–17 August

Led by Janet Scott

Sketching & Mixed Media Painting

12 places, £530

Monday to Friday, 18–22 August

Led by Sue Ford

Circle Dancing

15 places, £500

Monday to Friday, 1–5 September

Led by Anne-Lise Kryger

Hearing God

12 places, £505

Monday to Friday, 8–12 September

Led by Terry Winterton

Voices of the Earth [W]

14 places, £295

Friday to Sunday, 19–21 September

Zélie and Phillip Gross

Art, Spirit and Life

14 places, £530

Monday to Friday, 22–26 September

Led by Erik Dries

Centering Prayer

12 places, £260

Friday to Sunday, 26–28 September

Led by Rosemary Field

& Richard Eddleston

Boot, Boat & Goat

14 places, £565

Monday to Friday, 29 Sept.–3 October

Led by Terry Winterton

& Grace Ogilvie

Circle Dancing

15 places, £500

Monday to Friday, 6–10 October

Led by Anne-Lise Kryger

Taming the Tiger – Train Your Mind***Through Meditation***

15 places, £295

Friday to Sunday, 10–12 October

Led by Adam Dacey

What has Wordsworth to Offer us?

12 places, £480

Monday to Friday, 27–31 October

Led by Barbara Windle

Sketching & Mixed Media Painting

12 places, £410

Friday to Monday, 28 November–1 Dec.

Led by Sue Ford

COURSES FILL UP QUICKLY – in 2024, eight of the 31 on offer were already fully booked by 1 January – so if you are interested in anything on the list you should contact Glenthorne **without delay** to avoid disappointment.

BEN PINK DANDELION, who features largely in this issue (see pages 16 & 25–31, and among the Woodbrooke and Glenthorne courses), spoke to *The Church Times* on becoming a professor in 2008; the interview is still available to read at:

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2008/10-october/features/interview-ben-pink-dandelion-professor-of-quaker-studies-birmingham>

Recommendation: a book from the AM Library

*Ada Salter – Pioneer of Ethical Socialism by Graham Taylor,
Lawrence & Wishart, 2016*

The author is not a Friend, but an historian “interested in the history of dissenters, radicals and Quakers”, so the biography stems from a political angle, unsurprisingly since it comes from the publishers associated with the Communist Party. Ada’s beliefs took her from her Methodist background in the country to Bermondsey, a poor and deprived suburb of London, where the women workers had a very hard time. Ada was able to set up clinics and other groups and soon her clients engaged politically. Although not yet a Quaker she saw that of God in rough girls. She was already working for improved housing, education courses, health clinics, gardens, and the rights of women when she met the brilliant medical student Alfred Salter and persuaded him to give up his idea of going on with research, but instead to consider the needs of Bermondsey. They were married, and he got all the credit for Ada’s work.

You should read it. What a remarkable woman!

Rachel Frith

“An expensive way of making bad people worse ...”? *

QUAKERS and Prison Abolition: A Conversation was an event in April at Glasgow Meeting House, organised by the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network. Participants were challenged to set aside conventional wisdom on imprisonment and imagine radical approaches to justice informed by Quaker principles.

A booklet continuing that conversation has now been published, featuring articles from the three main speakers, quotations from prisoners spanning the last hundred years, and artwork that aims to engage the heart and imagination in questions of abolition; also a poem, a short story and an “Abolition-ish Reading List” of fifteen titles written since 1976, the newest being Ben Jarman’s as-yet-unpublished 2024 Swarthmore Lecture. The booklet’s text can be read at the Quakers in Scotland website, and downloaded here:

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/AbolitionPublicationDigitalVersion.pdf>

* This description of imprisonment is attributed to Douglas Hurd, Conservative Home Secretary in the late 1980s – Julian Le Vay, formerly of the Prison Service, who writes on penal policy, insists he never said it, and that it originated in the 1990 White Paper, Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public, published after Hurd had left office. At any rate, despite the possible implication that all inmates are “bad people”, it may be thought truer than the claim of Hurd’s successor-but-three, Michael Howard, that “prison works” – a dogma that led to the sharp rise in prisoner numbers during his time in office. The trend continued under the Blair government, until almost twice as many people were serving custodial sentences as had been in prison in Hurd’s time.

Climate Justice and the Rule of Law – *recent news items*

AT ITS WEBSITE <https://climatecasechart.com/>, Columbia Law School has two databases of cases concerning environmental issues. The one of **US litigation** includes details of more than twelve hundred Federal Statutory Claims, a hundred and fifty Constitutional Claims, some six hundred cases brought under State laws, and more than three hundred other cases under seven main headings. **Global litigation** covers the rest of the world: it is organised into Suits against Governments, Suits against Corporations/Individuals and Advisory Opinions, and it can be searched by jurisdiction. UK cases include three decisions at the Court of Session. Rulings by the Advertising Standards Authority are also reported. However it appears the ‘Global’ database is not updated very often; the UKSC’s important ruling in the Surrey case (*below*), given on 20 June, has yet to be added to it.

THE DECISION of the UK Supreme Court in the case *R. (on the application of Finch on behalf of the Weald Action Group) (Appellant) v. Surrey County Council and others (Respondents)* – referred to variously as ‘the Finch case’ and ‘the Surrey case’ – has wide-reaching implications, as noted in *Sesame 256*. It ruled that impact assessments of the environmental effects of a proposed development cannot focus only on its *immediate* consequences, but must consider future ‘downstream’ effects as well; on this basis, the new Secretary of State withdrew from the action to defend the granting of planning permission for a new coal mine in Cumbria. The case went ahead, and on 13 September the High Court agreed that Michael Gove, the former Secretary of State, had acted unlawfully in approving the mine; see

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/sep/13/high-court-blocks-cumbria-plan-for-first-new-uk-coalmine-in-30-years>

The Government also withdrew from the cases brought separately by Uplift UK and Greenpeace against the development of the Rosebank oilfield and the Jackdaw gas field. Shell and Equinor are continuing to fight them, and, at the time of going to press, the issue is before the Court of Session; it is understood the companies do not deny that the permission to go ahead was unlawful, but say it would be unreasonable to stop the projects now.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czd5rvqgp830o>

ALTHOUGH THE Labour Government has abandoned its predecessor’s active support for environmental damage, it has as yet done nothing about the Tories’ legacy of punitive laws against protest. Linda Lakhdhir, legal director of Climate Rights International, writes on this concern here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/sep/10/britain-protest-laws-tories-climate-labour>

She notes that Yvette Cooper as Home Secretary is continuing the appeal against the ruling that struck down as being unlawful some of Suella Braverman’s changes to the Public Order Act 1986, broadening its scope.

THE TWO 'Just Stop Oil' activists who in 2022 threw soup at a Van Gogh in the National Gallery were sentenced in September; Phoebe Plummer, 23, was sent to prison for two years for causing an estimated £10,000 worth of damage to the frame of *Sunflowers*, while Anna Holland, 22, got 20 months for the same offence, but will serve only half in custody.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/sep/27/just-stop-oil-activist-phoebe-plummer-jailed-throwing-soup-van-gogh-sunflowers>

The trial judge at Southwark Crown Court, Christopher Hehir, had presided at the 'Just Stop Oil' case in July, and was much criticised for the severity of the sentences he handed down then (see *Sesame* 256); he had already been referred to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General for undue leniency in cases of sexual assault, violent disorder, assault and battery, and affray, for which the accused were *not* imprisoned, as reported at:

<https://politicalcleanup.wordpress.com/2024/07/20/broken-britain-review-judge-christopher-hehirs-bizarre-and-unjust-sentencing-record/>.

IN SEPTEMBER, Vanuatu, Fiji and Samoa jointly submitted to the UN Secretary-General, and to the Working Group on Amendments of the Assembly of States Parties, a proposal to amend the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, calling on the international community to add the crime of ecocide to the list of internationally outlawed offences. The procedure by which the change could be adopted is described here:

<https://www.ejiltalk.org/should-ecocide-be-an-international-crime-its-time-for-states-to-decide/>

ECOCIDE IN WARTIME is already a crime, under Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which prohibits "*methods of warfare that cause widespread, long-term, and severe damage to the natural environment*", wording echoed in the proposed amendment to the Rome Statute. It is suspected that the release in August from within Russia of toxic chemicals into the Seym River was not accidental; the Seym flows across the Ukrainian border into the Desna, which connects to a reservoir in the Kyiv region. Over more than 650 km of the Desna, all organisms are reported to have been killed; the chemicals, thought to be waste from a sugar factory in Tyotkino, include magnesium, ammonia and poisonous nitrates. See

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/01/ukraine-seim-river-poisoning-chernihiv-ecocide->

FOLLOWING THE SPEECH in June by the UN Secretary General António Guterres in which he called fossil-fuel companies the "godfathers of climate chaos", and said that like tobacco companies they should be prohibited from advertising their products, the Hague has become the first city in the world to enact such a ban. It takes effect in January.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/sep/13/the-hague-becomes-worlds-first-city-to-ban-fossil-fuel-related-ads>

PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTEST is under attack in the United States, where, since 2017, legislation to restrict it (often as laws to protect ‘critical infrastructure’ such as oil pipelines) has been under consideration in 45 states and actually enacted in 22 of them. A 2023 Georgia law allows sentences of up to 20 years in prison for intentional damage to critical infrastructure, aimed at disrupting service. In Louisiana, unauthorized entry to oil and gas facilities is punishable by imprisonment – with or without hard labour – for up to five years. *The Guardian* has been running an occasional series, ‘The Fight for Democracy’ which has reported on this trend, and the part played in it by fossil fuel lobbyists. Recent articles are at

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/sep/26/anti-protest-laws-fossil-fuel-lobby>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/sep/27/mountain-valley-pipeline-protest>

THE TWO DISABLED MEN who, with the support of Friends of the Earth, sued the UK Government over the inadequacy of its plans for adapting to climate change (see Sesame 256), had their case rejected at the Royal Courts of Justice on 25 October; they had argued this deficiency breached their human rights to life, home and possessions, and that they had been discriminated against on account of their vulnerable situations. Friends of the Earth are considering an appeal against the judgment.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/oct/25/kevin-jordan-lost-home-coastal-erosion-court-case-uk-government>

IN SETTLING ANOTHER CASE, the UK Government has agreed to pay an undisclosed sum in damages to Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah, whose nine-year-old daughter Ella had a fatal asthma attack in 2013 after being exposed to excessive air pollution. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, the Department for Transport and the Department of Health & Social Care issued a statement expressing condolences to the family, which reads in part:

“Young children like Ella should not have to suffer because of our air. We are grateful to you for your tireless work, and we very much hope that, working together in the years to come, more can be achieved in improving not only the quality of the air we breathe, but also in raising awareness of the health implications of air pollution.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/oct/31/ella-kissi-debrah-mother-receive-settlement-death-air-pollution>

AT THE HAGUE THIS MONTH, the 2021 Dutch ruling that Shell must reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 45 % of 2019 levels by the end of 2030 was overturned. Milieudefensie, the Netherlands arm of Friends of the Earth, which brought the original case, is considering taking the matter to the Supreme Court. Shell had argued that while it planned in any case to halve its emissions by 2030, a legal obligation to do so was unreasonable.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/nov/12/shell-wins-appeal-against-court-ruling-ordering-cut-in-carbon-emissions>

The Cost of *Sesame*

IN A REDACTED FORM, *Sesame* can be read by anyone; it is on the Area Meeting website at <https://www.quakerscotland.org/south-east/newsletters>. The full issue, which includes the Area Meeting minutes, and may also give contact details of individuals, is distributed by email to all on the AM list, and is available free in printed form to anyone who requests it. Copies are posted from our printers, Footeprint UK, to be received by second-class post ahead of Area Meeting. It is assumed that readers do not necessarily see *The Friend*, and may not have internet access, so I try to include material of which Friends *ought* to be aware, such as Epistles, and *need* to be aware, such as papers from the Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group; as well as a variety of items on current concerns and Quaker doings. These can add up – this is the second consecutive issue with 52 pages.

It is cheapest of all for Area Meeting if readers receive *Sesame* by email only. *Please consider if you could manage without a paper copy.*

POSTAGE is the main element in the cost of the newsletter; costs would be much reduced if, rather than being sent individually to Friends' homes, copies went in batches to local meetings. I hope to explore the feasibility of this in the New Year.

There used to be a reminder on the back page (until squeezed out by Zoom) that the Treasurer welcomes donations to the cost of *Sesame* – this is still the case! *If you could consider a contribution, he (and I) would be most grateful – ED.*

Making Ecocide a Crime in Scots Law – *Call to Action*

A year ago, Monica Lennon MSP announced her intention to bring a Member's Bill to "*protect the environment in Scotland and deter environmental damage by introducing the crime of ecocide into Scots law*" (see *Sesame* 250); the final proposal for the Ecocide (Prevention) (Scotland) Bill was lodged on 12 November 2024, and the Summary of Consultation Responses was published on the same day – it can be read here:

[https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/proposed-members-bills/monica-lennon-ecocide-consultation-summary-2-\(2\).pdf](https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/proposed-members-bills/monica-lennon-ecocide-consultation-summary-2-(2).pdf)

Monica Lennon has 30 days (*i.e.* until 12 December) in which to enlist the support of 18 Members of the Scottish Parliament from at least two of the main parties to secure the right to introduce her Bill. She is urging all who agree that deliberate or reckless environmental damage should be criminalised to contact their MSPs and ask them to support the Bill. Using <https://www.writetothem.com/> is a free way to contact elected representatives by email in four simple steps (enter postcode; choose representative; write message; send message) even if you do not know who they are. *Please do it!*

[*With thanks to Janet Saunders for passing this on.*]

Led by the Spirit. *But to do what ... !?*

'Testimony is an experience of God, breaking into the particularities of our lives, disquieting our hearts so that they will not be stilled until we respond.'

Patricia Loring

IMAGINE you are the treasurer of a local cricket club. Its finances are not in good shape, and you discover workmen are being paid in cash to avoid VAT and income tax. What do you do? This is one small example of the spiritual dilemmas facing Friends as they try to embody divine guidance in their outward lives, integrating spiritual practice with social action. It was shared by a participant on 16 November during the day session on *The Spiritual Roots of Quaker Testimony*, led by Stuart Masters of Woodbrooke, and one of the five Woodbrooke sessions run for our Area Meeting. Those attending included six men and some twenty women.

'To conform a little to a wrong way strengthens the hands of such who carry wrong customs to their utmost extent; and the more a person appears to be virtuous and heavenly-minded, the more powerfully does his conformity operate in favour of evil-doers.'

John Woolman (*Quaker Faith & Practice* 20.47)

Backed up by a series of wonderful Quaker quotes from early and later Friends, and some work in small groups, the day focussed on: the overall shape of Quaker Testimony; Truth, Integrity and Simplicity; Equality and Community; Peace and Sustainability. It shared how these testimonies were visible in the early Quaker movement, how they have changed over time, and what they mean for us today.

The early Quaker testimony, in what was then an empowered and convinced Pentecostal, charismatic movement, was against the established church and its outward forms: tithes, priesthood, faith professed but not lived out. It was against swearing oaths (we tell the truth anyway); acts of social deference (flattering titles, bowing/scraping); frivolous pursuits (sports, games, theatre, arts); and fighting with outward weapons.

The day went on to explore our rejection of violence and war, the commitment to spiritual and social equality, working for economic justice, and our concern for environmental sustainability - as well as the dilemma of challenging social arrangements and hierarchies, especially when facing severe persecution. In Barbados, for example, Fox determined it more important to establish Friends as law-abiding citizens - even with submissive law-abiding slaves - than to challenge chattel slavery.

Some of the many numerous and inspiring ideas during the day:

- *Key features of Quaker testimony include: a response to specific circumstances, rather than a general principle; it only exists to the extent it is lived by real people; it seeks a response from others; it may be risky and have costly implications; but it can change things.*
- *'Simplicity is about organising our lives in a way that avoids unnecessary dis-*

tractions, so that we focus on what's most important – listening for and responding to divine guidance.'

- *Quakers today have become very reticent about their being Friends of the Truth'.*
- *'There is that of God in everyone – regardless of social class, gender, ethnicity. The Holy Spirit is a Great Leveller.'*

The session made plain a real opportunity and need now for more small group work in our AM exploring much further the dilemmas and challenges facing Friends, individually or together. What are the encouraging examples of testimony we are being true to? What are we avoiding? What in our everyday lives (however small or large the context) are we now being led to do and say ...and how?

Rosemary Hartill

STATEMENT OF CONCERN

The following statement, addressed to the chief executive officers of the five largest UK high-street banks, was drafted by the JustMoney Movement, Make My Money Matter, Churches Together in Britain & Ireland, Christian Climate Action, the Laudato Si' Movement and Tipping Point UK. Early signatories included the Methodist Church in Britain, the Free Church of England, the Iona Community, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hallam, the Anglican Diocese of Leeds, and six Area Meetings in England & Wales. There was no time to consider it at Area Meeting in September, but the Clerk has signed it on our behalf – see page 51.

DEAR C.S. Venkatakrisnan (*Barclays*), Noel Quinn (*HSBC*), Hector Grisi Checa (*Santander*), Paul Thwaite (*NatWest*), Charlie Nunn (*Lloyds*),
We, the undersigned, express our deep concerns over the financial activities of the five biggest UK high-street banks – Barclays, HSBC, Santander, NatWest and Lloyds.

Banks play an important role in society, from providing institutions like ourselves with services to investing in our economy. You hold immense influence and responsibility. However, we believe your financing practices represent a contradiction to our values as faith-based institutions.

This statement of concern comes at a time when many churches around the world are marking the Season of Creation, a reminder that the earth – our common home – should be cherished and safeguarded. As Christians, we understand that *“the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it”* (Psalm 24:1). We are called to act justly with the resources we steward and to care for Creation.

Recognising our own role in contributing to the climate crisis, we are striving to reduce our carbon emissions, educate our communities and champion positive climate action to bring about a fairer, greener future. This includes paying attention to where we bank.

Collectively, you have provided \$556 billion to fossil fuels since the Paris agreement, including \$268 billion to companies involved in fossil fuel expansion. The expansion of oil and gas is incompatible with limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees, according to the UN, the International Energy Agency and thousands of leading climate scientists.

The fossil fuel industry and the climate crisis not only threaten the future of the planet we love, but they also threaten the present, especially the lives of our neighbours in frontline communities and the global south. In the past few years, we have seen an increase in extreme weather events, from heatwaves to floods. The trend is set to continue and conditions to deteriorate. Vulnerable communities are already suffering from the effects of global heating; we cannot stand by and allow the crisis to worsen.

We look to create a hopeful future, one that is just, fair and kind, for everyone, our children and those who will come after us; we expect our financial institutions to do the same. This future cannot include the financing of fossil fuels and environmental degradation, or the facilitating of human rights abuses, health crises and atrocities across the globe.

Increasingly, organisations are wanting to align their choice of financial services provider to their values. In the last year, we have seen institutions challenge their banking providers, including major charities such as Christian Aid and Oxfam, a coalition of more than 20 universities led by Cambridge, as well as UK health institutions and several, trail-blazing churches. We are encouraged by these institutions to take this action, continuing the long tradition of Christian institutions standing for justice.

In light of the above concerns, we call on you all to urgently do the following:

1. End new finance or financial services to potential new clients involved in fossil fuel expansion.
2. Put existing fossil fuel clients on notice that they must end fossil fuel expansion or risk losing financing and financial services.
3. If existing clients fail to end their expansion plans in the short term, banks should exit those relationships.

As long as these demands are unmet, we will continue to publicly voice our concern and explore other banking options wherever possible. We encourage those of all faiths and none to join us in calling for a better financial sector that aligns with our values, protecting our future, our planet and communities worldwide. We hope that this statement is a step along the way to a just, fair financial system that works for all.

This statement remains open to signatories so that Christian institutions, from any denomination, can voice their support for a better, safer future.

For more on the organisations that drafted this Statement of Concern, see
<https://justmoney.org.uk/>; <https://makemymoneymatter.co.uk/>; <https://ctbi.org.uk/>;
<https://christianclimateaction.org/>; <https://laudatosimovement.org/>; <https://tippingpointuk.org/>

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Wednesday 18 September 2024
at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House,
and by remote videoconferencing**

2024/09/01 Worship and introductions

During opening worship, we have heard read from *Quaker Faith & Practice* 3.02. We seek to know God's will; our meetings for worship help us to discern this through silent waiting. Every activity of life is subject to divine guidance.

[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]

[Redacted]

2024/09/09 Closing minute

46 Friends (40 members, five attenders and one visitor) have been at all or part of this meeting, either in person or by Zoom. Local meeting attendance is indicated ~~below~~ [overleaf].

Dark Skies (Saraband Publishers, ISBN 978-1-916812-22-2)

This new book of essays by Anna Levin, one of the 'In the Moment' series from Saraband ("finding ways of being fully present in our activities and environment"), was published in October. See <https://saraband.net/in-the-moment/>.

Central Edinburgh 19	Central Fife 2	East Lothian 3	Kelso 3	Penicuik 1
Polmont 1	Portobello & Musselburgh 5	South Edinburgh 10	Tweeddale 1	Visitors/Others 1

We record our thanks to staff at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House for looking after us.

Because of lack of time, we were unable to take items 8, 10 and 11 on the published agenda. The Clerk will include draft minutes on these items as appropriate in an email accompanying the circulated minute of this meeting [*and see below*].

We next meet on Saturday 23 November 2024, at 2.00 pm at Bellfield, Bellfield Street, Portobello and online, hosted by Portobello & Musselburgh Local Meeting.

(Signed)
Alastair Cameron, Clerk
Cath Dyer, Assistant Clerk

Draft minutes in respect of agenda items not dealt with at AM

2024/09/08 Matters from local meetings

1. Portobello & Musselburgh

In accordance with Quaker Faith & Practice 12.16, Portobello & Musselburgh local meeting has carried out a spiritual review, which was considered by the meeting in May. This has had an impact on the life of the meeting, both in carrying out the review, and in going forward. Copies of the review can be had on request.

We look forward to hearing more about this when we meet in Portobello for our next Area Meeting, in November.

2. Central Edinburgh

Central Edinburgh local meeting is celebrating the 400th anniversary of the birth of George Fox on Saturday 5 October at 7 Victoria Terrace. Ben Pink Dandelion will be running an afternoon session on The Life and times of George Fox and the relevance of his ministry today. The event is open to all, and is free, with donations being collected for funds for Central Edinburgh. Booking is essential as space is limited: <https://tinyurl.com/2a5n4xaw>.

We thank Central Edinburgh for this initiative.

3. Central Edinburgh

Two successful events have been held as part of our Woodbrooke Where You Are series, open to everyone within our Area Meeting. In February, 47 Friends attended a session led by Ben Pink Dandelion on Essentials of Quakerism and in May, 29 Friends attended What Happens in Meeting for Worship, facilitated by Simonne Wood.

Feedback has been very positive; the days have been successful in deepening our understanding of Quaker spirituality and our sense of community and have been appreciated by newer attenders as well as more experienced Friends. The third session, scheduled for June, had to be postponed at the last minute due to the illness of the tutor but has been rescheduled for January 2025.

Costs for Woodbrooke (£6,100) have been met by the Sylvia Marshall Bequest, a legacy left to Central Edinburgh Meeting. Area Meeting (minute 2023/09/07) agreed to fund the catering costs, estimated to be between £200 and £300 per day. Catering costs for the first two events were £731. Local meetings and individuals have made contributions amounting to £293.75. There were costs amounting to £101.80 for staff of the meeting house and the caterer because of the late cancellation of the June event but Woodbrooke has agreed to give a credit of £120 to our Area Meeting for courses, to cover this. Local meetings who have benefitted from these opportunities are asked if they would wish to make a financial contribution, if they have not already done so.

*Friends are invited to sign up for the remaining three courses at least 10 days in advance at: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/sescotland Password **Cented24***

28 September: Trusting the Spirit – Understanding Discernment,

Rhiannon Grant

16 November: The Spiritual Roots of Quaker Testimony, Stuart Masters

11 January: Telling our Spiritual Stories, Rhiannon Grant

2024/09/10 General Meeting for Scotland (GMS)

[No Friends were appointed to attend General Meeting on our behalf, either at Inverness, on 21 September, (but South East Scotland was well represented nevertheless) or on 9 November, when East Scotland AM was to be the host; Friends were asked to contact the Clerk regarding the latter to enable appointment by between meeting procedure.]

2024/09/11 Correspondence

- 1. The Clerk has been invited to sign on our behalf a 'statement of concern' prepared by **Christian Climate Action** [and others], addressed to the leaders of the five major UK banks. This challenges the banks' role in funding the continued use of fossil fuels, in the face of the decisions taken at recent COP climate conferences. The letter calls on the banks to end services to new clients engaged in fossil fuel expansion; to put existing clients on notice that they risk losing financial services if they continue fossil fuel expansion; and to exit such relationship if clients continue. [The Clerk has signed this statement; see page 41.]*
- 2. **Steve Chettle** (K) is developing a peace project called Peace Bugle, with the aim of 'turning instruments of war into instruments of peace'. This has involved commissioning **Sally Beamish** to compose a new bugle call for Peace, entitled FirstPeace. Sally was a member of Glasgow Meeting and is now with Brighton Meeting. She is an internationally acclaimed composer. FirstPeace will be played publicly for the first time at 11.00 am this Saturday 21 September as part of International Day of Peace. More information, including an MP3 and sheet music, can be found at <https://www.arts-uk.com/peacebugle/index.html>. [There is more on this in the report of September's General Meeting – see page 18]*

QUAKER MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP IN SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND

Contact details of named Friends are in the Book of Members. 'QMH' = Quaker Meeting House

MEETING IN PERSON

Central Edinburgh – QMH, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL

Sundays at 9.30 & 11.00 am. Tea & coffee afterwards; soup and bread & cheese lunch, 12.30.

Wednesday, 12.30–1.00 pm. Tea & coffee; you may bring your own lunch.

Contact the office, centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk or 0131 225 4825, for updates.

Central Fife – The Old Kirk, Kirk Wynd, Kirkcaldy KY1 1EH

On the 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays at 10.30 am. On 1st Sundays, also at 10.30 am, at

Linburn Scout Hall, Abbey View, Dunfermline KY11 4HA.

Contact **Laurie Naumann** for further information.

East Lothian – Dunbar Town House, 79 High Street, Dunbar, EH42 1ER

On the 1st, 2nd & last Sundays of the month at 10.45am. Contact **Phil Lucas** for updates.

Kelso – QMH, Abbey Row, Kelso TD5 7JF

Sundays at 10.30 am. Contact **Anne Macnaughton** for updates.

North Edinburgh worship group – 4th Sunday in the month at 7.00 pm, meeting in Friends' homes. Contact **Tony Gross** or **Rufus Reade** for further information.

Penicuik – For confirmation of the venue, contact penicuikquakers@hutcheson.org.uk

1st Sundays at 11.00 am – contact **Mark Hutcheson** for updates and further information.

Polmont – Trinity Church, Manse Place, Falkirk FK1 1JN

Sundays at 10.30. Contact **Mariot Dallas** for updates.

Portobello & Musselburgh – Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello EH15 2BP

On the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 11.00 am, with a children's meeting.

1st Sundays: Evening meeting at 7.30 pm; NO children's meeting.

3rd Sundays: Hollies Community Hub, 183 High St, Musselburgh EH21 7DE, 7.00 pm

Contact **Robin Liebmann**, **Sarah Martin** or **Marian Willoner** for further information, portymussclerks@gmail.com.

South Edinburgh – The Open Door, 420 Morningside Road, Edinburgh EH10 5HY

Sundays, 10.30 am. For information contact the clerking team, sedclerks@gmail.com.

Tweeddale – 2nd Tuesdays, at 7.30 pm, and 4th Sundays at 10.30 am, meeting in Friends' homes. For further information contact **Lesley Morrison**

MEETING BY ZOOM

Central Edinburgh – for login details contact centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk

Every Sunday at 9.30 am ONLY (blended with the meetings in person).

Central Fife – for login details contact **Laurie Naumann**

On the 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays at 10.30 am, blended with the meeting in person.

East Lothian – for login details contact **Phil Lucas**

Tuesdays at 7.30 pm

Penicuik – available if requested in advance – for details contact **Mark Hutcheson**

South Edinburgh – for login details contact sedclerks@gmail.com.

Sundays at 10.30 am, blended with meetings in person.

1st Thursdays at 7.30 pm (online only). Meeting for worship (30 mins) followed by chat.