

SESAME

Number 263: November 2025

Area Meeting, 1 November / Wiston Lodge *report* / Fox's Journal *extract* / Action against Genocide / Parliamentary Engagement: *things to do* / Doors Open Day / NFPB at York / Alternative Remembrance Day event / Climate Justice *news* / Woodbrooke *events & courses* / Should SESAM terminate? / Meeting for Sufferings in Herts. / BDRC *update* / Christian Aid / September Minutes / ... &c.



Wiston Lodge – see page 3

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

The next Area Meeting will be on Saturday 1 November at Edinburgh Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, and online, starting at 11.00 am. We expect to finish at around 3.30 pm.

All associated with Quakers in South East Scotland are welcome; you don't have to be a member of the Religious Society of Friends. Children are also welcome; please notify **Alastair Cameron** (contact details in the Book of Members), who will be leading the programme for them, if any are coming with you.

The meeting is hosted by Friends from South Edinburgh Local Meeting who will be leading our afternoon session; Esther Shreeve will be joining me at the table. We will also be hearing from Alastair McIntosh of Glasgow Meeting about the work of the GalGael Trust.

Sara Davies
Clerking Team

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of 10 September 2025
3. Matters arising from previous meetings
 1. *General Meeting for Scotland / Quakers in Scotland*
 2. *Clerking roles*
 3. *Dates of Meetings for 2026/27* (Minute 2025/09/08 refers)
 4. *Radical Hearts, Open Minds*
4. Between-meeting decisions
 1. *Additional representative to Young Friends General Meeting: Kima Meijer*
 2. *Visitors to membership applicants*
5. Membership matters:
 1. *Applications for membership*
 2. *Reports on membership visits*
6. Matters from local meetings
 1. *Falkirk & Polmont: Cladhan Hotel witness*
 2. *Portobello & Musselburgh:*
proposed exhibition on conscientious objection [see page 33]
7. Trustees report, budget and appointment of auditors
8. Appointments

9. Reports and correspondence
10. General Meeting matters
 1. *Hospitality on 8 November*
11. Alastair McIntosh – GalGael Trust
Lunch
12. Afternoon session by South Edinburgh Meeting:
React, Retreat, Reach out, Reconcile
13. Closing minute

Building Community – the Wiston Weekend

Quakers have been gathering for community building weekends at Wiston Lodge in South Lanarkshire for at least 20 years. The most recent weekend took place 5-7 September. Sixty Quakers came along this year, about a quarter of them children.

But what do we mean by community building? Why does it matter for Quakers? *Quaker Faith & Practice* 10.03 says:

Our sense of community does not depend on all professing identical beliefs, for it grows from worshipping together, knowing one another, loving one another, accepting responsibilities, sharing and working together. We will be helped by tried and tested Quaker methods and procedures, but the meeting will only live if we develop a sense of community, which includes children and adults alike.

While SESAM's Local Meetings for Worship bring us together throughout the year, the opportunity Wiston provides to spend more time together with Friends from across south and east Scotland has been found to be an important way to broaden and deepen our relationships with each other. Financial support from SESAM has been vital in making the weekend accessible to all who wish to attend.

So how does our Wiston Quaker weekend contribute to the vision described in *Q.F. & P.* 10.03, of building community through worshipping together, knowing one another and sharing and working together?

Our gathering at Wiston had opportunities for Quaker worship running as a thread through the programme, in the silences we created though our time together, in our epilogue sessions at the end of the busy Friday and Saturday programmes, and in the joint meeting for worship held on Sunday with Lanark Meeting, who use Wiston as a venue for their regular meetings for worship. I know they deeply value our shared meeting for worship when we visit Wiston.

During the weekend we shared and worked together to create an engaging programme and make the event work for our mixed age group. All the workshops were put on by the participants, with a range of activities for

adults and children, from drawing and crafting to storytelling and a walk up nearby Tinto Hill. The lodge and its grounds, with woodland trails, ready-made campfire spots and peaceful surroundings, proved once again a wonderful setting for our planned activities as well as a place to explore between sessions.

We were all very grateful to David Somervell of South Edinburgh, Charlotte White, Portobello & Musselburgh, and Josh Green, Falkirk & Polmont, for the effort they put in as the organising team. However, I think that over the course of the weekend just about every participant helped out in some way. The Wiston staff were also, as ever, incredibly helpful: always there in the background to make things go smoothly. The fact they handled the catering gave us time and space for the programme to work flexibly and for us to enjoy wide-ranging conversations over delicious shared meals.

But the most important thing that happened at Wiston was that it enabled us, as a community of Friends, to form and renew bonds of friendship and faith. There were lots of new faces at this year's Wiston, as well as a number of familiar faces who hadn't come for several years. Our relaxed programme gave lots of time to talk and share and learn.

For me, the centre of the my experience of this year's Wiston was the workshop where Friends who had been attending the counter-protests against the anti-refugee events in Falkirk shared their experiences. It's easy to recognise 'that of God' in everyone when we are sat round in meeting for worship. It's much more difficult when you are facing those who are shouting abuse at refugees housed in a hotel in Falkirk. But if we are to tackle the despair that has caused people to look to the far right for answers it will require us to see the common humanity in all those involved. In our closing worship on Sunday the ministry spoke of renewed connection: to each other, to spiritual practices and to the land. Friendships had been deepened; connection to Quakerism strengthened.

However, to continue, the Wiston weekend needs more people to get involved and share ideas and the work of turning them into reality. In particular, there is more to be done to create a programme that gives the children and young people the freedom they want while at all times keeping them safe. Please contact quakerwistonweekend@gmail.com to get involved in planning and preparing next year's event, or just to be added to the mailing list.

Mark Ballard

"To love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices"

MARK 12:33 (N.I.V.)

Confronting an Oppressive New Law

The Conventicles Act 1670 received the Royal Assent on 11 April and came into effect a month later, banning religious gatherings of five people or more, unless they took place under the auspices of the Church of England. For a first offence, anyone aged 16 or over attending such a meeting could be fined five shillings, and anyone preaching at one, twenty pounds, with the owner of the house, if it took place indoors, also liable to a twenty-pound fine. All these were doubled for a second offence, and if one or more participants were too poor to pay, their fines could be levied on one of the others, up to a maximum of ten pounds per gathering. According to the Journal, the law was passed in response to a violent disturbance in Wiltshire, where a presbyterian preacher named John Fox had caused "a great tumult ... in the steeplehouse ... ; the Common Prayer book was cut to pieces and some treasonable words spoken by some of [his] followers". Reports of the incident confused John Fox with George (who was, he wrote, "above two hundred miles from the place where this bustle happened") and despite two MPs' signing certificates declaring that George Fox the Quaker had not been involved, Friends' meetings were not excluded from the scope of the Act. Before it came into effect, George Fox wrote against it, in A Declaration from the People of God, called Quakers, against all Seditious Conventicles – the Act's full title was 'An Act to prevent and suppress Seditious Conventicles', and Quaker meetings, he argued, could not be described as such – and he made the same case in a "short paper" addressed to magistrates. He also wrote to Friends, "to strengthen and encourage them to stand fast in their testimony, and bear, with Christian patience and content, the suffering that was coming upon them" ...

UPON THE FIRST-DAY after the Act came in force [Sunday 15 May 1670], Friends met as they used to in the morning, where every minister declared their going to the several meetings as they were moved. And Friends asked me to what meeting I would go and I told them, into the high fields to Gracious Street meeting where I expected the storm was most likely to begin ['Gracious Street' = Gracechurch Street in the City of London]. And this day all the train-bands [part-time militiamen] were up and as I passed through the street to the meeting all the street was full of people, and a guard set to the meeting-house door to keep out Friends. And I went in the other passage that goes out of Lombard Street, and there was another guard set, of a company of watchmen, and the court full of people. And William Warwick was speaking, but he had soon ended; and after he had done I stood up and spoke and was moved to say, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me' [see Acts 9:4 ff], and it was hard for him to kick against that which pricked him, and they that do persecute Christ in his members where he is made manifest kicked against that which pricked them now, so it was Saul's nature that persecuted still, and that it was the birth of the flesh that persecuted the birth of the Spirit; for we were a peaceable people and we did love them that persecuted us. And it was the nature of dogs to tear and devour the sheep, and we suffered as sheep that

did bite not again, but others they might persecute that would bite again. Therefore all to stand still and see the salvation of God, and let the peace of God keep their hearts, for the bright morning star was risen.

And after I had spoken a pretty many more words, in came the constable with an informer, and an officer with a file of musketeers, and I cried, 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' Then they plucked me down and pulled me out and the officer said I was the man he looked for, he must carry me to the Lord Mayor's, and he put me among the file of musketeers and bid them secure me, and took William Warwick and John Burnyeat and haled us along the streets. And Thomas Lower and Gerard Roberts followed after me. The people cried to them, 'Have a care of him, he is a princely man', and were mighty moderate. And we came along the streets to the Exchange and there they made a stand awhile, and then they had me on towards Moorfields. And as we were going amongst the streets this officer was laying his hand upon me, and some mocked at the constable and told him we would not run away. The informer was asking Will Warwick a question, how one might know the Scriptures, and William did not answer him; so I turned to him and said, 'By the same spirit that they were in that gave them forth.' 'Oh', said he, 'this is a rational man, I will talk with him.' Then said he, 'Where were all these new religions about two hundred years ago?' and that it would never be a good world until all people came to the good old religion that was two hundred years ago. 'What!' said I to him, 'art thou a Papist? what! a Papist informer? For two hundred years ago there was no other religion here but the popish!' But he would not be known nor discover [i.e. *reveal*] it. And after he saw that he had insnared himself he was vexed, and as he went amongst in the streets I often spoke to him and manifested his wickedness to the people, that he was a Papist informer and was not only against us but against the Protestants.

So when I came to the Lord Mayor's house he was putting me forward with his hand, I said, 'What? Thou thinkest to get money? But I'll warrant thee.'

And when we came into the Lord Mayor's court there were several people got about me and asked for what I was taken. So I desired them to go and ask the informer and know what his name was, but he would not tell his name but began to gnaw his fingers' ends. And after a little while he went and whispered to the constable and said he would go his ways, he could do little more there, but the constable would not have had him go. And then one of the mayor's officers looking out a window spoke to him and said he should tell his name before he passed out of that house, for the Lord Mayor would know by what authority he intruded himself with his soldiers into those laws which belonged to the civil magistrate to execute, and not to the military. For aught he knew he was come to inform against his lord as much as against any other. And one of the officers called to him and said, 'Have you brought people here and now will you go away before the Lord Mayor comes?' 'Yes,' said he. After which he was restless until he

got out, and came to the doorkeeper to let him forth, who was called unto not to let him go forth till the Lord Mayor came. But he forcibly pulled open the door and went out. And no sooner was he come out of the doors, the streets being full of people, but the people made such a shout that the streets rung with the noise, and cried, 'A Papist informer! A Papist informer!' and fell upon him and we thought would have torn him in pieces. So we desired the constable to go, who said he durst not go out, so the soldiers being there they rescued him from the people and brought him into the mayor's entry and kept him awhile and then he went forth again towards Moorgate. And they shouted after he came forth again, and then they fell upon him again and then the soldiers rescued him again and had him into an alley into a house and there he changed his periwig and vest, and passed away towards Moorfields unknown. It was judged he was gone to the mayor to inform him, the mayor not being come home.

So when the Lord Mayor came home I and William Warwick and John Burnyeat were brought before him. And some of the officers of his house would have taken off our hats, but he called to them and bid them let them alone and not to meddle with our hats, for, said he, 'They are not yet brought before me in judicature.'

So he called some of the Presbyterian and Baptist teachers before him and was somewhat sharp with them and convicted them.

After he was done with them I was brought up before him to his table, and the officers took off my hat. Then he swore the watchmen, that we were speaking at such a meeting.

I told him this Act did not concern us, which was made against seditious meetings that met under colour of religion to contrive insurrections, for we had been tried and were always found peaceable, and therefore he should put a difference betwixt the precious and the vile.

He said the Act was made against meetings and a worship not according to the liturgy.

I asked him whether the liturgy was according to the Scriptures, whether they might not read Scriptures and speak Scriptures.

He said Yes.

Then I said, ' "according to" is not the very same thing; and we ought to worship God in all times and all places'. And because this Act did take hold upon such as did meet and contrive as late experience had showed, they found no such experience by us. Because thieves were sometimes on the road, must not honest men travel; because plotters and contrivers of mischief had sometimes met, must not therefore peaceable people meet? We were not the people concerned in the Act, for if we were such as did meet to plot and contrive we did not believe five pounds, or ten, or twenty could clear us.

'Nay', said the mayor, 'that would reach further.'

'Yea', said I, 'to life and estate. Now if we had been the people that meet and contrive, then we might draw ourselves into fours; four might do more mischief than if there were a hundred, for they might speak out their minds, which they could not do so well before a hundred; therefore we being innocent and not the people this Act concerns, we keep our meeting as we used to do.'

Then the mayor very lovingly said, 'Mr. Fox, you are an eminent man amongst those of your profession, pray will you be instrumental to dissuade them from meeting in such great numbers? Seeing Christ hath promised that where two or three are met in his name, he will be in the midst of them, and the King and Parliament are graciously pleased to allow four to meet together to worship God, why will not you be content to partake both of Christ's promise of two or three and the King's indulgence to four?'

Unto which I answered that Christ's promise was not to discourage many from meeting together in his name, but to encourage the few, that the fewest might not forbear to meet because of their fewness. But if Christ had promised to manifest his presence in the midst of such an assembly where but two or three were gathered in his name, then how much more when two or three hundred are gathered in his name. Would not this Act have taken hold upon Christ and his apostles in their day, who often met above the number of four, who had seventy and twelve disciples, which was a considerable number?

To which the mayor said, 'You speak too popular' [*perhaps meaning* 'You are making them out to be too numerous.'].]

Then said I, 'Is it not true?'

Thomas Moore said unto the Lord Mayor he thought that was a mistake, in saying that the King and Parliament in this Act allowed of four, for though the Act takes hold of all that are met together above that number yet it doth not allow of four, nor two to meet together to worship God in other manner than the liturgy allows; and though if two, three, or four so met together were not punishable by *this* Act, yet by several other Acts they are, and therefore there was no allowance for any to meet together to worship God in any other manner than the liturgy allows, which he thought was very hard and unchristian.

To which the Lord Mayor replied, 'Mr. Moore, I will talk with you upon this subject another time.'

Then the mayor said to John Burnyeat because he looked whitely [i.e. *pale*], 'Come, your countenance shows you have come lately from beyond seas and are some Jesuit.' But I said he was neither Jesuit nor Papist but an honest countryman, I knew him. The mayor said he would have a certificate from him. I said that he might give him one.

So he took our names and recorded where I lodged. I told him I was but a lodger in London and had been there much since the Independents and Presbyterians had brought me up in Oliver [*Cromwell*]'s time as a plotter,

and finding nothing against me invented such a thing. So at last, seeing the informer was gone, he set us at liberty and said the Act did allow four of us might meet.

I said again, if it did allow four to meet it must be such as meet to contrive under a colour, and not such as are innocent. And as I was going away I spoke to the mayor and told him he knew in his own conscience we were an innocent people and the Act did not concern us.

And after we were set at liberty Friends asked me whither I would go, and I told them to Gracechurch Street Meeting again, and when we came there the people were gone; only some people stood at the gate.

So we went into Gerard Roberts's house, and I sent out to know how all the meetings were. And some were kept out and some were taken but set at liberty again a few days after. And the Lord's power came over all, and a glorious time it was for the Lord's everlasting Truth, for as fast as some were taken down that were speaking, others were moved of the Lord to stand up and speak, to the admiration of people. And many Baptists and other sectaries forsook their meetings and came to see how the Quakers would stand both in city and country.

And this informer was so frightened that there durst hardly any informer appear in London for several years after.

And yet this Lord Mayor after this proved a very great persecutor of our Friends and cast many into prison: as you may see in the books of the trials of William Penn and William Meade [sic] and Thomas Rudyard. And his name became a stink, and the Lord cut him off.

*Of the Friends named in this extract, **William Warwick** is not mentioned elsewhere in the Journal, but is presumably the printer and bookseller who in 1663 published William Smith's Liberty of conscience pleaded by several weighty reasons, and, in 1664, his own Truth's pursuit after falshood, criticising the first Conventicles Act, passed that year. **John Burnyeat** (1631-1690) was a husbandman from Cumberland who travelled widely in the ministry on both sides of the Atlantic from 1663 onwards. **Thomas Moore**, a justice of the peace in Surrey at the time of his conviction – Reigate Meeting House is built on a site he donated in 1668 – had been one of the twelve signatories of the Declaration from the harmless and innocent people of God called Quakers (1660) which first gave expression to the Peace Testimony. It is not clear how he came to be at the mayoral court, unless the reference to Fox's stepson-in-law, **Thomas Lower**, is an error and means him. **Gerard Roberts** (c. 1621-1703) was a wine cooper whose London house was a gathering place for leading Quakers. **William Penn** and **William Mead**, arrested under the Act for addressing the meeting at Gracechurch Street three months later on 14 August, were the defendants in the case when the jurymen led by Edward Bushel were imprisoned for refusing to convict them (see Sesame 254), as related in The Peoples {Ancient and Just} Liberties Asserted, in the Tryal of William Penn and William Mead (1670). [The text of this is at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31822043008879&seq=1>.] In a subsequent trial (reported in a similar pamphlet, as Fox says), a more malleable jury did convict **Thomas Rudyard** and ten other Quakers. The Lord Mayor, **Sir Samuel Starling**, was on the bench both times, and wrote a defence of the proceedings in the Penn/Mead case which Penn called "a meer rapsodie of lies, folly and slander". He died in 1674. – ED.*

Quakers Discern Genocide is Occurring in Gaza and Urge Courageous Action

"We are for justice and mercy and truth and peace and true freedom."

— Edward Burrough, 1659

AS QUAKERS, WE RECOGNIZE the divine imprint in every human being and confess the equality of all to live safely and without fear.

We are also compelled as Quakers to speak truth with integrity, including where it is uncomfortable, yet always to do so in love. This requires us to speak against the catastrophic violence in Gaza.

Friends have a long history of working for peaceful coexistence and justice for all people in the Middle East. We have witnessed times when Jews, Muslims, and Christians have enjoyed peace and cooperation in the region. Since the creation of the state of Israel, our organizations have supported nonviolent efforts among both Palestinians and Israelis to protect human rights, prevent violence, address the root causes of conflict, and promote peacebuilding. We still believe a peaceful future for all peoples is possible.

However, through our decades of humanitarian work and accompaniment with Palestinian and Israeli communities we have witnessed the relentless erosion of justice. This lack of justice and the current violence is rooted in the systemic and violent dispossession of Palestinians from their lands and decades of occupation, apartheid policies, and the systematic denial of Palestinian rights.

This history contextualizes the atrocities that are being perpetrated against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank today by Israel's military and government – the starvation campaigns, mass killings, mass deportations, ethnic cleansing, settler violence, and calculated erasure of life. These are not isolated horrors, but the brutal continuation of a 76-year project of displacement and denial of Palestinians' human rights.

These decades of dispossession, oppression, occupation, and violence are the backdrop to the cycles of violence in the region including the attacks, killings, abductions, and trauma suffered by Israelis on October 7, 2023.

After deep communal and prayerful discernment, informed by our direct witness in Palestine/Israel and our readings of the positions of international human rights organizations, international and Israeli genocide scholars, and experts on the UN Genocide Convention (1948), **we are exercising our religious conviction to speak the truth as we see it. We believe with moral clarity, and in line with the definition of the crime of genocide, that the current actions in Gaza perpetrated by the Israeli government, constitute genocide.**

Our peace and equality testimonies are clear: Apparent security for some, bought with the insecurity of others, tears at our shared humanity and cannot bring peace. Peace built on systematic oppression is a lie. We name what we see as genocide after deep discernment – not to incite, but to open eyes,

minds, and hearts. We name this painful truth with the fervent hope that the violence it describes will cease, and with continued commitment to help heal the wounds of war on all sides.

Since the 7th of October 2023, we have witnessed the following realities:

- *Approximately 1,200 Israelis killed, including over 800 civilians, 36 of them children, over 3,300 injured and 223 people abducted on October 7, 2023.*
- *Over 57,000 Palestinians directly killed in Gaza, with estimates of the number of people killed as a result of both the direct and indirect impacts of war rising as high as 300,000.*
- *In Gaza, at least 17,000 children killed, more than 35,000 injured, over 50,000 children lost at least one of their parents. Between 3,000 and 4,000 children in Gaza have had one or more limbs amputated – the highest figure for child amputees globally.*
- *Nearly 10,000 Palestinians held in Israeli military detention, over 3,500 of them without any charge or trial, and in facilities where they are regularly subject to violence, sexual abuse, torture, and killing.*
- *Over 200 Palestinian journalists killed.*
- *Deliberate mass starvation through the systematic obstruction of food, water, and medicine. which has claimed many lives.*
- *The destruction over 70% of homes.*
- *Over 1,450 recorded attacks on health workers, patients, hospitals, and medical infrastructure with at least 1,500 health care workers killed and over 85% of hospitals bombed or besieged. Remaining facilities are systematically denied fuel and electricity – cutting power to incubators, dialysis machines, and operating theaters, directly causing preventable deaths.*
- *Forced displacement of 1.9 million people amid calls to erase Gaza and for the ethnic cleansing of the population.*
- *State-sanctioned dehumanization and incitement by officials with Palestinians called “human animals” and with politicians, media, and soldiers celebrating killings of civilians.*

Article II of the UN Genocide Convention defines genocide as acts committed “with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group”. We believe the Israeli actions in Gaza meet this threshold.

We cry out equally for the protection of free speech and the right to protest. The moral urgency of this moment demands space for dissent. Across the world, those calling for a free Palestine, an end to genocide, and compliance with international law face censorship, smear campaigns, and legislative criminalization and repression. This silencing – often falsely equating support for Palestinian rights and/or anti-Zionism with antisemitism – undermines integrity and is a betrayal of democracy and a tool of genocide denial. Quakers know well that speaking truth to power requires the freedom to dis-

sent. This is reflected in the growing numbers of conscientious objectors who take the moral stand and refuse to participate in the atrocities through military service. We reaffirm our belief in the human dignity of all people and our opposition to all forms of discrimination.

All states have a legal duty under the Genocide Convention to prevent genocide. We call for:

1. *An Immediate, Permanent Ceasefire & Full Humanitarian Access*
 - All parties must recommit to diplomacy and dialogue in order to reach a permanent ceasefire, ending all hostilities.
 - Israel must open border crossings for unrestricted aid.
 - The international community must fully fund UNRWA and other involved UN agencies.
2. *The Application of Robust, Targeted, and Timebound Sanctions, including a Comprehensive Arms Embargo, aimed at ending Israel's genocide in Gaza and the related system of Apartheid.*
 - *Diplomatic:* Use all diplomatic channels to exert pressure, including by denying visas to officials inciting or justifying genocide/apartheid.
 - *Economic:* Suspend trade agreements and ban settlement goods devastating Palestinian livelihoods.
 - *Financial:* Freeze assets of officials and settler militias; block transactions funding oppression.
 - *Military:* Halt all arms sales, transfers, and military cooperation with Israel
 - *Transport:* Block cargo sustaining genocide or apartheid.
3. *Respect for International Law and Accountability*
 - The international community must hold Israel accountable to International Law and support the order of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) seeking provisional measures to prevent further harm, and remove any obstacles to support the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigations and rulings into war crimes and crimes against humanity, including apartheid.
 - Demand transparent government reports on compliance with legal duties to prevent genocide and apartheid.
4. *Protection of Free Speech and the Right to Protest*
 - Legislatures must reject all institutional efforts to criminalize solidarity with Palestine.
 - Authorities must safeguard students, academics, workers, and activists from censorship, cyber harassment, or retaliation for advocating Palestinian rights, while ensuring public spaces remain open for peaceful assemblies demanding ceasefire and justice.
 - Media outlets must center Palestinian voices, commit to facts without bias, and amplify independent journalism documenting Gaza's reality.
5. *Dismantling of Oppression and Establishing a Just and Permanent Peace*
 - End the occupation and apartheid policies across Palestine.
 - Uphold Palestinian self-determination and refugees' right of return.

- Ensure equal rights, dignity, and security for Palestinians and Israelis and challenge efforts to silence them – rejecting any system privileging one group over another.

As Quaker signatories, we commit to:

- Advocate relentlessly for the end of the Israeli genocide in Gaza and the deliberate starvation campaign, a permanent ceasefire and accountability for atrocities committed in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
- Boycott settlement goods and divest from companies profiting from occupation, apartheid, or genocide (e.g., arms manufacturers, settlement financiers).
- Reach out in love to Jewish, Muslim and Palestinian communities, confronting antisemitism, anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian hate while refusing to be silent in the face of oppression.
- Highlight the voices of Palestinians, which have still been all-too-absent from media narratives.
- Support humanitarian relief for Gaza and communities suffering under occupation in the West Bank.
- Advocate for the universal human rights of all people in Palestine and Israel—ensuring they can live in freedom and dignity, without fear, and with lasting peace and security.

We hold in the Light all suffering peoples and leaders, praying they choose justice. In Palestine and Israel, peace built on equality is the only path forward.

We invite Friends meetings and groups to discuss, discern, and endorse the statement.

<i>American Friends Service Committee</i>	<i>Quakers in Britain/</i>
<i>Canadian Friends Service Committee</i>	<i>Quaker Peace & Social Witness</i>
<i>Friends Committee on National Legislation</i>	<i>Quaker Council on European Affairs</i>
<i>Friends World Committee for Consultation</i>	<i>Quaker Service Norway</i>
<i>World Office</i>	<i>Quaker United Nations Office</i>

This statement, issued on 25 July 2025, can be found at

<https://afsc.org/newsroom/quakers-discern-genocide-occurring-gaza-and-urge-courageous-action>

and is available as a PDF at

<https://afsc.org/sites/default/files/2025-08/quakers-discern-genocide-is-occurring-in-gaza-and-urge-courageous-action-2025-07-25.pdf>.

More than 75 other Quaker bodies have also endorsed it, including Britain YM, Quakers Australia [*Australia YM*], Quakers en France [*France YM*], Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa/ New Zealand, Centre Quaker International [*CQI Paris*], the Northern Friends Peace Board, Quakers in Criminal Justice and Quaker Voluntary Action – see the list at the AFSC website.

It is to be hoped that as Friends we support the six actions highlighted above, most of which had already been called for in YM Minute 30, the text of which can be re-read in Sesame 261 (pages 5-7) as can suggestions on practical ways to implement the actions (pages 16-18) – ED.

From Holyrood

Our Parliamentary Engagement Officer **Sarah Komashko** went on maternity leave in October; **Lucy le Roux** (LucyR@quaker.org.uk) is standing in for her until she returns, and so will be supporting Quaker work at the Parliament up to and beyond the Scottish General Election in May 2026. We wish them both well.

On **5 November** a debate will be held on the following motion, submitted by Nicola Sturgeon:

That the Parliament notes that Glasgow hosted the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in 2021, which it considers built momentum for the establishment of the historic Loss and Damage Fund; understands that Scotland became the first nation to contribute to this fund with an initial £2 million pledge, demonstrating, it believes, Scotland's leadership in climate justice; considers that climate change disproportionately affects the world's most vulnerable communities that have contributed the least to the problem; believes that addressing climate impacts requires transformative fiscal reform and international cooperation to tackle economic and environmental inequalities; notes the view that industrialised countries and historic emitters, including Scotland and the UK, must meet their fair share of international climate finance, which it understands is estimated globally to be between £7.6 billion and £33 billion annually; further notes what it sees as Scotland's ongoing commitment to championing climate justice and building on Glasgow's COP26 legacy and the precedent set by Scotland's Loss and Damage Fund contributions throughout the current parliamentary session, and notes the support for continued advocacy for these principles in international fora and within climate and development strategies.

Supported by: Clare Adamson, Ariane Burgess, Maggie Chapman, Jackie Dunbar, Ross Greer, Clare Haughey, Bill Kidd, Monica Lennon, Fulton MacGregor, John Mason, Liam McArthur, Stuart McMillan, Audrey Nicoll, Lorna Slater, Evelyn Tweed, Mercedes Villalba, Humza Yousaf

We are encouraged to contact our own MSPs urging them to support this motion, using this template email:

Dear [MSP Name]

Support for Loss and Damage Funding

I am writing as your constituent in [AREA] to ask you to speak in support of Nicola Sturgeon MSP's motion on Loss and Damage funding, scheduled for member's business debate on 5 November.

[Optional space for personal motivation e.g.: As a Quaker, I see climate justice as central to my faith. We believe in the unity of creation and our responsibility to live simply and sustainably, caring for our shared world and those most vulnerable to harm.]

This motion comes in the run up to COP30 and addresses one of the most pressing moral issues of our time: communities across the global south, who have contributed least to climate change, are suffering its worst impacts through devastating floods, storms, droughts and rising seas.

As noted in the motion, Scotland showed leadership in 2021 by becoming the first nation

to contribute to Loss and Damage funding, with an initial £2 million pledge following COP26 in Glasgow. We must now build on this legacy and go further both in what we do as a nation, and in how we continue to encourage others such as the UK Government to go further and to meet its commitments to the UN Loss and Damage Fund.

Key principles for effective climate finance:

The motion rightly recognises that industrialised countries, including Scotland and the UK, must meet their fair share of international climate finance. This is estimated globally at £7.6–33 billion annually for Loss and Damage. I urge you to emphasise three crucial points in your support:

1. **New, grant-based finance beyond existing aid:** Loss and Damage support must be delivered as additional funding, not diverted from overseas development commitments. Climate reparation should not be at the expense of other vital aid.
2. **Public sector finance for climate justice at scale:** Public finance provides the most reliable and equitable means of delivering climate justice, particularly for adaptation and Loss and Damage. Unlike private finance seeking returns, public funds can reach the most vulnerable and support genuine resilience-building.
3. **Progressive taxation and polluter-pays mechanisms:** We need transformative fiscal reform to generate climate finance fairly. This includes wealth taxes, polluter-pays mechanisms that hold fossil fuel companies accountable for their role in the crisis, and ending fossil fuel subsidies in ways that protect low-income households.

When we account for the UK's colonial history, Britain becomes the fourth largest contributor to historical climate emissions (see <https://www.carbonbrief.org/revealed-how-colonial-rule-radically-shifts-historical-responsibility-for-climate-change/>).

Meanwhile, Scottish-based oil and gas companies continue making record profits from activities that drive the climate emergency.

The damage is not abstract; it is happening now. Communities worldwide are losing homes, livelihoods and lives to extreme weather that grows more severe each year. At the same time as we make efforts to reduce our domestic emissions, for example with an achievable Climate Change Plan, we also have a moral imperative to continue to address the inequalities caused by our historic carbon emissions.

I hope you will sign this motion and speak powerfully for climate justice in the debate.

In friendship,

[Name]

[Address including postcode]

An online skeleton email to Keir Starmer is at

<https://actionnetwork.org/forms/the-government-wants-to-hear-from-you-on-equinors-application-for-rosebank>

urging him to reject the renewed application to open the Rosebank oilfield.

QiS has co-signed a joint letter to Stephen Flynn MP on this; the majority owner of Ithaca, the would-be developer of Rosebank, is the Delek Group, an Israeli conglomerate involved in illegal settlement in the West Bank.

Public consultation on the Circular Economy Strategy – a plan for greater sustainability – is open until 13 January 2013. See

<https://consult.gov.scot/environment-forestry/draft-circular-economy-strategy/>

Edinburgh Doors Open Day: 27 September

'Doors Open Days' is an initiative promoted by the Scottish Civic Trust to enable people to visit and see inside buildings that are usually closed to the public – it describes itself as *Scotland's largest free festival that celebrates places and stories, new and old*. More than 120 locations in Edinburgh were accessible over the weekend 27-28 September 2025. Central Edinburgh Local Meeting agreed that 7 Victoria Terrace should register for inclusion on the Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Following a call for volunteers, seven Friends came forward to help, with John Phillips co-ordinating arrangements and David Sterratt supervising displays and refreshments.

Of the Friends who had offered to help, two were asked to be present to cover each of the two-hour periods. Five more Friends volunteered before the day, and were asked to attend at times that would suit them.

The basic plan was as follows:

1. One volunteer to be present in the foyer to welcome visitors, directing them to the second-floor Meeting Room via the staircase (or the lift if required).
2. The Meeting Room to be set out as for Sunday Meeting for Worship (with copies of *Quaker Faith & Practice*), but with space between rows to encourage visitors to move towards the windows. Two or three volunteers to be present to encourage conversations about Quakerism or about the building, and then to show visitors to the first floor.
3. The Hall (with two or three volunteers) to be set out with a number of tables with leaflets about Quakerism (visitors to be encouraged to help themselves), groups of chairs, pictures of the Meeting Room (by Michele Gunn) to be displayed around the room, historical information to be mounted on the notice board; a table at the west end to provide coffee with tea and biscuits; a collection bowl (for Quaker funds) beside the door.

A record was kept of numbers attending as they passed through the foyer: 165 was the total, evenly spread through the day. Most came in groups of two or three, occasionally more, but no large parties. Both Victoria Street and the Terrace were very busy with tourists chatting and wandering in guided groups, but the Meeting Room felt like an oasis of calm.

The quiet Meeting Room was the best place for conversations. Many were curious about Quakerism, both beliefs and activities ("How do you manage without a priest?" "How do you arrange a funeral?"), a few were mainly interested in the architecture and history of the building and its development through the years, and a few looked around and then walked out again. A number of the conversations were really meaningful and challenging. The interactions then continued downstairs; many took a little refreshment; the four or five children who were brought played with the Lego that had been put out on a table. We did not keep a record of leaflets

taken, but the most popular seemed to be our overview of the history of the building, and the Quaker Life leaflet on 'Quaker Faith'.

We were fortunate that it was a fine sunny day, slightly windy; we were much supported by the Meeting House staff who kept the drinks topped up and did all the clearing up.

For the record:

Volunteers:

John Phillips (*co-ordinator*), David Sterratt (*resources*)

Janet Grimwade (10.00 – 12.00)

Annie Miller, Jackie Noltingk (12.00 – 14.00),

Bridget Ramsay (*prevented*); Kerstin Phillips (14.00 – 16.00)

Additional volunteers:

Lynne Barty; Deb Rohan; Susan Kime; Evelyn Graham; Michele Gunn.

John Phillips

Northern Friends Peace Board: York, 27 September

Alan Frith, NFPB co-clerk, writes: Friends met at Friargate Meeting House and online – but I was not among them, the date clashing with my niece's wedding in France. This report is based on the minutes, therefore.

Rachel Julian – 'Building peace in troubled times'

The guest speaker at the meeting is Professor of Peace Studies at Leeds Beckett University, and also chairs the governing board of the Peace Museum, which re-opened in August 2024 at Salt Mills, Saltaire, Shipley (see <https://www.peacemuseum.org.uk/> and <https://www.visitbradford.com/things-to-do/the-peace-museum-p1620801>): it is the UK's only museum devoted to the history and stories of peace, peacemakers and the peace movement.

Rachel reflected that these are not necessarily uniquely troubled times, as there have always been wars and violent conflicts. But there are also, she encouraged us to recognise, always people and communities across the world taking positive action to build peace. There is a need to challenge the policies and economics that promote militarism as well, and the Peace Museum is one vehicle for telling the stories of those who have taken action to that end, as well as the peace-builders.

Rachel's book, *Transforming Protection: The Implications of Unarmed Civilian Protection* was published in June by Bristol University Press (in various formats including eBook and PDF) and she has a podcast (Peace Wanted) where people speak directly about non-violence. Resistance is fundamental to change; she has found from working across 26 projects in 11 countries that listening and working collaboratively are vital. [Hear Rachel's talk at: <https://nfpb.org.uk/test-audio-page/> .]

Standing up/speaking out – experiences of protest and public witness

Opposition to the DSEI arms fair, and to the proscription of Palestine

Action were two matters that had led Friends to be involved in public witness since our previous meeting. The meeting received a note with some discussion points, and reflected on these and on concerns arising: discomfort was expressed at how a Quaker presence at some events might appear to endorse opposition which is expressed (by those with megaphones) in terms we do *not* approve.

Reports

The meeting heard updates from Philip Austin, our coordinator, Deryck Hillas, our treasurer, and Jayne Meadows, clerk to trustees. The Board has had a grant of £5,000 from the Edith M. Ellis Charitable Trust; this is to be used on an event about the Peace Testimony next year.

Future priorities

Our meeting in June included an exercise for Board members to guide Trustees on what might be future priorities for the work of the NFPB, as it enters a process of transition with Philip Austin's retirement at the end of 2026. Friends received a paper bringing together points arising from that exercise, and discussed whether there seemed to be anything missing, and on the weight and importance of different elements. Suggestions included:

- the importance of continuity, building some of the Co-ordinator's role into the structure of the Board;
- making more use of the website and potentially YouTube and sharing sessions from speakers;
- linking up and networking, locally, regionally and nationally, with other peace workers, interested Friends and QPSW, including the role of NFPB as distinct; and also
- looking to highlight opportunities for people to become more actively involved given the streamlining of area meetings.

We have acknowledged much appreciation for the excellent work Philip has undertaken.

Members' forum

The meeting heard about continuing witness in different parts of the NFPB area: in particular in response to the situation in Palestine, and also events marking Hiroshima and Nagasaki days in August, in this the eightieth anniversary year. Friends also reported on interfaith activities and events to mark World Quaker Day.

Gaza – what more might we be called to do?

On the Board's behalf, Trustees had endorsed the statement drafted by AFSC and others (see page 10). Members reflected on how else we might collectively and individually follow up on this and other calls to action, two years after the start of the devastating increase in armed violence.

The meeting closed in worship.

NFPB will next meet in Liverpool and online on Saturday 29 November.

Alternative Remembrance Day event

Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House: 1.30 pm, Sunday 10 November

JOIN PEACEMAKERS highlighting the folly of war as a solution to conflict; share poems and songs; walk to the site of the Peace Tree in Princes Street Gardens.

Bring and share your reflections and poems, and join in the songs. Our theme is Opposing Wars.

Book at:

<https://remembrance9nov.eventbrite.co.uk> *Share the Event*; or

<https://www.facebook.com/events/4015176165364364>

At around 2.15 pm we shall set off for the site of the Peace Tree – the location for the planned Opposing War Memorial in Princes Street Gardens – where we shall hold a minute's silence. Sadly, the tree was vandalised this year and will be replanted this winter. Donations are invited towards that. We shall lay a wreath in memory of all those killed in wars – civilians, soldiers, executed for cowardice or as deserters for refusing to continue to fight, as well as soldiers killed, and conscientious objectors who refused conscription.

Meeting for Worship (at 11.00 am) is followed by a simple lunch (soup and bread & cheese) at 12.30 pm, which all are welcome to join, before the event itself starts at 1.30. It is expected to end at around 3.00 pm.

Organised and supported by:

Peace & Justice – Building a Culture of Peace in Scotland

Secure Scotland

Quakers in SE Scotland

Anglican Pacifist Fellowship

Peace Pledge Union

Edinburgh InterFaith Association

QUAKERS IN BRITAIN applied to intervene in the judicial review of the proscription of Palestine Action (the hearing is due to start on 25 November), in order to give evidence of its effect on rights guaranteed by Article 9 of the Human Rights Act (freedom of thought, conscience and religion). Leave was refused; it was held that the expression of these rights comes under Article 8 (freedom of speech, inter alia) and there is already sufficient evidence on how the order has impacted on this. A report on the decision, with a link to the witness statement by Paul Parker, the Recording Clerk, is at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/quakers-denied-intervention-in-court-challenge-over-faith-rights-in-terror-law-case>.

On 17 October, the Government's appeal to prevent judicial review was rejected by Lady Carr, the Lady Chief Justice, and two other judges, who also held that two extra grounds should be admitted for consideration as to why the proscription might be unlawful.

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

SESAME HAS PREVIOUSLY HIGHLIGHTED the problem in international agreements of Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) clauses. These enable foreign (but not local) investors to claim compensation for law or policy changes if an international tribunal can be convinced that the change will reduce expected future profits – even if the change is in the public interest. ISDS originally developed to compensate international investors for the direct expropriation of property by governments of former colonies. Since the 1960s it has expanded to include “indirect” expropriation and “legitimate expectations”, which do not exist in national legal systems: investors can say they were not consulted adequately about the change or did not expect it when they made the investment, which has a chilling effect on democratic decision making. ISDS has been excluded from World Trade Organization agreements, and the European Union and the UK quit the Energy Charter Treaty because of investors’ using its ISDS provisions to sue governments over phasing out fossil fuels. A new development has been an attempt by an Australian billionaire Clive Palmer to bring ISDS actions in Australia, on the basis that the registration in Singapore of one of his companies enabled him to claim damages of 305 billion Australian dollars for the denial of permission to develop an iron ore mine. In September, the tribunal in the Hague threw out his claim, ordering that he pay the government of Western Australia \$13m in compensation for its legal costs:

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2025/sep/27/clive-palmer-ordered-to-pay-13m-after-claim-of-being-foreign-investor-in-australian-mining-project-thrown-out>

Palmer has said he will take the case to the Swiss federal supreme court (since the authority under which the tribunal operates has its ‘seat’ in Switzerland); that court could call for a re-hearing, but could not order the Australian government to pay compensation. Three other ISDS claims, also on the ground that Singaporean registration makes them ‘foreign’, are continuing. There is comment on the issue at

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/sep/30/clive-palmer-singapore-investments-multi-billion-dollar-claims-make-mockery-tribunal>

THE SUNRISE MOVEMENT, the youth-led US climate justice organisation which popularized calls for a Green New Deal, is widening its mission to fight authoritarianism. In an open letter, Aru Shiney-Ajay, its executive director, wrote: *“Every day, Donald Trump is seizing power and shredding the Constitution. What ordinary people do in the coming months will determine whether he and his billionaire cronies can cement their grip on power and turn this country into a playground for the rich and powerful.”* Stevie O’Hanlon, a co-founder of Sunrise, said it needs to expand its activities because *“to prevent climate catastrophe, [we] ... need a country where we have the right to dissent and protest. How are we going to win on climate under authoritarianism?”*

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/oct/05/sunrise-movement-climate-activism-authoritarianism>

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL called in October for new legal pathways to enable people displaced by the climate crisis to re-settle elsewhere. It called on New Zealand in particular – home to the world’s largest Pacific diaspora – urgently to reform its policies so as to provide a “rights-based approach to climate-related displacement” including the creation of “a dedicated humanitarian visa.” The report is at:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa05/0343/2025/en/>

ASURVEY by researchers at the University of East Anglia revealed shocking levels of ignorance among Westminster MPs about the urgency of climate action; see

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s43247-025-02655-w>

MARY LAWLOR, the UN special rapporteur for human rights defenders since 2020, has documented hundreds of cases of governments’ seeking to smear and silence climate defenders engaged in peaceful protest, non-violent civil disobedience and litigation, with the UK, Germany, France and the US being among the worst offenders; she told *The Guardian* that “*These big countries spew out the rhetoric about 1.5°C, but they don’t mean it. They are playing the game to suit themselves. It’s business as usual.*” See

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/oct/13/climate-defenders-mary-lawlor-human-rights>

Her 24-page report to the UN General Assembly, the penultimate one of her six-year term, was presented on 16 October and can be read at

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n25/180/76/pdf/n2518076.pdf>

ON 15 OCTOBER, a federal judge dismissed a lawsuit filed by young climate activists that had aimed to halt Donald Trump’s pro-fossil fuel executive orders. Although he accepted that the plaintiffs had presented “*overwhelming evidence that the climate is changing at a staggering pace, and that this change stems from the rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide, caused by the production and burning of fossil fuels*”, the judge said that “*while this court is certainly troubled by the very real harms presented by climate change and the challenged [executive orders’] effect on carbon dioxide emissions, this concern does not automatically confer upon it the power to act. ... [the court] would be required to monitor an untold number of federal agency actions to determine whether they contravene its injunction. This is, quite simply, an unworkable request for which plaintiffs provide no precedent.*”

The lead attorney for the plaintiffs said they would appeal. See

<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2025/oct/15/youth-climate-activist-lawsuit-dismissed-trump-executive-orders>

GOVERNMENT MINISTERS met representatives from the fossil fuel industry more than 500 times during their first year in office – equivalent to twice every working day. The analysis, by Fossil Free Parliament, found that lobbyists were present at 48 % more ministerial meetings in Labour’s first year in power than under the Conservatives in 2023. A government

spokesperson said the findings were “misleading” – many of the firms involved had clean energy investments which were often the focus of discussions – although a 2023 report by the International Energy Agency found that fossil fuel companies had “minimal” engagement with clean energy transition, contributing just 1 % of clean energy investment globally. See

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2025/oct/16/uk-labour-ministers-fossil-fuel-lobbyists-analysis>

TWENTY-THREE STATES are suing the Trump administration over the cancellation of a \$7bn grant programme aimed at expanding solar energy in low-income communities. The attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin, and of Washington DC have all begun litigation, with a group of solar energy companies and labor unions having started an action ten days earlier to get the programme reinstated.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/oct/16/lawsuit-trump-cancel-solar-energy-program>

TOTALENERGIES, which features here often on account of its role in TEACOP and its LNG project in Mozambique, has been ordered by a court in Paris to remove from its website misleading statements about its environmental policies, and to display there instead the court’s ruling against the company. In an action brought by three NGOs, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Notre Affaire à Tous, France’s ‘greenwashing’ laws were successfully invoked against a fossil fuel company for the first time. Not all of the complaints against it were upheld, but the court ordered TotalEnergies to remove statements that said it placed sustainable development at the heart of its strategy and that it “contributed to the wellbeing of populations” in line with the UN’s sustainable development goals.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/oct/23/oil-firm-totalenergies-made-misleading-green-statements-court-rules>

ALSO IN FRANCE, the media regulator, Arcom, works to prevent false claims about the climate crisis appearing in broadcast news: four breaches have been acted on in the last two years, with one channel having been fined €20,000 for allowing the statement that climate change is “a lie”. In Britain, in contrast, Ofcom, which oversees TV and radio output, has received 1,221 complaints related to the climate crisis since January 2020, but none resulting in a finding that the code had been breached. The campaign group Reliable Media has complained more than fifty times about GB News programmes since March 2024 and suggests the regulator is failing:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/oct/25/enforced-veganism-ofcom-gb-news-flout-accuracy-rules-say-climate-campaigners>

Woodbrooke Courses: November/December and into 2026

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.

Moving Beyond Disability Access to Disability Justice

Saturday 1 November, 11:00-15:00 GMT Eleanor Tew, Ella Asheri

Introductory Evening to Communicating Truthfully, Equally and Effectively

Monday 3 November, 19:00-20:00 GMT Annie Dickson, Elize Sakamoto

Business Method Surgery for Clerks and Elders

Tuesday 4 November, 19:30-21:00

[One of Woodbrooke's staff tutors, an experienced clerk and elder, will be on hand to listen and help find solutions. All are passionate about helping meetings ensure this deeply spiritual process runs smoothly. The session is not a drop-in, but you can book right up to the start of it, at 7.30 pm.]

Quakers and the Trafficking of Africans: Researching Our Past

£15

Thursday 6 November, 13:30-18:00 GMT 'Ben' Pink Dandelion

Artificial Intelligence: What Does It Mean for Quakers?

£48

4 sessions: Thursdays, 6 – 27 November, 19:00 - 20:30 GMT Kenneth Cukier

Being a Quaker Clerk [RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND]

£315

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, nr Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 1AU

The course begins on Friday 7 November with the evening meal and ends with lunch on Sunday 9 November.

Adwoa Burnley, Judith Roads

Freeing the Imagination: Creative Writing Retreat

£40

Sunday 9 November, 13:30-17:00 GMT Rosie Carnall

Talking Confidently About Our Quaker Faith

£36

3 sessions: Tuesdays, 11 – 25 November, 19:00-21:00 GMT

Rhiannon Grant

Quaker Trusteeship in a Nutshell

£40

Saturday 15 November, 10:00 – 16:00 GMT Sarah Donaldson, Linda Craig

Diversity and Paradox: Ancient Wisdom for Today

Monday 17 November, 19:00 – 20:30 GMT

David Curtis

Meet the Students: Paul Harris

Tuesday 18 November, 15:00 – 16:00 GMT

'Ben' Pink Dandelion

Living More Deliberately: Spiritual Activism With Henry David Thoreau

Tuesday 18 November, 19:00 – 20:30 GMT

Robert Oulton

Enquiring Into: What We Know To Be True

Thursday 20 November, 19:00-21:00 GMT

Rosie Carnall

- Spiritual Nurture and Pastoral Care in a Nutshell*** £40
Saturday 22 November, 10:00-16:00 GMT Heather Rowlands, Helen Chambers
- Holding in the Light: What Does It Mean?***
Monday 24 November, 19:00-20:30 GMT Rhiannon Grant
- Poetry Reading As Spiritual Practice*** £30
Saturday 29 November, 14:00-18:30 GMT Tracey Martin
- Quaker Treasurership in a Nutshell*** £40
Saturday 29 November, 10:00 – 16:00 GMT
Wendrie Heywood, Oliver Waterhouse
- Vocal Ministry: How Elders and Others Can Help*** £10
Monday 1 December, 19:30-21:00 GMT Rhiannon Grant
- Essentials of Quaker Eldership***
Monday 8 December, 19:30-21:00 GMT Sophie Smith, Elize Sakamoto
- George Richardson Lecture: George W. Taylor, a Practical Antislavery Man***
Tuesday 9 December, 19:30-21:00 GMT Julie Holcomb
- The Wisdom of Epiphany*** £30
2 sessions: Thursdays, 1 and 8 January 2026, 19:00-20:30 GMT Nigel Thomas
- Sharing Our Journeys of Faith*** £40
Saturday 3 January 2026, 09:00-16:30 GMT Kate McNally
- Quaker Business Method Surgery***
Tuesday 6 January 2026, 10:00-11:30 GMT Wendy Hampton
- Navigating Change Well as Quaker Communities*** £54
4 sessions: Wednesdays, 7 January – 28 January 2026, 19:00-21:00 GMT
Alistair Fuller, Elize Sakamoto
- Parenting: A Spiritual Quest*** £60
6 sessions: Thursdays, 8 January – 12 February, 19:45-21:00 GMT
Carolyn Baynes
- Space for Joy*** £48
4 monthly sessions: Saturdays, 10 January – 11 April, 10:00-12:00 GMT
Till flo* Krapoth, Susan Groves
- Essentials of Quaker Eldership***
Monday 12 January, 19:30-21:00 GMT Ruth Audus, Elize Sakamoto
- Feminist Theology for Quakers*** £75
5 sessions: Mondays, 12 January – 9 February, 19:00-20:30 GMT
Rhiannon Grant
- Write From the Heart*** £60
4 sessions: Mondays 12 January – 2 February, 19:00-21:00 GMT Rosie Carnall
- Why Pause? The Radical Politics of Stillness*** £54
5 sessions: Tuesdays, 13 January – 10 February, 18:30-20:00 GMT Toni Spencer
- Seeing the Light: Reflections Through Images***
Wednesday 14 January, 14:30-16:30 GMT Duncan Dwinell

Enquiring Into: Quaker Membership

Thursday 15 January, 19:00-21:00 GMT

Rosie Carnall

Poetry for Spiritual Deepening and Reflection

Wednesday 21 January, 19:00-21:00 GMT

Saskia Stenson

By the Rivers of Babylon: Rebellion, Protest and Pop

Thursday 22 January 19:00-21:00 GMT

Josh Selfe

Spiritual Wholeness**£54**

4 sessions: Wednesday, 28 January – 18 February, 18:30-20:00 GMT, plus a follow-up session on Wednesday 15 April (18:30-19:30 BST). Kate McNally

The Spiritual Roots of Quaker Witness

Thursday 29 January, 19:00-20:30 GMT

'Ben' Pink Dandelion

Spiritual Practices to Guide and Nurture**£54**

3 sessions: Friday 30 January, 19:00-20:30; Saturday 31 January, 14:00-18:00; Sunday 1 February, 14:00-18:00 (all GMT). Deborah Shaw, Wendy Hampton

Quaker Clerking in a Nutshell**£45**

Saturday 31 January, 10:00-16:00 GMT

Elize Sakamoto, Judith Roads

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.

Should SESAM Terminate?

The writer of this article, Ben Davies, is a lifelong Friend and was until earlier this year a trustee of South East Scotland Area Meeting. Its inclusion here does not imply editorial endorsement of all the opinions expressed in it, or the manner of their expression. – ED.

This is an article in the drafting of which a number of people have been involved, and largely considers the facts. Should South East Scotland Area Meeting (SESAM) terminate and move all its assets, liabilities and membership to QiS (Quakers in Scotland)?

1. The consultation process has been very poor. No time or preparation has been given to those with a differing view, indeed local meetings are yet to respond fully save one.

Differing views can be intimidating in these situations. Reasonable timing and scheduling has been absent and fraught with delays. In part this is likely because reliance has been set heavily on doing this online. Q&A/ Consultation events have been held at short notice. Individuals who have asked the hard questions have been shouted down. A member has threatened to resign if SESAM does *not* terminate. Quaker business meetings have been dominated, possibly hijacked, by those asking for SESAM to terminate to the extent that little to no time was allowed for reflection and

discernment and for any differing views.

These things have happened. However, it is important for us all to look to the future and try and do this in a way that brings all along on the journey. For example if there is an urgent item that needs our attention we should address that rather than trying to push all items and views into the same shoe. Once that has been addressed then we can see where we are.

Effective consultation really should be conducted in person with sufficient timings. Doing this online is very clunky. We also need to find a way of encouraging all those who feel intimidated to speak to do so.

Individual members (and attenders) are always at liberty to transfer into QiS at will and as soon as QiS is able.

I note the following extract from QiS minute **25/09/06** *Report from QiS Foundation Trustees*:

Adwoa Burnley has illustrated the transition by analogy to the process of moving house. We pack everything we want to take away in boxes and work through them after we arrive, arranging things to suit the new situation. So we will all be working together to establish our new Quaker home, and at our November meeting we plan to spend time on how we operate Quakers in Scotland.

Perhaps this is a reference to why all the papers are so vague. Talking of arranging boxes and their contents seems a bit like talking about moving the deckchairs on the *Titanic*. When moving to a new property, one would want to know the building was structurally sound and fit for purpose (or, in the case of the *Titanic*, that it was seaworthy and iceberg-proof).

2. Comparatively, SESAM is a large and complex body with particular finances and property. This amounts to over £2,000,000 in property and investments and nearly £600,000 in cash and short term deposits. SESAM only owes £36,000 (from the latest accounts). This figure of debt belies a complexity around debtors and deficits. Any termination by an unincorporated charitable body will be reviewed by the regulator (OSCR). SESAM Trustees will be exposed to legal complaint personally by any aggrieved and involved individual (or body). Transfer of all its assets as a going concern into an open ended body reliant currently on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) could be seen as reckless. There is no enforcement through an MoU. To add to all this an accountancy firm is yet to be appointed and to assimilate a house without foundation.

There may well be an urgent need for other Area Meetings (AMs) to dissolve into QiS. This is not the case for SESAM. See *Advices & Queries* 15, (on trustees and governance) in *Quaker Faith & Practice*, 5th edition.

3. If SESAM terminates then of course our magazine *Sesame* also will cease to exist.

4. The officers and committees, to include those required by law, for the establishment and governance of QiS are many and require time and diligence. The issue of proportionality has not been raised, and some may

think this is a good thing. However, it could lead to some very poor decision making. For example a significant and new decision needed in the Borders may rely heavily on someone from the North who may also be unavailable. Should numbers of trustees and those on committees be dependent (proportionate) on numbers of people from a particular area or interest?

5. Intermediate Meetings (IMs) have been suggested by some, presumably to assimilate the current functions of AMs. Such bodies would have little authority, other than that which was delegated to them and which has been approved by the regulator. Anything involving the management of children or the vulnerable would be of great interest to the regulator. There would be no accountability or enforcement by such IMs. The current MoU is silent on the role of IMs. It could also be said that many of the QiS documents currently on display are at best aspirational. Much work will be needed on this and the initial focus will necessarily be on those AMs who have an urgency to close down.

6. Many members and attenders have signed up to QiS. This provides a significant conflict of interest regarding other AMs but particularly SESAM. The letter from the Clerk of General Meeting (GM) was misleading on this. It is a shame that members of SESAM were not offered the same option as attenders. The conflict arises because members (and possibly attenders) will have a duty and a responsibility to act in the interests of both bodies, and the risk is enhanced if dissolution of one body is on the agenda. Further, QiS will become General Meeting and Area Meeting. This could be confusing and will necessitate separation within and the need for more committees. Those finding this difficult could of course seek to join SESAM as their Area Meeting.

7. We are all members and attenders of the Quaker community in Scotland irrespective of whether SESAM continues or terminates. As a long established legal and spiritual body and community, SESAM can work alongside QiS as friend and rock whilst QiS gets itself established.

In 1666 George Fox wrote of the need for monthly meetings (now Area Meetings) and said:

*'...none that are raw or weak, that are not able to give a testimony of the affairs of the Church and Truth, may go on behalf of the particular Meetings to the Quarterly Meetings, but may be nursed up in your Monthly Meetings, and there fitted for the Lord's service' **

Friends might all agree that a decision should be taken at the January 2026 AM on whether SESAM terminates or continues. Given what has been said here the embracing decision would be to say no and give time some comfort. It would of course be prudent to all for such a decision to be reviewed annually.

* From Ep. 265 in *A Collection of ... Epistles, Letters and Testimonies*, by George Fox; online at <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A40137.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

Residential Meeting for Sufferings: 3–5 October *High Leigh, Hertfordshire*

Our representative **Jane Kelly** attended the residential gathering of Meeting for Sufferings, the papers for which are at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2025-10-calling-letter-agenda—papers-package>;

the minutes are at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2025-10-follow-up-package>.

Jane writes:

I appreciated staying at this Conference Centre with Friends from across Britain during mild Autumn weather. The weekend addressed several significant matters affecting our Quaker community.

Blended worship was discussed, recognizing its value for those unable to attend in person and its environmental benefits, though many felt that in-person meetings offer a deeper dimension through informal gatherings and mealtimes.

Three Scottish Area Meetings—East, North, and West of Scotland—are dissolving to become part of Quakers in Scotland (QiS), with General Meeting for Scotland minuting its intention to dissolve as soon as legal formalities are completed. We uphold our Friends in Scotland as they develop new structures to strengthen Quakerism there. Until transition is complete, four Friends will continue to represent Scotland at Meeting for Sufferings.

Ruth Homer reported on the Quaker World Relations Committee's work with Friends across Europe and beyond. We welcomed four Young Adult Friends from the Friends World Committee for Consultation World Plenary Meeting 2024, who participated in Yearly Meeting 2025. QWRC members attended the Europe & Middle East Section annual meeting in Poland, where we were encouraged to hold Friends affected by ongoing conflicts in the Light, particularly conscientious objectors. With this year's World Quaker Day theme of 'Love your neighbour' [*also the theme of the Wiston weekend – see page 3*], we reflected on how to encourage our community through challenging times.

The BYM Treasurer Paul Whitehouse assured us that our finances remain sound if we maintain our budget, asking all Friends and Area Meetings to contribute what they can to support Britain Yearly Meeting's work.

WAS VERMEER'S *Girl with a Pearl Earring* painted as devotional art for the Collegiants, a religious community founded in 1619, with many similarities to Quakerism? Vanessa Thorpe interviews art historian Andrew Graham-Dixon about his new theory regarding the life and beliefs of the Dutch master, at

<https://observer.co.uk/culture/art/article/vermeers-girl-with-a-pearl-earring-finally-gets-a-name>

[With thanks to David Sterratt for passing this on.]

Book of Discipline Revision Committee – update

For its final meeting this year, your committee assembled at Aston University in Birmingham over the weekend 10-12 October. Having dealt with routine matters on the preceding Wednesday evening, we plunged straight into a huge amount of business that necessitated an extra session on Sunday: we were glad to finish slightly early, having done all we'd intended.

My own BDRC workload this year has been lighter, since I couldn't commit to taking on any major projects. Others, however, had a staggering amount of writing to complete in time for the meeting, while all of us had a huge amount of reading – with some of it coming very late in the day.

After our July meeting, those of us wanting a hard copy were presented with a 400-page book containing everything we've written and banked so far, for us to read, digest, and comment on by the end of September. Meanwhile, more material on our testimonies was being produced, and another group continued its work on new Advices and Queries. All this extra reading arrived uncomfortably close to the date of our meeting...

Some people – not I – managed to read, digest, and reflect on this vast amount of prose. We all concentrated on upholding the process and ourselves as we worked through the agenda: and made good progress with this first draft of our new Book. I had been feeling overwhelmed in contemplating the vast amount of work ahead of us and seriously questioned what on earth I might be able to contribute to the next phase of our work. Blessedly, being with my Friends over this weekend restored my quiet joy in their company and my knowledge that, whatever I'm called to do, I will be given what I need to do it.

At the Wednesday evening session we had met our External Reader, tasked with turning our massive tome into a workable draft text for us to consider at our February meeting. He has already begun working with the Review of Banked Text (RBT) group, who have been looking at all we've written and identifying gaps, repetition and overlap.

One of the first points made by the RBT group was that we are NOT going to produce any more new text! We have already assembled a massive amount, which needs to be wrestled into a more coherent form – we simply can't keep adding to what we already have, no matter how strong the temptation. We considered whether we needed to take account of how many extracts by a particular author, past or present, are used in our text: we decided that the important thing is that the quotation is the most appropriate one for what it's illustrating, not who the writer is.

Not everyone will read the Book from cover to cover: many people will dip in and out. We obviously want to minimize the amount of duplication of "voice of the book" (narrative voice) and extracts, but sometimes things might need to be said in more than one place rather than filling pages with potentially off-putting cross-referencing. It is probable that the more coher-

ent the Book becomes, the less need there will be for repetition.

Our Communicating with Friends (CwF) group felt we needed to discern a working title for the draft, to reinforce the message that we are not simply re-working *Quaker faith and practice* but are creating a totally new book of discipline. We kept returning to this question throughout the weekend – it was fascinating to see the gradual emergence of clarity.

We also talked of how to get Friends interested in, excited about, and engaged with the new draft when it is released at the end of next year. Much of this work will be done by the CwF group, of which I am a member, but almost everyone on the committee was happy to be involved. Central Nominations committee is looking for new names to join the committee; Woodbrooke and Friends House staff will be supporting us in this work.

More than half of us relaxed on Saturday evening with *Strictly Come Dancing*: a wonderful way to unwind before another busy day ...

Sunday morning began with the Advices and Queries group's work – reading some of the new advices aloud, responding with appreciation and questions, and reassuring the members of the group that what they had produced is already very good. The group will continue to work in the light of our responses, and bring A&Qs back to our February meeting.

We spent time in worship together, heard our external reader's initial reflections, and looked briefly at the work of various other working groups.

Our final session gave us time to review how we felt the weekend had gone, both the work involved and being in a venue not previously used by any Quaker group. The general response to the venue was extremely positive, and committee members felt a lot happier about the work ahead than they had before the meeting. *Finally, we are beginning to edge towards a book!*

That said, we still need your prayers and upholding as we near the end of the first phase of our work as your committee. We are working on your behalf: we can't do this without you!

The key messages from this meeting are:

1. *Our newly appointed External Reader has begun the task of reviewing current versions of all texts which the committee have written.*

2. *We have agreed our sixth and final report to Meeting for Sufferings which will go to their meeting in December 2025. This will include sharing information about our working title and structure of the new book.*

3. *We remain on track to have the first complete draft of the new book ready by late 2026 for inclusion in Documents in Advance ahead of Yearly Meeting in July 2027.*

4. *Our work to create resources that will help prepare Friends to engage with our first complete draft in early 2027 is being supported by both Woodbrooke and Quakers in Britain staff.*

5. *Drafting the new version of Advices and Queries continues.*

Mary Woodward

Christian Aid: News and Events

Harvest Appeal 2025

This year's Harvest appeal shares how churches can stand in solidarity with farmers and women like Maryama in Sierra Leone. After floods damaged her crops, she joined a Village Savings & Loans Association supported by Christian Aid. With a small loan, she was able to pay her children's school fees, secure her farm and invest in their future. Could your meeting hold a Harvest collection to support farmers like Maryama? See:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/harvest-appeal>

Prayers for Peace in the Middle East – Monthly Online Meeting

Join Christian Aid and its partners on Teams on the 24th of each month (7.00 – 8.00 pm), as we continue to pray for peace in the Middle East. Learn more and sign up at:

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

Save the Date: The Gathering, 24 February 2026

The Gathering, Christian Aid Scotland's annual supporter event, returns on 24 February 2024 at 10.30am, online. We'll be celebrating the difference we've made together over the last year and getting ready for Christian Aid Week 2026 and the year ahead.

Register now at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/events/gathering-2026>

Restore Campaign

Tackling the debt and climate crises through Christian Aid's Restore Campaign is one way we can join in God's work to restore creation and see the flourishing of all people. There are videos, flyers, info sheets, a 'kintsugi' inspired art project and a petition to sign to the UK Government. See:

https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/restore-campaign?utm_campaign=806653_20250310-CA-CAM-ADV-Restore-Campaign-Launch&utm_medium=email&utm_source=christianaid&dm_i=7MDW,HAF1,E8UY5,1NXJ8,1

Scotland's Climate March: A Better World is Possible

Join thousands of people from across Scotland on a climate march on Saturday 15 November. Assemble at 11.00 am at Glasgow Green. Stand in solidarity with people around the world affected by the climate crisis, show the public and politicians in Scotland that many people care about the planet and want to see urgent climate action. This march is happening on the Global Day of Action during COP30 in Brazil and is organised by Friends of the Earth Scotland with the support of other organisations. Sign up at https://act.foe.scot/climate_march_2025

Further Humanitarian Aid for Sudan and South Sudan

The conflict in Sudan continues to displace significant numbers of people. We are grateful to have been awarded a further £125k of funding from the Scottish Government's Humanitarian Emergencies Fund for our work in

South Sudan. This will allow us to increase our support of refugees and returnees in Renk South Sudan, providing cash grants so that families can access essentials. See

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/our-work/working-scottish-government>

November is Will Aid Month

Each November, solicitors across the UK generously give their time and waive their fees to write basic Wills. Instead of paying a fee, you'll be invited to make a donation (*the suggested figure is £120*) to Christian Aid and other charities, working tirelessly to transform lives both near and far.

Learn more about Will Aid 2025 at

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/give/gifts-wills/will-aid>

AWAKENING – A message to the World

Many people accept the idea of a divine spark in all of us – it is a quotation often found. Divine is the stuff of God: goodness, truth, mercy, compassion, understanding, peace, joy, forgiveness, strength, courage, healing, enormous loving.

Let us look at a spark. It flashes for a tiny amount of time, then it stops. Two images that come to my mind are my gas hob at home and the box of matches in my kitchen drawer.

I turn on a burner on my gas hob and the piezo electric spark clicks quite frantically and the flames come because the gas has come through the pipe. Without the gas the spark would keep clicking madly but there would be no flame.

In the drawer is a box of 220 cook's matches, all very small. I only need one to light a candle. The match burns down very quickly but it has lighted a wick and the wick draws in the candle wax until the candle is used up – a long process.

Here are two examples of the spark becoming a steady flame. What is required? Gas or wax. A divine spark uses the Holy Spirit like gas or wax to make a steady flame. People in touch with Holy Spirit, Holy Energy, turn their spark into a steady flame. Instead of just flashes of peace, joy, forgiveness, truth, kindness, they can sustain these things.

So how do we get this Holy Energy? We seek it, we ask for it. There is no shortage of spiritual material to read. There are many people who can teach us meditation: reaching into higher realms. This is born of desire. If your desire is strong enough, and you pursue it, you will get there.

How can we be sure we all have the spark? Think of a person you have heard of who causes great distress and damage. Even a person like this has moments of kindness, patience, understanding, with a friend or family member. The spark only fires occasionally but it IS there. All of us can have the desire to turn spark into flame.

And what happens when we all come to the place where the flame burns steadily? We know who we are – at last, at long last. This is called Awakening. We see that all divisions are false, that the way forward is to work in unison with others, loving all. And in this way we heal the world, we restore all life to its full dignity, its full length. We heal the planet. We look forward to æons of peace and joy.

*I know I am a spark divine
And I would be a steady flame
Then I will know that for all time
I'm Part of God – that is my Name.*

Susan Kime

Conscientious Objection: a live issue

The following minute from Portobello & Musselburgh LM was forwarded to Area Meeting in September, but was not discussed there owing to other agenda items overrunning.

At our June meeting, it was agreed to explore the possibility of holding an exhibition at Portobello Library of a series of panels on conscientious objectors in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee in WW1. These were produced, along with a handbook, some years ago by the Workers Educational Association and included some Quakers as volunteer researchers.

In developing the proposal, it has expanded. There are now three strands:

- *An exhibition and associated public meeting in Portobello Library, probably at the end of November. This will be an opportunity to make clear that conscientious objection is a contemporary issue, particularly in Russia, Ukraine and Israel, and possibly to make links with activists today*
- *An offer to local schools of hosting the exhibition and meeting people from within the Quaker community who have family history of conscientious objection or are led by conscience to take actions for peace and justice today*
- *An Instagram strand during Quaker Week about the theme on Iola Wallace's Instagram feed. We have heard some of the detail of these plans, which are being taken forward by Iola Wallace, Duncan Wallace, Claire Chalmers and Alastair Cameron. [Quaker Week was 27 September to 5 October.]*

We thank these Friends for the preparation that has gone into this. We agree to support this. We ask that a letter be sent, with this offer, on behalf of our Meeting, to local schools and available more widely, such as for homeschoolers. We are asked to support the library exhibition and public meeting in November and early December by stewarding attending and publicizing. Details will be circulated in our newsletter and notices. Please pass on to your contacts, Friends.

We were reminded that the issue of conscientious objection is complex and has been throughout Quaker history.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Wednesday 10 September 2025
at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House and by remote videoconferencing**

2025/09/01 Worship and introductions

During opening worship, we have heard thanks for the service of Alastair Cameron as Clerk and Cath Dyer as Assistant Clerk, both of whose terms are coming to an end.

...

[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]

2025/09/11 General Meeting for Scotland

We will be hosting Quakers in Scotland (as General Meeting for Scotland will have become by that time if things go to plan) on Saturday 8 November. Our Friend Cath Dyer (*F&P*) has drawn attention to the appeal that was initiated by Quakers in Scotland on the occasion of the US president's forthcoming state visit to the UK. This has secured the support of some other churches and will be read out at worship services on Sunday 14 September. We encourage local meetings to read the statement publicly.

2025/09/12 Closing minute

56 Friends (48 members, 8 attenders) have been at all or part of this meeting, either in person or by Zoom. [*However there is no record, on this occasion, of the attendance for each local meeting.*]

We record our thanks to the staff of Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House.

We next meet on Saturday 1 November 2025 at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House and online, hosted by South Edinburgh Local Meeting. Times will be notified when arrangements have been made.

(Signed)

Alastair Cameron, Clerk

Mark Hutcheson, Assistant Clerk

Recommendation: a book from the AM Library

Snakes and Ladders: A personal exploration of Quaker work on human rights at the United Nations by Rachel Brett (The 2012 Swarthmore Lecture)

Rachel Brett has worked at QUNO Geneva for many years, and is now Senior Technical Adviser, Human Rights and Refugees, in particular in relation to conscientious objection to military service. Her lecture reflects on particular achievements such as outlawing the (often forced) recruitment of child soldiers, and winning rights for COs and women in prison. It gives an insight, as the cover says, into QUNO's "*profound and continuing effect on people's lives*".

Rachel Frith

IN RECENT YEARS, the last issue of *Sesame* has included notes of changes to meeting times in the Christmas/New Year period, in particular due to the closure of buildings where some local meetings hold their worship. Despite the festive season's starting ever earlier – shops in Edinburgh were displaying mince pies and Stollen in September – these details were unavailable at the time of going to press. Please consult the Friends named overleaf in **bold type** for updates nearer the time on arrangements in late December/early January at their own meeting. – ED.

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 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 **Laura Pearson** 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. Worship on 1st Sundays is all-age; there is a children's meeting on the last Sundays. Contact **Phil Lucas** for updates.

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

Sundays, 10.30. Contact **Denise Marshall** if bringing children; **Anna Levin** 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.

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 7.00 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 **Laura Pearson**

Every Sunday at 10.30 am; blended with the meeting in person on 1st, 2nd, 4th & 5th.

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.