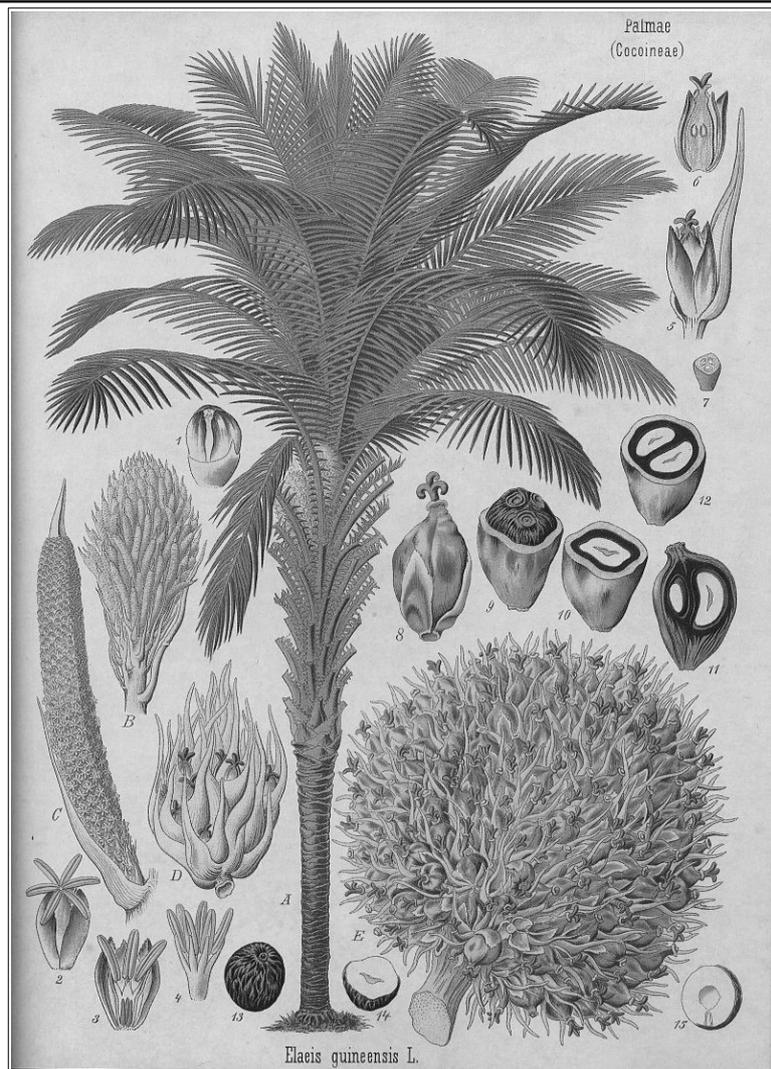


SESAME

Number 228: March 2020

NO AREA MEETING IN MARCH / Palm Oil/ Jesus/ Human Trafficking/ Eight Laws of Change/ End of Life issues/ Meeting for Sufferings/ Bursary help to attend YM Gathering/ Festival 2020/ BDRC update/ Trans & Non-binary identities/ Welcoming Babies and Children/ World Day of Prayer / General Meeting/ AM January Minutes/ EAPPI – *accompaniers needed*/ Etc.



African Oil Palm (*Elaeis Guineensis*) from *Medizinal Pflanzen* by Franz Eugen Köhler (1897) – see page 3

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

OWING TO CORONAVIRUS, AREA MEETING WILL NOT TAKE PLACE IN DUNBAR ON SATURDAY 21 MARCH

It is very much hoped that this is a postponement rather than a cancellation. East Lothian Local Meeting has put a lot of thought and effort into preparing for the meeting and the afternoon activities on the theme *Living Earth, Loving Earth*. It would be a great pity if these did not happen eventually.

For the moment, however, it is felt to be more responsible NOT to bring people together and so heighten the risk of infection.

Written versions of some of the reports that would have been presented at Dunbar – Meeting for Sufferings on 7 December 2019 and 1 February; General Meeting for Scotland on 7 March; and updates from the AM Festival Committee and the YM Book of Discipline Revision Committee – are included in this issue.

Editor

HHEALTH IS A PROCESS, not a single and unique event. Health is a becoming; it is not a state of being. The price of health is an eternal vigilance, a constant adaptation to the creative Word of God ... During each life period, a new measure of the Word of God must be built, living stone by stone, into the very structure of the growing personality, just as the energy of the sun is built into the plants of the earth. Childhood, adolescence, maturity, middle age and old age, each and every phase of life calls for the discovery of new potentialities within the eternal self ... Thus, by a process of growth, the healthy spirit is prepared for the last crisis, death, when the body returns to the earth, and the spirit to God who gave it. If the spirit be in health, the fate of its tabernacle becomes of slight concern ...

Howard E. Collier (1890-1953)
Health and the Quaker way of life, 1945

The Green Challenge, part 1 – Palm Oil

Area Meeting in January heard about the “Green Challenge” which, with the support of the management committee, the managers of Edinburgh Meeting House have set themselves (see Minute 2020/01/05 on p. 27). In each quarter this year, they and the staff will be considering some particular issue in how the building is used and run which has implications for sustainability and the environment; and Friends are encouraged to assess their own lifestyles in similar terms. In April-June, the issue will be single-use plastic; for January-March, it has been palm oil, an ingredient in many foods and a valuable cash crop, but which is a cause of concern on account of its adverse impact on global warming and bio-diversity. (Ed.)

Palm oil has long been a commodity with social implications in its production. During the First World War, the Empire Resources Development Committee reported that intensive cultivation of oil palms could in itself pay off the British war debt and give Englishmen a six-hour working day; it recommended, therefore, that agricultural land in West Africa should be given over to plantations. A Quaker MP, T. Edmund Harvey, urged, in a Parliamentary Question, that, *as the Committee exploits the vegetable oil palms of the dependencies for UK benefit, the governors of those dependencies should be fully consulted before any action is taken*; and at least one had strong objections. From what is now Ghana, the governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Hugh Clifford, wrote that

a plantation system is not a society; it is an economic agglomeration created for the pursuit of profit. It substitutes itself for those primitive societies which in sickness and in health sustain their members.

This view (which prevailed) was shared by his successors in the Colony's government, who similarly thwarted a strenuous campaign by Lever Brothers in the 1920s to impose a plantation system through wholesale alienation of farmland to Europeans. (Cocoa, the cash-crop that would have been supplanted, *was* grown by small farmers; and although there was no notion of 'fair trade' the market was less exploitative than plantations would have been.)

In the '20s, the main use of palm oil outside the areas that produced it was as a machine lubricant and for making soap: brands such as Sunlight and, in the US, Palmolive. Previously, its chief uses in Britain had been for greasing railway axles, in the manufacture of tin-plate in South Wales, and for making candles – 50,000 tons were imported annually into the UK, at a price, in the 1890s, of £26 a ton. The shift to being used in toiletries and then in food raised its price in real terms, making it a more lucrative product that attracted new producers. Nigeria, where both plantations and small farmers contributed to the total output, was overtaken as the world's leading producer in 1934 – it remains the third largest, with 2.3 million hectares under cultivation in 2018 – but is far surpassed by Malaysia and Indonesia, which between them produce 80 % of the world's palm oil.

Oil palms are an efficient crop: of the world's farmland producing vegetable oil they occupy 5 %, yet from it comes 38 % of the oil. Global demand for palm oil is huge, and growing, still chiefly for use in food, soap and cosmetics, but now also for bio-diesel and other fuels. In 2008, when world production of palm oil and palm kernel oil amounted to 48 million tonnes, the UN Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) was forecasting that demand would have doubled by 2020 and tripled by 2050.

Concern expressed by non-governmental organisations about the environmental and social impact of palm oil led to the establishment of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) in 2004. Based in Geneva, with a secretariat in Kuala Lumpur and a satellite office in Jakarta, it has, according to its website (<https://www.rspo.org>), 4,643 members in 94 countries, who "represent all links along the palm oil supply chain": growers, processors, consumer goods manufacturers, retailers, and bankers/investors, together with some of the NGOs whose criticisms had led to its setting up. Its stated vision is that "RSPO will transform markets to make sustainable palm oil the norm"; to achieve this its aims, in its own words, are to:

- *Advance the production, procurement, finance and use of sustainable palm oil products*
- *Develop, implement, verify, assure and periodically review credible global standards for the entire supply chain of sustainable palm oil*
- *Monitor and evaluate the economic, environmental and social impacts of the uptake of sustainable palm oil in the market*
- *Engage and commit all stakeholders throughout the supply chain, including governments and consumers.*

Greenpeace and others have attacked RSPO for its lack of progress – currently only 19 % of world production is certified by it as sustainable. When Herakles Farms, a US firm, had to abandon a project in Cameroon because of local opposition, it responded by simply leaving RSPO, rather than changing its practices; and in the same year, 2013, the annual meeting of the Roundtable was gatecrashed by workers accusing it of turning a blind eye to forced labour and child labour in plantations it had accredited. Nevertheless, such monitoring as exists is under the oversight of RSPO.

Other organisations concerned with promoting sustainability include the WWF (Worldwide Fund for Nature – formerly the World Wildlife Fund) and UN agencies such as the FAO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Since 2009, WWF has published an annual report of the use of sustainable palm oil by major corporations. In 2011, 31 of the 132 surveyed received the top score – none had done so two years earlier – and it was noted that a further 87, including Unilever and Nestlé, had committed to using only sustainable palm oil by 2015. Neither of these two succeeded. Nestlé was suspended from RSPO in 2018; it now hopes, according to its website, to meet the commitment in 2020. In 2015, Unilever actually used only 19 % sustainable palm oil, but has a published

plan to reach 100 % by “the end of 2019” [*sic*], and its website says “we ... are on track to deliver it”. It is still a member of RSPO.

In its *Human Development Report 2007-08*, the UNDP said that West African production *was* largely sustainable, through being mainly in the hands of smallholders and not part of a monoculture. Growers across the continent have been encouraged; new varieties have been introduced, for example in Kenya, which used to import most of its palm oil but now makes more of its own from the hybrid high-yielding palms promoted by the FAO; their cultivation is claimed to have environmental benefits in stabilising the soil, and they do not compete with existing food crops or indigenous vegetation. Likewise in Ghana, where palm oil was only marketed locally or to neighbouring countries, there is potential for growing for the European and American markets. These are instances of the crop functioning as a means of development and wealth creation; and in other parts of the world too it may also improve lives. Thus in Colombia, now the biggest producer in the Americas, cultivation has been backed by USAID (the United States Agency for International Development) as both a means of providing livelihoods for former paramilitaries, and a source of biofuel, which accounts for 35 % of the palm oil produced. Fedepalma, the National Federation of Palm Growers of Colombia, announced in 2006 that the land under oil palms had passed a million hectares – in the '60s, it had been about 18,000 hectares – with the projection that seven million hectares would be devoted to exportable cash crops by 2020, of which oil palms would be a significant part. Despite Fedepalma's stating that its members follow sustainable guidelines (it has been a member of RSPO since 2004), there have been allegations of the forced displacement of the plantation-land's previous occupants and of ill-treatment of workers, and claims that some plantations have been turned over to growing coca.

It is in Malaysia and Indonesia, however, that the problematic issues which are associated with palm oil are at their worst, owing to the scale of the industry in those countries. The most obvious of these is the devastation of the environment, with global consequences: for while plantations can act as 'sinks', absorbing carbon dioxide, they do so less effectively than the rainforest cleared to make room for them. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimated in 2007 that 98 % of Indonesian forest would have been destroyed by 2022, largely through forest fires and logging (80 % of it illegal), to get more land for oil palms. In Malaysia, clearing peatland for plantations was reckoned by Greenpeace to release more gases than the emissions from a year's use of conventional fuel. (In 2018 about half of the EU's palm oil imports went into bio-diesel – in principle greener than fossil fuels – but it was reported in November that year that, since the greenhouse gas emissions saved from engine exhausts was more than cancelled out by the side effects of its production, palm oil would be phased out of transport fuel in Europe by 2030.)

The Indonesian forests being destroyed are the habitat of some of the world's rarest animals. On the island of Sumatra, the Sumatran species of elephant, tiger, and rhinoceros, all critically endangered, could be driven to extinction; as could, in Borneo, the pygmy elephant and the Bornean sun bear; and in both places, the local species of orangutan. However creatures less exotic (and less newsworthy) are also threatened, since, after the rainforests of the Amazon and the Congo, the lowland forests of Indonesia are the most biologically diverse places on earth. On Sulawesi, not just 80 % of the forest has gone, but 99 % of the wetland have been lost or damaged. The situation in Malaysia is less extreme, and the government pledged in 2010 that at least half the nation's land area would be retained as forest.

People can be displaced as well as animals. Indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable, and in the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak there has been conflict arising from the appropriation of traditional land. In Indonesia, similar violent evictions have taken place; and human abuse also occurs in the production process, through the exposure of workers to dangerous pesticides and herbicides, the flouting of legal requirements in regard to working hours and minimum pay, the exploitation of female and child labour (both women and children are often unpaid) and other failings amounting to "systemic" human right violations, according to an Amnesty International report on the Indonesian industry.

It can be difficult for outsiders to intervene positively. The European Commission's decision to phase out bio-diesel from palm oil was described by the Malaysian premier as "rich people ... try[ing] to impoverish poor people", an argument which had been used successfully when France introduced a levy of €300/tonne on palm oil in 2016. Dubbed the "Nutella tax" – because what is described on the label as a "hazelnut spread with cocoa" is actually mostly sugar with 20 % palm oil, and so was particularly hard hit – it was quickly reduced to €90/tonne, in part because of concern for "the producers ... who are mainly in developing countries", as one Socialist deputy put it.

Ferrero, the makers of Nutella, are among those singled out for praise on the latest (January 2020) WWF scorecard – the summary of the report on palm oil buyers. [See <https://palmoilscorecard.panda.org/analysis>] Others are L'Oréal and IKEA, who like them score 19 or more out of 22, for "investing time and resources beyond their own supply chain to support a responsible industry". Of the 173 companies up for assessment, 141 are RSPO members; 132 responded to the survey, with all but one committed to using 100 % certified sustainable palm oil (and 117 to doing so in 2020). Nevertheless, the average score of the firms assessed is only 12.6; and the key finding is that *while some companies are making commendable progress on sustainable palm oil, others – including brands whose products we consume daily – are doing little or nothing or at all.*

Re-reading the Gospels

On 22 February, Timothy Ashworth, the Biblical Studies tutor at Woodbrooke, the Quaker study centre in Birmingham, led an all-day meeting for learning on *Jesus: a Quaker approach* at Edinburgh Meeting House. It was a lively event. In four sessions the speaker passed around selections from each of the gospels to be read aloud, and he then discussed the role of these passages in the relevant Gospel. There were also questions and answers, and a set of separate discussion groups after lunch. What follows is an attempt to capture some of what was said.

Our visitor began by emphasizing the Jewish context of early Christianity, drawing attention to the way the Bible was treated by early Quakers. Fox could sometimes be negative about Scripture, and many early Quakers put more emphasis on the living word of God revealed through the Spirit.

The four gospels all differ in various ways. None of the writers was a witness, but each was in touch with witnesses.

In Mark, Jesus is seen as a prophet, often involved in conflict, and misunderstood even by his disciples and his family. The account of the baptism of Jesus has similarities to accounts of the Spirit calling a prophet. The message that the Kingdom of God is near, and that repentance and renewal are needed, reflects this context. Jesus is presented as someone who has authority to forgive sins (2:7 ff). Mark also presents Jesus as a human figure, a Jewish teacher who uses humour and exaggeration: "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle..." (10:25), or speaks of mountains being thrown into the sea on request (11:23). The conflict with the temple authorities is the key to the later parts of Mark.

Matthew made heavy use of Mark, though he left out some items which he found problematic, and added fresh material. Matthew reflects the friction between the early Jewish Christians and the mainstream Jewish community. Matthew 2:11 ff shows the kings of the Gentiles bringing gifts and treating Jesus as King. For Matthew, Jesus is a teacher like Moses. Matt. 5:48 urges the love of enemies, and the pursuit of perfection, a motif taken up by George Fox. The parable of the mustard seed (13:31 ff) expects a swift transformation of the world, another motif taken up by early Quakers. At 18:20 we find the idea that when a few people meet in his name Jesus is present. In Judaism, if two or three study the *Torah* [the Law; often specifically the five books of Moses], God is said to be present. Though there was some friction between Jesus and his contemporaries Matthew presents him making much stronger accusations against his opponents. Fox was also critical of the established church of his day.

Luke mostly keeps the order in Mark but adds a lot more. His genealogy traces Jesus' descent back not just to Abraham but to Adam. The Spirit plays a strong role in Luke from the very beginning *via* the account of what

Jesus read in the synagogue at Nazareth (1:67) to the claim that the promise of an anointing by the Spirit to bring good news to the poor is being fulfilled (4:16 ff). There is a sense of things being turned upside down here, as also in 12:13 ff, where the pursuit of wealth is criticized. Early Quakers took a similar stance.

The Fourth Gospel opens with a focus on the Word – the *Logos*. (For the Greeks this was the rational principle which ordered the universe, and some Jewish writers had already taken up this idea.) This gospel reflects tensions within the Jewish Christian community, and a sense that it tried to set itself apart from hostile outsiders. The First Epistle of John (traditionally ascribed to the writer of the Gospel) displays antagonism to outsiders and even to some other Christians. The division is related to what people think about Jesus. This Gospel holds a very elevated view of Jesus. So 16:24 writes of Jesus speaking in the community through the Spirit. This, like 8:58f where Jesus is portrayed as saying he was there before Abraham, is a theme arising in the community inspired by the Spirit. In 9:22 the author reflects on the exclusion from the synagogue of anyone who said Jesus was the Messiah. That was a separation which came late in the first century. Early Quakers were not afraid to be regarded as different by their neighbours.

The day was a wide-ranging exploration of many themes, which, for those new to the subject was illuminating and thought-provoking. Timothy Ashworth also hosted an online ‘web follow-up’ on 9 March: a chance to discuss further any issues and questions that had arisen on the day or occurred to a participant subsequently.

Thanks are due to David Clarke, the elder who arranged the event in co-operation with Woodbrooke.

David Mealand

THE BIBLE IS THE RECORD of what God did with and for Israel and of what He has done for mankind through the discipline of Israel and the coming of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament relates the call of a nation to become a moral and spiritual example to all nations, the training of a people to be the bearers of God’s truth and mercy to all peoples. It was the mission of Jesus ‘to make the treasures of Israel available for mankind’. Throughout the story, from the call of Abraham to the coming of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the divine initiative is manifest with a unique intensity in a continuous and progressive revelation. As the record of this revelation the Scriptures become the primary and indispensable witness to the history and nature of salvation.

Meeting for Sufferings, 1956

Modern-day Slavery

Edinburgh Interfaith Association Religious Leaders and Faith Representatives Meeting

Edinburgh City Chambers, November 2019

A presentation on human trafficking was given by Joy Gillespie, Development Manager of the charity Survivors of Human Trafficking in Scotland (SOHTIS), which was established in Edinburgh in 2017. She defined modern-day slavery as “the movement of people by force, fraud, coercion or deception in order to exploit.” This trade in human beings has an annual global turnover of a hundred billion pounds. Its profits are estimated to be about 400 %.

The Scottish Government, to its credit, has some of the most robust legislation in the world designed to tackle this crime. The Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act was passed in 2015 and the development of its first Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy in 2017.

Modern slaves, we were told, are kept captive not by chains but by violence, fear and extreme poverty. Some may be exploited for a short time and then dumped, others are held captive for years. There are three times more enslaved people now than there were during the entire period of the Atlantic slave trade from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. More than 136,000 of them are working in the UK today. During 2019 there was a 74 % increase in identification, but this represents only the tip of the iceberg. Most enslaved people are hiding in plain sight and can be found in every local authority area in Scotland.

In addition to people being trafficked from other countries, there are increasing numbers of UK citizens being targeted across Scotland. Perpetrators are luring the young, the homeless and people using foodbanks.

Trafficked people are typically found working in trades such as domestic service, the construction industry, agriculture, fishing, car washes and nail bars as well as being sexual exploited, forced into marriages against their will or made to engage in criminal activities. A current trade in Edinburgh involves single girls approaching diners in restaurants with roses for sale. The sexual exploitation of young women during the Edinburgh Festival is three times higher than during the rest of the year, according to the police.

Signs to look out for are people wearing inappropriate clothing, looking nervous and travelling with little or no luggage. If they are selling something that looks extremely cheap or offering a bargain too good to be true we were told to ask ourselves – Why ?

The victims *may* have limited English but this is not always true. One example given was that of a 14-year-old British Asian girl, “befriended” and then sold by her white, elderly next-door neighbour. For eight years she

was trafficked for sex from one handler to another until a hospital nurse intervened, alerted by the type and severity of internal injuries she had suffered, and from which she will never fully recover. Interviewed after her ordeal, she did not know what the word “trafficking” meant.

We were advised that if we encounter any person we suspect may have been trafficked we should not try to intervene directly but phone the Salvation Army confidential helpline on 0300 303 8151. Alternatively we could call the police on 101 or 999. Police Scotland have a web page with more information, some of it extremely disturbing, at:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/whats-happening/campaigns/2018/human-trafficking>

Lynne Barty

The text of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 is at

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/12/contents/enacted>

Further information is at

https://consult.gov.scot/human-trafficking-team/a-human-trafficking-and-exploitation-strategy/supporting_documents/683603_v4_20161007.pdf

and

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/trafficking-exploitation-strategy/>

(Ed.)

“I will decide if I sing”

Prompted by Jenny Copsey’s report in Sesame 227 on her work as a Quaker Prison Chaplain, Alison Burnley writes:

I remember a story that our late Friend Helen Steven told us after she had been in Cornton Vale (Scotland’s women’s prison, near Bridge of Allan), following prosecution for one of her acts of peace on which the authorities had frowned.

As the women were being led into the prison, the warder said: “Right – from now on, you will not make any decisions; you do as we tell you.” Helen told us: “Then I said: ‘Oh no; I will decide if I sing or not.’ ”

The other women were shocked and surprised at Helen’s nerve in defying the warder – but also felt a bit less disempowered, and stood up just a little bit taller.

Eight Laws of Change

In 1973-5, the Catholic academic Michael J. Sheeran SJ studied the working of business meetings in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and published his conclusions in an interesting book, Beyond Majority Rule: voteless decisions in the Religious Society of Friends (1983). Another American outsider, Stephan A. Schwartz (“scientist, futurist, historian and writer” as he is described on his website), is the author of The 8 Laws of Change: How to Be an Agent of Personal and Social Transformation (2015), from which the following is taken. These ‘laws’ are his own formulations with regard to how Friends operate, and have not been stated by any Quaker meeting or group; but it can be illuminating “to see ourselves as others see us”. – Ed.

How could this small group of people create movements that ultimately involve millions, tens of millions? This is a tiny group whose beingness is so powerful that enough people personally change their choices so that the desired change becomes society’s new norm. In studying the histories of these great social transformations, eight laws—I hesitate to call them laws, but because they are constants in each case, I think they have earned the term—begin to emerge ... Taken together, they reveal how individual choice linked in consensus becomes the strategy of beingness that creates change. Adherence to these Eight Laws is not the unique domain of Quakers, of course. But in their efforts, it can be clearly seen.

Here are the laws:

First Law. The individuals, individually, and the group, collectively, must share a common intention.

Second Law. The individuals and the group may have goals, but they may not have cherished outcomes.

Third Law. The individuals in the group must accept that their goals may not be reached in their lifetimes and be okay with this.

Fourth Law. The individuals in the group must accept that they may not get either credit or acknowledgment for what they have done and be authentically okay with this.

Fifth Law. Each person in the group, regardless of gender, religion, race, or culture, must enjoy fundamental equality, even as the various roles in the hierarchy of the effort are respected.

Sixth Law. The individuals in the group must foreswear violence in word, act, or thought.

Seventh Law. The individuals in the group and the group itself must make their private selves consistent with their public postures.

Eighth Law. The individuals in the group and the group collectively must always act from the beingness of life-affirming integrity.

With thanks to Rosemary Hartill for passing this on, and acknowledgement to the Franciscan source – Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditation – which drew it to her notice.

Building and sustaining compassionate communities

The role of the Churches in supporting people with end of life matters

In November, the charity Faith in Older People, together with the Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care and the Church of Scotland Guild, held a conference/workshop at the Methodist Halls, Nicolson Square, Edinburgh. I was invited, and it was clear there are a few things we could all do by way of preparation to 'keep living until we die'.

There were reminders of the practical steps that everyone should consider:

Making a Will – a printed will form can be bought at Ryman's at less than £15 for a Scotland-only will, and about twice that for a will valid under both Scots *and* English law, to be witnessed and signed by friends or family. A will can have a letter of funeral wishes attached.

Creating a Power of Attorney – granting power of attorney means that if you become incapable, decision-making on your behalf is in the hands of someone you have chosen. It is more complicated to set up than writing a will – the document has to be registered with the Office of Public Guardian (for a fee, currently £79) and accompanied by a doctor's certificate that the granter has capacity at the time of signing (for which there may also be a charge), and it needs to have been drafted by a competent legal writer – the OPG does not provide a template. However it is a fraction of the cost of establishing **guardianship** – which is set up when a person *has* lost capacity, can cost £5,000, take a year, and need revisited annually.

[*Hilary Patrick wrote in more detail about will-making and power of attorney in Sesame 194 and 200, which can be accessed at the Area Meeting webpage. – Ed.*]

Advanced directives – also called 'living wills' – can define your end of life care. They are likely to be followed, but not legally binding; making one does not require the assistance of a solicitor. See:

<https://compassionindying.org.uk/library/advance-directives-living-wills-scotland/>

It is worth giving thought to your wishes regarding burial/cremation, special songs, poems, flowers, where to be laid to rest, *etc.*; and making sure these are known. How to repatriate a body, and the holding of ceremonies in two countries may also be issues for some.

Our modern lifestyles can add new aspects to our experience of death. It may bring guilt: at not doing enough for the dying, or from wanting your death your way. People living independent lives away from their family may not be close enough to act as 'next of kin'.

Marion Chatterley spoke about the gap between expected and actual duration of end of life, and how clergy and faith groups can help.

J. William Worden's work on grief therapy was touched on. He identifies 'Four Tasks of Mourning':

1. *To accept the reality of the loss, and the reality of a new situation;*

2. *To work through the pain of grief*, which for each person will be a different experience – sensitivity is needed in those around them, particularly in their faith group;
3. *To adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing*, which may take time, and require adjustments that are internal, external and spiritual; and
4. *To find an enduring connection with the deceased while embarking on a new life*. For the bereaved, this means reinvesting emotionally and spiritually. Others need to think how to help people who are angry, how to say what the dying needs to say, how to share thoughts on faith.

In discussing the theme of the day, building and sustaining compassionate communities, we tried to identify key issues: what actions are desired, and by whom? Some of the options, including safe spaces to open up about concerns, already exist, but clearly needs more publicity. Did *you* know, for example, that Marie Curie is not just a hospice for cancer patients? that repatriation of a deceased person is much, much easier and cheaper after cremation? and that 'Death Cafés' exist, as places to talk about concerns and clarify issues about dying, through cards, games and talks?

Kathryn Mannix's book *With the End in Mind: How to Live and Die Well* can be recommended [ISBN 978-0008210918].

Useful contacts

Organisations

Marie Curie Hospice Edinburgh

<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/hospice-care/edinburgh>

Macmillan Cancer Support

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/get-help>

Faith In Older People

<https://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk/>

Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care

<https://www.palliativecarescotland.org.uk/>

[including course information on a 4 module course in *End of Life Aid Skills; Death Café; Marie Curie Cards*]

Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief

<https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/>

[including information on the *Compassionate Cities tool kit*:

<https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/content/toolkitcompassionatecities/>]

Solicitors for Older People Scotland (SOPS)

sops.org.uk (Tel. 0800 152 2037) [offering some services at reduced rates]

Death certification review service

http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/governance_and_assurance/death_certification.aspx

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS

7 December 2019

All the papers for the meeting are available online at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2019-12-agenda-papers>

The minutes and other follow-up material are available from

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2019-12-follow-up-package>

Annual Reports

Annual reports (all in the linked-to agenda above) were received from the four 'standing' committees: Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC); Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC); Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR); and Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC). No action was called for, but we had some thoughtful deliberation.

QCCIR and Churches Together in England (CTE)

The most surprising bit of information concerned our participation in CTE, the English constituent of the Christian ecumenical bodies in the UK. In brief, the same-sex marriage issue has led to the rejection of the Quaker nominee for the rotating presidency, last held by a Friend in 1998-2001. Details are given in the December 2019 issue of CIRcular¹ and in press statements from BYM and CTE². We were led to reaffirm the legitimacy of our presence in the ecumenical movement, while rejecting the relevance of an individual's sexuality in making appointments. We are committed to the ecumenical project for the long haul.

[1] <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/circular-2019-12>

[2] <https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/churches-plan-for-new-president-falters-because-of-same-sex-marriage>

Has the word overseer had its day?

Maybe yes, maybe no... Central Yorkshire AM raised this question; Meeting for Sufferings declined to take a position, deferring to the Book of Discipline Revision process.

Central Nominations

We returned to a proposal which we knocked back at our meeting in November 2018, now revised. We agreed to combine the work of the existing Committee on Clerks and Central Nominations Committee.

The result is a larger single body (a "new Central Nominations Committee") with flexible sub-structure replacing the two separate bodies, nominating:

- Clerks of Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings
- Other regular central roles

No list has been published of all the posts for which the existing or new groups are responsible; the following is a partial list, being roles to which Friends were appointed at YM in May 2019 (with the actual numbers for each):

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees (6)

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (5)

Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee (3)

Yearly Meeting Elders (9)

Yearly Meeting Epistle Drafting Committee (6)

Quaker Stewardship Committee (5)

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (3)

Yearly Meeting Pastoral Care Group (1)

Yearly Meeting Publications Group for *Quaker faith & practice* (1)

- *Ad-hoc* roles, e.g. review groups: at least one or two small ones per year, and occasionally big (the impending review of Yearly Meeting, with four *ex officio* members and four to be nominated) or *very* big (the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, 20+ members)

Budget

In her introduction, underlining the vulnerability to ageing that we face, the YM Treasurer said that five people, giving £8,000 between them, contribute 30 % of the income of her own Area Meeting.

As a result of the plans for Meeting-centred support, the budget projects a deficit, and is expected to do so for some years forward, so reserves will be lowered.

1 February 2020

All the papers for the meeting are available online at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2020-2-agenda-papers>

The minutes and other follow-up material are available from

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2020-02-follow-up-package>

Trustees consultation

Caroline Nursey, the Clerk of BYM Trustees, reported on the state of the meeting-centred support initiative and related issues.

She acknowledged concerns about decisions with regard to meeting-centred support.

More work is to be done on re-envisioning trustees as responsible for the 'simple charity' which supports BYM as a 'simple church'.

As an Area Meeting, we can (and should) feed back to Trustees. What do *we* need from the centre to help us be simpler?

In response to Trustee's call for expressions of interest in first steps towards Meeting-centred support, specifically hosting local development works or acting as 'hubs': 38 responses were received.

- One hub will be announced later this year as an experiment;
- Local development worker roll-out will begin 'immediately' but will take years, still aiming to have one such worker "in reach of" every meeting

Paul Parker, BYM Recording Clerk, spoke about the devolution of central functions, saying that this would be a gradual process. There will continue to be wealth of specialist expertise in London. Discussions have started with QLCC on what kinds specialist expertise is needed and when it needs to be *in London*.

Speaking out

We returned to this matter, previously considered at Sufferings on 4 October [see Sesame 226], to hear more from Friends House staff on how they approach this.

They drew out two continua along which they see themselves as helping us to approach public statements:

Compelled to witness <--> Compelled to achieve change
Be distinctively Quaker <--> Voice all concerns

Our decisions at York Gathering in 2009 on same-sex marriage was cited as an instructive example of how witness without the expectation of change nonetheless *achieved* change.

Diversity

Sam McNair reported very impressively on a Diversity and Inclusion gathering held at Woodbrooke, 17-19 January. During a small-group reflection session on this, I found the following points that were shared particularly helpful:

- Gay people of gender X may find X to Y trans people challenging to their own choices with regard to their own dismorphia;
- Not all trans people are prepared or able to 'come out' to everyone in a new meeting: how would we as a Meeting cope with a gradual spread of knowledge?
- In our struggle to understand how a Meeting might be a Quaker meeting and yet take what we find to be a very unQuakerly approach to LGBTQ issues, one Meeting reported having got great value from taking an African Meeting as the equivalent of a pen-friend, 'twinning' with a Meeting in Ghana;
- What we need to understand better is how we as Meetings can, in individual cases, find a way to make a space that is safe for people who are labouring under the experience of being 'other' to share that in some way. They may have been waiting a long time for the opportunity...

Henry S. Thompson

South East Scotland AM representative

Financial support to attend Yearly Meeting Gathering

We are aware that attending Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG) is expensive but South East Scotland Area Meeting (SESAM) encourages Friends to go if they are able. There is financial support available for those who want to attend but cannot afford some or all of the cost. This is what SESAM's Bursary Guidelines say about YMG:

Bursary help is normally available from Area Meeting up to the full cost of attending, on the recommendation of overseers. (This includes the cost for accompanying family members, where appropriate.)

When an overseer recommends that Area Meeting should offer financial assistance, this should be done on the general grounds of the financial need of the recipient.

To apply, please contact the AM treasurers (sesamtreasurer@gmail.com) to let them know how much you would like to apply for, and ask a member of your pastoral care team to write separately to confirm that your circumstances are such that you need this level of support.

(Similar arrangements apply to Junior Yearly Meeting. For full information about bursaries that may be available, please contact the AM treasurers. [However please note that bookings for JYM 2020 have already closed. Ed.]

Area Meeting welcomes a report or reports on YMG from those who have attended: this may be a joint report from all those who have been.

Some local meetings may be able, and wish, to give some assistance, and may ask the recipient to report back to them.

Yearly Meeting itself also has a bursary fund which may be able to help towards travel and accommodation costs. There is information on page 5 of the preliminary brochure.

Jacqueline Noltingk
AM Treasurer

BOOK OF DISCIPLINE REVISION COMMITTEE

March 2020 update

Your committee met in January at Friends House in London, and will be meeting again in April, at the University of Warwick.

We spend time each weekend listening to each other as we worship-share: this time we spoke about how we ground our work in the Spirit and how gradually we move towards clarity and a better understanding of our task. It's a long slow process...

How are we getting on? Well, I invite you to consider the size and the scale of the project – it's not just a matter of getting a copy of *Faith & Prac-*

tice, cutting it into bits, rewriting some of them, and juggling the order a little bit! We are spending a lot of time discerning our way forward – what needs to be in the book; what’s not currently in *Q. F. & P.*; the importance of explaining WHY we do things as well as HOW we do them; how we do that explaining; how to be inclusive; and how everything fits together.

I am learning that the weekends tend to take a particular shape: the Friday night is good as we come together again, find out how we’ve been getting on, and prepare for the work ahead. The Saturday becomes increasingly difficult and demanding, and I usually end up wondering what on earth is going on, feeling that everything is very muddled – and then on the Sunday morning the clerks present a draft minute summarising our work of the previous day, and everything seems clear again and we can see how to move on. (I remember having a similar experience at Yearly Meeting, listening to everyone’s ministry and trying to work out what it all means and where we are trying to go – and then Minute 36 makes sense of everything.)

The key messages from this weekend’s meeting are:

- We feel daunted and excited by the size and importance of our task. We continued to seek ways to make it more manageable to approach. We are thinking about how to make our book of discipline more inclusive. We are also working out what is central to explaining the Quaker way.
- What passages of *Quaker Faith & Practice* are significant to you? We talked about parts that are personally meaningful to us, and will invite everyone to do the same during YMG.
- Keeping in touch with Quakers is very important to us. Many thanks to those who helped us by attending the Woodbrooke conference in November. We will be active at YMG and hope to accept other invitations to engage with Friends. Our current communications channels are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. BYM reports on our work through Quaker News and other BYM channels.

As well as working on the ‘homework’ tasks we are set to do for the next committee meeting, I have been working very hard as convenor of the planning group for our committee’s engagement with Friends at Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath. The planning group was appointed in December and immediately was faced with Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee’s imminent deadlines – what did we want to do at YMG? What spaces would we need? How would we describe what we want to do? A small group of us has been toiling for the last three months: we currently have a breathing space but will need to pick up the task again at our April committee meeting, when we work out who does what and when in Bath in August.

If you’re coming to Yearly Meeting Gathering and want to know more about our work, look out for our special interest groups – *Boldly revising*

Quaker faith & practice, Prayerfully revising Quaker faith & practice, and Joyfully revising Quaker faith & practice. We hope you will contribute to our week-long project Our Book – Bath 2020: a creative BDRC community art and podcast project.

Once again, please uphold us all as we do this complex task on your behalf – we can't do it without you.

Mary Woodward

Festival 2020 – Venue 40 Events

Our Meeting House Mangers with support from Festival Committee have been finalising an exciting theatre programme for this summer. We have a variety of **performances**, from companies who have been with us before and from others new to us.

We have agreed that, in the same way as last year, the Meeting Room should be used for **outreach activities** in Weeks 1 and 2 (10-15 and 17-22 August respectively). The suggestion is that with COP26 happening in Glasgow later in the year, the focus might be on Climate; and we are looking for ideas from Local Meetings, groups or individuals. It could be for a craft activity, a workshop, an exhibition; but any proposed use of the space *must* be well worked out, with thought having been given to who is going to staff it, over what hours, how it will be publicised, who the likely audience is, *etc.* We will need information for the printed programme by mid-May at the latest. Please contact the Meeting House with any possible proposals.

Luath Press will once again be arranging a series of **talks** in Week 3 (24-29 August), with the climate emergency as the theme. They would be happy for Friends to have short 'soapbox' slots, in which to talk about Climate matters and Quaker involvement, during some of their events. (Anyone interested in getting involved should contact the Meeting House first, and a meeting will then be arranged with Luath Press.)

As usual the committee will be looking for offers of accommodation for our national volunteers for any of the three weeks and there will be request for other help nearer the time.

The Festival is an important piece of outreach which I hope will be well supported again this year; and if you feel particularly enthusiastic you might consider joining the Festival Committee, which could benefit from some new members.

Janet Grimwade
Convener, Festival Committee

Meeting for Learning: Trans and Non-binary Identities

Friends from other meetings joined members and attenders of South Edinburgh meeting on 2 March, for a meeting for learning on the subject of trans and non-binary identities.

A group of around twenty were welcomed to the meeting by Rici Marshall Cross and Mairi McCormack, who invited us to participate with bravery and kindness in a shared exploration of gender identity. We were reminded of *Advices & Queries* 17:

Do you respect that of God in everyone though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern? Each of us has a particular experience of God and each must find the way to be true to it. When words are strange or disturbing to you, try to sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others. Listen patiently and seek the truth which other people's opinions may contain for you. Avoid hurtful criticism and provocative language. Do not allow the strength of your convictions to betray you into making statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue. Think it possible that you may be mistaken.

We began by introducing ourselves to one another using our names and our preferred pronouns – do we prefer to use *she/her*, *he/him*, or *they/them*? We learned of the hurt and discomfort we could unwittingly cause to others by making assumptions about their gender identity based only on their name or appearance. Several of us had experienced uncertainty or made mistakes with this in the past, and it was encouraging to learn that if and when we do so a simple apology – and redoubled effort to use the person's preferred pronouns – can usually put things right.

A short video produced by the US National Centre for Transgender Equality (available online at www.bit.ly/transintrovideo) introduced us to several trans and non-binary people of all ages, each speaking clearly and directly about their own experience. We heard of their fears and concerns, of appalling discrimination and everyday dilemmas, and also of the joys to be had in living fully as one's authentic self.

Back in the room we discussed some of the common terms that are used by trans and non-binary people and others in discussion around gender identity. Some of these terms were unfamiliar to many of us, and others were loaded with significance. We reflected on our understanding of these terms and their meaning for us.

The highlight of the whole meeting, for me, was the discussion that followed the testimony of Chloe, a Friend from the US, recorded in a video from Quaker Speak ("My journey as a transgender Quaker" – www.bit.ly/transquakervideo).

Chloe's powerful and moving account of her early years spent experiencing a profound sense of dislocation and depression, and the loving sup-

port offered to her and her family by her Quaker meeting as she began to 'put herself together' as a woman, was simply extraordinary.

This short film provided a wonderful grounding for us as we considered what support we would have wanted from our own meeting if we were in a similar situation to Chloe, and how we can be ready to support trans Friends asking, as she did, for support from the meeting.

We considered all of the things that make us feel safe and welcome at meeting, and how we could make sure that trans Friends attending for the first time would feel safe and welcome, too. Chloe did not say if there were Friends in her own meeting who were uncomfortable with her transition, but we were also invited to consider, if there were, how they too could be supported.

It was a rich discussion, tentative and exploratory in many ways, as we acknowledged the limits of our own knowledge and experience. In this, the words of Chloe's Quaker friend Carol were something of an inspiration. In her filmed interview, Chloe explained that she had called Carol late one night to tell her she was transgender and to ask for some help. And Carol's response had been to say "I don't know anything about that... but I want to learn, and I think we as a meeting want to learn, and we want to be here with you and for you."

This was an important opportunity for us to learn something, together as a meeting, about transgender and non-binary identities. I expect it will be just the beginning of a longer conversation and I'm encouraged that we embarked upon it as we set out to do: speaking honestly from our own experience, looking for the truths that have nourished the lives of others, and allowing – always – for the possibility that we may be mistaken.

Jo Swanson

All Age Worship to Welcome Babies and Children

On Sunday 1 March we welcomed fifteen new babies and children to our Quaker community. Everyone gathered at Central Edinburgh meeting house from all the South East Scotland meetings. It was lovely to have so many families together in one room.

We started by welcoming everyone and with some quiet and then were introduced to all the babies and children being welcomed. This is a rare time when we can all be together as an all age area meeting gathering, so it was especially good to have several families from Polmont Meeting bringing seven children to be welcomed. There were children and babies from Portobello & Musselburgh and Central Fife. Lovely too to see extended family including a good number of grandparents.

We had some simple readings and then everyone settled down to listen to 'All are welcome', a story by Alexandra Penfold and Suzanne Kaufman.

We asked people to think about how we welcome people, children and babies and what can we offer them? What is special about our meetings? We had fifteen stars, one for each child being welcomed. We invited everyone to take a smaller star and to write/draw their thoughts on. This reminded me of a song that I knew when I was a child. It goes:

*Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket
Never let it fade away ...*

We thought about what gifts we can give our children that will not fade away. We gathered all the stars together and hung them from the bigger stars to make a mobile for each child with welcome messages.

It was quite a busy meeting for worship with a quiet babble and chatter from the children and babies, but also some special quiet moments.

It was a joyful, happy occasion and a celebration of the strength and love within our Quaker community.

Madeleine Harding

Rise, take your mat and walk

World Day of Prayer, Friday 6 March 2020

Service written by the Christian women of Zimbabwe

This year I was unable to find a World Day of Prayer service in Musselburgh, so I went to the lunchtime one at St Andrew's & St George's West, at the east end of George Street in Edinburgh. The service was held in the delightful small chapel in the Undercroft where we were secluded and yet a part of the busy world outside, including the people enjoying the refreshments offered by the adjacent café.

Having attended the service preparation and Bible study sessions, I'd been looking forward to the full-length service which offered the opportunity to learn about Zimbabwe and its culture. Rosie, the minister, made sure we felt welcome, greeting us in the languages of the Shona and Ndebele people, encouraging us to do the same, and reminding us that we were part of a world-wide celebration. I was a bit sad to find we were taking part in the short form of the service – but we had some glorious red lilies, the nearest flowers to the native flame lily, *gloriosa superba*, and listened to a letter from the women of Zimbabwe which didn't make light of the problems facing them but looked with hope to a better future. We also sang one of my favourite hymns – 'The Day Thou Gavest, Lord, is Ended' – with its picture of the unceasing hymn of praise that girdles the world which always brings a lump to my throat.

The Bible reading chosen by the women of Zimbabwe was the account from John's Gospel of the man at the pool in Jerusalem known as Bethesda,

who'd been ill for thirty-eight years, but had no-one to help him into the pool when the water was stirred, which legend said would bring healing to the first person to enter the water.

In the Bible study sessions we spent a lot of time pondering the question Jesus asked the sick man – Do you want to get well? We thought about what things might prevent us from seeking the healing we need, whether personally or in a wider context – do we want to be whole, or do we prefer to stay in the security of our known surroundings and habits? I was struck by the exhortation from Andrea Price from St Michael's, Slatford, who led our first study session – Don't be bound by a small mat...

John Bremner, ecumenical minister for the United Reformed Church, led the second study session, inviting us to focus on healing in our communities. The sick man complained that he had no friends to help him to the water – is it easier for us to sit and complain, while doing nothing? Are we trapped by custom and habit, afraid to grasp the opportunities god offers us? Do we really want to live in peace? Are we prepared to engage with people whose views diametrically oppose ours, and to work for the reconciliation which is an essential part of healing and peace-making?

The little chapel in the Undercroft was full, and Rosie announced that next year the service would be held upstairs in the main church. She greeted us individually as we left the service, and was very complimentary about Quakers – another reminder to me both that we are held in high regard by other denominations and that it's a huge reputation to live up to!

Mary Woodward

For WDP 2021, the service will be written by the women of Vanuatu. See <https://worlddayofprayer.net/latest-news/first-steps-towards-wdp-vanuatu-2021> (Ed.)

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

Edinburgh, Saturday 7 March 2020

General Meeting was held at the Meeting House in Edinburgh on Saturday 7 March under the care of our new clerking team, Elizabeth Allen and Nicola Maharg of East Lothian and Glasgow Meetings. They helped us through a really busy programme for their first day with us, covering many areas of Quaker work within Scotland. Fortunately this was facilitated by the pre-circulation of a considerable volume of background papers undertaken by Sue Proudlove, who has now taken over the duties of GM administrator.

A Local Development Worker for Quaker Meetings in Scotland

General Meeting has submitted an expression of interest to Britain Yearly Meeting concerning the possible appointment of someone to serve in this role for the next few years. While no decision has yet been reached (it is

expected at around the end of March) there have been discussions with the programme leaders about the sort of work that might be undertaken, remembering the particular needs of Scottish Friends that result from the geographical spread of our Local Meetings.

The climate emergency – actions by Friends

Activities by individuals, by Local Meetings and by Area Meetings had been summarised in a background paper. During our morning session our clerk took us through a variety of suggestions for activities based on General Meeting, ranging from better publicity on our own website for highlighting relevant reports and concerns, five-minute oral reports in GM sessions from Friends covering new local initiatives, and our participation in inter-faith initiatives. We applauded the initiatives taken by Young Friends in this area and expressed our support for them, and we saw that this area of concern would spread into several other parts of our agenda for the day – such as consideration of how we should try to influence decision-makers in society (see Parliamentary Work, below) working with COP26 (see below), and how we communicate generally within GM (see also below).

UN Climate Change Conference, COP26, 9-19 November 2020, Glasgow

Martin Mansell of Glasgow LM gave us an overview of that Meeting's engagement with the planning for this enormous event (30,000 delegates expected, plus 100,000 associated visitors). There will be a "hub group" to coordinate Quaker activity in Scotland, based on the Glasgow QMH which has been block-booked for the fortnight from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. each day; Inter-faith Scotland is co-ordinating work by 54 faith groups including Quakers; and Britain Yearly Meeting is co-ordinating international aspects. How might Quakers be involved? Possibilities include providing a sanctuary space for participants, with a place in which groups can meet; creating an exhibition or a garden; supporting people from countries with limited resources to make the journey to Glasgow; and the provision of accommodation and of interpreters. Volunteers will be needed, and we look forward to regular updates. General Meeting was scheduled to be held in Glasgow on 14 November but these arrangements will be changed (probably to 31 October, in Dunblane); on 14 November Friends will be upholding a climate change protest scheduled to be taking place in Glasgow.

Communication within General Meeting

In groups we considered how we all respond to our rapidly changing communication environment. Is our website adequate? Would social media groups help us with general aspects of planning and organisation? How should we facilitate participation in meetings through video conferencing? What changes would appeal to teenagers and young Friends? What are the resource implications of using modern methods more effectively? How do we include those who find digital communication difficult? Could this whole area be part of the brief given to any incoming BYM Development Worker? Plenty of questions were raised; the GM Communications Group

set up at the end of 2019 agreed to report back to us in due course.

Revision of the Book of Discipline

Mary Woodward updated us about the work of the group that is working on the preparation of a new edition of *Quaker Faith & Practice*. In particular three workshops/interest groups, in which all may participate, will be arranged during the Yearly Meeting Gathering to be held in Bath in August.

Tabular Statement and Trustees Report

These were received and approved. Our Trustees have been much involved in a number of important issues over the past year, in particular the future of our parliamentary engagement work. This was subject to external evaluation last year, with much appreciation for the work that has been done as well as the airing of helpful suggestions relating to its integration with the organisation of BYM and questions around the priorities of QPSW and Meeting for Sufferings. Inevitably, the resignation of our Parliamentary Engagement Officer Mairi Campbell-Jack in November caused a re-evaluation of these matters before a new position could be advertised. While it has been agreed that there should now be a permanent position, working 24.5 hours per week, the funding arrangement is still unclear; General Meeting's contribution will continue during 2020 (since we have budgeted for this) while a new arrangement with BYM is clarified.

The Parliamentary Engagement Working Group

It is hoped that a new Engagement Officer will be recruited by April to carry forward the work that is currently our highest priority, namely scrutinising work within the Scottish Parliament. At present the February budget proposals are being evaluated for possible implications for impact on our climate, and this type of work will be fundamental in coming months: the promises and targets within the Climate Change Act 2019 have implications in many areas of legislation. Meanwhile, matters that are currently on the Group's horizon are the parliamentary elections to be held in 2021, the work of the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office, and Quaker participation in the Edinburgh International Book Festival later in the year.

Criminal and community justice

On behalf of our Area Meeting Jenny Copsey has been working for a number of years with prisoners in HMP Edinburgh. Among other activities she has been running a creative listening group there. But the main focus in her report was on the desirability of re-establishing a community justice support network for Friends doing similar work, such as within restorative justice, and the usefulness of doing this under the auspices of General Meeting so that it would link up across Scotland.

Conclusion

Our General Meeting closed at 4.30 p.m. with grateful thanks to those Central Edinburgh Friends who provided soup and sandwiches for all, cakes, coffee and tea, all of which were greatly appreciated.

John Phillips

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Monday 20 January 2020
at the Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh**

2020/01/01 Worship and introductions

During worship, we have heard read *Advices & Queries* 33, which reminds us to bear witness to the humanity of all people. We have ensured those present know each other's names and meetings. The attendance will be recorded in the concluding minute.

[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]

2020/01/11 Correspondence & announcements

We have received:

11.1 *Our Homeless Neighbour*, the newsletter of Scottish Churches Housing Action, marking its 25th anniversary

11.2 *The Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Briefing 2019* from the Network of Christian Peace Organisations

11.3 *Sustainable Security, a statement of concern* from Northern Friends Peace Board

11.4 An invitation to participate in a community textile project from the Loving Earth Project, supported by Quaker Arts Network and Friends World Committee for Consultation. Further details can be found at <https://lovingearth-project.uk>

11.5 The Lent appeal from Water Aid

11.6 *Around Europe*, the latest newsletter from QUNO, the Quaker United Nations Organisation.

2020/01/12 Closing minute

27 members and three attenders have been at all or part of this meeting. Local meeting attendance is indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 13	Central Fife 1	East Lothian 3	Kelso 2	Penicuik 1
Polmont 1	Portobello & Musselburgh 6	South Edinburgh 3	Tweeddale -	

We next meet on Saturday 21 March 2020, as guests of East Lothian Local Meeting – venue and times to be notified. [*But see page 2.*]

(Signed)
Alastair Cameron
Clerk
Cath Dyer
Assistant Clerk

COULD YOU SPEND 3 MONTHS IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL MONITORING HUMAN RIGHTS?

EAPPI provides protection by presence, monitors human rights abuses, supports Israeli and Palestinian peace activists and advocates for an end to the occupation.

- Serving in the West Bank and Israel in 2021
- No previous experience required
- Full training given
- Expenses covered
- Living allowance provided

More information: www.quaker.org.uk/applyeappi

Closing date: Friday 24 April 2020



The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel is an international programme co-ordinated by the World Council of Churches. Since 2002, more than 1,500 volunteers from 22 countries have served as Ecumenical Accompaniers.

Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland

Every Sunday

Central Edinburgh: 7 Victoria Terrace	9.30 am & 11.00 am
South Edinburgh: Open Door, 420 Morningside Road	10.30 am
Polmont: Greenpark Community Centre	10.45 am
Kelso: Quaker Meeting House, Kelso	10.30 am

Every Wednesday

Mid-Week Meeting: 7 Victoria Terrace	12.30 – 1 pm
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First Sunday in the Month

Penicuik: Valleyfield House, 17 High St., Penicuik <i>Children welcome, bring and share lunch</i>	11.00 am
Portobello & Musselburgh: Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello EH15 2BP <i>Half an hour – no children's meeting.</i>	7.30 pm

Second Sunday in the Month

East Lothian: Dunbar Town House, High Street, Dunbar	11.00 am
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Second and Fourth Sundays in the Month

Portobello & Musselburgh: Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello EH15 2BP. <i>Children welcome.</i>	11.00 am
Tweeddale: Nomad Beat, 10-11 Cavalry Park, Peebles <i>All welcome, but please phone to confirm 01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389</i>	10.30 am
Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (Kirk Wynd, opposite Old Kirk)	10.30 am

Fourth Sunday in the Month

North Edinburgh Meeting: Broughton St Mary's Church, Edinburgh	7.00 pm
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Fifth Sunday in the Month

Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (Kirk Wynd, opposite Old Kirk)	10.30 am
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Last Sunday in the Month

East Lothian: Dunbar Town House, High Street, Dunbar	11.00 am
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So far as we know, there are no regular meetings for worship on University premises. Nominations Committee is currently seeking a Friend to act as a Quaker contact; there is (we believe) a Facebook Group at www.facebook.com/groups/EUQuakerSoc

Distribution of *Sesame* and *Scottish Friends Newsletter*

The current practice is to distribute one copy of *Sesame* and the *Scottish Friends Newsletter* to every Member and Attender household. Contributions to the costs of *Sesame* are always warmly welcomed by the Area Meeting Treasurer.. An email version of *Sesame* is more ecological and is free; if you would prefer to receive it this way, or to change the address to which a paper copy is sent, or if you would like to get one by post and currently do not, please contact **Joanna Swanson** at jmswanson69@gmail.com. A large print version is also available on request. Published by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, South East Scotland Area Meeting, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. Scottish Charity No. SC019165. Printed by Footprint UK, Riverside Works, Edinburgh Road, Jedburgh TD8 6EE.