

Quaker Plans, Quaker Challenges and Quaker Week

Wrap up of my work in the second Quarter of 2022



Zoe's two children looking out to sea on a windy day

Hello, my name is Zoe Prosser. I am the Local Development Worker for Quakers in Scotland.

We are in the heart of the summer holidays and I am getting used to working in our shed-office while my parents, husband and friends entertain and coral our two girls. I have a day off a week, which allows me my child corralling time as well.

We seem to be settling in well as a family. On a recent walk with my girls, my eldest child said "last night I was thinking how much I loved Scotland. The majestic hills, the highway cows...". There was a pause and, after I stopped laughing, we explained that it was *Highland* cows. She is growing up fast. It's moments like that which remind me of when she was a toddler and calling every wall a "walrus".

This will be the second report this year, which will hopefully give you a taster of the work that I have been doing.

In a slight change from the previous format, I am starting with a few things that I hope you (or your meeting) will be interested in taking part in.

Coming Up

Quaker Week

Are you excited for Quaker week 2022? The theme for this year is "Welcoming Families as Part of an All-Age Community". In preparation, Woodbrooke and Quaker Life are running workshops to help Friends consider how they can meet the theme of Quaker week. The workshops will cover topics such as the role of joy, practical steps towards being more inclusive, and easy ways to prepare for welcoming families.

Sessions will run weekly, alternating between lunchtime and evening. Friends are welcome to attend one, some or all sessions. Although the course is designed as a whole, we want to encourage Friends to join as and when they can, and it is fine to drop in for a single session.

To find out more about the pay as led Woodbooke courses, please go here <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/product/preparing-for-quaker-week-2022/>

If you would like my support with your plans for Quaker Week 2022, then please let me know.

Gifts Work

Until we know ourselves and each other, how can we organise ourselves effectively, appoint Friends to roles and build our community?

In this workshop I plan to take the meeting through an exploration of gifts and service, considering what you want to achieve as a community and the skills that you have within.

This can cover a concern of your meeting, but it has been conceived as a way to support the meeting's inner growth, encouraging Friends to understand each other's skills and build them into the community of Friends within that meeting.

I hope by the end of the workshop Friends will feel more confident knowing what their skills are and what they bring to their meeting, and accepting (and turning down) service. I also hope that the course will help meetings start to think about how to make the roles fit the skills of the Friends within their meeting (rather than the risk of the other way round).

This is a new piece of work, and the workshop can be shaped to the needs of the meeting who is interested in trying it. I hope that this will be available as an in person, online and blended session.

Ongoing work

RESTORE

RESTORE is a series of workshops that Local Development Workers have put together, following the easing of Covid restrictions, to support meetings to rebuild and look towards an exciting future. I have had the pleasure of running RESTORE workshops with Area Meetings, Local Meetings and residentials, and feedback has been amazing.

“I have never felt so included in the whole meeting as I did today”

“Very clear, accessible and thought provoking”

This is something that I can and have adapted to the needs of the meeting inviting me. To find out more, please go to <https://quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings/restore>

Role Holder Networks

The network for Elders, Overseers and The Pastoral Care Teams across Scotland is continuing every other month. This is a drop in session that all members of the Elders, Overseers and The Pastoral Care Teams are invited to. Any member holding one of these roles is very welcome to attend and I create a summary report after the meetings, for those who were not able to attend. If you are a member of a pastoral care team and have not yet been invited, please could you contact me on zoep@quaker.org.uk and let me know and I will add you to our mailing list.

The first network for Nominations committee members will meet in August.

I am planning a network for clerks of Local Meetings.

Please let me know if you have a suggestion for another network that I should consider setting up.

Supporting meetings



A peaceful view over the sea in North Berwick

Example 1

Part of my role is to support meetings who are facing conflict or difficult decisions. Here are a couple of examples of my work this quarter:

Tweeddale meeting had shrunk to a small size and the way that they met was no longer working for them. I offered to come in and work with them to find a way forwards. They knew that they wanted to continue to worship together and to work to build a greater sense of community. Through their discussions they decided to take the opportunity to experiment. Following a model taken from Young Adult Worship Groups, they agreed to meet in an evening, in one of their homes. The evening meeting would allow those of working age, or with caring responsibilities, to meet at a time that was more convenient. They would follow worship with a meal and try to build a greater sense of community together. They checked this thinking with Friends in surrounding meetings who were supporting them, and were reminded to give themselves time to recover from the stresses and pressures of the last few years.

The first of Tweeddale's meetings in the new format is **13 September, 6.30-7.30** followed by soup, at 14 Kingsmeadows Rd. They will run on the 2nd Tuesday of the month thereafter. Do come and support their new way of worshipping together if you able.

Example 2

Another meeting was considering what they should do with a sizable asset, which required a lot of upkeep in terms of time and energy. Opinions within the meeting were split on what should be done, and the area meeting had asked them to suggest a way forward. Working with a small group of Friends appointed to do this work, I supported their program of activities, preparing for their local and area meetings on the issue. As part of the meeting's thinking I offered and ran a visioning workshop. This offered the local meeting a chance to consider what their needs were, their history with the asset and the complex mix of emotions attached with any movement forwards.

Feedback included:

“Very uplifting free flowing leadership. Thankyou!”

“Good relaxed safe leadership. Much appreciated.”

“Meaningful and gentle dip into our dreams and aspirations.”

I supported further fact finding sessions, ran an online meeting to collect the thought of Young Adult Friends associated with the meeting, and assisted the clerk of the final meetings for business.

Meet your Local Development Worker



Picture of Zoe Prosser at the Quaker Centre in Leeds

I have a regular drop in sessions (via Zoom). In these sessions, you can pop in, have a chat or ask me a question. These have been running since last quarter, and it has always been lovely to meet new and old Friends.

There are drop in sessions in the morning, afternoon and evening. Please go to the end of the document for times and zoom details.

If you are interested in finding out more about me I have a webpage and interview video on our Quakers in Scotland website. These reports will also be available online. To visit the page, please go to <https://quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>

Options for Scotland

I am currently accompanying the Options for Scotland group in their ongoing work.

Completed work this quarter

Emily Provance

Our American Friend Emily Provance is travelling in the ministry. She visited Scotland and had a chance to speak with some Quakers in Scotland – she spoke to Friends in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Inverness.

Her work is inspiring – to see more (or sign up for her mailing list) please go to <https://quakeremily.wordpress.com/>

She has also created a really interesting document for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting on things to consider when running virtual and blended meetings. It does have slightly different language, but it has lots of useful things to think about. It is available here - <http://www.pym.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/GuidanceForMeetingsW.pdf>



Picture of an opened box with a child's drawings inside

Family Weekend

I was lucky enough to be invited to accompany Scotland's Children and Young People's Advocates in arranging this year's Family Weekend at the Atholl Centre in Pitlochry. In fact I ended up standing in as a session leader when the original session leader was not able to attend for a very happy reason (they had just had their first grandchild).

The whole weekend was half work and half being a mum, as my daughters and my husband came with me.

We used the RESTORE model as a theme for the sessions and the weekend went well, with opportunities for children and families across Scotland to get to know one another, worship and celebrate together. My children definitely enjoyed themselves and would love to go back.

Themes that have arisen

Two of the current themes that have arisen with Friends who have spoken to me are:

Families and all age work – there is a sense that some meetings have fewer families attending since the pandemic, and a worry about reengaging them. For meetings worrying about this I do suggest considering the Woodbrooke training and Quaker week work (there will be a huge resources pack) which should help to give you some ideas.

Community and service – Are Quaker communities struggling and, if they are, why? There are meetings where Friends have spoken to me about feeling that their sense of community and “togetherness” has been damaged. There are local meetings that have a strong sense of community, but little connection to the area meeting or General Meeting for Scotland. Depending on what struggles the meeting is facing issues can then arise.

In the middle of this worry is the fact that Quakers are aware that there are roles than need to be filled to keep the local, area or general meeting going. Is the awareness of these roles and their responsibilities affecting the community building that Friends are looking for?

I can provide support with community building activities and advice if you would like it – please come along to one of my drop in sessions or contact me to set up a time to chat. I suggest that you consider the gifts workshop I am developing as well. I hope to work on this further in the next quarter.

Drop in Zoom Meeting Details:

	Dates	Zoom details
Scotland Drop Ins - Morning	Oct 25, 2022 10:30 Jan 26, 2023 10:30	Join Zoom Meeting https://quaker.zoom.us/j/84957113031 Meeting ID: 849 5711 3031
Scotland Drop Ins - Afternoon	Aug 17, 2022 14:30 Nov 16, 2022 14:30 Feb 15, 2023 14:30	Join Zoom Meeting https://quaker.zoom.us/j/82907091250 Meeting ID: 829 0709 1250
Scotland Drop Ins - Evening	Sep 14, 2022 18:30 Dec 13, 2022 18:30 Mar 14, 2023 18:30	Join Zoom Meeting https://quaker.zoom.us/j/82150494485 Meeting ID: 821 5049 4485

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