



# GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

13 March 2010

Glasgow

## Min. 1 Reading

During Meeting for Worship we heard a reading from *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.23 calling us to a radical change of attitudes to the problem of homelessness.

## Min. 2 Welcome

We welcome 1 attender to this GM.

We also welcome as a visitor Maureen Stewart from the United Reformed Church.

We will record the total numbers of all present and add them to these minutes.

East Scotland	5
South East Scotland	13
North Scotland	2
West Scotland	<u>14</u>
Total:	34

## Min. 3 Reporter

We appoint Chris Stapenhurst of North Scotland AM to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask West Scotland AM to report on the next GM.

## Min. 4 New members and deaths

We record the following new members since our last meeting:

Jill Tutton (SE)  
Madeleine Moffat (SE)  
Chris Stapenhurst (N)  
Mary Law (N)  
Carel Goodheir (N)  
Lorraine McFadden (W)

We record the following death since our last meeting:

Nancy Young (W).

## Min. 5 Dates and venues for 2011-12

We propose the following GM dates and venues for 2011-12:

*East – 5 March 11 (already agreed)*

*North – 4 June 11*

*West – 10 Sept 11*

*South East – 12/13 Nov 11*

*East – 3 Mar 12*

We ask AM Clerks to consider these dates and for GM to confirm them in June.

## Min. 6 Tabular Statement 2009

We note the following numbers of members at 31 Dec 2009:

	2009	2008	2007	2006
East	113	109	113	107
West	224	223	226	227
North	128	126	122	117
South East	268	269	262	261
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>712</b>

### **Min. 7 Next steps on same sex marriage**

The Clerk has reported that we have received a request from Meeting for Sufferings to take forward the decision from YMG last July concerning same sex marriage in relation to the Scottish Parliament.

This has also been a concern of SE Scotland AM. We have heard that Mark Bitel of Central Edinburgh LM has attended a meeting on this topic with representatives from the Unitarian Church and Liberal Jews. The Clerk has read a report of the meeting from Mark.

We have heard that there is still a concern among some regarding the conduct of the sessions held in York last summer.

We agree that we will take the matter forward as requested. We will establish a working group with the following remit:

1. To explore possibilities of joint working on this with other religious groups.
2. To maintain contact with the Recording Clerk's Office to ensure consistency of approaches within Britain Yearly Meeting.
3. To consider the most appropriate way of making representation to the Scottish Parliament on the matter of same-sex marriage, in the light of the decision made at Yearly Meeting Gathering in July 2009.
4. To report back to a future GM with recommendations for action.

We are grateful for the offer from Mark Bitel of a template letter to help Friends wishing to write to the Scottish Government and accept this proposal.

We ask Nominations Function Group to bring forward names for this new working group and authorise them to begin their work prior to formal appointment by GM in June.

### **Min. 8 Work of Archive Group**

We have heard a report from Paul Burton about the work of the Archive Group. He referred to the useful document "Your Meeting's Records" and new advice from Friends House.

The group have prepared a report on their work and the issues they have been considering. They have put forward 8 recommendations (see summary in Appendix 1). We recognise the importance and complexity of this whole area. We do need greater clarity of advice and consistency of practice across our range of meetings. We accept the recommendations in principle. We ask Central Committee and our Administrator to consider how best to implement them, in liaison with the Archive Group.

### **Min. 9 Conference for Elders and Overseers**

We have received an offer from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre to run a conference for Elders and Overseers in Scotland. There has been a positive response from Elders and Overseers in North Scotland AM, with a suggestion of Inverness as a venue.

We are willing to support this idea in principle and ask North Scotland AM to consider taking this further, and to seek sources of additional funding such as the Camfield Trust.

### **Min.10 Companion Training for “Becoming Friends”**

We have received a Minute from West Scotland AM about the possibility of a training event in Scotland for “Becoming Friends” companions, delivered by Woodbrooke tutors. We agree to ask our administrator to gather information from AMs about their plans, preferences and suggestions regarding options for accessing such training, and then supporting West Scotland AM as required.

### **Min. 11 Work of Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations**

Margaret Peacock has given us a report on the work of the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (attached, Appendix 2).

They have recently published the statement “We are but Witnesses” which is designed to help us explain the decision on same-sex marriages to other churches.

They are requesting information about interchurch and interfaith work taking place at local levels.

### **Min. 12 Statement on Afghanistan**

We have been invited to support a draft statement from the Scottish Episcopal Church concerning the war in Afghanistan. The statement reads:

*“Scottish Churches are deeply concerned about the present involvement of British forces in Afghanistan. It considers that some of the crucial criteria for the war in Afghanistan being a just war are no longer met. It calls for British troops to be deployed only as part of the ISAF and for a date to be fixed in 2010 by which all British troops will be withdrawn from Afghanistan.”*

We agree to write to the organisers expressing our support for the first sentence, but explaining that we cannot unite with the second or third sentences.

### **Min. 13 Appointments and Representatives**

Nominations Function Group have brought forward the following names and we agree to these appointments:

Northern Friends Youth Events Trust

Trustee - Mariot Dallas from Jan 2010- Dec 2012

Communications & Outreach FG (Parliamentary liaison)

David Somervell from Jan 2010- Dec 2012

GM Trustees

Convener	Philip Bryers	March 2010 - March 2013	(2nd triennium)
South East	Martin Burnell	March 2010 - March 2013	(2nd triennium)
East	Pam Brunt	March 2010 - March 2013	(2nd triennium)
North Scotland	David James	March 2010 - March 2013	
West Scotland	to follow		

Contact for Quaker Service (Northern Ireland)

Mary Alice Mansell

Representatives

1. Church of Scotland General Assembly 20-26 May 2010 Edinburgh  
Philip Bryers
2. Scottish Episcopal Church Synod 10-12 June 2010 Edinburgh  
to follow
3. Methodist Church Synod 17 April 2010  
Leslie Stevenson
4. Edinburgh 2010 Mission Conference closing celebration 6 June 2010  
Pamala McDougall  
Margaret Boland

**Min. 14 A home for all – the challenge for Scotland**

We have welcomed our Friend Alastair Cameron, Chief Executive of Scottish Churches Housing Action (SCHA), as our speaker. He has been introduced by John Foster who represents Friends on its Board.

SCHA was established in 1995 and is a development organisation bringing together thirteen denominations, and is focused on responding in practical ways to homelessness.

Alastair has helped us reflect on what we mean by 'home' both in its widest and most intimate sense and how it connects to hospitality and welcome.

He has described how SCHA works through fostering and supporting local initiatives. He has outlined some of the practical expressions of SCHA's work including the provision of starter packs, rent deposit guarantee schemes and befriending schemes. SCHA also has a role in public advocacy.

Alastair has spoken of some current challenges. The Scottish government has set an ambitious target that by 2012 local authorities must guarantee housing to anyone seeking it.

Currently, SCHA has new plans for the provision of supported accommodation for vulnerable young people at risk of homelessness, and this has been warmly received by some local authorities.

Alastair has challenged us to reflect on how most of us are unwittingly part of the problem of homelessness, and on the implications on the homeless of the current economic recession.

We thank him for provoking and stimulating both our thinking and acting together.

### **Min. 15      Closing Minute**

We record our thanks to West Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this GM, and look forward to meeting again in Inverness on 5 June.

Robin Waterston  
Clerk

**Archive Group  
Report to General Meeting**

Robin Davis

Eva Deregowska

Paul Burton

**Summary**

We propose that General Meeting for Scotland, in discussion with Local and Area Meetings, develop a policy for the archival materials of Meetings in Scotland which includes the following:

1. Appointment by each Local and Area Meeting of an Archivist whose role will be to carry out GM policy as detailed below in a manner appropriate to his/her Meeting, taking into account the advice in *Your Meeting's records*. If it is not possible for a Meeting to appoint an Archivist, GM maintain a list of Friends willing to advise on archival matters.
2. A statement on the format in which documents should be stored. We recommend that paper records should be on acid-free paper and kept in archival quality containers, especially if they are to be kept on paper for the long-term (but see 5 below). If this is not feasible, good quality paper should be used and documents filed in ring binders, preferably without using plastic pockets. Records can also be digitised and stored on computers, CD-ROMs or memory sticks. These must also be stored properly, preferably with back-up copies, and thought must be given in the long term to transferring to new technologies as they become available.
3. Documents be deposited with the National Archives of Scotland at intervals to be decided in consultation between GM, AMs and LMs. Before documents are deposited, they should be bound (i.e., not deposited in ring binders) in sets of between 10 and 15 years worth. This will ensure that documents are not lost. (NAS has experienced problems with the deposit of digital records and currently prefers paper copies).
4. To achieve a uniform approach to archiving, a "hierarchy of document transfers" be created whereby LM records go triennially to AM, where they are cumulated and transferred to one or all of General Meeting, National Archives of Scotland or a local library.
5. Copies of documents are held by LMs and AMs for five years (regardless of the process suggested in 3 above).
6. Development of an easily accessible retention schedule for records and documents based on that suggested in *Your Meeting's records*.
7. Consider the conditions under which documents, wherever they are held, can be made available to, and duplicated by, others outside of Scottish Friends (e.g., researchers). Meeting for Sufferings has recommended closure for at least 50 years. (NAS will accept this condition).
8. All files of documents be indexed to at least a basic standard which will act as a finding aid for specific documents (e.g., correspondence) or minutes. This will be the job of the Archivist (or whoever is willing to advise).

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relationships  
APPENDIX 2

Meeting in Friends House 26-28 February 2010.

Report to GM

1. We are a committee of 15 charged with supporting and representing Friends on inter-church and inter-faith occasions nationally, both in person and in writing. Our most recent contribution is the leaflet "We are but Witnesses". Having been cut down to 15 members, we are having to withdraw from sending representatives to many of the ecumenical meetings we previously supported.

We meet over a weekend three times a year, and try to keep up with reading a lot of relevant material submitted from our representatives and from other committees and correspondence to Friends' House.

What we should like to do is know much more about the inter-church and inter-faith work that is undoubtedly going on in BYM, and hence to be able to offer much more support and encouragement, personally and by way of literature.

2. Our recent booklet "*Quakers and the Ecumenical Agenda*" has been well received, and we are thinking about a companion booklet "*Quakers and the Interfaith Agenda*" - ("QIFA"). In the nature of the subject, the formidable theological knowledge of our previous writing group is not applicable, so "QIFA" is not very far advanced. It certainly cannot have the same format. In September we are jointly running a course at Woodbrooke for "Interfaith Practitioners", and we are hoping that Friends who attend may contribute to our thinking on QIFA.

3. In Southampton and several other cities, Street Pastors walk the streets on Friday evenings to help young people who behave unwisely and find themselves in difficulties. A common situation is a girl who has drunk too much and been abandoned by her boyfriend with no money and inadequate clothes.

The Street Pastors organisation is specifically Christian, though it does not preach in the streets. The problem which was brought to us is that a very suitable Jewish person applied to join and was refused. It seemed to us that a good first reaction might be to contact both CTBI and the police - ACPO - who have a high regard for the Street Pastors, and would undoubtedly like to recruit more.

4. Friends' House has sent copies of "We are but Witnesses" to the central offices of all churches, and received a response from the Scottish Roman Catholic bishops. This was a very courteous letter, setting out briefly that the purpose of marriage is to have children and, more interestingly, that ecclesiastical doctrine can certainly develop over the years. However, St. Vincent of Lerin stated that the development had to be an organic development like the growth of a boy to manhood, and not some disfiguring carbuncle.

We were impressed that the bishops had taken the trouble to write a serious reply - the only church to do so. We shall thank them and say that we are considering whether to write further on the subject, when other churches have contributed.

5. BYM Trustees are reminding all the staff at Friends' House, and all committees of Friends' testimony to equality and its detailed implications. There is a detailed equalities scheme for all centrally managed work, and CIR needs to absorb it. Basically for all decisions we need to have at the back of our minds the implications for gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, age and race. This is of course normal good practice, but we decided that a checklist would be counter-productive, and settled for saying we would bear it all in mind. Disability, after all, comes in so many forms (e.g. doesn't use a computer) that it would need a checklist all to itself!

Margaret Peacock 12.3.10