



GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

15th September 2018
Glasgow

Minute 1 Worship

We began General Meeting with worship. During worship we heard read parts of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Marjorie Farquharson.

Minute 2 Welcome to all present

We are glad to welcome everybody, including 4 attenders and Juliet Prager our Deputy Recording Clerk.

We are grateful to Friends present who have offered to serve as Elders for this meeting.

The total numbers of all present.

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| East Scotland | 15 |
| South East Scotland | 13 |
| North Scotland | 11 |
| West Scotland | 31 |

Total: 70

Minute 3 Reporter

We appoint Joyce Taylor of ESAM to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask West Scotland AM to report on GM in Perth in November.

Minute 4 New members and deaths

We record the following new members since our last meeting from Area meeting minutes:

East - Linda Jones, Dundee LM

West – Diana Scott, Glasgow LM

Deaths

We record the deaths of Marion Mainprize, Dundee LM on 09/04/18, Maris Armfield, Dunblane LM on 24th June and Bernardo Alhucema, Glasgow LM on 04/08/18

Minute 5 Minute from meeting held 13th Sept on NSAM concerns

In minute 9 Of General Meeting held 16th June 2018, the clerk was asked to convene and clerk a meeting with Paul Parker our Recording Clerk to include Scottish AM trustees, GM Trustees, Clerks to AM and GM Nominations Committees and those in GM who feel invested in this concern. All those who would like to be invited to this meeting were invited to contact

adwoabittle@hotmail.co.uk

That meeting took place on Thursday 13th September in Perth. There were 37 Friends present. The list of names is attached to these minutes so that you can find a Quaker near you with whom to talk to about the meeting, if you wish. Our clerk has read the minute from that meeting. We are grateful for all the energy that is going into this work. We are happy to endorse the suggestion that GM on 9th March 2019, to be held in Glasgow, will be dedicated to the next steps of discernment on this matter. We are glad that Paul Parker and Jonathan Carmichael will be able to attend to continue to share in and help lead this discernment with GMS. We ask that the minute from that meeting be sent to Paul and Jonathan and be attached to these minutes.

Minute 6 Shindig 2018 report

Summer Shindig is the annual residential camp for young Quakers aged 11-16 mainly from Scotland and the North East of England. It is held at Ackworth School, near Pontefract.

10 Young Friends joined us to share their experiences of Shindig, which this year was held 28th July to 4th August. The theme this year was Building Bridges, with a programme of talks and activities.

We heard about Radio Ackworth, how supportive the staff are and how special and moving Epilogue is.

We were moved to hear about the impact of Shindig itself. Of how it is a place where you are safe to be yourself, learn to know your true self and to make strong connections. It's a place where young people can and do grow in their spirituality. We have been deeply moved by the enthusiasm, joy and power behind the words of our young people. We are so glad that Shindig exists and is the place where such life affecting moments happen. We know that it will continue to thrive.

We wish to convey our thanks and appreciation for all those who enable Shindig to happen - its trustees and management, its staff and volunteers and the young people who attend. They all make it the vibrant event that it still is after all these years.

Minute 7 Parliamentary Engagement Working Group

Joyce Taylor has spoken to the latest PEWG report. The report is attached to these minutes. We urge you to read it and pass on what is happening on our behalf.

Joyce introduced Alastair McIntosh to us. His presentation on Land Reform began by talking about Tom Forsyth with whom Alastair worked for many years on Community Land Buyout. Tom has just died. Alastair invited us to think carefully about how we can move forward on land reform. We are trying to guide our PEWG with their work. Alastair urges us to use our knowledge and understanding of the movement of the spirit, of clearness meetings and of respectful listening.

What can we do?

Can our prophetic voice be heard?

Can we be an enabler for different groups, churches, other faith communities and political parties to work together in Scotland on this issue?

Quakers have an understanding of community building, conflict resolution and an understanding of the movement of the Spirit that could be helpful.

Alastair raised with us, the need in Scotland today for communities to be empowered but also supported in understanding how to recognise and process conflict. Some communities have been damaged in the process of community buy outs. It is not easy process and can bring with it much difficulty and pain.

Is our role one that holds a space for people dealing with the complex practical issues in this area?

Alastair talked of some of the practical difficulties in land reform and pointed us to the document "A Land Value Tax for Scotland" written by Andy Wightman for Green MSPs, which can be found on the internet.

Our sense, and Alastair's moving presentation have led us to feel it is important to tackle this in more detail with more time at GM in November in Perth.

We are grateful to Alastair and the PEWG for this item of business. We hope that the spirit behind this minute can shine through and that this work we are beginning can enjoy good discernment in Perth.

We give PEWG our prayers as they work on this between now and November 17th.

Minute 8 Appointment to attend a consultation

We are happy that Barbara Davey of ESAM is able to represent GMS at a consultative event being organised by Faith in Older People together with the

Church of Scotland on the role of the church in relation to dementia and end of life issues. It will be held in Edinburgh on 4th October.

Minute 9 Sufferings report, tabled, Ann Kerr

We thank Ann for her report which is attached to these minutes. Please make yourself and your Meeting aware of what is going through Sufferings and support our representatives at AM and GM.

Ann Kerr of WSAM is our new GM representative on Meeting for Sufferings. Mike Shilson of WSAM is the alternate.

Minute 10 Nominations

We thank the search group which was set up to find a name for our GM Nominations Clerk. They bring us the name of Anna Mitchell of SESAM to serve from January 2019 to December 2021 as Clerk of GM Nominations. This name being very acceptable, we appoint accordingly.

Minute 11 ACTS report Huw Lloyd Richards

Huw spoke briefly about the THEOS report on Acts. THEOS is a privately funded Think Tank in London. Their report galvanised ACTS trustees to set up a working group to discern a way forward for ACTS. Huw is on this group. The group is to write a report after working hard with the constituent churches. They worked internally and very carefully in ways that challenged. They organised a two-day meeting, with the first day being one of listening and threshing together. This enabled the second day of difficult business to be better grounded. We are glad to hear that churches that had not previously been part of these conversations are now involved. From here the working group will tidy up its report. There are two priorities ahead, one being the financial affairs of ACTS and another being the constitution. It is the second that the working group is focusing on. Huw is working closely with Marigold Bentley the secretary to QCCIR on all these matters. We ask that this minute be sent to Marigold.

The new working title of ACTs is likely to be The Scottish Christian Forum, although the title of ACTS will still be in the constitution.

We are grateful to Huw for his presence on this working group. We know that having Huw, a Quaker, involved has enabled new ways of working and true inclusivity. We look forward to hearing from Huw as to how this moves forward.

(As allowed by GM I asked Huw to help me with this minute. He has done so but what he has so helpfully written is very different, rightly, than the words agreed by GM. Therefore, is in right ordering that we formally agree the following words at GM

in November. However, I thought you should see them so you could make sense of what is happening.)

Huw spoke briefly about the THEOS report on Acts. THEOS is a Think Tank in London. Their report galvanised ACTS trustees to set up a Working Group to discern a way forward for ACTS. Huw is on this group. The Group produced a Report which was circulated informally for initial consultation to the constituent churches including GM. Huw thanked those who replied to this consultation for their comments. The September two-day ACTS Members/Trustees meeting was used to discuss the Report with the first day being one of listening and threshing together. The first day was grounded in worship and began with Psalm 139, and Huw read the first five verses of this Psalm to us in his report. This approach enabled the second day of difficult business to be better grounded. We are glad to hear that churches that had not previously been part of these conversations are now involved. Based on the consultation and the two-day Meeting the Working Group will now fill out further details in a revised Report. There are two further streams of work required to complement the main Report on financial affairs and on the changes required to the Constitution. Huw is keeping Marigold Bentley the secretary to QCCIR informed on all these matters. We ask that this minute be sent to Marigold.

The new working title of ACTs is The Scottish Christian Forum, although the title of ACTS will still be in the Constitution.

We are grateful to Huw for his presence on this working group. We know that having Huw, a Quaker, involved has enabled new ways of working and true inclusivity. We look forward to hearing from Huw as to how this moves forward. Huw shared a poem that had been exchanged by members of the Working Group, by RS Thomas:

Via Negativa.

Why No! I never thought other than
That God is that great absence
In our lives, the empty silence
Within, the place where we go
Seeking, not in hope to
Arrive or find. He keeps the interstices
In our knowledge, the darkness
Between stars. His are the echoes
We follow, the footprints he has just
Left. We put our hands in
His side hoping to find
It warm. We look at people
And places as though he had looked
At them. too; but miss the reflection

Notice: A meeting for all involved in Ecumenical and Interfaith work is to be held in Edinburgh at Victoria Terrace Meeting House on 8th October from 10am to 4pm. This is to share information, learn from each other, make sure we are all supported and not duplicating work if not necessary. Kate Arnot is facilitating the meeting, please send expressions of interest for attendance to k.arnot@btinternet.com

Minute 12 Session with European and Middle East Section of FWCC

We welcomed members of Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation who have been holding their Executive Meeting in Glasgow Meeting House this weekend. We were glad to hear from each member and we won't forget what EMES is! We will remain in Europe through EMES – Brexit or not.

We worshipped together and are glad of this.

Building bridges between our divisions, I reach out to you as you reach out to me. With all of our voices and all of our visions, Friends we can make such a sweet harmony.

Minute 13 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to West Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this GM. We record our thanks to Elaine Millar of WSAM for all her hard work in enabling our YPs to meet today. We hope we can share this work amongst us so that this can continue to happen.

We look forward to meeting again on 17th November in Perth where will be sharing further discernment on PEWG priorities. Please see minute 7.

We will also be looking at our next years' budget, hearing reports of the Family Weekend to be in Pitlochry and the Link Weekend to be held in Edinburgh. Both are being held in October. If you would like to attend the Family gathering please contact Madeleine Harding.

Adwoa Bittle
Clerk

Meetings in 2019 and 2020

March 9th 2019 Glasgow (already agreed)
June 8th 2019 South East Scotland AM
September 14th 2019 North Scotland AM
November 16th 2019 Perth
March 7th 2020 South East Scotland AM

We ask that the Area Meetings concerned confirm the acceptability of these dates and inform our clerk of the venue (where not already done so) and the contact details of the person nominated to oversee the local arrangements.

People who attended meeting on 13th September. Please see minute 5

Martin Burnell, Robin Davis, Paul Parker, Jonathan Carmichael, Adwoa Bittle, Kate Arnot, Diana Brockbank, Anthony and Sue Buxton, Margaret Morton, Jacqueline Noltingk, Rachel Frith, Margaret Roy, David Saunders, Robert Thompson, Pamala McDougall, David James, Sarah Brown, Marion Sharkey, John Phillips, Robin Waterston, Tom and Phyllida Sayles, Maureen Lambie, Pam Apted, Daphne Wassermann, Robert Wilson, Michael Hutchinson, Gisela Creed, Alyson Buchan, Nigel Dower, Alastair and Gill Reid, Constance Tonge, Mike Shilson, Joyce Taylor, Leslie Stevenson

Minute from meeting held 13th September on NSAM concerns

Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God's guidance and offering counsel to one another?

A desire to listen, pray and discern brought 37 Friends from across Scotland to Perth on 13th September 2018. This meeting was called following minute 9 of GM June 2018.

We met to move forward on the issues and thinking that began in NSAM 3 years ago.

We welcomed Paul Parker, our Recording Clerk and Jonathan Carmichael, the BYM staff member tasked with leading the Simpler Meetings Project.

Initially we were invited by our clerk to write down what brought us here and/or what we really wanted to get from the day.

There were three common themes that emerged. Firstly, to let the Spirit move amongst us. Secondly, for NSAM to be heard and for their concerns to be addressed and thirdly for us to look at the structures that are currently in Scotland as to whether they need changed or spring cleaned.

Paul Parker then led us through a very helpful framework that focussed our thoughts and contributions for the rest of the time. (see paper 1 in full report) Before lunch we considered what Pressures for Change exist. He talked about how change can be a thing that can create uncertainty hope, and conflict but can

also contain joy and positivity. We shared our thoughts on this is a very worshipful session. Within the room our different voices pointed to some unity and echoed situations found throughout BYM. After lunch we looked at the bare essentials of what is the Heart of Quakerism in Scotland. We spent time considering what it is we need to look after. (see paper 2 in full report) what gifts we have to do this service with (see paper 3 in full report) and then what structures we have at present. (see paper 4 in full report)

Then we came to the time that we needed to stop.

There is not unity of understanding or unity of vision, yet. However we did really listen to each other and to God.

We said at the beginning that if we needed another meeting we would have one. We know we need another meeting. We are clear that we want this meeting to be similar to this one in that anyone across Scotland that is interested should come. We would like to invite Paul Parker and Jonathan Carmichael to the meeting.

This meeting needs to be in a bigger venue and have really clear documents in advance. *(so that those who have not previously been part of this discernment can catch up)*