



Quakers in Scotland

Parliamentary Engagement – Year in Review. 2019

Militarism

The Public Petitions Committee of The Scottish Parliament closed the Quaker in Scotland and Forces Watch petition into military recruitment in schools, after a report from the committee, and correspondence from the Deputy First Minister. The closing of the petition is by not the end of this work, as there is the upcoming bill which will incorporate children’s rights into Scots law.

Peace education/Israel Palestine

Mairi has spoken to MSPs about the new Razor Wire and Olive Branches pack, helped EAPPI draft a [motion](#) in the Scottish Parliament on their work, and attended a training day for Scottish based Ecumenical Accompaniers.

Land Tax and Justice

The PEWG has initiated and cultivated a **fruitful relationship** with the Edinburgh International Book Festival. This year we hosted an event on **land reform** on the New York Times auditorium, which holds 700 people. The event was almost sold out and generated a lot of discussion.



Climate Emergency



The Parliamentary Engagement Officer has been attending meetings of the SCCS in relation to their campaign on the Climate Change (Emissions Targets) Bill Scotland, and PEWG members have been attending meetings on COP26 – the international meeting on climate change. Joyce Taylor, Chair of the PEWG went with other members of the SCCS to hand a petition into Parliament before their debate of the Climate Change Bill.

This year Quakers in Scotland joined Stop Climate Chaos Scotland. **SCCS** is a coalition of 40 civil society organisations who are working together to campaign on climate change.

Time for Reflection - Clerk of South East Area Meeting, Alastair Cameron gave Time for Reflection in the Scottish Parliament, a three minute slot before chamber business starts, given to faith or spiritual leaders as a means to focus members. Alastair chose the climate crisis as his topic for discussion, you can watch it [here](#), or read it [here](#).

Contact: Mairi Campbell-Jack, The Melting Pot, Thorn House, Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH22PR. mairic@quaker.org.uk, @scotpolquaker, 07419991246, www.quakerscotland.org.



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Children’s rights

In January Mairi travelled to Skye to give evidence to the Equality and Human Rights Committee on the Equal Protection from Assault. Quakers in Scotland made a valuable contribution in demonstrating faith groups can hold progressive views on family life issues. The evidence session can [be listened to](#) or [read](#), and significant media coverage was secured. The Bill passed later in the year marking significant progress in children’s rights. Quakers contribution was mentioned by the Committee chair at a celebration after the passing.

Mairi spoke to General Meeting for Scotland about membership of Together who are an umbrella organisation who work on children’s rights. General Meeting approved Quakers in Scotland membership and Mairi has been contributing to their report on the state of children’s rights in Scotland, to be published later this year (check).

Other

On behalf of QiS Mairi responded to the Scottish Government [consultation on Prisoner Voting Rights](#).

With the SCPO Mairi wrote to the Public Petitions Committee on behalf of Quakers in Scotland in support of a petition from the Hindu community who are [petitioning](#) for a fund to help places of worship meet security needs.

Mairi has also engaged with colleagues at Friends House to train them on Scotland’s different social, cultural and political history.

Evaluation – an independent evaluation into the Scottish Advocacy Project has been completed and is awaiting final confirmation before it is available for everyone to read.

Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) - Mairi does not hold a secretariat function for this group, information can be received from each areas representative, or through the regular reports in the General Meeting for Scotland minutes.

- Joyce Taylor (Convener)
- William Purser (North)
- Rosemary Hartill (South East)
- Ed Tyler (West)
- Martin Mansell (West)
- Martin Pippard (East)
- Phil Lucas (Scottish Churches)

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