

Minutes for North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting on 6th November 2021

Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs started at 10:00am, online
Attended by 22 Friends, from Inverness, Skye, Forres, Aberdeen.

We upheld those working at COP26 and those attending the international day of action, today. We upheld all those working to effect the meaningful, structural changes required of our societies to keep us anywhere close to the 1.5 degrees C climate warming that might avert climate breakdown.

We upheld those unable to join us for health or practical reasons.

Minutes:

38/21 The minute from last month's Threshing Meeting, recorded by Jonathan Carmichael (Clerk to the Threshing Meeting) has been read out:

"Around 36 Friends from North of Scotland Area Quaker Meeting gathered on 23 October 2021 for a threshing meeting, on Zoom. We have listened to one another about advantages and disadvantages of owning Aberdeen meeting house. We have spoken of feelings we have about there being differences of view, of perhaps the growing pains in the relationships between our meetings, and how we can help heal those feelings. We have listened, and we hope we understand better. And we have heard a hope of moving forward to somewhere new. We hope this will be a helpful part of the process of moving towards unity regarding the area meeting's properties in Aberdeen, and unity of the area meeting as a family of meetings."

Aberdeen Properties

39/21 Area Meeting supports the ongoing work of Trustees and the Aberdeen Premises Committee towards the vision to reduce our liabilities, responsibilities and work load in relation to property management. Bearing in mind we want to make the right decision for the right reasons, and that improvements required to Aberdeen Meeting House will need significant financing, that AM is not otherwise dependent on income from 100 Crown St for general funds, the priority needs to be to work towards the probable sale of 100 Crown St.

We support work to understand more fully the financial value of 100 Crown St, what it might release in capital value if sold, what its ongoing running and maintenance costs are and for Trustees to report back to AM within 3 months.

We understand it is a complex issue of trying to retain parking for the Meeting House and retain or find alternate provision for children's meeting and Area Meeting archive storage and to make the most of what has been an appreciable asset to AM.

With limited time available to us, we understand it may be difficult to fully consider alternative uses for 100 Crown St but we would welcome clear suggestions from Aberdeen Premises Committee and others.

40/21 The Meeting agreed that the strategic vision for the Meeting House (98 Crown St) is that it will be retained, for as long as Friends in Aberdeen are able to care for and use the building, hopefully extending its use by the local community and retaining sufficient access to parking for when the Meeting House is in use.

41/21

We heard an update on the burial grounds. We understand that Aberdeenshire Council are not willing to take responsibility for the Kinmuck Burial Ground. We understand that Aberdeen City Council will take responsibility for the Kingswells burial ground if they can take ownership of the site, to be maintained as a historic burial ground and managed accordingly. The Meeting would accept a transfer of ownership and ask Trustees to seek advice from our solicitors. We hope that if a transfer of ownership goes ahead that we maintain dialogue with the Council to ensure appropriate interpretation of the site as the surroundings are developed.

Andrew Collins offered to make further enquiries in relation to local authority responsibilities for historic burial grounds.

Our Meeting ended at 12.30pm with a short period of silent worship

The Clerk intends to arrange a short online AM one evening within the next two weeks to cover the few outstanding membership and nomination items of business.

Piers Voysey

Clerk

Andrew Collins

Assistant Clerk