

## **North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting**

### **Meeting for Church Affairs**

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023**

5pm, online

16 Friends present representing Inverness (including Skye, Caithness, Dingwall), Aberdeen, Forres, Orkney

#### **2022 Annual Report and Accounts**

**28/23** Anthony explained the report on the 2022 annual accounts and raised our attention to the situation that we are year on year increasing our AM General Fund's deficit and it would be helpful to consider how we might raise additional funds from our members and attenders, noting that there are reserves in the bank to cover the deficit for a few more years.

We will revisit the financial situation in our November AM when we consider the budget for 2024.

We thank Anthony and Trustees for preparing the accounts and submitting them to OSCR.

#### **Skye Local Meeting**

**29/23** We receive an amended minute 18/23, which reads:

“We confirm a minute from Skye Local Meeting (Ann Galbraith as Clerk). It reads: “At a Meeting held by Zoom on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020 it was agreed to lay down Skye (Incorporating the former Stornoway Meeting) Local Meeting, and request that the Meeting should become a ‘Worshipping Group’, under the care of Inverness Meeting.” While this minute was received in good time from the Clerk of Skye Local Meeting, it was not brought to an Area Meeting until now. We confirm that Friends on Skye wish to continue as a Worshipping Group and the clerk will notify GM and YM accordingly and the website will be updated.”

#### **Consideration of membership**

**30/23** In response to a Meeting for Sufferings request to consider the nature of membership our Meeting today has collected the following comments:

- Why do we have membership?

It provides an opportunity for Friends to commit. We need Friends who are long-standing, committed, maintaining Quaker tradition, practice, and our Quaker voice in society.

Membership affirms a society of like-minded people. There are no other leaders and ministers than us.

- What is it for?

It marks a right of passage, being loved into Quakerism, it takes time, it's an invisible process.

Membership recognises the knowledge required before joining

- Is it still necessary?

While it is important to minimise the difference between attenders and members, welcome attenders into roles and to recognise their gifts to our Meetings, we need to identify key roles that perhaps only members can fill (for legal reasons as well as evidence of commitment and experience): AM clerks, trustees, 'elders'.

- If yes, what form(s) could it take?

A greater emphasis on being members of BYM. AM's only administers our membership to the Society of Friends.

Flexibility on routes into membership. That Local Meetings might initiate the membership process by finding out what route to membership an Attender might prefer. Attenders might then be simply given an invitation to join the Society, or to receive visiting Friends. Area Meetings appointing visiting Friends might best check with the Attender that the names of visiting Friends are acceptable to them, and to agree a location for the visit.

The membership process needs to be unthreatening and welcoming, minimising the sense of meeting high ideals, accepting new Friends on the journey, at any point in that journey.

Young Friends might have the choice of not be attached to an Area Meeting, but attached to Junior Yearly Meeting, for example.

It is helpful to let attenders know that they can choose how and with what AM their membership is attached to/administered by.

Reassure Attenders that it is an easy process to resign membership.

There might be an option for paused membership, so that those Friends (Members) who are no longer active or contributing to AM are not adding to the AM quota.

We recognise there is a need to modernise membership and our route to membership.

### **Nominations**

**31/23** We appoint Tom Sayles to serve as clerk of Trustees from 1 July 2023 until 30 June 2024.

*Piers Voysey*  
Clerk