

North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting

Area Meeting 10th February 2024

Online & in person in Aberdeen

Joined online with East Scotland (in person in Dundee & online) for opening worship & a presentation from Sarah Komashko (PEO)

North Scotland Friends Present:

In Aberdeen: 9 from Aberdeen Meeting, 3 from Forres

Online: 8 in the morning, 16 in the afternoon from Forres, Inverness, Aberdeen & Orkney

During the opening worship we heard words from Harvey Gillman writing in 1988, Quaker Faith and Practice 23:12, reflecting on the definition of “testimony”. Being “witness to the living truth within the human heart as it is acted out in everyday life.” Quaker testimonies reflect the corporate position of the Society of Friends, for individuals and for the collective society they are fruits that grow from our faith/conviction.

Parliamentary Engagement

01/24 Together with East Scotland Friends we welcomed the Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer, Sarah Kamashko, who came into post in July 2023.

Sarah has outlined her personal background, and the work she has been engaged in over the past six months: in peace education; community justice & human rights; the climate emergency; and truth and integrity in politics.

Looking ahead, these issues will still be on her agenda, especially with respect to climate action, campaigning for a loss and damage fund, identifying the connections between Scotland and the arms trade, and also ensuring that a Quaker perspective reaches politicians campaigning in the Westminster election.

On 13 March, there will be a special event at the Scottish Parliament, building on the *Time for Reflection* offered by Lesley Morrison (Tweeddale) last year: ‘The Climate Crisis is a Health Crisis’. Sarah also reminds us of the opportunities for offering to deliver the weekly *Time for Reflection* for MSPs, along with those of other faiths.

Sarah is pleased with her relatively new role because it links her spiritual beliefs with working on the political concerns she feels strongly about.

A transcript of Sarah's presentation is available from the clerk.

02/24 We have heard from Carolyn Burch (Forres) that a small group STOPEACOPSCOT has formed to actively support a campaign against insurance for the planned East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP). A flyer can be seen at <https://bit.ly/stopeacopscot> and details of the wider campaign can be found at <https://www.stopeacop.net/>. Carolyn would welcome hearing from Friends who would like to know more and who might like to get involved.

Membership

03/24 Angela Nunn - We record that Angela Nunn (Shetland) resigns her membership to the Society of Friends. Angela considered this in discussion with a small number of

Shetland Friends, including a member of the Pastoral & Spiritual Care Group. We wish Angela well on her continuing faith journey.

04/24 Tabular statement

We record that at the end of 2023 that we have 133 Friends in Membership and 108 attenders. This compares with 131 Friends in Membership at the end of 2022.

05/24 We record how disappointing it is that so few of our Members and attenders are encouraged to attend Area Meeting, especially when there is much about putting our faith into action. We ask Local Meeting clerks to raise AM as notices after Meetings for Worship and for Friends to report back from AM to their local Meetings. We record that Zoom is a blessing and a curse in relation to helping Friends maintain connection with AM while not providing the depth of community and hospitality that face to face Meetings provide. We ask the AM Clerk that every AM has a clearly structured agenda.

Nominations

06/24 We appoint Clive Potter and Alastair Simmons as co-convenors of the Communications (Website) team from January 2024 to December 2025. The period reflects a possible move to Quakers in Scotland and that communication roles will be reviewed again then.

Working with refugees in Lebanon – Kash Smith

07/24 We have heard from Kash Smith, who grew up in Nairn and has been active in Young Friends, who is now living in Lebanon working, and studying, both in Beirut and with Syrian refugees in the Becca valley.

A more detailed summary of his presentation is in preparation and will be available from the clerk in due course.

Trustees

08/24 We receive the Trustee minutes dated 18 Jan 2024. We thank Trustees for handling this business on behalf of AM.

09/24 Quakers in Scotland Draft Governing Document – we have nothing to add, or subtract to the comments made by Trustees and already submitted to the Co-ordinating Group. We thank Trustees for this work on our behalf.

10/24 Clerk of Trustees – we note that it is incumbent on us to appoint a clerk of trustees to replace Tom before June this year.

Piers Voysey – Clerk

Andrew Collins – Assistant Clerk

Lynden Easterbrook – Assistant Clerk