

North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting

Saturday May 17th 2025.

The Treehouse, Carsegate Rd, Inverness

We welcome Friends from Aberdeen (5), Inverness, (7) Forres (4), and online a further 2 from Forres and 2 from Aberdeen. We also welcome our Local Development Worker who is with us online. Brian Ashley joins us online in the afternoon to speak to the item on Quakers in Scotland.

Prevented:

Diana Brockbank (Forres), Nina Lane (Caithness), Roger Ellis (Caithness), Clunie Conochie (Inverness)

Elders:

Anthony Buxton (Forres) and Oriole Hall (Inverness) have offered to serve as elders for this meeting.

18/25 We receive an application for membership from Susan Greenwood (Lochaber & Lorn), received by the Clerk on 22/03/2025.

We appoint Michael Ashman (Lochaber & Lorn) and Louise McKeown (Mull) to support Sue in preparing for this significant step in her faith journey. We ask Michael and Louise to report back to us when the time is right.

19/25 We receive the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Eleanor Fairclough read out to us by Oriole Hall. We ask the clerk to forward this to Britain Yearly Meeting and General Meeting and thank Inverness Friends for preparing the testimony.

20/25 Nominations:

The clerk has received the following minute from Nominations:

“Nigel raised the issue of the Nominations Committee being very small at a recent AM Planning Committee. It was felt at the planning meeting that QIS was moving so quickly that possibly by November current nominations may not exist. However, as a Nominations Committee (and as advised by Zoe Prosser Local Development Worker) we feel that AM Nominations should continue to be made until the requirement for AM roles has ceased. We agree to forward this minute to AM Clerk, Piers Voysey, for inclusion in the next Agenda for AM Business, to be held in Inverness on 17 May 2025.”

Nominations are still seeking names for:

A second Foundation Trustee for Quakers in Scotland
Meeting for Sufferings Alternate
Assistant Treasurer
Custodian of Records
Deputy Registering Officer
Pastoral & Spiritual Care Group
Nominations Committee members
[Clerk of Trustees]

The clerk has written to local meetings to ask them to reflect on the vacancies and to consider names to bring to our Nominations Committee. We expect that whether we remain an Area

Meeting or join with Quakers in Scotland there will be a greater role for Local Meetings to bring names forward for appointment.

Financial Matters

21/25 We propose to support Alastair Simmons (Inverness) who is delivering a tapestry to the Scottish Parliament. The tapestry is the work of Nairn artist Susie Alexander, who, at 88 is deputising the delivery of the tapestry to Alastair. The tapestry is titled "New Life Rises from the Ashes of Hiroshima" and it will be part of an exhibition in the Members' Lobby of the Parliament, from 20-22 May. Susie has also engaged students from Nairn Academy and Gordonstoun to contribute artwork to the exhibition. As well as delivering the works to the Scottish Parliament Alastair will be helping to steward the exhibition.

Inverness Meeting has already agreed to support Alastair with accommodation costs and Area Meeting will fund the travel costs for Alastair. We agree to supporting Alastair in this opportunity for witness

22/25 We have heard about the financial needs of Quaker linked schools in the Middle East and having heard that our finances are sufficient we agree to support both Ramallah Friends School and Brummana High School each with a donation of £1,000. We also encourage Friends to personally support these schools, acknowledging the vital role that education can play in supporting peace and co-operation.

For more details please visit the Quaker International Education Trust (QUIET) which directly supports Brummana High School - <https://quietcharity.org.uk> and <https://www.rfs.edu.ps/en> for more information about Ramallah Friends School. QUIET raises funds in the UK for both schools.

We have also been referred to a fascinating and inspiring book, "An Orchestra Beyond Borders" by Elena Cheah, which captures voices of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra.

23/25 At least 5 young Friends would like to attend Shindig this year and we agree to making funds available to enable any young friend from North Scotland who applies to attend. The cost to attend is £400 per person and support would also be provided for travel. Our treasurer confirms that we have some £1500 to 2000 in the budget to support Friends attending Shindig.

Shindig is held on the island of Cumbrae, it is well facilitated by a Quaker team, although they are always seeking more volunteer helpers. It is an important opportunity for young Friends, aged mid to late teens, from across northern Britain to gather together and to share experiences and to get to know one another. Shindig has already enabled Young Friends in the Area Meeting to establish strong relationships across Scotland and create a legacy that impacts on their wider lives.

24/25 We receive the Complaints Policy and Procedure as approved by Trustees. It provides guidance for Trustees should a complaint be received by any part of Area Meeting and it satisfies a requirement for charitable bodies. We acknowledge that conflicts within Meetings would ideally be dealt with according to Quaker Faith and Practice.

Zoe Prosser (Local Development Worker) is developing a guide to advise Friends further to clarify what can be confusing or unclear when seeking advice in Quaker Faith and Practice.

25/25 We record that Quakers in Scotland (QiS) is now established as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). General Meeting on the 7th June, in Aberdeen, will be considering further the move to lay down General Meeting (GM) and to put the GM resources and functions into Quakers in Scotland.

To avoid conflicts of interest no serving trustee will be trustee of new body. Adwoa Burnley and

Elizabeth Allan are joint clerks for the current Trustee body. This will enable QiS to receive assets from other Quaker bodies in Scotland.

East Scotland are moving towards being part of QiS and have recently amalgamated their bank accounts to enable an easier transfer of financial resources. West Scotland also seeking to transition into QiS.

We encourage our trustees to continue working towards enabling our transition from North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting to Quakers in Scotland, ideally before the end of the year. Our AM at Pluscarden in August will be an opportunity to review this item further and AM in October will be an opportunity to lay down our North Scotland AM. Between now and our next AM in August the clerk will work with the Co-ordinating Group in order to inform discussion at a Local Meeting level, e.g. will it be most practical for Local Meetings to retain a local bank account in order to manage meeting room bookings, etc? Our understanding is that there will be a general MOU between Quakers in Scotland and other Quaker Meetings under its umbrella, and an MoU to cover how properties will be managed. Hopefully drafts of these documents will be ready in advance of GM on 7th June.

26/25 The Annual Report 2024 for North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting has been circulated and is approved by our Trustees. It is good to receive it today and reflect on some of the achievements of 2024. In particular we celebrate that Inverness Meeting is thriving in its new 'home' in Scottish Canal's Tree House, and that our Young friends have flourished at Shindig and shared their experiences with us.

27/25 We have had a short discussion about communications and our aspiration to maintain our connections across the North of Scotland. We have talked about the value of the Northern Quaker newsletter. We acknowledge that our resources are limited and that both the Northern Quaker and the Northern Quaker Notebook have slipped from use.

As the Quaker Notebook took so much work, it would be good to maintain it. Oriole Hall and Jane Booth will set up a meeting of those who were on the original design group to reinstate and edit the content.

Zoe is working on a Padlet programme that might be able to be added to and adopted by other groups. Lesley Reynolds has experience of this. We will keep in touch with Zoe about this option.

Weekly email reminders from the clerk will continue. Calendar reminders from one Meeting might be shared more widely – e.g. Aberdeen's online discussion groups, Inverness Poetry groups.

In relation to our North Scotland Meetings it is hope that our online facility will continue and that at least once a year, a residential gathering at least, we will be able to come together in person.

We note that the Wiston Lodge weekend is an opportunity for friends to meet from across Scotland in Sept (Sept 5 to 7th this year) and the Westerly and isolated Friends Gathering at Crianlarich in the spring, as other residential opportunities.

Clerks' post-script:

The clerk extends our thanks to our hosts from Inverness Meeting for their hospitality and refreshments, and to Laurie from Scottish Canals for his support in setting up this morning.

Signed:

Piers Voysey
Clerk

John Hitchen
Assistant Clerk