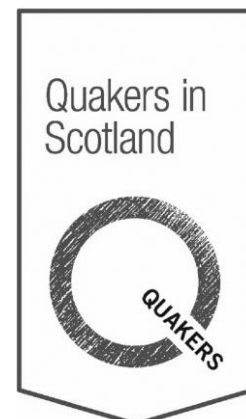


# General Meeting for Scotland



14<sup>th</sup> September 2019  
Aberdeen

## Minute 1 Worship

We began General Meeting with worship. During worship we heard read an extract on prayer as resistance, from Helen Steven’s 2005 Swarthmore Lecture, “No Extraordinary Power”, in which she quotes Allan Boesak.

Driven by holy rage, motivated by love, our prayer is action, deeds of resistance. It is uncomfortable, irresistible and it moves people to change human history, until it conforms with the norms of the Kingdom of God.

## Minute 2 Welcome to all present

We are glad to welcome everybody, including 5 attenders and Miriam Weibye. Miriam is the Church Relations Officer for the Episcopal Church. She is also on the ACTS Transition Group and the Scottish Churches representative on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. We also welcome Mairi Campbell-Jack and her daughter Milla.

The total numbers of all present.

East Scotland	14
South East Scotland	9
North Scotland	20
West Scotland	14

**Total: 57 + 3 visitors**

### **Minute 3 Reporter of this meeting**

We appoint Phil Lucas of SESAM to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask North Scotland AM to report on GM in Perth in November.

### **Minute 4 New members and deaths**

We record the following new member since our last meeting, from Area Meeting minutes :

South East - Graeme Beale

We record the following deaths since our last meeting, from Area Meeting minutes:

NSAM - John Melling (Inverness LM) on 20/05/19  
Colin Millar (Aberdeen LM) on 22/07/19.

SESAM - James (Jimmy) Smith (Polmont LM) on 29/07/19  
Merilyn Smith (Central Edin) on 07/08/19  
Pat Newbury (Polmont) on 15/08/19

West - Nan Irving (Glasgow) on 15/05/19  
Fleming Carswell on 24/05/19

### **Minute 5 Providing Spiritual and Pastoral Care at General Meeting**

We are glad to hear of the special meeting held in June in Glasgow at which thought was given as to how to best deal with Meetings for Worship for business that may need extra support and spiritual discernment, in particular how we provide eldership.

We are grateful to Friends present who have offered to serve as Elders/Overseers for this meeting and we are happy with the role descriptions on the reverse of our agenda. The text is

Role description for Elders and Overseers at GM

- To encourage Friends in the maintenance of an atmosphere that enables spiritual discernment and to prayerfully uphold the Meeting and ensure its right ordering;
- To ask Friends to uphold the worship and or clerks if necessary
- To be available to clerks after the meeting for support, if necessary,
- Be aware of any needs that may need to be met and alert clerks

This text will be on the reverse of all future agendas. Names of those serving for today have been noted. It is important that all of us share the duties of oversight and the spiritual care of our Meetings, not just those appointed to carry them out.

### **Minute 6 Receiving minutes from the AMs and LMs sent to GM in response to the call for action on Climate Emergency**

We receive minute 76/19 of WSAM held at Lochgilphead, Argyll 24<sup>th</sup> August 2019

We receive minute 18/87 of Glasgow LM

We receive minute 2019/09/09 of SESAM

The texts of these minutes are in the paper circulated with docs in advance entitled Area Meeting and Local Meeting minutes sent to General Meeting for Scotland and is attached to these minutes.

### **Minute 7 Climate Emergency**

We thank Friends across Scotland for sharing their responses to the call for action to prepare us for this session on the climate and ecological emergency. These responses were circulated as documents in advance of this meeting and will be attached to these minutes. We are grateful to Mike Shilson, Maeve Topliff, Richard Raggett, David Gean, Cath Dyer, David Somervell and Elisabeth Wilson for sharing what moves them to action on the climate and ecological emergency.

We heard of their paths in life and, for some, the event or happening that was their turning point. We heard that the spiritual aspect of the concern is what drives them. They feel the need to be rooted in behaviour which leads to making a difference however small. In all contributions individual actions that join together with others of like mind created something big. This can also be seen in communities that work together to reduce their carbon footprint.

We heard that, from a Quaker perspective, people's attitudes, behaviour and policies that have led to the climate and ecological emergency are completely against all of our Testimonies. We can know the science of climate change, but it is the passion for humanity that counts. Quakers believe in answering that of God in everyone. We were led to pray that we can do this globally, that Love is most important – that if love for all creation is what drives us then that motive is coming from a good place. To what extent does our privilege cloud our vision? We do harm by carrying on as we are. Can we say that we will move forward striving to “do no harm” in our everyday actions?

We are concerned that we share information well among ourselves and support each other to take the steps we can without being overwhelmed or struck down by guilt.

We hope to return to this unfinished discernment later today.

### **Minute 8 Nominations**

We are grateful for the work of our GM nominations committee. They have brought us the following names;

#### **Nominations for GM 14<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

#### **GM representative to ACTS Members Meeting**

Adwoa Bittle with immediate effect until December 2022

First Triennium

#### **Faith in Community Scotland Action Fund**

Kate Arnot with immediate effect until December 2022

First Triennium

#### **Assistant Clerk to General Meeting**

Nicola Maharg

January 2020 to December 2022

First Triennium

These names being acceptable we appoint them accordingly.

### **Minute 9 Action for Churches Together in Scotland update**

We were represented at the ACTS Members Meeting and AGM on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019 by Adwoa Bittle. She reports that work is ongoing to move from ACTS to the Scottish Christian Forum (SCF). Attached to these minutes is her report which includes some of the papers presented at the meeting.

Appendix 3 which holds the Vision Statement was particularly well received. The criteria for becoming a forum (the smaller groups to be set up under the umbrella body of SCF) is laid out in appendix 4. This is helpfully worded to make it clear that this new body is all about enabling action which we as Quakers are so keen to encourage. Appendix 5 describes the structure of the SCF. Again, it was well received by members.

Next the meeting considered the membership basis. The plan is for there to a sliding scale of contributions from the member churches, linked to membership numbers. By this calculation our contribution will drop by 11%. This financial work is ongoing, and a clear picture should be available at the next Members Meeting on

18<sup>th</sup> November. We understand that the Basis for Commitment to the new SCF will remain the same as our commitment to ACTS. Adwoa felt very welcome at the meeting and that Quakers being part of this group of people is important.

Modelling good communication and honest respectful dialogue is so important in this time. If we can't be at the table with our Christian colleagues where can we be?

We thank Adwoa for her enthusiastic report and for representing us at the two ACTS Meetings.

### **Minute 10 World Day of Prayer**

We thank Margaret Roy for her report which was circulated with documents in advance. Margaret shared with GM her involvement with the Scottish Committee that reviews material for the World Day of Prayer. She also spoke of how many issues around violence against women both in Scotland and around the world fall under this focus of looking at the status of women. We are interested to hear that Edinburgh will host the international committee in 2022. Margaret's full report is attached to these minutes.

### **Minute 11 Journeymen Theatre**

Carolyn Burch of St. Andrews Meeting has asked us to consider inviting Journeymen Theatre to put on one of their plays at a time to coincide with a General Meeting in the first half of 2020.

We agree to invite Journeymen Theatre to come to Elgin in June.

We understand that there will be travel and accommodation costs, plus venue hire. A rough estimate of these would be helpful for GM trustees, who are meeting in October.

### **Minute 12 Book of Discipline Revision Committee Update**

Mary Woodward has given us a flavour of the current work being carried out by the Book of Discipline Revision Committee. We are encouraged to hear that they are looking forward to opportunities for working with central and standing committees, and Friends across the Yearly Meeting. They are exploring some potential approaches to their task within the committee and they are keen to build community as a committee in order to speak authentically to each other. In this way they are seeking to model a willingness to be open with each other about their spiritual experiences and understandings. Such openness is vital to building a healthy community within the Yearly Meeting, which they see as both essential to and a desired outcome of the revision process.

They welcome submissions of ideas, favourite passages, etc. You can send in your contribution via the online "collection tool" <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qfp-idea> by emailing [qfp@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qfp@quaker.org.uk) or by writing to Revision Committee, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

Nuala Watt and Mary were appointed to the planning group for the weekend at Woodbrooke this November [8th-10th]. Entitled “Why have a book of discipline?” it invites us to consider what the book’s functions are and the many different ways in which people use it.

Every AM has been invited to send a representative and interested individuals over the age of 14 are also encouraged to come.

We thank Mary for her report and the Committee for their work.

### **Minute 13 Annual Report of Trustees for 2018**

Michael Hutchinson has spoken to this report. We note that in future the Annual report of GM Trustees will be presented at the March GM and the Accounts and public Annual Report to OSCR will be presented at the June GM. This change is necessitated by a change in the arrangements for the examination of the accounts.

Michael spoke of the work required to prepare for the Data Protection Regulation and of discussion over the second phase of evaluating the Scottish Advocacy Project. Michael hopes that we are bored! This will mean that the legal regulations, employment issues and property aspects of GM are ticking along just fine. We are grateful to our Trustees for all the work they undertake on our behalf in developing model policies and procedures for use across Scotland, in particular the work on GDPR. There is much more in the report which is attached to these minutes.

### **Minute 14 Parliamentary Engagement Working Group**

Joyce Taylor has spoken to the latest PEWG report. We are pleased to hear that the event organised with the Edinburgh Book Festival concerning the ownership of Scotland’s land attracted 700 people. Joyce has also updated us on the petition on militarism in schools; the group’s work on climate emergency; QPSW workers; and Cop26. PEWG has been working with Together Scotland, which is an umbrella body of groups that work together on children’s rights. We have been asked to consider joining Together Scotland to strengthen children’s voice. This would cost £100. Mairi would liaise with them on militarism in schools. Other issues may arise in the future. We agree to this partnership with immediate effect. We are concerned to learn that the company which recruits for the armed forces is targeting 16-18 year olds, and that cadets’ activities/ involvement in schools is with still younger children.

The full report is attached to these minutes. We urge you to read it and pass on what is happening on our behalf to Friends in your Local and Area Meetings. We thank our PEWG and Mairi for all the work done on our behalf.

Please speak to Joyce if you are interested in working with PEWG. They have the power to co-opt.

### **Minute 15 Tender of interest for QPSW worker**

The Economics and Sustainability team at Friends House is developing a project that would see paid coordinators placed in 3 different areas of the BYM. Their role would be to bring together local groups and organisations (both Quaker and non-Quaker) whose work contributes to the zero-carbon transition. The coordinators would help link these groups and then support them to engage in the political process and call for policy change which would increase the effectiveness of the work they do. Olivia Hanks from Friends House has asked for expressions of interest from local and area meetings interested in hosting some of this work. Several local meetings and area meetings in Scotland have already been in touch with her to lodge their interest. This project is seeking outside funding to make it happen, so the more interest meetings demonstrate the better the chance of it being funded.

GM is very supportive of Local and Area Meetings that are led to lodge an expression of interest for hosting this work. We hope that Scotland is chosen to host a paid co-ordinator.

We forward this minute to QPSW Central Committee and Olivia Hanks.

### **Minute 16 COP26 United Nations Climate Change Conference 2020**

Mairi Campbell-Jack has told us about COP26, the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations framework convention on climate change (UNFCCC). Recently it has been made public that the UN Climate Change Conference will be held in Glasgow on 7<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020. BYM has already applied for observer status. Meantime many climate organisations are working on what action they plan to take. David Somervell spoke about a recent Civil Society Meeting about this conference which he attended 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019. We are keen to support Stop Climate Chaos – of which we are a member, in the work they are galvanising to do for this conference. We recognise that one essential aspect of the problem is the misuse of power. We might wish to reflect on what we as Quakers have to say on this.

Chris Walker, the Sustainability Programme Manager for BYM, has offered to help Scottish Friends consider what actions they could take to support those attending this important event and to learn about the climate emergency from a Quaker perspective. BYM staff will be working alongside the Quaker United Nations Office to engage directly with politicians attending the talks. But there is much work to do 'outside' too.

Examples of actions could include:

- holding an event to bring faith groups together to call for climate action
- hold a speaker event or two so activists/ local people can hear from climate campaigners from around the world

- providing accommodation in Friends' houses
- sponsoring a delegate from an environmental organisation in a developing country to come to the conference. This could cost around £1500 and should come from individual Friends rather than GM funds. We could also work with other groups to crowd source funding on a larger scale.
- There is an international dimension to our Quaker involvement, and we might need to consider how FWCC and their resources can be involved in this.

A group of those interested including WSAM and Glasgow LM clerks are arranging a "Zoom" conference with Chris next week to discuss these ideas.

We also note that Oliver Robertson, the new head of Worship and Witness at Friends House will be coming to West Scotland Area Meeting on 11th January 2020 and it is expected that this subject will be on his agenda.

We will return to this at a future GM. We thank Mairi Campbell-Jack for offering to come to GMs between now and the conference to update.

### **Minute 17 Bid to hold the Parliament of the World's Religions in Scotland: Invitation letter asking for support**

Hosts for the 2021, 2024, and 2027 Parliament of the World's Religions are presently being considered and plans are being developed for a joint Glasgow/Edinburgh bid on behalf of Scotland. This is supported by the Lord Provosts of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the Scottish Government, through the First Minister. Churches and faiths, representing a wide spectrum of belief, have already confirmed their support.

We understand from Marigold Bentley, Head of Peace Programmes and Faith Relations, that the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations has been invited to sign a letter of support for the Scottish bid. General Meeting has been asked for their view on this request.

As a faith community, we already participate in ecumenical and interfaith activities and we welcome the potential opportunities for interfaith exchange and community building this event would provide. We hope that QCCIR will sign the letter of support for the bid to host the Parliament of the World's Religions, in Scotland. We forward this minute to QCCIR.

### **Minute 18 Support the cross-party amendment to the Bill on indefinite immigration the "Immigration and social security co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill" second reading in the commons.**

David Bradwell of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees has invited us to publicly support the cross-party amendment on ending indefinite detention for EU nationals.



Sam Grant from Liberty has explained that this is a good opportunity to introduce a 28-day time limit for everyone held in immigration detention. Support for the amendment was required prior to GM. Our clerk contacted Paul Parker, BYM Recording Clerk, and was advised that, as BYM already has a position on this, she could offer the support requested. Liberty briefing papers are attached to these minutes.

### **Minute 19 Closing minute**

We record our thanks to North Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this GM. We look forward to meeting again on 16<sup>th</sup> November in Perth where will be focusing on building community! We will also be discerning a way forward on the ways of working within Scotland following AM feedback on the papers circulated after last GM.

We will also be hearing feedback from this year's Shindig, family gathering and the most recent Link weekend and considering our next year's budget.

Adwoa Bittle  
Clerk

### Meetings in 2019 and 2020

November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Perth

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 South East Scotland AM

June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Elgin

September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Dundee

November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Glasgow

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021 North Scotland AM

We ask that the Area Meetings concerned confirm the acceptability of these dates and inform our clerk of the venue (where not already done so) and the contact details of the person nominated to oversee the local arrangements.