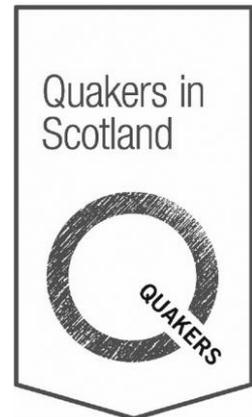


# GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

At a hybrid Meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at Aberdeen Meeting House, 98 Crown Street AB 11 6HJ, and by video conference.



## Minutes

### **25/06/01 Opening worship**

During our opening worship our assistant clerk read the following account that quotes Mariann Budde in May, 2025:

At a recent large gathering of Christians in Germany, known as the Kirchentag, Mariann Budde, Episcopal Bishop of Washington, reiterated her belief that our greatest contribution is to speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen. "More importantly," she said, "we are to live as best we can according to the highest aspirations of humankind revealed to us in Jesus.

- to recognize the inherent, God-given dignity of every human being
- to love our neighbors as ourselves, and even to love our enemies
- to share what we have and to strive for an equitable and just society
- to refrain from evil and refuse to hate
- to be mindful of the power of our words, and to speak without malice or contempt
- to forgive, as we have been forgiven
- to live in hope
- to be willing to sacrifice, even our very lives, for the sake of love.

I see love and courage embodied in the people I meet, and I am grateful."

### **25/06/02 Welcome to all present**

We welcome all Friends who are with us today, both by Zoom and in Aberdeen.

The numbers of those present for all or part of the meeting were:

East Scotland AM	9 (1 in Aberdeen 8 on Zoom)
North Scotland AM	19 (11 in Aberdeen, 8 on Zoom)
South East Scotland AM	25 (9 in Aberdeen, 16 on Zoom)
West Scotland AM	21 (7 in Aberdeen, 14 on Zoom)
Visitors	1

**Total: 75**, including 5 attenders

We thank North Scotland Area Meeting for asking Oriole Hall and Juli Salt to act as elders for us today in Aberdeen. We ask East Scotland AM to provide Friends to act as elders for our next meeting.

### **25/06/03 Agenda**

We adopt the agenda as circulated as amended in this meeting.

### **25/06/04 Reporter to *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend***

We thank Kate Arnot for agreeing to report on this meeting for *The Friend* and *Scottish Friend*. We ask North Scotland Area Meeting to provide the name of a Friend to report on our next meeting.

### **25/06/05 New members, transfers and deaths**

From Area Meeting minutes since General Meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025, we record the following membership changes:

#### **DEATHS**

Geoffrey Alexander	died in 2024	SESAM
John Fox	died 3/2/25	SESAM
Bryan Bowes	died 13/5/25	WSAM
Margaret Paterson	died 5/5/25	SESAM

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

Julie Hughes	SESAM
Christopher Holman	SESAM
Gordon Sharp	ESAM

#### **TRANSFERS IN**

Roger Robertson	From Mid Somerset AM to SESAM
Connie Wright (Goodwin)	From Friendswood Friends Church, Texas to ESAM

#### **RESIGNATIONS**

Derek Morrison	SESAM
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#### **TERMINATION**

Conor Watt	SESAM
John Helliwell	SESAM

[ESAM = East Scotland Area Meeting; NSAM = North Scotland Area Meeting; SESAM = South East Scotland Area Meeting; WSAM = West Scotland Area Meeting]

## **25/06/06 Proposed dates and host meetings for GM in 2026/27**

No Area Meeting has indicated any problem with the suggested dates and host area meetings for holding General Meeting in 2026/27. We agree to these as follows:

7 March 2026 - West Scotland AM (already agreed)

6 June - East Scotland AM

19 September - North Scotland AM

7 November – South East Scotland AM

6 March 2027 West Scotland AM

If the transition to Quakers in Scotland occurs within this time frame, we will use these dates for holding that meeting instead.

## **25/06/07 Trustees Annual Report & Accounts for 2024**

Robin Waterston, clerk of General Meeting Trustee, has introduced the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024. The report and examined accounts, with the list of donations and affiliations were circulated with our papers as Papers A1, A2 and A3, and these will be filed with our minutes. These documents have been approved by Trustees and are before us primarily for information.

Income during the year was £30,520 and expenditure was £24,452 giving a surplus of £6,068. GM's overall balance at the end of the year was £49,554, more than the reserve policy requirements. Trustees reviewed the situation in 2023 and as Quakers in Scotland are going through a major structural organisational review, it was agreed that additional funding could be required to support this process so the level of reserve can be justified. However, it was agreed on the recommendation of Trustees that the budgeted quota from AMs for 2025 should be reduced from £16,000 to £12,000, and the contribution to BYM for the Parliamentary Engagement Post be increased to £6,500.

We understand that the list of the donations and affiliations as listed requires checking for accuracy, after which it will be placed again on the General Meeting website. We will also be returning to a donation to Stop Climate Chaos Scotland later in this meeting. Trustees suggest that it is time to review the list of those receiving donations and affiliations, perhaps when Quakers in Scotland is in operation.

We thank our trustees and treasurer for their work on our behalf.

## **25/06/08 Families weekend**

Minute 25/03/11 refers. Mary Troup, our children and young persons advocate, has spoken to us about the Families Weekend held 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at the Atholl Centre in Pitlochry. We are sad to hear the Centre is

closing soon, but that next year's event will be held at the Pitlochry Youth Hostel. The theme of the Pitlochry Weekend was peace and peacebuilding. Mary's report is filed with these minutes and a copy placed on the General Meeting website.

We thank Mary and her team for all that is going on in support of our children and young people.

## **25/06/09 Transition to Quakers in Scotland**

Minutes 25/03/17 and 24/11/26 refer. Paper B informs our business today. General Meeting for Scotland and Scottish Area Meetings agreed to the establishment of 'Quakers in Scotland' as a potential new structure with a single trustee body for all Scottish meetings.

This trustee body has been set up and would be responsible to a single Quakers in Scotland meeting for business, with General Meeting, the four Area Meetings and the Dundee Friends Property Trust transitioning or joining the new body when and if ready to do so.

We receive minute 2025/05/09 (Quakers in Scotland) of South East Scotland Area Meeting (SESAM) held 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and are pleased to learn of the discernment made at that meeting. We note that SESAM asked the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group (QiSCG) and the Trustees of Quakers in Scotland to offer:

1. Plans for how key issues will be handled following the transfer of responsibilities: specifically sharing of finances; management of property; safeguarding;
2. An outline of whether fewer jobs (other than trustee roles) will be needed;
3. Proposed arrangements for maintaining eldership and pastoral care under any new, more flexible system;
4. Proposed systems to guard against local meetings becoming isolated: from surrounding LMs, from QiS, and/or from BYM;
5. Ideas for how the current Area Meetings might work together, and together with QiS, as an interim measure or for the foreseeable future.

SESAM wishes through this process to reach a position where it can make an informed and guided decision as to dissolving SESAM in order to be part of Quakers in Scotland.

We note that East Scotland, North Scotland and West Scotland Area Meetings, and the Dundee Friends Property Trust, are all planning to join Quakers in Scotland by the end of this year.

The next stage is for General Meeting to transition to the new body in order that it can start to function and work on how it will operate.

The manner in which Quakers in Scotland will operate will become a function of the new body, to evolve as Friends then see fit. The Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group have prepared papers towards this, and posted drafts on the GM website for Friends to view. The pre-meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> June was an opportunity for Friends to meet informally with members of the Co-ordinating Group to discuss these. The present, mainly working, drafts are:

- Governing Document
- Draft General Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
- Draft Property Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
- Possible arrangements for Spiritual and Pastoral care
- Possible financial structure and organisation
- Summary of how Intermediate Meetings (Im) might work
- What difference might it make to the number of roles
- Foundation and substantive trustee roles

They are on the GM website at Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group documents on: <https://quakerscotland.org/general-meeting/qis-documents>

At the pre-meeting, discussion took place on how the combined business of General Meeting and four Area Meetings could be managed, with opportunities seen for operating in new ways. Discussion involved the technicalities of transferring membership to the new body so that business could be conducted. A Friend likened the whole transition process as being like moving house. We pack all our possessions (ways of doing things) into boxes to move, and afterwards gradually unpack them to find what we need and what we don't. We will return to the papers in September and onwards as we establish how Quakers in Scotland will operate to fulfil its purposes.

We are clear from our consideration today that we look to consider how the required business for Quakers in Scotland is taken and how intermediate meetings will work. We will return to this.

General Meeting for Scotland is asked to approve:

- that General Meeting Trustees apply to OSCR to wind up GM, with the aim that at the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September, subject to approval from OSCR, General Meeting formally minutes its dissolution and the functions of General Meeting for Scotland be transferred to Quakers in Scotland;
- that the Trustees of General Meeting for Scotland are asked to transfer the assets of General Meeting for Scotland to Quakers in Scotland on 20<sup>th</sup> September;

- that current General Meeting service appointments transfer to Quakers in Scotland on 20<sup>th</sup> September, other than those for the GM Treasurer and GM Trustees. The new body will then appoint them for itself.
- that Friends are asked to transfer membership to Quakers in Scotland before the target date of 20<sup>th</sup> September.

We agree to the transition of General Meeting for Scotland to Quakers in Scotland as defined above. We appoint the existing GM clerks as clerks designate of QiS, to serve until the end of 2025. This means they can call Quakers in Scotland as body for 20<sup>th</sup> September, a day in which General Meeting for Scotland will also be called, but then laid down and Quakers in Scotland formally hold its first meeting.

In order to bring Quakers in Scotland into operation as a body for Friends in Scotland, a Quakers in Scotland Treasurer is required so a bank account can be set up and assets transferred. A nomination is to be received this afternoon. GMS Trustees are working to facilitate the transfer required. We will also transfer the Administrator's employment to the new body. Further Quakers in Scotland trustees are required and Nominations Committee and Area Meetings are working on this. Appointments may be made by our between-meetings procedure if required.

Work continues on the manner in which the membership transfer can take place and Friends will be contacted in due course. The membership transfer is an administrative consequence of the new charity being a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and does not affect continuing membership of area meetings for the time being.

The Half Yearly Meeting for North Britain was established in 1786, becoming General Meeting for Scotland in 1807. We have now reached the next stage in our history and evolution.

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to approve the transition of General Meeting for Scotland to Quakers in Scotland, and suggest that the current GMS responsibilities as set out in *Quaker faith & practice* 5.03 become responsibilities of Quakers in Scotland. All Friends in Scotland would become part of Quakers in Scotland for these purposes. Further work is in hand to define the new responsibilities and status of Quakers in Scotland as and if the four Scottish Area Meetings and Dundee Friends Property Trust become part of it too.

We are aware of the exciting opportunities before us as we begin thinking as Quakers in Scotland. It is up to us to make it work for building and strengthening our community. Our exercise today has strengthened this resolve to find ways forward for all of us. We thank the Co-ordinating Group and others working on our behalf to make this happen.

We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings and the Recording Clerk.

## **25/06/10 Appointments and Nominations Committee report**

No appointments have been made through our between meetings procedure since our 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025 meeting:

Nominations Committee has brought us the following nominations:

### **QUAKERS IN SCOTLAND FACEBOOK PAGE MODERATORS**

Martin McCaffery (ESAM) to serve 01 07 2025 – 30 06 2028 (third triennium).

Clive Potter (NSAM) to serve one year 01 07 2025 – 30 06 2026 (second triennium)

### **ECUMENICAL OFFICERS' FORUM (SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN FORUM)**

Mary Woodward (SESAM) to serve 01 07 2025 – 30 06 2028 (second triennium).

### **QUAKERS IN SCOTLAND TREASURER & EX-OFFICIO QiS TRUSTEE**

Kate Gulliver (WSAM) to serve from appointment until 31 12 2027.

We appoint our Friends named accordingly.

### **EDITOR, SCOTTISH FRIEND & GM ZOOM HOST**

Amer Syed wishes to be released from these posts.

We release our Friend and thank him for his service.

We ask Nominations Committee to bring in the name of a Friend to be an editor, together, if appropriate, an assistant editor, for the Scottish Friend. We also ask Nominations Committee to find the name(s) of Friend(s) to act as Zoom Host(s) for setting up and running video conferencing at our hybrid and video conference meetings.

### **PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP**

To release on 30 06 2025:

Tanya Jones (ESAM)

We are pleased to hear that Tanya has been appointed as Climate Justice lead for Quakers in Britain which means she has to step down as member of PEWG.

We ask Nominations Committee to find a replacement and seek further Friends to serve. Minute 25/06/12 will also refer.

## **25/06/11 Nominations Committee**

Anna Mitchell wishes to be released as clerk to our Nominations Committee. We duly release her and thank her for her service.

The procedure for finding a new clerk is to appoint a Search Group with representatives from each Area Meeting. In view of the immediate need to find a replacement, we agree to appoint the clerks of the four Area Meetings and clerks of General Meeting (subject to consent) as the Search Group. A between-meetings appointment may be needed.

Zoe Prosser, our Local Development Worker, has spoken to us on our nominations process, following a meeting for all Area Meeting and General Meeting nomination committee members this week. Zoe supports our nominations committees throughout Scotland.

In moving to Quakers in Scotland we have opportunity to review our nominations process and connect it more to Friends in our Meetings. Zoe has asked us how we can undertake nominations well in a manner that includes us all, and given us some ideas. We ask the clerks to work with Zoe to hold an open meeting to consider the potential for our nominations process.

### **25/06/12 Meeting for Sufferings Report**

There has been no Meeting for Sufferings since our last meeting, when we heard a brief spoken report from our representative, Elaine Millar, on the Meeting for Suffering held 1<sup>st</sup> March. Her full report was circulated with the March minutes, and is also in the current *Scottish Friend*. Elaine has spoken further to us today of the changes to happen with the move to a Continuing Yearly Meeting following the last single event Yearly Meeting to be held in London next May. This will coincide with the laying down of Meeting for Sufferings and instigation of a continuing Yearly Meeting meeting four times in a year.

Elaine has focussed her personal response to these changes in the light of having had some disconnect in the past to the Quaker discernment process. However, through working within Meeting for Sufferings this has become more real to her, and its value and depth so more important. She hopes that the continuing Yearly Meeting will encourage the involvement of Friends with the discernment experience. Elaine's ministry has made us aware of the transformative nature of discernment.

A Friend raised the question of whether Quaker language and terminology might unwittingly exclude some Friends from the ways of doing things we are trying to uphold. We will return to this.

We thank Elaine for her report.

### **25/06/13 Parliamentary Engagement Working Group report**

We receive the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) Report, Paper C, and Carolyn Burch, co-convenor, has spoken to it and given us a flavour of the wider

range of the work. The work seeks to find common ground with those we are connected to. This is how our Quaker response begins, even in difficult circumstances.

The report includes a number of updates on current activity, including the outcomes of Westminster Meeting House police raid in March and its relevance for Scottish Quaker advocacy; the letter to the First Minister about the new Programme for Government; Parliamentary Engagement Officer and PEWG meetings with party manifesto writers for the 2026 Scottish election and Peacebuilding and Peace Education (including a report on IDEAS - the International Development Education Association Scotland).

Carolyn has focussed on key points about the current and upcoming work and she has requested that we all help find Friends who could serve on PEWG.

We are pleased to hear that Richard Raggett gave his “Time for Reflection” to the Scottish parliament on 13th May. This happened this was the day of the major debate (and free vote) on the proposed Assisted Dying Bill. So, Richard’s message about more honesty and integrity in listening and speaking, and finding kinder ground in debate, proved timely and was referenced during the debate.

We are also delighted to hear of Sarah Komashko’s maternity leave and wish her and her husband well for the birth of their baby. Sarah, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, will be replaced by a temporary staff member during her leave.

Richard Raggett has spoken to a request in the report for additional funding for a key partner in the work: Stop Climate Change Scotland (SCCS). SCCS is PEWG’s main ally for general advocacy for climate action. It is a broad-based coalition of 74 organisations which collectively represent hundreds of thousands of members, for example Friends of the Earth, Oxfam, and RSPB. Its financing comes largely from membership fees which cover staff costs, admin costs and a small activities budget. We already gave SCCS £230 this year as a membership fee. In 2023 we contributed £500 in addition to the membership fee. PEWG suggest we do this again this year, and the report gives the context and need. Specifically, SCCS proposes a mass lobby of MSPs on 18<sup>th</sup> September in Holyrood, and Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September across local constituencies, at which citizens meet their MSPs to explain in their own words why meaningful, rapid climate action is so important to them. A working group has been established to make this happen, drawn from coalition members. Our PEO and/or a PEWG member have attended the early meetings. SCCS has secured £5,000 towards the project’s budget of £8,000. PEWG therefore asks GM to consider a donation of £500 towards the target for this project.

We agree to this, hearing of the importance in keeping climate justice on the wider agenda.

We give thanks and uphold our Working Group and Parliamentary Engagement Officer

in their continuing work on our behalf, which makes a distinctive Quaker Witness in Scotland more widely known.

### **25/06/14 Wiston Lodge weekend 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

Area and Local Meetings have been circulated about the residential weekend at Wiston Lodge 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> September, organised through South East Scotland Area Meeting. This is open to all Friends in Scotland and provides opportunity for a residential gathering, which was one of the factors deemed missing in strengthening Quaker community in Scotland. The details will be sent with these minutes.

### **25/06/15 Local Development Worker – priorities for 2026**

Our Local Development Worker (LDW) for Scotland, Zoe Prosser, works annually with her Britain Yearly Meeting line manager and ourselves to determine her priorities for the coming year. In 2023, General Meeting endorsed a mechanism for Friends in Scotland to contribute to this process.

Area and Local Meetings in Scotland and Scottish Friends individually are invited, therefore, to submit suggestions by the end of September, for the priorities of the Local Development Worker's work in Scotland for the following year.

Suggestions will be passed to the LDW for sorting and if necessary, distilling, in preparation for a meeting to select the suggestions to be brought to General Meeting. In mid-October GM Committee or equivalent, the four Scottish AM clerks, the LDW, and the LDW's line-manager will consider the suggested priorities and select those to bring to General Meeting/Quakers in Scotland in November. These suggested priorities will then be put before Friends for their consideration and agreement.

The current priorities agreed by this process last year are:

1. Continue to strengthen and develop support for role holders.
2. Supporting Quaker communities to be loving, inclusive and all age.
3. Pointing the way to information about available resources and materials, including videos and non-traditional resources, to help Quaker Meetings and role-holders identify what they need, and developing and creating further resources where there is a need.
4. Supporting the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to work for change.

Friends and Meetings are now invited to consider what help from Zoe that Quaker communities in Scotland require over the next year.

Suggestions may come to us through minutes, messages or emails. General Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> September will hear from Zoe on what she has done and what she sees coming ahead so as to help the process.

### **25/06/16 Items for Yearly Meeting 2026**

We have received the annual invitation to the clerk to help discern the agenda for the next Yearly Meeting from Mary Aiston, clerk to YM Agenda Committee. Yearly Meeting 2026 will take place from Friday 1 to Monday 4 May, and will be held at Friends House, London and online. For reference, the clerk's response from last year has been made available with the agenda papers for this meeting (Paper F). The clerk is invited earlier than usual to a meeting of YM Agenda Committee to be held 26<sup>th</sup> July, with a paper submitted in advance. Friends and meetings are asked to submit ideas for this paper in advance, by the end of June.

### **25/06/17 Correspondence and further business**

#### **a) Interfaith insurance letter to Tokio Marine.**

Further to minute 24/03/19d, on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025, the clerk signed a follow up interfaith letter, organised through Britain Yearly Meeting, to Tokio Marine insurance company, urging them change their fossil fuel engagement policy. A group of Friends from Scotland have been trying to contact them on this matter but have not yet received a reply.

#### **b) Statement: Debt relief in the global south**

Christian Aid have been working with partners and church leaders in Africa to produce a shared statement calling on the UK government to bring in new legislation to compel private creditors to provide debt relief to countries in the global south. The clerk signed this statement on behalf of Quakers in Scotland on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

#### **c) Scottish Covid Inquiry**

Further to minute 25/03/20b, the clerk attended the Scottish Covid Inquiry on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025, to give oral submission on the basis of our written submission.

#### **d) Ecocide (Scotland) Bill**

On 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025, The clerk, through our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, Sarah Komashko, signed an open letter in support of the Ecocide (Scotland) Bill which is going through the Scottish Parliament.

### **25/06/18 Upcoming business**

In September, we envisage the main business as being a return to the discernment over the future of Scottish Quaker structures – the 'Quakers in Scotland' proposals. We will also consider our Climate Justice work along with our Parliamentary Engagement work and our support for children and young people, with a Shindig

report. We will hear from Zoe Prosser on the discernment process for the Local Development worker priorities for 2026. The Community Justice Working Group annual report is to come either in September or November. We also await the conclusion of the review of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group' three-year priorities.

### **25/06/19 Update on witness to President Trump / Ecumenical / Interfaith Appeal**

Minute 25/03/14 (Peacebuilding in dark times) refers. At a March meeting we agreed that an informal group could be convened to plan a response to a potential visit by President Trump to Scotland later this year. That group was convened and has been drafting a letter of appeal in conjunction with Scottish ecumenical and interfaith groups. A draft of the appeal has been circulated, but has since been updated. Susan Mitchell has briefed us on the appeal and the process and how it has been taken up by others. The plans for the visit are not yet fixed. The group is liaising with the Recording Clerk on the appeal.

We encourage the group to continue this work and ask the assistant clerk to liaise with the Scottish Christian Leaders Forum, the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations and Interfaith representatives.

### **25/06/20 Finland Yearly Meeting**

Mary Woodward of Portobello & Musselburgh LM has spoken to her attendance at Finland Yearly Meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> May 2025 in Tampere. The clerk provided a travelling letter. This was Mary's fourth time in attending Finland Yearly Meeting as a representative, and she has attended Finnish gatherings at other times. She has also maintained other contacts with Finnish Friends over the years and values meeting with them for worship online. Mary has given us a brief account of the Yearly Meeting, the theme of which was peace and peacemaking. This year also gives her opportunity to consolidate Finnish contacts and friendships and to extend her knowledge of Friends from other Nordic countries in July at Nordic YM.

Mary has returned the travelling letter, endorsed by the Finnish Yearly Meeting clerk as follows:

*We worshipped together, seeking ways to nurture peace & hope within ourselves and we prayed to have courage to live that in our communities, wherever we may be.*

*It was so nice to have our 'honorary Finn' Mary with us once again.*

*The Light is everywhere.*

*Greetings to Friends in Scotland!*

*In Friendship*

*Toni Hämäläinen, Clerk to Finland YM*

## **25/06/21 Concluding Minute**

We record our thanks to North Scotland Area Meeting Friends for being our hosts today, for all the arrangements for our venue in Aberdeen Meeting House and their hospitality that enabled this hybrid meeting. We also thank our Zoom hosts for work beforehand, and Clive Potter for Zoom hosting today.

There being no further business to bring before General Meeting, we conclude, intending to meet next in Perth and online on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025, if nothing occurs to prevent.

Michael J. Hutchinson,  
Clerk

Susan Mitchell,  
Assistant Clerk