

**Portobello and Musselburgh Local Meeting of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)**  
**Meeting for Worship with attention to business**  
**Bellfield, 24 August 2025**

**MINUTES – starting 12:45 pm**

**2025/08/01. Opening worship**

During opening worship, Cathy Holman read from QFP 3.05

**2025/08/02. Attendance and minutes of the last meeting**

Prevented - Mary Jane Elton, Chris Booth, Heather Stacey, Mark Ballard, Jacob Frankau

Attending - Sarah Martin (co-clerk), Robin Liebmann (co-clerk), Marian Willoner (co-clerk - minutes), Cathy Holman (elder), Chris Holman (treasurer), Alastair Cameron, Josie Fawcett, Ian Edwards, Duncan Wallace, April Middleton, Ross Campbell, Tali Brown, Wade Robertson, Jemima Johnson, Eoin Rutter, Tessa Thomas-Pyne, Claire Chalmers

Minutes of the last meeting on 8th June 2025 have been signed and entered in the minute book.

**2025/08/03. Matters arising**

**i) 2025/06/05 Worship on 5th Sundays**

Mary Jane Elton, Ian Edwards, Tali Brown, Tessa Thomas and Fabien Camus met in June 2025, to discuss the proposition that we should have a meeting for worship on the fifth Sunday of the month.

The following six options emerged for us to consider:

1. A one hour evening meeting at the Hollies
2. A half hour evening meeting at the Hollies
3. A morning meeting, nature based, possible venues to be discussed.
4. A walking meeting during the day....
5. A purely online Zoom meeting, time to be decided.
6. None of the above, but encourage one another to join other Quaker meetings on that Sunday, which would include children's meetings.

We thank the above Friends for their work on this matter.

We heard support for outdoor Meeting and for zoom. We also heard concerns about accessibility for outdoors Meetings. We heard support for weekly 11am Meetings in future, once Bellfield refurbishments are completed.

Tessa has investigated The Hollies for a fifth Sunday, and they would be happy to have us. We heard that if we meet at The Hollies, we need to renegotiate use of facilities to make it feel like our home. We heard a desire for simplicity and a simple option may be 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday one hour meeting at the Hollies.

We suggest trialling an evening Meeting of one hour at The Hollies on fifth Sundays, and with the option of booking an all age Meeting at Bellfield at 11am once refurbishments are completed.

**ii) 2025/06/06 Quaker Week 2025 - 27 September to 5 October – Love your neighbour**

- a) We are all invited to bring a friend to Worship that week.

Alastair has offered to introduce Worship (for the benefit of newcomers and visitors) on 5th October and Ian has offered to do the same on 28th September. We would also appreciate Friends to provide baking and serve refreshments.

#### b) Learning on conscientious objection

At our June meeting, it was agreed to explore the possibility of holding an exhibition at Portobello Library of a series of panels on conscientious objectors in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee in WW1. These were produced, along with a handbook, some years ago by the Workers Educational Association and included some Quakers as volunteer researchers.

In developing the proposal, it has expanded. There are now three strands:

- An exhibition and associated public meeting in Portobello Library, probably at the end of November. This will be an opportunity to make clear that conscientious objection is a contemporary issue, particularly in Russia, Ukraine and Israel, and possibly to make links with activists today
- An offer to local schools of hosting the exhibition and meeting people from within the Quaker community who have family history of conscientious objection or are led by conscience to take actions for peace and justice today
- An Instagram strand during Quaker Week about the theme on Iola Wallace's Instagram feed.

We have heard some of the detail of these plans, which are being taken forward by Iola Wallace, Duncan Wallace, Claire Chalmers and Alastair Cameron. We thank these Friends for the preparation that has gone into this.

We agree to support this. We ask that a letter be sent, with this offer, on behalf of our Meeting, to local schools and available more widely, such as for homeschoolers. We are asked to support the library exhibition and public meeting in November and early December by stewarding attending and publicizing. Details will be circulated in our newsletter and notices. Please pass on to your contacts, Friends.

We were reminded that the issue of conscientious objection is complex and has been throughout Quaker history.

#### **2025/08/04. Re-appointing co-clerks**

Our co-clerks Sarah Martin and Marian Willoner both finish their first three years of service in November. They have both indicated they are willing to serve another three years if the Meeting wishes them to. We need to decide whether to reappoint each of them.

We thank them for their service for the last 3 years agreed to reappoint Sarah Martin until November 2028 and Marian Willoner until November 2028. Friends feel having 3 co-clerks in the team has served our Meeting well.

#### **2025/08/05. Clerking our Meeting**

Our Meeting has grown much larger in recent times. This means we need to rethink some ways we make decisions and run things. We are working on increasing the number of elders and pastoral Friends. PEC group has decided it is now more appropriate to meet separately as elders and pastoral Friends, and as clerks instead of all together.

Our decisions are made at business meeting. The current clerking team feel there isn't enough time to make all the decisions necessary when we meet as we do now. We heard appreciation for conversations with Friends and Meeting for Eating and concern that we don't lose these for business Meeting.

We propose to meet for longer, still every three months, will request capacity training from Woodbrooke, consider succession, and keep this arrangement under review.

#### **2025/08/06. WhatsApp Groups**

Claire spoke to us about meeting online as well in real life. We lack experience in meeting online, as this is new. We need to learn about security and be aware that WhatsApp is owned by meta, which is an organization with different values to Quakers. Online companies, such as meta, may have relationships with governments and police forces that we do not understand. This is new territory for us as a Meeting.

We propose appointing a small group to explore security, privacy, moderation for us as a Meeting. Tessa, April and Eoin agree to form this group. Claire is willing for this group to have a conversation with her about her contribution today. Duncan offers to assist with his knowledge of ethics in communication.

We ask this group to consult with elders and pastoral Friends and report back to business meeting in November. We are aware this is a complex issue.

We urge Friends using the WhatsApp groups to be mindful and thoughtful in this.

#### **2025/08/07. Mobile Bookcase**

We have heard a proposal to have a mobile bookcase for our Meeting's use for both adults' and children's books. Bellfield have been asked some time ago and were happy then for us to store it in an appropriate place.

Ian Edwards has volunteered to build this. We welcome and accept Ian's offer. This will mean us appointing a librarian, but this would be for a future date.

#### **2025/08/08. Financial Review**

Our Treasurer, Chris Holman, has provided the attached financial update. We thank Chris for his work.

#### **2025/08/09. Date of next meeting**

November 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025

#### **2025/08/10. Closing worship**