

Quakers in Scotland Newsletter – Summer 2025

Note from your Local Development Worker:



Part of our lawn/wildflower patch

It started with a small patch of clover in the middle of our recently turfed lawn. I like to think I started it by picking clover heads and scattering them over the grass, but the clover is tenacious and could have got there on its own.

Now there is clover, selfheal, lesser trefoil and kidney vetch (sole food of the small blue butterfly).

I don't think I have ever lived anywhere where wild flowers were able to completely take over part of a turfed lawn. Every year I live here our lawn has become more and more diverse.

Life has been very busy and somewhat tricky for us over the last half a year. I am sorry I have not produced a newsletter earlier. A tricky time for family or friends is not helped by international news and concerning stories from across the UK. The urge to spiral (in all sorts of directions) is high.

When that happens, I remind myself to look at what I *can* do – and to look at what I (and others) *have* done. Small things can make a difference, and we never know for sure what would have happened if we had not done them. Perhaps if I had not scattered clover heads all those years ago, the lawn would be a boring wasteland of green right now.

This newsletter is full of things you can do, and things we have done. I hope some of them help you.

With love, Zoe.

What's in the newsletter?

- Events and Workshops (July–September)
- Newcomers & Enquirers
- Witness & Solidarity
- Learning Opportunities: Woodbrooke Highlights
- Local Development Updates
- Support for Meetings
- Calls for action
- Contacting me

Events and Workshops

8–11 August – Interfaith Retreat to Holy Isle

Residential, Hosted by EIFA & partners

A reflective retreat for people of all faiths, with shared silence, dialogue, and interfaith connection.

Info: eifa.org.uk

18–22 August – Resource Your Activism - Nonviolence and Leadership Retreat

Residential, Sauchie Home Farm, Quaker-led

A deep dive into resilient, collaborative leadership for change-makers, grounded in nonviolence and spiritual practice.

Info: <https://sites.google.com/nglcommunity.org/resourceyouractivism/course-details-registration>

23-24 August – Beyond Borders International Festival

Scottish Borders, Hosted by: Beyond Borders Scotland

An annual weekend-long event encompassing panel discussions and debates alongside a programme of music, visual and performing arts, film, spoken word, and well-being activities. If you know any young people who might be interested in going, free tickets are available through me.

Info: <https://bbintfest.com/>

A small number of free tickets are available for young Quakers, please contact zoep@quaker.org.uk to request a ticket.

5–7 September – Wiston Quaker Weekend

Wiston Lodge, hosted by: South East Scotland Area Meeting

Held at Wiston Lodge, this annual gathering is a highlight of the Scottish Quaker calendar. It offers time for worship, walks, storytelling, art, and community-building. Open to all linked to Scottish Meetings. Financial help is available to ensure all can attend.

Booking: bit.ly/wiston25

For Newcomers

Discovering Quakers

This initiative provides simple, friendly ways for newcomers to connect with Quakers. It includes weekly “Quaker Lives” Zooms, enquirer packs, and a welcoming website. Whether someone is spiritually searching or simply curious, this is a great starting point.

Website: discoveringquakers.org.uk

What Is the Quaker Way?

Gentle, one-hour monthly Zoom sessions introducing Quaker worship, values, and spiritual practice. These welcoming and reflective gatherings are ideal for people exploring whether Quakers are their spiritual home.

Frequency: Monthly

Register:

https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=MGHYU_KJUq_K4_1UYIBaC6sKC-7eK5LkJYiC58JmldURTFKRiIRk8zNihKNkVEVFdFNVFITEpaVi4u&route=shorturl

Witness and Solidarity

Quaker Peacebuilding Network

The ‘Quaker Peacebuilding Network’ is for Quakers who are interested and active in local peacebuilding efforts in Britain and Ireland. The online meetings will provide an informal and supportive space to share experiences, difficulties and dilemmas, to identify emerging common challenges and develop ideas.

If you would like to join the network and participate in this online space, please email peacebuildinginbritain@quaker.org.uk

Visible Witness for Peace and Justice

In addition to the “Red Line for Palestine” vigil on 4 June in Edinburgh and CAAT vigils at the Scottish Parliament on 10 and 12 June, Quakers in Britain recently joined the broader *Red Line for Gaza* campaign on 2 July. They issued a public call demanding an end to British complicity in Gaza’s killings—highlighting UK government facilitation of Israel breaching “red lines” through arms sales and diplomatic support mediacentre.christianaid.org.uk+5quaker.org.uk+5en.wikipedia.org+5.

More info: quaker.org.uk/news/quakers-join-uk-coalition-demanding-end-to-british-complicity-in-gaza-killings

EAPPI Eyewitness Stories

In June, Portobello & Musselburgh Friends hosted an event featuring Neil, recently returned from the Jordan Valley as a human rights monitor with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). If you want to invite Neil, or another Friend to speak at your meeting, you can find out more at the link below.

More info: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/international-work/eappi>

How to Kill a War Machine Film Screening

On 3 July SESAM Hosted a short-notice screening of this powerful documentary at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House. The film used real-time footage to follow Palestine Action’s raids on UK arms factories. The screening was followed by Q&A and discussion with Phil Lucas, who spoke to the Quaker position on peace and witness.

Events and campaigns:

Fast for Gaza Petition

Christian Aid is leading a campaign inviting individuals and churches to fast weekly in solidarity with Palestinians. This action raises awareness and urges UK political leaders to halt arms sales, break the siege, and push for a just peace. Wednesdays are communal fasting days.

Details: christianaid.org.uk

Restore Campaign

Christian Aid’s Restore Scotland campaign focuses on climate and debt justice. It urges the Scottish Government to acknowledge climate debt, support financial reforms, and increase contributions to climate adaptation in the Global South.

Resources: Policy briefings, templates for contacting MSPs, and campaigning tools are available online.

Just Peace Campaign – Israel and Palestine

This Christian Aid initiative promotes a just and lasting peace in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. It highlights human rights issues, supports peace advocates, and offers resources for prayer, learning and advocacy.

Materials include: The “A Just Peace” booklet, study guides, and practical ways to act and pray.

Woodbrooke Highlights

Woodbrooke offers transformative learning rooted in Quaker spirituality. Here are just a few current and upcoming courses:

Being a Quaker Clerk (residential) – November: Essential skills and spiritual support for clerks.

Telling Our Stories – Ongoing: A creative course in narrative, identity and witness.

Meeting for Worship in Nature – Various dates: Outdoor worship practices that connect with the Spirit through nature.

Quakers and the Climate Crisis – Online: Develop faithful responses to the climate emergency.

Spotlight: All-Age Climate Justice Workshop

A new and exciting offering, the *All-Age Climate Justice Workshop* is designed to engage everyone in exploring the vital question, “What is Climate Justice?” Through play, storytelling, creative activities, and guided discussion, this interactive session brings generations together to reflect, learn, and act on ecological justice. Perfect for Local and Area Meetings seeking to host a truly inclusive learning experience with all ages. This is a workshop that you can commission Woodbrooke to run for you.

More info: woodbrooke.org.uk/what-is-climate-justice

Note: *Equipping for Ministry* will return in late 2025.

More info: woodbrooke.org.uk

Highlights of Local Development Work

Quakers in Scotland

The charity Quakers in Scotland now exists as a SCIO. General Meeting for Scotland has decided to lay itself down and become Quakers in Scotland. North, East and West Scotland area meetings have said that they wish to join Quakers in Scotland by the end of the year. Some Friends have fed back that they feel energised by the potential for growth and understanding of central structures that this has shown.

Unfortunately, this is not the end of the work. Now comes the hard graft of making the structure work well for Quakers across Scotland. We need to try new ways of doing things whilst preserving the essence of our Quakerism. I want to thank the Friends who have provided honest, challenging and helpful feedback on our proposals. It won't always be right first time, but together we will be able to find the best way forwards.

Whilst I acknowledge that this is not the end of the work, I do want to remember all of the Friends who have brought this work so far. Whether you were part of a nominations committee, planning group, questionnaire respondent or upheld the process in and out of business meeting, every one of you has been fantastic. I particularly want to remember Peter Christy, who served on Quakers in Scotland Coordination Group and before that, Options for Scotland. I wish he was around to see the decision that the General Meeting for Scotland has taken.

West Coast Friends Gather



This year my daughter Ella and I continued what has become a tradition and travelled to the West Coast friends gather. There I was delighted to see Wendy Hampton, who used to be a local development worker in the Swarthmore Hall region of England, but who now works for Woodbrooke. Wendy was leading the sessions about community, strengths, purpose and resilience.

We also got to go for a walk alongside rugged islander Quakers, who were kind enough to wait for us, And the eating together and renewing old friendships from previous years was a delight.

Ella says: "I really liked it, I enjoyed going out and having fun just exploring. The park is not that big but really fun to play in with friends".

Castle Douglas and the South West "Cluster"

Before Christmas (this "outs" me for how long it's been since I last wrote a newsletter) I travelled to Castle Douglas to support work on their best way forwards. We looked at some great examples of thriving smaller meetings – and heard of the success of their neighbouring meeting Dumfries. It was lovely to see Friends who I know from online meetings, and great to meet new Friends as well.

Falkirk and Polmont – Spiritual review



The review was held at Sauchie Farm Steading, which is a lovely site

In June I recruited half my immediate family to support the start of Falkirk & Polmont's spiritual review.

Falkirk & Polmont have a thriving children's meeting and Ella knows a number of the children who attend. My husband Gary provided child care support and Ella helped with the all-age parts of the session.

While I planned the sessions, Falkirk & Polmont were able to reorganise and reshape them into something that worked best for them on the day. It was really fun, and I felt that we were able to hear from everyone taking part.

For me it was also the first time I had been able to attend Falkirk & Polmont meeting and it was lovely to meet everyone.

Support for Meetings:

As the local development worker for Scotland I work to support Scottish Quakers and Scottish Quaker communities. My ongoing work for Quakers and Meetings includes opportunities to support your work and learning:

- Quaker networks for role holders, such as Elders and Pastoral Care Friends.
- Support for Quakers – whether those are as individuals, groups, local and area meetings, or General Meeting.

- In person “getting to know you” visits to your meeting – do invite me, I would be delighted to meet you!
- Bespoke workshops and events for your meeting – is there something you need particular support with? Please get in touch and we can see if I can help.

If you would like to know more about all of this work, I have put information up on the Quakers in Scotland website – please check here [<https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>]. My email address if you need to contact me is zoep@quaker.org.uk.

Take Action

- Invite a newcomer to a “What is the Quaker Way?” session
 - Write to your MSP using Christian Aid’s Restore campaign briefing
 - Book your place for Wiston Weekend (5–7 September)
 - Participate in or host an interfaith event
 - Let a young person know about free tickets to Beyond Borders Festival
 - Explore actions from the Red Line for Palestine campaign
 - Join a local or online peace vigil (e.g. CAAT, Red Line)
 - Invite an EAPPI speaker to your Meeting
 - Host or attend an All-Age Climate Justice Workshop from Woodbrooke
 - Recommend or use “Discovering Quakers” resources in your Meeting
 - Organise a bespoke workshop or invite me to visit your Meeting
 - Share or study the “A Just Peace” booklet and guides in your Meeting
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Contacting me:

If you are interested in finding out more about me, I have a webpage and interview video on our Quakers in Scotland website. To visit the page, please go to <https://quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>

My email address is zoep@quaker.org.uk

My website address is <https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>