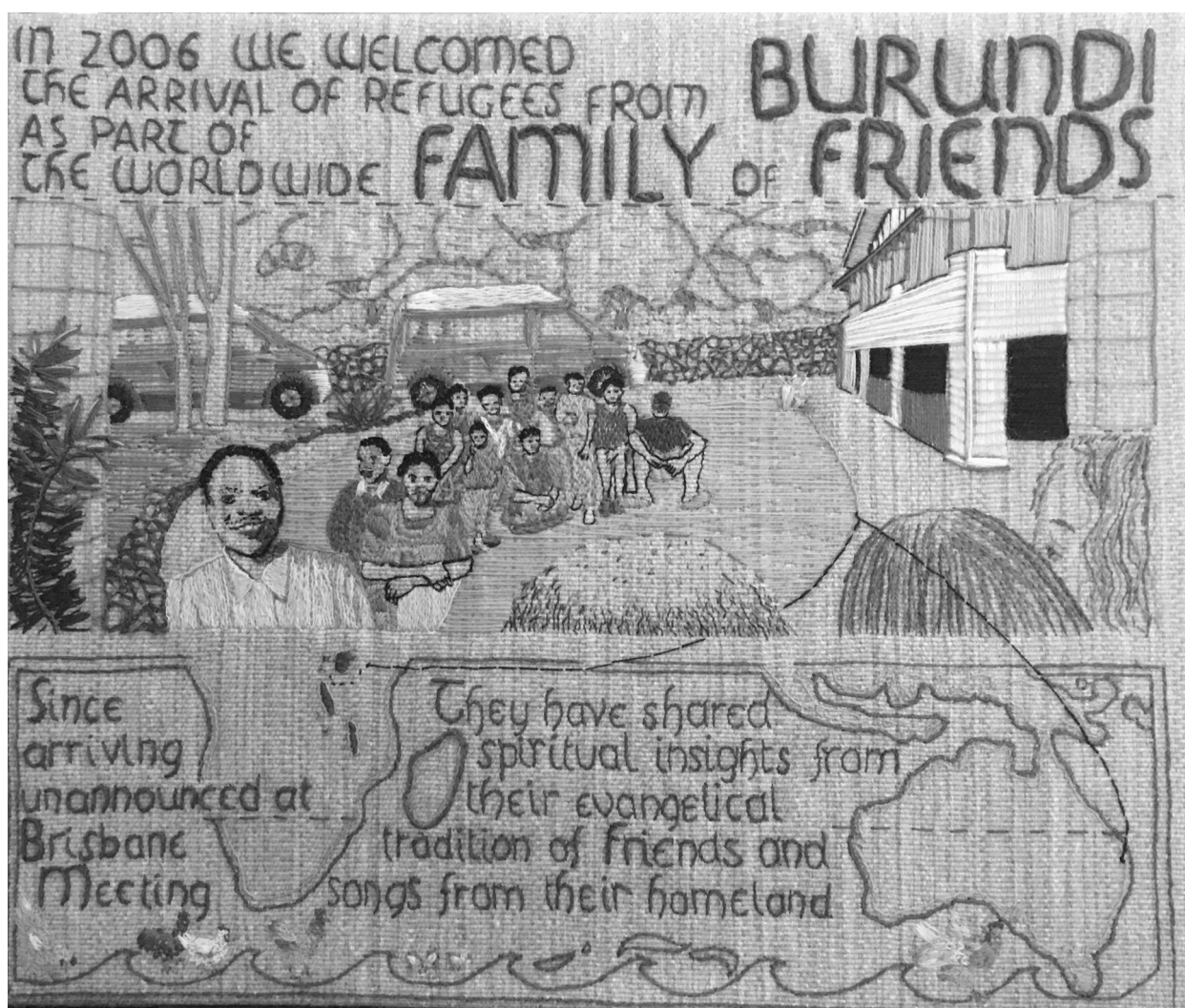


SESAME

Number 237: September 2021

AM on 8 September/Yearly Meeting Epistle/Community Sponsorship – *a proposal*/Witness against Trident – what next?/BIEN/A Quaker Tavern in 1699/Postcards to MSPs/Climate crisis: an Interfaith manifesto/ “Nature”? /‘Living with more than one Tradition’ (*online event*)/Courses at *Maison Quaker*/COP26 Pilgrimage/Trustees’ Report, 2020/AM June Minutes/ &c.



Australian Friends welcome refugees – see page 8
See also page 6

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Area Meeting will be on Wednesday 8 September at 7.00 pm by Zoom.

AGENDA

Please notify the Clerk as soon as possible of any additional item you would wish to have included.

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of Saturday 19 June 2021
3. Matters arising from previous minutes
 1. *COP 26 Pilgrimage [see page 16]*
 2. *Young People at HM Young Offenders Institution Polmont*
 3. *Geoffrey and Elisabeth Carnall memorial event [see page 18]*
 4. *Wedding*
4. Decisions taken by between-meeting procedure
 1. *Appointment of visitors*
 2. *Wiston costs*
5. Membership matters
 1. *Application*
 2. *Report on membership visit*
 3. *Transfer*
6. Community sponsorship of refugees – proposal [*see page 6*]
7. From AM trustees
 1. Area Meeting accounts and annual report 2020 [*see page 19*]
 2. Proposal to change governing document
8. Proposal from elders:

Testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of Pat Lucas
9. Matters from local meetings
 1. *Central Edinburgh LM: memorial minute to Andrew Hadjucki*
10. University chaplaincy

11. Appointments (nominations to be notified at the start of the meeting)
12. Dates and venues of meetings in 2022
13. Closing minute

Alastair Cameron
AM Clerk

Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering, held online from 19 July to 8 August 2021.

We send loving greetings to Friends everywhere

We have no time but this present time

Friends in Britain have gathered online at this time of great upheaval, amid the pandemic, climate and environmental breakdown, and increasing social inequality and division. We are grateful for technology, and the hard work of Britain Yearly Meeting staff, Agenda and Arrangements Committees, the Woodbrooke team, and others in bringing us together.

At this Yearly Meeting Gathering Friends have considered the theme “For our comfort and discomfort: living equality and truth in a time of crisis”. We have been wrestling with what it will mean to be truly committed to anti-racism and faith-based action for climate justice. We have thought about how to better affirm gender diversity in our meetings. We have discovered the challenges of attempting to make statements as a unified ‘we’ in a way that acknowledges the different experiences among us.

We have greatly missed the opportunities of being together as an all-age community that we would have had in a face-to-face Gathering. We held a worship session during which the children and young people shared their exploration of community, climate, equality and truth. Junior Yearly Meeting asked how we could centre justice and equity in our antiracism and climate justice work. Only when all are listened to equally, may all be treated equally.

As in the days of early Friends, we sense this is a time of prophecy and want to uphold the prophets in our midst and in the wider world. We must heed the Spirit’s call to urgent action. Prophets are visionaries, calling out those in power, and reconcilers stand in the middle of conflict: in this both run great risk.

A Friend of Colour spoke in ministry:

All I have ever wanted for the longest time is to feel equal, and again, here in this room, I don’t.

I hear people talk all week about George Floyd but we are here now, in the UK, in your meetings, feeling like outsiders every day.

This is not the experience I was promised.

Racism is systemic. To most white people – including white Quakers – it is largely invisible, like the air they breathe. As long as it stays unrecognised, systems and institutions that perpetuate white power are left unchallenged. Racism and oppression are often daily realities for those without the advantages conferred by white skin.

As a Yearly Meeting in session we have declared our commitment to becoming an actively anti-racist faith community.

Our theologians and historians are helping us to root our action in our faith, reminding us of the examples of Friends of the past who have listened to the voice of the Spirit and followed the inward Light. They challenge the complacency of some white Friends' perception of themselves as 'good' people.

We have heard trans and non-binary Friends and their loved ones talk about their gender journeys and of being in Quaker community. Acknowledging trans or non-binary identity can be compounded by unfamiliarity, ignorance and prejudice. Providing support can lead to greater self-acceptance, enabling Friends to flourish and contribute. Belonging is being accepted as one's true self. Who are we to resist what God has created and continues to create in all their glory?

As a Yearly Meeting in session we lovingly acknowledged and affirmed the trans, nonbinary and gender non-conforming Friends in our communities.

It is ten years since Britain Yearly Meeting in session committed to becoming a low carbon, sustainable faith community. Friends across the world have long held a concern for us to live in right relationship with creation. We grieve for the planet we love – our home – but we have no time to despair. We must act with urgency and imagination – the consequences of inaction are upon us.

For those experiencing injustice, the need for transformation is urgent. We know those who have contributed least to climate and ecological break-down are the most affected: the poor, the global majority, and vulnerable communities everywhere. We recognise and abhor the legion of violent, deadly impacts of economic and exploitative systems on both the people, other species and lifeforms, and the body of our Earth. The climate crisis is fuelled by a system based on growth, consumption and systemic inequalities. If life on earth is to survive we must push for a more democratic, compassionate and equitable world.

Britain Yearly Meeting has asked its central committees to emphasise the urgency of work on climate and ecological justice and to cooperate with others across the world in this task.

Our individual tasks are our Quaker spiritual discipline: loving our neighbour – on our street and across oceans; and caring, cherishing and protecting our natural world. Let's not be self-conscious about speaking of the Quaker faith that underpins our action.

Friends have talked about the need to let go of stories we tell ourselves about our shared near 400-year history and hold fast to the essence of the Quaker way. Is it time to look afresh at systems, structures, processes and procedures

– and possessions like meeting houses that might hold us back? We're already starting to address this by agreeing to change some committee responsibilities next year, and through our Simpler Meetings project.

Our Quaker forebears were wild about their faith. And they challenged the establishment. Suggesting that anyone could have a direct, unmediated relationship with the Divine, and that our relationship with God should not be confined to the steeple house, was revolutionary and upended the status quo. Is it time to rewild our Quakerism?

We will often get things wrong. But we have been comforted by the reminder that Jesus' disciples often did not understand, they argued with him about who he was and what he should do. When Jesus said, "Feed these five thousand", they said, "you must be joking?!" When it got to the really difficult stuff, they ran away.

Faithfulness is not about always getting it right, it is about committing ourselves to carefully seeing and listening. We need to walk together in the Light, so we can see what we are meant to do and find the strength to do it.

We have been heartened to hear through their epistles that other Yearly Meetings and faith bodies are grappling with the same issues. It is vital we work alongside and be led by Friends and others across the world. We do not have to do things on our own and have learned the value of sharing our skills, resources and insights with each other. We have enjoyed welcoming international and ecumenical visitors, exploring with them common areas of concern. One of the things we have gained through the pandemic is new ways to meet with one another, so that we are no longer limited by geography.

We can meet one another on kinder ground, in our personal relationships, meetings, wider communities, and on social media. We can help create listening spaces using our skills and resources. We can help create a climate where the pursuit of truth is not about becoming dug into our rigid positions. We need to quietly listen, and tenderly explore difference, disagreement and areas of discomfort, and thereby avoid a false peace. A commitment to truth requires us to be open to new experiences with a readiness to learn, while weighing up what we hear and see through the light of our faith.

There is so much to do but we have been inspired by the prophetic voices we have heard throughout our Gathering. We have pledged ourselves to continue to be a 'gentle, angry' people who dare to live for truth and justice in such a time of crisis.

Our Salter Lecturer told us "I didn't choose politics, politics chose me". She asked us: *what work is choosing us at this time?*

Friends, we have no time but this present time. We should now do what love requires of us.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting

Clare Scott Booth, Clerk

Community Sponsorship – a proposal

Following an online session with Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees in April 2021 [see Sesame 235, p. 32, & 236, pp. 8-10], some Quakers in Edinburgh have looked into establishing a project of community sponsorship, to allow resettlement in the city of a refugee family. Under UK government rules, this requires sponsorship of the project by a recognised charity, and the group is asking South East Scotland Area Meeting (SESAM) to take on this role, appointing an individual to be the lead sponsor.

This means that SESAM will be the legal body hosting a Community Sponsorship (CS) programme based in Edinburgh. This is something that other Quaker bodies have done – e.g. London West Area Meeting – though it is new to Scotland.

Community Sponsorship is a refugee resettlement programme endorsed by the UK Government which enables local groups to welcome a refugee family to live in the UK and to support them for their first year as they rebuild their lives. One of the key advantages of receiving refugees through CS is that it is additional to the limited quota imposed by the UK government on refugee numbers. More information can be found at <https://communitysponsorship.org.uk>.

Area Meeting trustees have considered the proposal. They agree that it falls within the objects of SESAM as a charity; and that it can be done without recourse to the funds of Area Meeting. A Memorandum of Agreement has been drafted to set out the relationship between the core group running the project and trustees, and the roles and duties of each.

Interest among members of SESAM is growing and five members or attenders have already committed themselves to forming a core group for the project, provisionally called *Fáilte* – the Gaelic for ‘welcome’ (pronounced something like ‘faalshe’).

Not all of the core group need be Quakers; indeed, a more diverse group would be an advantage.

Initial soundings have been made with Augustine Church, the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association and Edinburgh University Chaplaincy Centre.

Roles within the group will include treasurer, family support, safeguarding, accommodation, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). There will be a co-ordinator. Training is an essential for these roles and is provided by umbrella bodies. An initial face-to-face meeting is being arranged.

It is a requirement of the scheme that each local group raises £9,000 before starting; it is felt that £12,000 is a more realistic figure. Already some £9,000 has been pledged to the initiative.

This paper has been prepared in consultation between the core group members, the SESAM Clerk, the Treasurer Team and Trustees. Trustees

have already met to discuss the proposal and are broadly in support of it. Area Meeting will be asked on 8 September to agree to proceed.

Questions in advance of discussion should be addressed to the clerk; he will consult and bring responses to the meeting.

Alastair Cameron, Clerk
clerk.sesam@outlook.com

Are you alert to practices here and throughout the world which discriminate against people on the basis of who or what they are or because of their beliefs?

from Advices & Queries, 33

Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement may demand.

Advices & Queries, 34

Witness for Peace – how next?

For many years, Alison Burnley has encouraged and co-ordinated the involvement of Friends from South East Scotland in the regular acts of witness that have taken place at the gate of HM Naval Base Clyde, which harbours the UK's Trident submarines. She writes:

The state of the world, with the floods and the fires, and the talk at the Yearly Meeting Gathering, and the effort to be more sustainable in our everyday living are leading some of us to the view that driving to Faslane as an act of witness is not really sustainable. There could be other ways to make our feelings known and felt about Trident in particular and war in general. Peace is a positive objective.

This is a general announcement to all Friends in Scotland, though we are aware that not everyone has been able to join us – we have felt upheld.

If Friends would like to have a Sunday when all meetings did 'something' locally, I expect that could be co-ordinated – possibly Remembrance Sunday. I just throw the idea into a pool and will see if there are any ripples.

Basic Income Earth Network Congress 2021

The annual international basic income conference, organised under the auspices of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), was hosted remotely for the first time, from Glasgow over the four days 18- 21 August.

Because it was a virtual conference, it was free, although participants were invited to contribute a donation towards the running costs, and so, at nearly a thousand, it had the largest number of participants at a BIEN Congress so far. It was organised by members of the charity Basic Income Network Scotland together with support from the University of Strath-

clayde and volunteers providing technical support and other advice.

The first day traditionally is devoted to developments in the host country. These included contributions from the team who carried out the study of the feasibility of a basic income (BI) experiment in Scotland: on hold at the moment because Scotland does not yet have the necessary political levers to carry it out. There were also recordings from 2019 of sessions exploring how a BI could help people with mental health problems. A key contribution was a message of support for the conference from the First Minister.

The subsequent days had parallel sessions where participants had to opt which session to follow, out of seven or eight at a time, mostly involving presentations of papers, roundtable discussions, workshops or creative sessions of poetry, prose and film. The sessions allowed the presentation of nearly one hundred and fifty papers, covering a range of topics, including determining the adequacy of a BI, sources for funding a BI scheme, the outcomes claimed for it, arguments for and against BI, identifying groups of potential beneficiaries including artists and care-leavers, papers reporting developments in different parts of the world, and the results of Tax-Benefit microsimulation model experiments.

Interestingly, 35 years after the first BIEN Congress, there were still papers discussing the definition of BI, which represents the keystone of the academic foundation for BI, in which, ideally, all advocacy should be rooted. The presenters included academics, advocates and those with a general interest.

There were some major recorded plenary sessions. One was based around the United Nations Development Program, and researchers from different organisations – International Labour Organisation, UNESCO, World Bank, IMF, UNIDO – described the work that they were doing to explore ways in which a BI could be implemented world-wide. Another Plenary presented recordings of mayors from around the world, who had implemented BI experiments in their cities – describing how they had overcome some of the legal and funding problems, and the clear beneficial effects.

Apart from a few minor technical hiccups, most agreed that it was a well-organised event with many highlights. It is intended that recordings from the sessions remain available for six months. People can still register for it, peruse the program, look up speakers' profiles and gain access to the recordings or copies of papers, *via* the BIEN website, www.basicincome.org.

Annie Miller

The illustration on the front page is one of the 23 completed panels of the Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery – a project inspired by the Quaker Tapestry – and depicts the unheralded arrival in 2006 at Brisbane of 20 Quaker refugees from Burundi. (For more details, see <https://www.quakersaustralia.info/Stitches/burundi-quakers-arrive-brisbane-meeting-0>) Friends in South East Scotland have the chance to respond in a rather more organised fashion to forced migration: see page 6.

A Quaker Tavern, 1699

The *London Spy*, first published in book form in 1703, moralises on “the vanities and vices of the Town” – which, however, are described with a relish that make the reader doubt the writer’s real disapproval. Ned Ward (1667-1731), was the landlord of the King’s Head, near Gray’s Inn, and an author whose works include *The Poet’s Ramble after Riches* (1691) and *A Trip to Jamaica* (1698). In 1705-06, *Hudibras Redivivus* was issued in monthly parts, as *The London Spy* had been, but it did not subsequently appear as a book; its attacks on the Whig Government led to a fine and the author’s being ordered to stand in the pillory at the Royal Exchange and Charing Cross, where he was pelted so hard by the mob that Pope uses the simile “as thick as eggs at Ward in Pillory” (in *The Dunciad*, III, 34). This experience turned him off politics, but he went on writing books and pamphlets until his death.

In Part IV of the *Spy*, the narrator and his guide visit a tavern in Finch Lane, between Threadneedle Street and Cornhill, kept by “a little sanctified Aminadab” [i.e. Quaker] who intended it “chiefly for watering the lambs of grace, and not to succour the evil offspring of a reprobate generation”. The visitors attract “froward looks”, for they are wearing swords ...

HOWEVER, we bid ourselves welcome into their company, and were forc’d, for want of room, to mix higgledy-piggledy, as the rooks among the crows upon the battlements of a church steeple: they leering at us under their bongraces [*broad-brimmed hats*] with as much contempt as so many primitive Christians at a couple of pagans.

We, like true Protestant toppers, scorning the hypocrisy of tippling by half-pints, as if we drank rather to wash away our sins than our sorrows, appear’d bare-fac’d and call’d for a quart at once. Thus we soon discover’d [i.e. *disclosed*] our religion by our drinking, whilst they, like true Puritans, gifted with abundance of holy cheats, will never be catch’d over more than half a pint, tho’ they’ll drink twenty at a sitting.

The wine prov’d extraordinary, which, indeed, was no more than we expected, when we found ourselves surrounded with so many whose religious looks shew them to be true lovers of what the righteous esteem as the chiefest blessing of Providence.

We had not sat long, observing the humours of the drowthy saints about us, but several amongst them began to look as cheerful as if they had drowned the terrible apprehensions of futurity and thought no more of damnation.

The drawer [*waiter*] was now constantly employ’d in replenishing their scanty measures; for once warm’d they began to drink so fast that ’twas the business of one servant to keep them doing. Notwithstanding their great aversion to external ceremony, one plucked off his hat and ask’d his next neighbour, “What dost think, Friend, this cost me? But before thou tellest me, let me drink. I hope thou understand’st my meaning.” This, I suppose, was the canting method of paying more than ordinary veneration

to some particular thoughts, by this stratagem render'd intelligible to each other. For I took notice this allegorical method of drinking some obliging health was observ'd thro' the whole society with the reverence of uncover'd heads under a crafty pretence of examining into the price of each other's hats. Then when they were desirous to elevate their lethargic spirits with the circulation of a bumper, one fills it and offers the prevailing temptation to his left hand companion, saying: "Friend, does the spirit move thee to receive the good creature thus plentifully?" The other replies, "Yea, do thou take and enjoy the fruits of thine own labour, and by the help of grace I will drink another as full." Thus did the liquorish saints quaff it about as merrily, after their precise canting manner, as so many country parsons over a tub of ale when freed from the remarks of their censorious parishioners, till, like reprobate sinners who have not the fear of providence before their eyes, they were deluded by Satan into a wicked state of drunkenness.

By this time the subtle spirits of the noble juice had given us a fresh motion to the wheels of life, insomuch that my friend must needs be so frolicsome as to tune his pipes, and entertain us with a song. For he must try whether those who were deaf to reason and good manners had any ears towards music with their wine. Usually these are held to be such inseparable companions that the true relish of the one can never be enjoy'd without the assistance of the other. And because the words happen'd to be in some measure applicable to that present juncture, I have thought it not amiss to insert 'em.

SONG

WHY should Christians be restrain'd
 From the brisk enliv'ning Juice,
 Heaven only has ordained
 (Thro' love to men) for human use?
 Should not claret be deny'd
 To Turks, they'd wiser grow;
 Lay their *al Koran* aside
 And soon believe as Christians do.

Chorus

For wine and religion, like music and wine
 As they're good in themselves, do to goodness incline
 And make both the spirit and flesh so divine
 That our faces and graces both equally shine.
 Then still let the bumper round Christendom pass,
 For Paradise lost may be found in a glass.

Just as my friend had ended his sonnet, in came the little lord of the tippling tenement, about the height of a ninepin, with his head in a hat of such capacious dimensions that his body was as much drown'd under the disproportion'd brims of this unconscionable castor, as a pigmy under the umbrage of a giant's bongrace, or a mouse crept into a close-stool-pan. He

was button'd into a plain vestment that touch'd no part of his body but his shoulders, his coat being so large and his carcase so little that it hung about him like a maulkin [*scarecrow*] upon a cross-stick in a country peasefield, his arms dangling, and his legs so slender they would bid defiance to any parish stocks.

He waited a little while for the motion of the Spirit; and when he had compos'd his countenance, and put himself in a fit posture for reproof, he breaks into this following oration. "Pray, friend, forbear this profane hollowing and hooting in my house! The wicked noise thou makest among my sober Friends is neither pleasing to them nor me, and since I find the wine too powerful for thy inward man, I must needs tell thee, I will draw thee no more of it. I therefore desire thee to pay for what thou hast had and depart my house, for I do not like thy ways, nor does anybody here approve of thy ranting doings."

We were not surpris'd at this piece of fanatical civility, it being no more than what we expected; but the manner of his delivery render'd his words so very diverting that we could not forbear laughing him into such a passion, that the looks of the little Saint reveal'd as great a devil in his heart as a pious disciple of his bigness could be well possess'd with. Then, according to his request, we paid our reckoning, and left him in a condition of vinegar and crabs' eyes mixt; that is, upon a great ferment.

After this, having "adjourn'd to the sign of the Angel in Fenchurch-street", the two are arrested for "tippling at an unseasonable hour, and refusing to go home according to the command of authority". They spend a riotous night in prison, but escape further punishment when 'the Spy' tells the magistrate next morning that he is a guager [Excise officer] who had been unlawfully detained in the performance of his duties. Released, they go to the Rose Tavern in the Poultry, where "over a quart of good claret, we laugh'd at our night's adventure, and curs'd the constable."

Postcards to MSPs

In the June issue of *Sesame*, Friends were urged to send postcards to the newly elected or re-elected Members of the Scottish Parliament taking their seats at Holyrood after the May elections. (It may be rather late to congratulate your MSPs on their success at the polls, but there is no time limit on making contact with them for any other reason, of course – see *Sesame* 236, pp. 28-30, if you are minded to do so now.)

Richard Raggett of the GM Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) is collating responses to these postcards. Anyone who has sent cards is encouraged to get in touch with Richard [*contact details in the Book of Members*] to let him know how MSPs replied. This will help the PEWG and Andrew Tomlinson, our Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer, as they review their work and plan for the future.

An interfaith response to COP26 and the climate crisis

Our planet is in crisis. As people of faith, we believe that

- Everyone has a right to a healthy environment
- We must act right now at every level of our society
- We are part of nature, interconnected and dependent upon it
- Nature can regenerate itself if humans support this process

Our faiths demand we protect and preserve the earth's resources and ecosystems, respect all life on earth, and live simply, avoiding greed and over consumption.

We recognise that the climate crisis and injustice are inextricably linked. Inspired by faith and science we ask governments, businesses and all those in power to:

1. Learn from traditional ecological knowledge and the sustainable practices of indigenous communities; and to support Indigenous people's land rights
2. Stop investment in and subsidy of all fossil fuel energy sources, and to make an urgent and just transition to renewable energy
3. Transform unsustainable food systems to prioritise local food production, the environment, human health, and animal welfare over profit
4. Work with communities and civil society to ensure that new jobs are created in a green economy
5. Ensure COP26 agrees action that limits global warming to 1.5°C; and agrees a delivery plan for the \$100 billion promised annually to the countries experiencing the worst loss and damage due to climate change
6. Urgently accelerate our work towards zero carbon emissions globally. The obligation on the global north to reach zero carbon emissions quickly is greatest.
7. Protect and restore the biodiversity of the land and the ocean, and to cease our dumping of hazardous waste into sea, land or air
8. Protect and restore the world's forests and stop unnecessary deforestation

We hold ourselves to these standards and ask you to do likewise.

COP26 Interfaith Working Group (Scotland)

<https://manifestosfromtimesofcrisis.com/host/cop26-interfaith-working-group-scotland/>

[With thanks to David Somervell for passing this on – Ed.]

We Should Stop Talking About Nature (*well, sort of*)

One of the big problems underlying the serious pickle we are in with climate breakdown and the threat to bio-diversity is how we think about the non-human part of life on earth – which we usually call Nature. When we give it that name we are usually thinking about it as something quite apart from humanity – as the Other. If we want to be really precise we need to accept that clothes and internal combustion engines and the internet are quite as ‘natural’ as orang utans and lichen – otherwise we are thinking of humans as somehow dropped into reality from some external source.

Thinking of humanity as absolutely and categorically different from the rest of nature has been part of our mindset for millennia. Here are the beautiful words of Psalm 8:

*When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars,
which thou hast ordained;*

*What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

*For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,
and hast crowned him with glory and honour.*

*Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
thou hast put all things under his feet:*

*All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;
The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*

I am not sniping at religion here. There are many elements in religious tradition that emphasise a wholesome relationship with non-human nature, but Psalm 8 catches perfectly the notion of a stratified cosmos (God/ Angels/ “Man” / the rest). And, of course, human society has added more strata (Men, then Women; Whites, then Blacks *etc.*) and we are still thirled to this way of thinking (God/ the Queen/ Elites/ ... *etc.*). The Non-Human Nature as Other and the Stratified Universe mind-locks go hand in hand.

Note too that this habitual thinking track requires what we might call ‘hard boundaries’ so that we don’t allow categories to merge gently into each other but draw hard and inflexible lines (Blacks at the back of the bus, “just a dog”, lining up by Boys and Girls to go into school *etc.* and forever). We maintain these boundaries by emphasising differences rather than commonalities. And of course it is this mindset that has justified our ruinous behaviour, our exploitation and devastation. You can more readily accept that cows have to suffer cruelly to make parmesan cheese if you can think of cows as on the other side of a categorical boundary. In the toxic culture of the incel community hatred and violence are warranted by classing all women as inferior, nasty and dangerous. Seeing Japanese people as

less than human made the dropping of atomic weapons feasible for ordinary family men.

In this pandemic and its restrictions we have learned more and more to acknowledge and value what “Nature” can give us – the way the open air lifts our hearts, the benign shade of the trees, the expanding vistas, the bugs, the running water. Yet we need to take a step beyond the “love of Nature” to an abandonment of seeing and feeling it as the Other, and instead admit our place in the middle of it all, our actual connectedness to it, the sober fact that in dominating and ruining it we are fouling our own nest and choking our own essence. This is not some obscure notion about words and their meanings – it is rather a matter of a transformation of the understanding of who we are and where we are inextricably placed.

David Mackenzie

Living with More Than One Tradition

Free online event on Monday 18 October and Thursday 21 October (afternoon and evening sessions UK time).

Living with more than one tradition can take many forms. Our interest began with religious traditions but includes as ‘traditions’ faiths, spiritualities, philosophies, practices, and more. This gathering will enable people who have personal experience of living in interfaith settings or belonging to more than one tradition to come together with academics who research multiple religious belonging and interfaith matters to explore what it’s really like.

Questions that arise include the following:

- *What is it like to live with more than one tradition? What is it like to belong to more than one religion? What is it like to have a family which includes multiple faiths? How does it feel? What are the social implications?*
- *How do religious traditions respond to individuals or families who also have connections to other traditions? What happens when terms like ‘convert’, ‘seeker’, or ‘hybrid identity’ are used? Who is welcomed or excluded and why?*
- *How does being part of one or more traditions relate to other identities? What happens at the intersection of religious or spiritual identity and race, class, gender, disability, sexuality, and other social power dynamics?*
- *What patterns emerge when we look at the big picture? Where in the world is it normal to participate in more than one tradition? Where is it seen as exceptional and why? Which religions are commonly combined and which combinations of traditions are rare?*

Grace Milton

(Hyphen Project, University of Birmingham)

Rhiannon Grant

(Centre for Research in Quaker Studies, Woodbrooke/University of Birmingham)

Centre Quaker de Congénies: Autumn Courses

Congénies, a village in Languedoc, situated between Nîmes, Montpellier, the Cévennes and the Camargue, has the only purpose-built Quaker Meeting House in France, in use from 1822-1907 and re-acquired by France YM in 2003. Maison Quaker is re-opening this autumn, offering two residential courses: an **Art Retreat** in September, led by Kate Hale, and a **Music Week** in October, led by Mike Adcock. Both programmes will be conducted in English.

Costs of the facilitated parts of the programmes include accommodation, most meals, and guidance and direction. Both courses offer the chance to come a day early and stay a few days longer in order to complete projects, continue making music, or tour the region. Costs for these days includes breakfast, dinner and transportation to such local sights as market day in the medieval village of Sommieres, or you could take off on your own to see the Pont du Gard, the walled city of Aigues-Mortes, or Provençal attractions. Enjoy walking, cycling, or relaxing in the Maison Quaker garden.

Cost

Art Retreat

Facilitated Programme: 18-24 September: 6 nights. €695 (single rm)/ €575 (shared)

Optional Nights: 17, 24, 25, 26 Sept.: Cost per day: €92 (single rm)/€68 (shared)

Music Week

Facilitated Programme: 10-15 October: 5 nights. €595 (single room)/€475 (shared)

Optional Nights: 9, 15, 16, 17 October: Cost per day: €92 (single room)/€68 (shared)

For more information contact the *amis-residents*, Amy & Chamba Cooke,
centre.quaker.congenies@gmail.com



Maison Quaker, 11, Avenue des Quakers, 30111 Congénies, France

Phone +33 (0)4 66 71 46 41

<http://www.maison-quaker-congenies.org/>

VISITORS MUST VACCINATED IN COMPLIANCE WITH FRENCH LAW

Pilgrimage for COP26

A pilgrimage has been organised in advance of COP26, the UN climate emergency conference in Glasgow, being held in early November 2021. It will start in Dunbar, East Lothian, on Sunday 17 October, and will culminate in an event on Glasgow Green on Saturday 30 October. Details can be found at <https://artandecology.earth/pilgrimage-for-cop26/>.

South East Scotland Area Meeting agreed in March to support the pilgrimage, and other Quakers from Scotland and beyond are involved; the following is a brief outline so you can see where to contribute. New things will be added, and more detail will be available as plans are settled. For updates, see <https://www.quakerscotland.org/cop26/what-can-i-do-cop26>.

(There are many other ways in which Quakers are involved in events around the conference, including providing accommodation to COP26 delegates from overseas: information on these can be found on the same web page.)

A key feature of the pilgrimage is that it is being done at minimal cost and with low-profile leadership: it's up to participants to make it happen. So if you have an idea that fits in with the themes of arts, ecology and social justice, make your plans and let the organisers know.

The dates and stages of the journey are:

- 17th October – launch in Dunbar (see below)
- 18th – Dunbar to North Berwick
- 19th – North Berwick to Aberlady Bay
- 20th – Aberlady Bay to Portobello/Edinburgh
- 21st-24th – Edinburgh waystation (various events)
- 25th – Edinburgh to South Queensferry
- 26th – South Queensferry to Bo'ness
- 27th – Bo'ness to Falkirk (via Grangemouth)
- 28th – Falkirk to Kirkintilloch
- 29th – Kirkintilloch to Glasgow
- 30th-31st – Glasgow welcome (various events).

Key events with Quaker involvement en route are:

Launch in Dunbar, Sunday 17 October:

- 2.00 pm** children's workshops at Lauderdale Park, Dunbar EH42 1AE (off Bayswell Road)
- 4.30** gather at John Muir's Birthplace, 126 High Street Dunbar EH42 1JJ for slow sensory walk by artist Karen Gabbittas
- 4.45** poetry, music and readings + exhibition in the Battery at Dunbar harbour: 'Soil Cloak' performance by artist Natalie Taylor, accompanied by Rowan Bank Theatre

- 5.30 lighting of the warning beacon on Dunbar Castle; walk to Belhaven Church Hall, Belhaven Road EH42 1NH, carrying LED lights
- 6.00 pilgrims soup and bread from waste and local vegetables and flour
- 7.00 talk by Alastair MacIntosh, Quaker author and activist.

On the afternoon of Thursday 21 October in Portobello, there will be a discussion on ‘reworlding’ led by Justin Kenrick of Portobello & Musselburgh local meeting. **In the evening**, there will be songs with Protest in Harmony, led by Jane Lewis of Portobello & Musselburgh local meeting. (Times and venues to be arranged).

In Edinburgh on Friday 22 October, there will be a focus on youth, involving members of the Young Christian Climate Network and Fridays for the Future.

Saturday 23 October will see the peace and global justice walk, organised with Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association, starting in silence at the Mound, Princes Street, and visiting worship centres from many faiths in the city.

On Sunday 24 October there will be a focus on ‘deep time’, with guided immersive walks lasting two hours on Arthur’s Seat.

On Wednesday 27 October, Polmont Quakers will welcome pilgrims as they arrive in Falkirk.

On Friday 29 October, the pilgrimage will set off from Kirkintilloch to walk the final 11 miles into Glasgow.

Why the pilgrimage?

Organiser Jonathan Baxter asks:

“Will COP26 meet the major challenge of our time? Will it adequately address the social, environmental and economic roots of climate change? Or will it merely seek to decarbonise an economy without addressing the social, ecological and economic injustices that climate change brings to light?”

And he says: *“The Pilgrimage for COP26 is being organised to reflect on these questions and discern a way forward. Just as streams flow together to form a river, the Pilgrimage for COP26 will increase its flow as the journey develops. Individuals, communities and cultural organisations are collaborating to bring their concerns, imagination and resources to bear to shape the pilgrimage and articulate its vision”.*

Jonathan can be contacted at [**jb4change@googlemail.com**](mailto:jb4change@googlemail.com).

Cath Dyer, Assistant AM Clerk, is organising a continuous Quaker presence throughout the pilgrimage; contact her [*details in the Book of Members*] for information on this.

Yemen – Pathways to Peace

An evening of music, film & debate with Yemeni artists & human rights defenders exploring how art & culture contribute to peacebuilding
Tuesday 21 September 2021, 19:00 – 20:30 BST

This is the first **GEOFFREY AND ELISABETH CARNALL AWARD LECTURE** and will be a free, online event.

With:

Radhya Al-mutawakel, Yemeni human rights defender and chairperson of Mwatana Organisation For Human Rights (Mwatana is the recipient of the first Geoffrey and Elisabeth Carnall Peace Award, and joint nominee, with Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize)

Shatha Altowai, Yemeni visual artist and Artist Protection Fund Fellow

Saber Bamatraf, Yemeni self-taught pianist and composer and Artist Protection Fund Fellow

Chaired by **Jolyon Mitchell**, professor of communications, arts and religion at Edinburgh University, and editor of *Peacebuilding & the Arts* (2020)

About the event:

Yemen's civil war, now in its seventh year, has been called an 'invisible war'. It has killed more than 250,000 people including 18,400 civilians, making it the largest humanitarian crisis the world has seen in decades, according to U.N. agencies. Yemen is also experiencing the world's worst food security crisis with 20.1 million people—nearly two-thirds of the population—requiring food assistance at the beginning of 2020.

Individuals and communities that have been subject to protracted violent conflict seek ways to move out of a cycle of violence, toward healing and reconciliation. The power of art to inspire change within people and communities has made it a valuable peace-building tool.

During the evening we will explore how art and culture can contribute to peace and reconciliation in Yemen with artists and human rights defenders who are using their art to inspire healing and change. Radhya Al-mutawakel will join us live from Yemen to talk about the human rights situation in her country. Kate Nevens, of the Green Party in Edinburgh, will talk about the report she co-authored, 'Broken People can't heal a nation', on the importance of the arts in peacebuilding in Yemen. Shatha Altowai and Saber Bamatraf will introduce their documentary film *Voice of the Rainbow*; and, after a panel discussion about the role of the arts in peacebuilding and reconciliation, Saber will perform live on the piano some original music he has composed.

To book, go to <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/yemen-pathways-to-peace-promoting-peace-through-art-tickets-167280908701>

Trustees' Report for 2020

The full text of the Annual Report for 2020 has been circulated as a PDF to Friends and Attenders on the Area Meeting emailing list – it runs to 32 pages, too long, in its entirety, for inclusion in Sesame. (Anyone who needs a paper copy should approach the Trustees.)

What follows is the complete text of pp. 1-14 & p. 16 of the document – the Report itself and the Statement of Financial Activities – but NOT the Independent Examiner's Report on p. 15 (which confirms that he finds no reason to doubt that the accounts have been properly kept) nor the figures in detail and the explanatory notes which fill the other sixteen pages. These, however, have been helpfully and lucidly summarised by Jacqueline Noltingk and John Phillips of the Treasurer Team, starting here on page 31.

Area Meeting will be considering the Report on 8 September.

Editor

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

Trustees' Report

This is the Annual Report for South East Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) for the year ended 31st December 2020.

INTRODUCTION

Eleven local groups (including two worshipping groups) of varying sizes meet for regular sessions of Quaker worship within South East Scotland. They also work together as an Area Meeting, responsible for Quaker witness in the area and for the general support of members of the Quaker communities, whether they are in formal membership of the Society of Friends or not. Two meeting houses (in Kelso and in the centre of Edinburgh) act as focal points not only for Quakers but for the wider community, their rooms and facilities being made available for community groups. Both worship and work are overseen by the whole community of Friends through Area Meetings for Church Affairs, at which the process of decision-making is guided by the Spirit.

This report gives some insight into Quaker activities in South East Scotland during 2020, including the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic. It highlights the main concerns of the meetings and work that is undertaken to facilitate their running. Financially the Society is largely dependent on the voluntary donations of its members and attenders and their great generosity is warmly recognised.

We were able to make the Society's rooms available for the use of others until the middle of March and we hope they found a peaceful haven in which they could pursue the purpose that brought them to us. Unfortunately, both meeting houses were closed to public use for the rest of the year, as well as for almost all Quaker use.

PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES

OBJECTIVES

The charitable object of the Area Meeting is the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in the area of South East Scotland and beyond, as laid down in *Quaker Faith & Practice*. The Area Meeting furthers the religious beliefs of its members, provides places where Quaker Meetings for Worship can be held within South East Scotland, maintains Quaker witness within this area and supports charitable objectives that give witness to Quaker testimonies.

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The Area Meeting is the over-arching entity supporting Quaker worship and witness within South East Scotland. Quaker Meetings for Worship are open to the public and, until closure in mid March, were held at:

- Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House (several meetings on Sundays and weekdays)
- Kelso Quaker Meeting House (on Sundays)
- South Edinburgh and Polmont (each Sunday)
- Dunbar and Kirkcaldy (twice each month)
- Peebles and Portobello / Musselburgh (three times each month)
- Penicuik and North Edinburgh (monthly).

Following the preparation of risk assessments, which were approved by trustees, some meetings were able to reopen for Meetings for Worship towards the end of the year before closing again in December. Quaker worship moved online, for both public Meetings for Worship on Sundays and, at other times, for Quaker business meetings. While there was some experimentation with 'blended' meetings (with some participants being present in person, but most attending online) there was little opportunity for this during 2020. Plans are being made to improve the audio-visual facilities in the Edinburgh Meeting House during 2021 to improve the quality of blended meetings both for Quakers and for others.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Meetings for Church Affairs (business meetings of the Area Meeting) were held on six occasions during 2020, all but the first held online using 'Zoom'. All members of the Religious Society of Friends as well as others who attend our Meetings for Worship are welcome to attend these meetings, at which subjects of general interest are explored, reports covering a variety of Quaker concerns are received, and decisions are made concerning the use of our various resources.

Despite the restrictions caused by Covid-19, the main concerns of the Area Meeting during 2020 have been focussed on similar matters to earlier years.

- The year saw further development of our concerns about the effects of climate change, with consideration both of the planetary effects and the impact that this must make on our own lifestyles. The Area Meeting added our name to the 'Global Investment Statement to Governments on Climate Change' which calls on all governments to implement the actions required by the Paris Agreement of 2019 as a matter of utmost urgency. More locally, the Area Meeting is continuing to encourage the UK and Scottish governments to be as ambitious as possible in tackling the climate and ecological emergency. We have also explored ways in which we might further green our meeting houses.
- In relation to peace work, we have made a financial contribution to the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) to support its work in Scotland. We await with interest an update on plans for the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre's project to erect a memorial in Princes Street Gardens to commemorate the courage and steadfastness of conscientious objectors during the two world wars, to which we have contributed in the past.
- Along with the other three Area Meetings in Scotland, we have continued our involvement with and our support for the Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer, employed jointly by General Meeting for Scotland and Britain Yearly Meeting. After the new PEO started in October 2020 following a delayed recruitment process, his work focussed on the Scottish commitments to reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels and the need for a just and green recovery from the Covid-19 emergency.
- In relation to societal issues, we have continued to provide funds to support remand prisoners in maintaining contact with their families while they are held in prison. We have striven to educate ourselves about Black Lives Matter and show support for anti-racism wherever possible, posting concerns on our website and hosting one of the displays of the Black Lives Matter Mural Trail on the railings outside Edinburgh Meeting House. We have also been considering how we might embrace greater diversity and inclusiveness within our own meetings.
- The Area Meeting hosted a residential meeting of the Quaker Centres Gathering in January 2020. This is a periodic meeting of representatives from all the large Quaker Centres within Britain Yearly Meeting. Items of mutual interest were discussed concerning the running of Quaker buildings that are regularly let out for public meetings or for residential events.

Local meetings support these initiatives through their own Meetings for Learning and study groups, including collecting funds and supporting new themes that are brought before the wider membership. Many have interacted regularly with their local MPs and MSPs. The strengthening of ties between members of different meetings has been fostered through the meetings of all Scottish Friends organised by General Meeting for Scotland (four meetings each year) and the online Britain Yearly Meeting, held for members of the Society of Friends from the whole of Britain.

OUTREACH AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

It was not possible to use the Quaker Meeting House in Edinburgh as 'Venue 40' during the Edinburgh International Festival Fringe in August 2020. However, the Meeting House did take part in the 'FringeMakers' crowdfunding platform initiated by the Festival Fringe, raising money for the provision of new drapes for the theatre space.

OUR MEETING HOUSES

The Area Meeting's two meeting houses (located in the Edinburgh Old Town and in Kelso) are normally hired out to community groups and to voluntary organisations when they are not being used for Quaker activities. Each meeting house is seen not only as a base for the activities of the Society of Friends but also as a resource for the local community.

During the enforced closure of both meeting houses, the opportunity has been taken to carry out some repair and maintenance, although major planned repair work could not take place in 2020 because of the restrictions placed on contractors.

MEETING HOUSE STAFF

The Area Meeting employs a number of staff to manage the Edinburgh meeting house. Almost all staff work supporting Quaker worship and other activities in Edinburgh is carried out in the Meeting House and little can be done at home, although the joint managers maintained an onsite presence and were able to carry out necessary office work during 2020. The management staff were both willing and able to undertake work outwith their normal job description in order to respond to the rapidly changing situation. It was an Area Meeting priority to continue to pay salaried and, as far as possible, casual staff and an expanded management committee was set up to monitor this and report to trustees.

SUSTAINABILITY

For many years members of the Society of Friends have upheld a commitment to reducing global warming and mitigating climate change (this is known as the "Canterbury Commitment" following a decision taken at a Yearly Meeting held in Canterbury in 2011). Britain Yearly Meeting has asked Area Meetings to include an annual statement about activities and progress towards becoming low-carbon communities. Apart from trying to influence the lifestyles of all who worship in Quaker Meetings it is clear that a major task is to try to increase the energy efficiency of each of our two meeting houses. Our architect undertook detailed quinquennial surveys of each meeting house at the end of 2019 and made specific recommendations about improving energy efficiency through in-installing better wall insulation and more double glazing (in both meeting houses). Work on this and the need to up-grade their heating systems and ventilation has been delayed because of the pandemic.

DONATIONS AND GRANTS

The voluntary contributions of those who attend our Meetings for Worship help to support the upkeep and development of the two meeting houses, as well as supporting the Meeting's charitable activities. The Area Meeting itself

provides funds:

- for the work of the Religious Society of Friends within Britain and abroad (as funded through Britain Yearly Meeting);
- to General Meeting for Scotland as support for Scottish ecumenical and interfaith initiatives;
- for the support of the Scottish Parliamentary Liaison Officer (funded through General Meeting for Scotland and Britain Yearly Meeting);
- to its members and others to attend Quaker meetings and conferences;
- to support charitable work undertaken by its own members and for other charities undertaking work supported by the membership.

The Area Meeting has been the fortunate recipient of a legacy established as the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust. This makes grants to “deserving persons resident in Scotland who owing to straitened circumstances are unable to enjoy the usual pleasures of life, the purpose of such grants being to provide the recipients with some additional comfort or pleasure of an exceptional nature over and above the usual necessities of life.” Since the Trust was established in 2002 more than 150 grants have been distributed to Quakers and non-Quakers from all over Scotland to enable them to experience some aspect of enjoyment in their lives. Reports on grants made by the trust are published regularly in *Scottish Friend*, the newsletter of General Meeting for Scotland, and the Area Meeting’s own newsletter, *Sesame*.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The results for the year and the charity’s financial position at the end of the year are shown in the attached financial statements.

OVERVIEW OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The pandemic affected both income and expenditure in 2020. On the income side, there was a substantial decrease because both meeting houses had to close for bookings in March in order to comply with Scottish Government regulations. We were, however, able to take advantage of the Business Support Fund to offset some of these losses. There was a drop in Members’ donations to the Area Meeting and direct to Local Meetings. A legacy was received by one of our Local Meetings.

There were some savings as a result of the lack of public use of the rooms in the meeting houses (trading activity) and there being no costs associated with the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The Area Meeting continued to employ its staff, putting them on full or flexible furlough as necessary and taking advantage of the UK Government’s Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The net financial result before other recognised gains was a deficit of £31,112 as compared to a deficit of £27,833 in 2019. The overall result in 2020, after accounting for investment gains, is a loss of £10,662 whereas a surplus of £8,957 was reported in 2019. Overall, such fluctuations are within normal ranges but in 2020 the outcome was achieved by taking the difficult decision to reduce the Area Meeting’s total contribution to the work of Britain Yearly Meeting as compared with 2018 and 2019, and because of the unplanned deferral of some major capital work.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Following the quinquennial reviews of our meeting houses trustees started planning for repair work and for upgrading of the thermal performance of our meeting houses in early 2020. However, both programmes were interrupted by the response to the pandemic starting in March 2020. This major work being planned involved some internal repair work and improvement of insulation at Kelso, as well as installing double glazing; in Edinburgh there was some essential stonework repair to the frontage along Upper Bow as well as redecoration and draught-proofing of some of the windows of the meeting house library and kitchen. However, all this work was greatly delayed and in fact neither project was completed until 2021.

RESERVES POLICIES AND LEGACIES

As explained in our Report for 2019, our capital development of the two meeting houses is expensive and can only be afforded intermittently. In the past we have been able to draw extensively on grant support, supplemented by reserves built up largely from legacies received by the Area Meeting. Since receipt of the large legacy from our Friend Catriona Collins in 2018 we have been able to set aside a fund which we planned to draw on for the improvement work described above. Following on from this, in the first half of 2021 funds were moved from the savings account that we hold with the Charity Bank for settlement of major invoices. In general, we aim to maintain accessible reserves of around £100,000; this situation will be reviewed towards the end of 2021 as we plan for resumption of more normal Quaker activity, assuming the pandemic recedes.

FUNDS

Restricted Funds are those where the donor has stipulated the use for which the funds may be used. Funds at the disposal of Local Meetings have been confirmed as restricted funds.

Unrestricted Funds are those which may be spent entirely at the discretion of the Area Meeting within the terms of its charitable aims. Funds which the Area Meeting has set aside for specific projects are treated as Designated Funds. One legacy was received during 2020, a contribution towards work to improve the meeting house in Kelso.

The land and buildings in Edinburgh and Kelso belonging to the Area Meeting were revalued professionally in 2019. It is the trustees' policy not to depreciate them but to revalue them every five years.

FUNDING SOURCES

The Area Meeting is very dependent on the donations that it receives from its members. Members are extremely generous: they may request that all or part of their donation is passed on for the use of a Local Meeting, or some may be sent further afield to support the work of General Meeting for Scotland or Britain Yearly Meeting. Many members also contribute regularly by cash donations following Meetings for Worship, a source of funding that has been much reduced while worship in person has been prevented during the year.

Income is received from letting out rooms in both meeting houses to external organisations (normally charities or community groups) when they are not

needed for Quaker activity. Funds raised through these lettings are used to support the employment of a number of staff to manage the facilities at the meeting house in Edinburgh. A Management Committee supports these staff and reviews their contracts of employment regularly; it keeps the use of the Edinburgh rooms under review, undertaking the updating of lettings policies and charges, health and safety issues and so on. As a result of the pandemic, much time was spent in 2020 in revising health and safety guidelines in the hope that the meeting house would be able to reopen. Although that was only possible to a very limited extent in that year, the work will stand the management team in good stead if it is possible to reopen in 2021. In 2020, the committee met much more frequently than in previous years to discuss the problems arising from the pandemic, the safety of meeting house staff, furlough, and related matters. The trustees acknowledge the advice of the Area Meeting's accountant, Heather Hartman, which helped inform their decision-making.

In normal years, the Edinburgh Meeting House is used as a venue for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe each August, staffed by volunteers both from within the Area Meeting and from other Quaker meetings. Large numbers of members of the public attend the performances and also use the opportunities that are offered for rest and refreshment. Considerable income is raised through the Festival Fringe performances and the associated activities; this is used to support several external charities as well as funding various aspects of Quaker activity. Because of government restrictions imposed to limit the spread of Covid-19, it was not possible to hold a festival in 2020 and it is unlikely there will be any events in 2021. As a result, the Area Meeting was not able to offer financial support to external charities as it would normally, or to use funds from Festival bookings for supporting its own activities.

GRANT MAKING POLICY

Every year the Area Meeting makes substantial contributions to both Britain Yearly Meeting and General Meeting for Scotland to fund their general work in supporting Quaker witness in Britain and in Scotland as well as further afield. In addition, Britain Yearly Meeting provides technical support and training for those who serve their Meetings in specialised areas such as trustees, treasurers, clerks and registering officers. General Meeting for Scotland undertakes representational work among religious groups in Scotland and provides a forum for the four Area Meetings in Scotland to share matters of common concern. General Meeting for Scotland also provides guidance and some funding for the Parliamentary Engagement Officer employed in Scotland by Britain Yearly Meeting. In 2020, following the resignation of the first Engagement Officer appointed, considerable time elapsed before a new appointment could be made, but the new officer was in place by the end of the year.

Following receipt of the large legacy in 2018, trustees substantially increased the annual donation passed on to Britain Yearly Meeting from unrestricted funds to about £55,000 in both 2018 and 2019. However, in view of the financial situation created by the pandemic this was reduced to £30,000 in 2020.

Most other grants payable during a year are towards Quaker activities. Non-Quaker as well as Quaker work is normally supported through special collections following local meetings for worship held on Sundays, but the opportunities for these special collections were again greatly reduced by the pandemic. Members and attenders may also specify that parts of their regular donations to the Area Meeting should be passed directly to Britain Yearly Meeting or to one of the Local Meetings (through a restricted Donations Fund).

As reported in 2019, it was agreed that the sum of £10,000 should be passed from a recent legacy to support Scottish work of the Campaign Against Arms Trade. Following the appointment of a Scottish co-ordinator in 2020, £5,000 was contributed to the Campaign's expenses in 2020, with a similar contribution being passed on early in 2021.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The priority of the Area Meeting is to maintain and support its worshipping communities within the area of South East Scotland, encouraging the establishment of further groups whenever possible. It also has a responsibility to increase the profile of Quakerism within this area and it undertakes periodic outreach activities. 2020 has been a particularly challenging year from this perspective. Meetings for Worship have moved on-line and plans for a return to in-person Meetings are currently unclear. The trustees have been considering making substantial investment to prepare the Edinburgh meeting house to host "blended" Meetings (in-person, with good links to those participating from home), in the hope that this will appeal both to Quakers and to the community groups who normally rent the rooms. Future developments are critical both in terms of the financial aspects (both lettings and Festival income being essential for supporting our staff when the government grants from which we have benefitted in 2020-21 cease) as well as the community-building aspects of supporting in-person meetings. Trustees hope that the overall direction of the development of our Area Meeting will become somewhat clearer by the end of 2021.

STRUCTURE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

ORGANISATION AND AFFILIATION

The Area Meeting is a constituent part of Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). This is a Christian denomination founded in the seventeenth century. For charitable purposes, its principal objective is the advancement of religion.

Quaker Faith & Practice is regarded as the nearest equivalent of a governing document for the whole Religious Society, being a book of faith and practice constituting the Society's Christian discipline. It was first issued in manuscript form in 1738 and has been rewritten periodically. The most recent (fifth) edition was published in 2013.

Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends currently contains 70 Area Meetings (as well as a number of General Meetings encompassing several Area Meetings). Membership of the Society is held within an Area Meeting, and this is also the main charitable and accounting unit.

South East Scotland Area Meeting is one of four making up the General Meeting for Scotland. It comprises 235 members (241 in 2019) worshipping in nine separate Local Quaker Meetings, of which the largest are Central and South Edinburgh with 94 (98 in 2019) and 35 (41 in 2019) members respectively. In addition, a similar number of non-members (known as 'attenders') regularly attend meetings for worship and participate fully in the life of the Society.

Decisions affecting the life and work of the charity are taken corporately by the membership within the context of a Meeting for Worship for business, God's will for the meeting being discerned without the need for voting when the meeting takes place within a spirit of worship. Minutes are approved at the conclusion of each item of business when unity has been reached.

GOVERNANCE AND CHARITABLE TRUSTEES

The Area Meeting adopted a governing document at a meeting held on 27 October 2007. Its trustees are all members of the Religious Society of Friends and are appointed under the terms of this governing document. They report regularly to sessions of the Area Meeting.

The Governing Document was reviewed by trustees during 2020 and found to be clear, pertinent and fit for its current purposes and not requiring revision at this time.

The Area Meeting also appoints office bearers (who are not trustees for the purposes of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations). They include a clerk and assistant clerk, a registering officer for marriages and members of an Area Meeting Nominations Committee. The Area Meeting co-treasurers are trustees *ex officio*.

The process for the appointment of trustees is that names are brought forward by the Area Meeting's Nominations Committee; appointment is by minute of the Area Meeting in session. New trustees are given the Trustees' Committee's Terms of Reference and back copies of the committee's minutes, as well as the Handbook for Quaker Trustees, followed by briefing from committee members. In addition, new trustees are encouraged to attend a residential training course for Quaker trustees usually held at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham (which was held online in 2020). Other events are organised by Britain Yearly Meeting to enable trustees and treasurers from Area Meetings throughout Britain to meet, and to share best practice and experience.

RISK MANAGEMENT

An assessment has been made of the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and systems are in place to mitigate its exposure to major risks. This process is ongoing and, in 2020, included risk assessments for the reopening of Meetings for Worship during the current pandemic. Architects undertake quinquennial inspections of both meeting houses, the latest being in late 2019. These reports give the trustees warning of major issues as well as detailed information to assist them with any minor repairs that are required.

Area Meeting policies covering safeguarding, health and safety and food hygiene are in place. The actions required by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into effect in May 2018, have been completed.

THE AREA MEETING'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Law applicable to charities in Scotland requires the Area Meeting to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of its financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing its financial statements, the Area Meeting is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities (the Charities SORP);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Area Meeting will continue in operation.

The Area Meeting has appointed a body of trustees as required by its 2007 governing document. The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Area Meeting and which enable the trustees to report that the financial statements comply with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Area Meeting's governing document, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities.

The trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Area Meeting and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In accordance with good practice recommendations by OSCR, all Trustees have completed a declaration of eligibility.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

SCOTTISH CHARITY NUMBER: SC019165

PRINCIPAL OFFICE: The Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace,
Edinburgh EH1 2JL.

ADVISERS:

Accountant

Heather Hartman BA (Hons) CA,
Hartman Figures Limited T/A Charity Figures
c/o 9 Ainslie Place, Edinburgh, EH3 6AT

Independent Examiner

David Jeffcoat FCCA,
Alexander Sloan (Accountants and Business Advisers),
50 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7HF.

Bankers

Bank of Scotland,
61 Leith Walk, Edinburgh EH6 8LS

Triodos Bank,
Deanery Road, Bristol BS1 5AS

Charity Bank Ltd.,
Fosse House, 182 High Street, Tonbridge TN9 1BE.

Investment Managers

Rathbone Greenbank Investments,
10 Queen Square, Bristol BS1 4NT.

Solicitors

Balfour and Manson, 54-66 Frederick Street, Edinburgh EH2 1LS

OFFICE BEARERS (2020):

Alastair Cameron (Area Meeting Clerk)
Catherine Dyer (Area Meeting Assistant Clerk)
Jacqueline Noltingk (Co-Treasurer)
John Phillips (Co-Treasurer)

KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL**Meeting House managers**

Antony Wilkes and Susan Proudlove
Michael Stokes

TRUSTEES (during 2020 and at the time of signing this report):

Kathryn Arnot	Jacqueline Noltingk
Ian Beamish (to 19 June 2021)	John Phillips
Ann Forsyth (to 31 March 2021)	David Somervell
Kenneth Jobling (clerk to the Trustees)	Neil Turner
Philip Lucas	

TRUSTEES (at the time of signing this report):

Jennifer Copsey (appointed 1 July 2021)

Alastair Cameron (Clerk to the Area Meeting), Catherine Dyer (Assistant Clerk to the Area Meeting) and David Sterratt (Convenor of the Meeting House Management Committee) attended meetings of trustees during the year.

This Report was approved by the trustees on 20 July 2021. It was signed on their behalf by Kenneth Jobling.

This Report and the Statement of Accounts for 2020 were presented to an Area Meeting held in Edinburgh [*sic*] on 8 September 2021 and the Clerk of the Area Meeting was authorized to sign them.

Kenneth Jobling (Clerk to Trustees) Alastair Cameron (Area Meeting Clerk)

Date: 8 September 2021

[...]

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	<i>Notes</i>	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2020 £	2019 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	3	57,436	34,103	91,539	102,532
Charitable activities	4	385	3,037	3,422	12,413
Other trading activities	5	39,250	44	39,294	145,394
Investment income	6	6,797	184	6,981	5,878
Other income	7	55,566	-	55,566	-
Total income		159,434	37,368	196,802	266,217
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	8	77,189	663	77,852	107,013
Charitable activities	9	119,990	30,072	150,062	187,037
Total resources expended		197,179	30,735	227,914	294,050
Net incoming resources before other recognised gains/(losses)		(37,745)	6,633	(31,112)	(27,833)
Unrealised gains on investments	16	21,118	-	21,118	34,389
Realised (losses)/gains on investments	16	(668)	-	(668)	2,401
Gains on revaluation of fixed assets		-	-	-	-
Net (expenditure)/income		(17,295)	6,633	(10,662)	8,957
Gross transfers between funds		5,242	(5,242)	-	-
Net movement in funds		(12,053)	1,391	(10,662)	8,957
Total funds at 1 January 2020		2,143,719	120,502	2,264,221	2,255,264
Total funds at 31 December 2020		2,131,666	121,893	2,253,559	2,264,221

The charity has no other recognised gains or losses other than the result for the year as set out above. All activities of the charity are classified as continuing.

FRIENDS will not need reminding that 2020 was a very difficult year for all of us individually, and for the Area Meeting. The Financial Statements for 2020 – our accounts for the year – show how the difficulties affected our finances.

Our accounts incorporate the accounts of *all* our local meetings and committees as well as AM's own direct income and expenditure. The accounts are prepared by our accountant, and are examined by an independent firm.

Following the financial review on pp. 7-10, there is an overview of the year on pp. 16-17, with details given in the notes on pp. 22-32.

John Phillips has prepared tables which present information from the full financial report in a more digestible way, giving references for those who wish to look at the report itself.

MEETING HOUSES (Edinburgh and Kelso)

You will remember that, after the year had started normally, our two meeting houses were closed in March. Lettings have traditionally provided an income stream from which we could pay salaries and for basic upkeep of the premises, but after closure we had no income from them for the rest of the year. Our Meeting House managers continued to work, dealing with cancellations, monitoring government guidance in the hope that we would be able to re-open, taking care of the building, and so on, and we are grateful to them for all that they did under difficult circumstances. We were also able to retain our other staff, even where we had no work for them, by taking advantage of the UK Government's Job Retention Scheme.

INCOME (Notes 5 & 7, pp. 22-23)

	2020	2019
	£	£
Room lettings, Edinburgh and Kelso	19,386	76,214
Catering associated with lettings in Edinburgh	13,552	46,161
Quaker Centres Gathering, 2020; Festival, 2019; sales in the Meeting House foyer	6,312	23,019
Govt grants (business support & job retention)	55,566	-
TOTAL INCOME	94,816	145,394

EXPENSES (Note 10, p. 25; Note 8, p. 23)

	2020	2019
	£	£
Wages, salaries, pensions (<i>before job retention grants – see income, above</i>)	66,456	63,295
Building costs (<i>Council Tax, utilities, maintenance, architect fees, insurance, cleaning, purchases, training; excluding depreciation costs</i>)	54,198	53,185
Professional support (<i>accounting, audit, investment fees, computing</i>)	12,575	12,760
Expenses associated with lettings (<i>catering, Festival costs</i>)	6,972	38,466
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	140,201	167,686

We were able to undertake some upkeep and maintenance of our properties in 2020 but most major contracts we had planned to put in place in 2020 (following the architect's inspections in 2019) were deferred until 2021 or later.

DONATIONS

Aside from lettings, our income mainly comes from members and attenders, particularly through donations. We are grateful to those who have been able to continue to give financial support through the Area Meeting. The figures below include sums earmarked by donors for local meetings or for passing on to the John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust (JWET), to General Meeting for Scotland or to Britain Yearly Meeting. When normal Sunday Meetings for Worship ceased in March, cash contributions made direct to local meetings inevitably decreased.

DONATIONS INCOME (<i>Note 3, page 22</i>)	2020	2019
	£	£
Donations for Area Meeting use (<i>includes grants received each year from the Camfield Trust</i>)	58,836	66,087
Donations and legacies for JWET and Local Meetings	32,703	36,445
TOTAL	91,539	102,532

EXPENDITURE ON QUAKER WORK

As a result of the pandemic, there was less AM expenditure on committee meetings, conferences and other Quaker activities. Nevertheless the major feature of our expenditure each year is our payment of grants and financial contributions to organisations beyond SESAM. During 2020 we kept most of these at normal levels. The main exception was our grant to Britain Yearly Meeting: we had paid about £65,000 in each of 2018 and 2019 as a result of receiving a large legacy in 2018 (our donation to BYM comes from both general AM funds and from earmarked donations), but we had to reduce this to about £41,000 in 2020. Using another legacy, we made the first of two payments to Campaign Against Arms Trade.

EXPENDITURE (<i>Note 9, page 24</i>)	2020	2019
	£	£
Conferences, bursary help, committees, admin., newsletters, membership fees	7,343	10,699
LM activities and LM premises costs	4,121	10,948
<u>Grants/Contributions paid</u>		
Britain Yearly Meeting	41,133	65,636
General Meeting for Scotland	7,101	7,342
Northern Friends Peace Board	2,250	2,205
Northern Friends Youth Events Trustees (<i>Shindig was online in 2020</i>)	1,300	1,274
Campaign Against Arms Trade	5,000	-
Other grants (less than £1,000 each)	10,934	20,366
TOTAL	79,182	118,470

BALANCE SHEET (*See p. 16 [page 30]*)

We ended 2020 with an overall **loss of £10,662** (compared with a **surplus of £8,957** in 2019). While variations of this size are not unusual, the figures need to be treated with caution as they include changes in the valuation of our investments (and, in some years, our property). As Friends know, we invested a proportion of the large 2018 legacy and the portfolio is revalued at the end of each year. The changes as a result of the revaluation amounted to £22,690 in 2020 and £38,010 in 2019 (*see Note 16, p. 28*). In consequence, the actual cash deficit in 2020 was considerably larger than indicated by the overall loss – see the decrease in the AM’s “net current assets” (*as shown on p. 17*).

2021

Friends should be aware that we are anticipating a considerably greater loss in 2021. Extensive work has been carried out at each meeting house, such as replacing the windows at Kelso as well as improving the building’s insulation, and redecorating the outside of windows and aspects of interior work in the Edinburgh meeting house and in our staff flats there. Almost all the invoices for the work are being paid in 2021 using some of the legacy funds that were not invested.

The Government’s Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, from which we benefited in 2020, started to run down in July this year and will be phased out in October. Although there are a few enquiries from organisations wishing to use rooms at Victoria Terrace, rental income will certainly not return to the levels of 2019 this year, nor probably next, and the costs of staffing and cleaning the premises are higher than in the past.

The management committee for Edinburgh continues its search for an improved audio-visual system for the meeting house and we hope that, before the end of the year, Area Meeting will be able to hold a blended meeting with some Friends present in person. Meeting together as Quakers, even if we are not all present in the same space, will surely enhance our worship, fellowship and sense of community.

THANKS

We have already expressed our thanks to our Meeting House staff and to Friends who have maintained their financial support. Many of them, and other Friends, also contribute to the life of our meetings by their service, and as treasurers we are particularly grateful to local meeting and committee treasurers, our own extended treasury team, the management committee, those Friends in Kelso who take so much care over the meeting house there, and trustees for all they do.

John Phillips and Jacqueline Noltingk

Friends who have queries on the above or on the full Financial Report are invited to email sesamtreasurer@gmail.com so as not to take up too much time at the meeting itself.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 19 June 2021
by remote videoconferencing**

2021/06/01 Worship and introductions

During worship, we have heard read *Quaker Faith & Practice* 21.08, "Our need is to accept ourselves as a whole, and offer that whole to God..."

[The full minutes are included in both the print edition of Sesame, and in the PDF emailed to Members and Attenders on the circulation list, but are redacted in this publicly available version. – Editor]

2021/06/13 Closing minute

37 Friends (33 members, 3 attenders and one member of staff) have been at all or part of this meeting.

Central Edinburgh 11	Central Fife 1	East Lothian 8	Kelso 3	Penicuik -
Polmont 2	Portobello & Musselburgh 2	South Edinburgh 9	Tweeddale -	<i>Visitor (LDW)</i> 1

We next meet on Wednesday 8 September 2021 at 7.00 pm.

(Signed)
Alastair Cameron
Clerk
Cath Dyer
Assistant Clerk

Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland

Contact details of named Friends are in the Book of Members. 'QMH' = Quaker Meeting House

MEETING IN PERSON

Central Edinburgh – QMH, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL

On the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the month at 11.00 am: places are limited and must be booked on Eventbrite by 5 pm on the Wednesday before. 1st Sundays are usually All-Age worship.

On 2nd and 4th Sundays at 9.30 am (for 45 mins): no booking required.

Wednesdays at 12.30 pm (for 30 mins): no booking required

Contact the office, centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk or 0131 225 4825, for information.

Central Fife – The Old Kirk, Kirk Wynd, Kirkcaldy KY1 1EH

On the 1st, 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays at 10.30 am; no limit on attendance; no pre-booking required. Meetings on 1st Sundays in Dunfermline will resume when a venue is available.

East Lothian – Dunbar Town House, 79 High Street, Dunbar, EH42 1ER

*On the 2nd & last Sundays of the month: 10.50 for 11.00 am start. Maximum attendance 12, so please contact **Di Simcock** in advance to book a place.*

Kelso – QMH, Abbey Row, Kelso TD5 7JF

*Sundays at 10.30 am; please contact **Marianne Butler** in advance to book a place.*

North Edinburgh worship group – St Mary's Church, 12 Bellevue Cres., EH3 6NE

*4th Sunday in the month at 7.00 pm. – contact **Tony Gross**.*

Penicuik – Venue to be confirmed: contact penicuikquakers@blueyonder.co.uk

*1st Sundays at 11.00 am – contact **Mark Hutcheson** for updates and further information.*

Polmont – Greenpark Community Centre, Greenpark Dr., Polmont FK2 0PZ

*Sundays at 10.45: no booking required but contact **Marriot Dallas** for updates.*

Portobello & Musselburgh – Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello EH15 2BP

On the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 11.00 am; out of doors in fine weather; children's meeting.

1st Sundays: Evening meeting at 7.30; indoors; NO arrangements for children.

*Please contact **Mary Jane Elton** if you plan to attend either morning or evening meeting.*

South Edinburgh – The Open Door, 420 Morningside Road, Edinburgh EH10 5HY

*Sundays at 10.30 am: at the Open Door, and – weather permitting – out of doors in a garden; contact **Rici Marshall Cross** for further information.*

Tweeddale – The Drill Hall, Walkershaugh, Peebles EH45 8AU (access in Tweedbrae)

*2nd Sundays at 10.30 am; 4th Tuesdays at 7.00 pm; contact **Anna Lawrence**.*

MEETING BY ZOOM

Central Edinburgh – for login details contact centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk

Every Sunday at 9.30 am and 11.00 am, blended in relevant weeks.

Central Fife – for login details contact **Laurie Naumann**

On the 1st 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays at 10.30 am, blended with the meeting in person.

East Lothian – for login details contact **Di Simcock** or **Phil Lucas**

Wednesdays meetings at 7.30 pm are to continue for the moment.

Kelso – for login details contact **Marianne Butler**

1st Sundays only at 10.30 am; blended with meetings in person.

Polmont – for login details contact **Mariot Dallas**

Sundays at 10.45 am; also Children's Meeting, of which Mariot Dallas can provide details.

Wednesdays at 8.00 pm.

South Edinburgh – for login details contact **Rici Marshall Cross**

Sundays at 10.30 am, blended with the meeting in person, as above.