

SESAME

Number 240: March 2022

AM on 26 March – *at Polmont in person* / Prayers for Peace / NFPB / General Meeting / Woodbrooke / Witness at Faslane / Meeting for Sufferings / Fàilte Edinburgh: *update, how to donate & items needed* / World Day of Prayer / YM 2022 / BDRC / Parliamentary Engagement in 2021 / January minutes / &c



“Let your light shine ...” (Matthew 5:16)

(see page 21)

Published by South East Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Material for the next issue should be sent to Alan Frith (email: ar.frith@btinternet.com) or by post to 10, East Parkside, Edinburgh EH16 5XJ, to be received at the latest by **Tuesday 26 April**. The Editor reserves the right to condense articles. If possible, please submit articles by email sending as an attachment *and* in the body of the email. An email version of *Sesame* is available in PDF format. Contact the Editor.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Area Meeting will be on Saturday 26 March, 10.00 am – 4.00 pm, at Greenpark Community Centre, Greenpark Drive, Polmont FK2 0PZ. **There is no Zoom option;** the facilities are not available and so the meeting will be in-person **only**. Please come only if you feel safe in the company of 30-50 others; and please consider taking a lateral flow test beforehand. Current regulations maintain the need to wear a face covering.

Please tell us you are coming by logging in at Eventbrite, indicating how many people you are bringing, including children and young people.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/299017648837>

Refreshments will be provided from 10.00 am; please arrive by 10.30 for the start of worship. You should feel free to come to all or any part of the day. Please bring your own lunch – see the notes in the table below.

<i>Time</i>	Pre-school and Young Primary	Older children and young people	Adults
10.00	<i>Arrive and gather with refreshments</i>		
10.30	All-age worship: AM agenda items 1-3 (<i>see opposite</i>)		
11.00 approx.	<i>Comfort break/shuffle divide into strands</i>		
11.15	Play and craft activities	Self-directed activities	AM business: agenda items 4-9
12.30	LUNCH: please bring your own: we suggest not sharing to minimise waste and maintain COVID safety. <i>Our hosts will supply tea & coffee, milk & sugar, water, fruit & biscuits</i>		
1.45	More play and craft	Workshop discussion: <i>What does AM mean to us?</i>	Options in small groups: 1. <i>What are we doing in our LMs to build a genuinely all-age community?</i> 2. <i>Worship and reflection on Ukraine</i>
3.00	<i>Finishing up</i>	AM business, item 10, including consideration of young people's workshop conclusions	
3.30	Welcome young children, hear about Polmont LM's recent experience		
3.45	Prepare closing minute		
4.00	<i>Close and depart</i>		

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of Monday 17 January 2022
3. Proposal from Portobello & Musselburgh LM:
Wiston Lodge weekend, September 2022
4. Matters arising from previous minutes
 1. *Appointment of elders for wedding, 16 April*
5. Membership matters
 1. *Reports on membership visits*
 2. *Application for membership*
 3. *Transfers*
6. Tabular statement, 2021
7. Memorial minutes
from Portobello & Musselburgh LM and from Central Edinburgh LM
8. Reports
 1. *Meeting for Sufferings [see page 17]*
 2. *General Meeting for Scotland [see page 10]*
 3. *Parliamentary Engagement Officer [see page 27]*
 4. *Treasurer team*
 5. *Festival Committee [see page 9]*
9. Appointments – *nominations will be made known in advance*
10. Children & young people in the life of our Quaker community
11. Closing minute

All who have a connection with Quakers in South East Scotland are welcome at Area Meeting – it is not necessary to be a member, though we ask attenders to identify themselves as such when we open the meeting.

Public transport from Edinburgh to Polmont

Trains from Waverley leave at quarter to and quarter past the hour and take about half an hour to get to Polmont. Greenpark Community Centre is a 10-15 minute walk from the railway station, northwards along Station Road to the roundabout junction with Main Street, and then into Greenpark Drive (see below).

Buses (service X38) leave Regent Road, Edinburgh, at 8.40 and 9.10 on Saturday, calling at Princes Street (stops PQ & PX), Haymarket (stop HH) and points west; the journey takes about an hour and ten minutes, according to the timetable. See: <https://bustimes.org/services/x38-falkirk-community-hospital-edinburgh-regent-ro?date=2022-03-26>

Alight at the Black Bull Inn bus stop in Main Street, Polmont; go back towards the roundabout and cross the road to enter Greenpark Drive, which turns left when going straight on would take you into Airlie Drive. After passing Bennett Place, on your left, the Community Centre is on the right – it is a two-minute walk from the stop.

Prayers for Peace

From the Corrymeela Community – <https://www.corrymeela.org/>

It is with deep sadness that we pray for peace and for the people of Ukraine.

*God who sees the weakness
in acts of naked aggression;
God who feels the fear
in moments of acute helplessness:
cure this warring madness,
and shield all who fall in harm's way.
Leach the poison from the mind
that thinks strength is shown
in a bullying force.
And may an equal strength in solidarity
give resolve to those
whose aim is to protect, and respect,
not just the ones we call our own,
but all with whom we can share
a better, more peaceful world.*

Amen.

From the United Reformed Church – <http://www.urcscotland.org.uk/>

*Living God,
Creator and giver of life to all people:
We ask that you would hear our prayer
for peace amongst the nations
And for ending of conflict in Ukraine.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.*

*Living God,
Who has inspired faith across the ages:
Grant peace in the midst of war
And bring harmony to the
commonwealth of nations.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.*

*Living God,
Who shall judge between the nations:
We ask that that you would lead
the nations in the paths of peace
And that the dividing wall of
hostility would be broken down.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.*

*Living God,
Who gave his only Son that we might
have life:
We ask that you would pour out your
Holy Spirit
And inspire in us hope that peace will be
renewed.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.*

Friends World Committee for Consultation has issued a **Christian Call for Peace**, which individuals are invited to sign; see:

<https://fwcc.world/christian-call-for-peace/>

Northern Friends Peace Board: 5 March

On the tenth day of the invasion of Ukraine, 34 Friends participated in the first Board meeting of 2022, held on Zoom.

We began in breakout rooms, in groups of four, to talk about our own reactions to events – the latest news, that morning, was that a limited ceasefire had been agreed to enable civilians to leave Mariupol in the south-east and the eastern town of Volnovakha (although in neither place did it happen). Friends shared feelings of frustration and powerlessness, sadness and anger.

In his Coordinator's Report, Philip Austin updated us on his work since our last meeting in November. All current activities have been impacted by the war, and are likely to be affected further.

Janet Fenton reported on the work of the Nuclear Weapons Abolition Group. The barely veiled threat by Vladimir Putin to use such weapons, and its echoing by others in response, had given greater urgency to the need for abolition, while making the prospect of it more distant; a dismal development since the group had last met in February. Both the conference to review the Non-Proliferation Treaty, scheduled for January, and the Meeting of State Parties [i.e. *signatories*] of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was due to take place in March, had been postponed by the resurgence of COVID – the latter is now to be held in June [see page 24]. The briefing paper on TPNW by Rebecca Johnson, delayed by the need for last-minute revisions and now expanded to book length, was finally with the printers as Janet was speaking [see page 14]; and local authorities are being encouraged to adopt resolutions in support of the Treaty – see:

http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/vision/initiatives_petition.html.

Also, 2022 sees the fortieth anniversary of Wales being declared a Nuclear Free Zone, which is being marked with a webinar, a new website, and a touring exhibition; see:

<https://nation.cymru/news/exhibition-to-mark-40-years-since-the-nuclear-free-wales-declaration/>

The Board co-opted Barry Mills as a member of the NFPB (he had ceased to be an AM representative after moving to a different area) to enable him to continue his involvement in the Nuclear Weapons Abolition Group.

Quaker Roots, a Quaker Recognised Body within Britain Yearly Meeting, began as 'Roots of Resistance', a group which came together specifically to protest at the DSEI arms fair. Rosie Horsley told us how its scope has widened, and of its involvement in other events. Its core group is looking to empower Friends to take action. (It has a website – <https://www.quaker-roots.org.uk/> – which appears not to have been updated since September 2021, however.)

From our Trustees, Peter Speirs presented the draft of a new constitution, which was approved, and Deryck Hillas gave his first report as our treasurer.

The remainder of the meeting was given over to a full session on events in Ukraine, in place of the usual Members' Forum, when Friends report on local peace activities. Daniel Jakopovich, of QPSW, started by drawing our attention to a list (compiled before the invasion started) of possible actions, <https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/military-stand-off-over-ukraine-5-things-you-can-do>, and to FWCC's 'Christian Call for Peace' [see page 4]; he also told us of a planned campaign of letter-writing to members of the Orthodox Church hierarchy. (I have not found reference to this anywhere online; it may be happening without publicity or a wide invitation to participate, which I think is wise[†]). Our minute read, in part: *We need to find ways of reaching out and listening whilst recognising that this is not the only war and that there are wider and deeper issues about the role of militarism in the world that need addressing.* We agreed to form a new group to concentrate on these issues; Philip Austin has, since the meeting, set up a webpage of links and resources, https://nfpb.org.uk/ukraine_2022/, in addition to the monthly peace round-up emailed to Board members. (The Quakers in Britain website now has a page as well: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/ukraine.>)

It is hoped our next meeting, on 18 June, will be blended, with Leeds as the likely venue for meeting in person.

Alan Frith

† In 1987, when I was working in Ghana for Quaker Peace & Service (as it was then), Hill House Meeting in Accra received a stream of letters from Amnesty International groups in the UK, each on behalf of a different political prisoner whose release it urged us actively to support. (One of them, Yao Graham, I had actually met in London the year before.) It would – needless to say – have been reckless for the Clerk, or any of us, to agitate on their behalf in the manner suggested, and, under more efficient repression, dangerous even to be identified as a potential agitator by being written to from abroad in these terms. Letter-writing initiatives require great care in identifying suitable recipients, both in regard to their possible effective influence and the risk to themselves that contacting them might pose.

Faithfully maintaining our testimony against war

On 6 March as Meeting for Sufferings gathered in worship, **Oliver Robertson** shared this prepared ministry on the complex web of issues as major armed conflict has arisen again in Europe.

FRIENDS, LET US HOLD IN THE LIGHT THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE. *Let us hold in the Light the people of Russia. Let us hold in the Light the people of Afghanistan. Let us hold in the Light the people of Ethiopia. Let us hold in the Light the people of Myanmar. Let us hold in the Light those affected by conflicts we have forgotten or have never even heard of, because the consequences of war will scar lives*

just as they are doing in Kyiv. Let us hold in the Light the people working for peace. Let us hold in the Light the people who are not.

Prayer can be a great comfort, and a powerful spur to action. But what will comfort us and what will comfort others may be very different. We need to hear the voices of people affected by today's wars, so that their lived experience can help us better understand how God is leading us in that situation. But whose voices are we hearing? Pay attention to the news you notice and the events that move you, as it can be a window into your priorities and your prejudices.

Making connections

So how do we connect with people living close to armed conflict? During worship last weekend, one meeting put up on their walls the names of Russian and Ukrainian peacemakers. Many Friends have joined the online meetings for worship of Quakers in Kyiv, and of Friends House Moscow, which has been quietly building peace since the end of the Cold War. Whose voices should we be raising up? Which stories should we be challenging?

Oftentimes taking a pacifist stance, of faithfully maintaining '*our testimony that war and the preparation for war are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ*', is itself a challenge to a dominant narrative. Its value is often to remind people that there is another way, that even when war may seem the only answer there is still a choice and an alternative.

Nonviolent resistance

That alternative is not passivity. Friends and others have long experience of nonviolent resistance. People may nonviolently demonstrate, as thousands of Russians have been this past week, and being arrested for it – including children. People may refuse to support occupiers, both passively – by not going to work – and actively – by damaging the weapons they are forced to make. Many of the most powerful acts of nonviolent resistance manage both to challenge the oppressive action and assert the humanity of everyone involved. When Syrian protestors gave flowers and water to soldiers, it showed both that they were not a threat (so making it harder to shoot them) and meant that the soldiers could see them as people like themselves. Such actions are not about victory over an enemy, but about turning an enemy into a friend.

Upholding people

One of the ways Quakers have often acted on our conviction that we are all God's children, that everyone has value and worth, is to support the people shunned by others. This can be about practical support, and it can also be about reminding the rest of the world that these are people too.

When I think of the people who may be shunned, I think of conscientious objectors. It will take some considerable courage to be a conscientious objector to military service today in Russia *and* in Ukraine, though for different reasons. Quakers have long upheld the right to refuse to kill; how can we support those who are holding firm to that stance even in the most trying circumstances? Would we support COs who come to Britain? If we didn't, are we confident others would?

When I think of people being shunned, I think of the people fleeing Ukraine who are not white. People of colour in Ukraine, students from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, have been reported to have been hampered or attacked as they tried to flee, denied support and accommodation in Ukraine and neighbouring countries because they are not Ukrainian. How can we support them, and in so doing uphold the notion that all refugees should be treated equally?

And when I think of people being shunned, I think of Russians around the world. It's probably very lonely being a Russian in a lot of countries right now. Are we helping to ensure that any outrage over the Russian government's actions does not turn into hatred of all Russians, those with no links to the government, no influence over its actions?

Opportunities for action

Many of us may be feeling, that's all well and good, sharing stories and holding in the Light and so on, but what can we actually DO? How can we stop the bloodshed or at least mitigate its impacts?

We may be able to give money, to give time, to offer hospitality, to undertake relief work, to use our resources and our riches as individuals and as communities. But the reality is that the role we can play from here in Britain, at this time of war, may be more limited than we would like. Friends may be familiar with the hourglass model of peace work: there is space *before* war and *after* war to carry out many actions for peace, but at the time of conflict itself, where the hourglass pinches in the middle, there is very little opportunity.

There can sometimes be a temptation to think of what great thing we can do, on a par with the times past when Quakers organised the *Kindertransport* or advised the Russian Tsar. But those things could only happen because of groundwork being done, relationships being built, for years beforehand. Have we built the foundations we need for such work today? Has someone else, so that our role is to support? We aren't necessarily called to be amazing. We are called to be faithful.

Building the commonwealth of heaven on Earth

One of the things we can get from our faith and our long-established testimony against war is a clear vision of the world we want to see, the divine commonwealth that God is calling us to live in. Some of the greatest strides towards that world have come after very dark times. What are the changes that are needed? What work do we need to do now to clear the way for such changes to happen? What are the existing institutions and practices that need to be celebrated and maintained, even if they are imperfect? What would need to happen for Russia's neighbours not to see it as a threat? What would need to happen for a military alliance in Europe to feel unnecessary?

As Paul Parker was quoted last month, "*war today is the failure of yesterday that leads to unimaginable human suffering on all sides. Imagine what could happen if we were willing to invest as much in peace as we currently do in preparing for war.*"

Just imagine Friends. Then let us get to work.

Oliver Robertson is Head of Witness and Worship for Quakers in Britain. He works to support Quakers to live out their faith through their worship and social action.

Festival Committee – March update

Festival Committee is moving ahead with plans for Venue 40 this year. As we will not be hiring seating or having technical support, the Managers plan for a performance space in the hall which will have about 60 seats. We are looking at having two slots for performances every day (Monday-Saturday) as this could be covered in normal staff hours – there will be no national volunteers. Local volunteers may be needed to support staff. We are planning not to have a box office, and to encourage the use of e-tickets.

To put on performances we must apply for a Public Entertainment Licence which would normally cost over £1,000, but is not needed for talks *etc.* and there is no charge if the groups performing are charities. We are therefore only offering space to charitable organisations. If Friends know of any who might like to use our space, ask them to get in touch with the Managers or look us up on <https://www.edfringe.com/>. Luath Press will be putting on a series of talks in the third week (22-26 August).

We are hoping to have an exhibition of some of the Loving Earth panels and will be looking at local Friends to act as stewards. If you are interested and free during August, please let someone on Festival committee know.

Janet Grimwade

Meetings for Worship at Faslane

After a break due to the renewal of COVID precautions, Friends have resumed the practice of holding meetings for worship at the North Gate of HM Naval Base Clyde, G84 0EH, as an act of witness against the Trident nuclear submarines stationed there. The dates planned for the rest of 2022 – all Sundays – are as follows; meeting starts at 11.00 am.

24 April

22 May

26 June

25 September

13 November (*Remembrance Sunday*)

Those attending are advised to bring something to sit on, weatherproof clothing, and something to eat before returning home. Parking is available at the cemetery just beyond the North Gate on the right. For further information, contact **Mary Alice Mansell** of Glasgow Local Meeting: details are in the Book of Members, page 115.

Friends may agree with Alison Burnley that a round trip to the Gare Loch is an unsustainable form of witness for us in South East Scotland (see Sesame 237) but it is expected that they would wish to hold the meetings in the Light, and might, in some circumstances, feel it right to attend. We still await suggestions of other ways for us to witness against war in general and nuclear weapons in particular. (Ed.)

General Meeting for Scotland, 12 March 2022

The first General Meeting of the year was held by Zoom; 74 participated, including six attenders and two visitors.

Among the routine business, it was noted that Lynne Barty has been appointed to represent Friends on Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (SFAR); and Katrina McCrea was appointed to serve as Assistant GM Treasurer, and as a Trustee, in 2022. From 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025, she will serve as GM Treasurer, and a Trustee *ex officio*.

The Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Pat Lucas [see page 33] was received and endorsed, and forwarded to the Recording Clerk. The Meeting also received the Tabular Statement for 2021. GM dates for 2023/24 were offered for discussion and approval by Area Meetings.

The working group set up last year to review 'Options for Quakers in Scotland' – in particular, the suggestion from North Scotland AM that the four area meetings and General Meeting be reconstituted as a single body – presented its report, which identified seven ways of working together more effectively. These included the possibility of boundary changes between AMs, and active consideration by meetings of "*whether there are aspects of their duties which would benefit from a collaborative approach*" which might be "*Scotland-wide or between two or more area meetings*". The proposal for fundamental re-organisation was *not* endorsed, however. After discussion in small groups, the meeting minuted that Friends are "*open to more radical change in our structures, if its purpose and the way it will bring about improvement are clear*, and it was agreed to set up a new working group to keep these matters under consideration. The 'Options' group was laid down.

GM Trustees presented their report for 2021, which highlighted the difficulty of finding Friends to serve; it was agreed that a Zoom meeting should be arranged to "*demystify our Quaker roles*".

On behalf of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG), Richard Raggett reported as co-convener. A review of PEWG's priorities is being undertaken, and will be presented to GM in November. [See also Andrew Tomlinson's report, page 27.]

Ann Kerr reported on the December and March meetings of Meeting for Sufferings [see page 17 for Jane Kelly's report of the latter; Katrina McCrea's report of December's meeting was in our last issue]; Ann too had been moved by Oliver Robertson's reflections on events in Ukraine [see page 5].

The meeting heard a series of reports from those who represent Friends on ecumenical bodies. **ACTS** – Action of Churches Together in Scotland, which in 1990 succeeded the Scottish Council of Churches, and brought in the Roman Catholic church for the first time (although the Baptist Union withdrew) – is currently moving towards becoming a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation under the name of the Scottish Christian

Forum; Adwoa Bittle updated GM on the slow progress of the transition. Certain bodies under the ACTS *ægis*, such as the Church Leaders' Forum (CLF) and the Ecumenical Officers' Forum (EOF) continue to function; Adwoa felt it would be beneficial for Friends to be represented on the EOF. The CLF often invites a Quaker signature on letters relating to shared concerns, and the GM Clerk exercises her own discernment on whether to sign. The value and importance of Friends' participating in ecumenical work was noted in the minute. A written report from Bob Dixon, who represents GM on the Board of the **Iona Community**, described its work in 2021 and set out its plans for 2022 – a full programme has been arranged. The leader of the Community, our Friend Ruth Harvey [*sister of Philip Austin, the co-ordinator of the Northern Friends Peace Board*], has been joined by a new Executive Director, Callum Orr. In its report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Board had highlighted six areas of work, and Bob noted two of these – 'common concerns and the historic legacy of slavery' and 'environment and future' as being of particular significance to Friends. Margaret Roy also reported in writing; she is Friends' representative on the **Scottish Committee of the World Day of Prayer** (WDP), formerly the Women's World Day of Prayer. [*See Mary Woodward's report of WDP 2022 on page 22.*] Involvement in the committee had given Margaret the opportunity, which she had valued, to work on issues of inequality and injustice affecting women. Lastly, Barbara Potter reported on **Interfaith Scotland** which supports 17 groups across Scotland, and had been involved in some seventy events associated with COP26 which took place at the time of the conference.

The final major item was a report from GM's Children & Young People's Co-ordinator, Mary Troup, informing Friends of activities in our meetings and detailing her own work on the Meeting's behalf. A Families Weekend is to be held at Pitlochry, 17-19 June, now that face-to-face contact is again possible.

In other business, it was decided that General Meeting could *not* support a visit to Scotland by the Friendly Folk Dancers at this time [*see our minute 2022/01/03.1 on page 32*]. The Meeting was also told of upcoming events: a 'day of reflection', at Glasgow QMH and online, on 26 March, organised by the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network [*see page 29*]; the 2022 Swarthmore Lecture by Helen Minnis of Glasgow LM on 'Race and Privilege', in preparation for which resources and questions have been prepared for two study sessions, to be undertaken either individually or in groups [*see page 26*]; and Britain Yearly Meeting itself, on 27–30 May at Friends House; there is still – as of the date of GM – space for participants in the Children's Programme. [*See page 25 for more about attending BYM.*]

The closing minute noted that General Meeting will next gather on 11 June 2022, "if nothing occurs to prevent".

Summary by the Editor, based on the Minutes

On Not Giving Offence

For more than ten years, the name *Sesame* has usually appeared on our front page in a distinctive typeface called Gill Sans, one of many designed by Eric Gill (1882-1940), also to be seen on the Usher Hall's signage, on Lothian buses and on Waitrose carrier bags. A convert to Roman Catholicism in 1913, Gill was nevertheless in sympathy with some of Friends' concerns: he was a member of the Peace Pledge Union and supported the Fellowship of Reconciliation, having previously been one of the very few British Catholics to voice support for the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War when most of his co-religionists sided with Franco. Among his published *Letters* (ed. Walter Shewring, 1947) is one to *The Friend*, dated 14 July 1933, in which he takes issue with an article which, in his view, put "us artists ... on too high a pedestal":

for God is worshipped in laughter as well as in tears, in works as well as in faith, in music-hall songs as well as in silent prayer, in every kind of light and not only an inner one

– a sentiment with which many modern Quakers would agree – and he had progressive opinions which he expressed in essays and pamphlets such as *Unemployment* (1933), *Money and Morals* (1934), *Work and Leisure* (1935) and *Work and Property* (1937). He was notable as a calligrapher, type-designer, illustrator, artist and sculptor; his apprentice Hew Lorimer carved the seven figures on the façade of the National Library on George IV Bridge in Edinburgh, which show Gill's stylistic influence. In many ways, an admirable man; but not in all. His diaries record sexual abuse of his two eldest teenage daughters, incestuous relationships with his sisters, and other unconventional behaviour, all of which was revealed in a 1989 biography. Its author, Fiona MacCarthy, later wrote that

as Gill's history of adulteries, incest, and experimental connection with his dog became public knowledge ... the consequent reassessment of his life and art left his artistic reputation strengthened. Gill emerged as one of the twentieth century's strangest and most original controversialists, a sometimes infuriating, always arresting spokesman for man's continuing need of God in an increasingly materialistic civilization, and for intellectual vigour in an age of encroaching triviality.

Others, however, in particular the survivors of abuse and those who speak for them, think differently. In January this year, Gill's sculpture *Ariel* on the outside of Broadcasting House was attacked by a protestor with a hammer while another man shouted about the artist's being a paedophile, and the police looked on. In 2014, a local man tried to have Gill's statue of St Michael the Archangel removed from St Patrick's Church in Dumbarton; a similar campaign began in 1998 to have his panels depicting the Stations of the Cross removed from Westminster Cathedral. Those who resist such calls are criticised as being like those at the BBC who turned a blind eye to

the predatory activities of Jimmy Savile, or the councillors in Bristol who refused, over many years, to consider the removal of Edward Colston's statue. See, for example this from *The Observer*:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jan/16/abuse-victims-find-eric-gill-statue-intolerable-if-only-bbc-had-too>.

Neither comparison seems to me fair or reasonable; and no-one has ever complained about the lettering on our cover. Even so, if it is possible that the appearance of the name *could* cause distress, it seems needlessly provocative *not* to change it. The replacement typeface, OPTIMA, was designed by Hermann Zapf (1918-2015), who also designed Palatino, which you are reading now; we have been using for the main body of *Sesame* since I was assistant editor to Alan Davies. If it emerged that he too had dark secrets – as might seem likely, given that Zapf grew up in the Third Reich and was a conscript in the *Wehrmacht* – then I would be inclined to continue using Palatino even so, on account of its legibility, and because its italics have the useful property for which the form was invented, of being narrower than Roman type; such considerations do not apply, however, to using Gill Sans for titling. (As it happens, Zapf's father, a trade-unionist, was an early inmate of the Dachau concentration camp; and Hermann's own wartime career, as a cartographer working on maps of the Spanish railway network, following his rejection by the artillery because he apparently could not tell left from right, seems as blameless as it could be.)

Public works created by those of whom we may disapprove seem to me quite distinct from statues which memorialise and therefore glorify their subject, for all that they may provoke similar reactions. (In this context, 'public works' could include the operas of the anti-semitic Richard Wagner, or the novels of Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Knut Hamsun, both pro-Nazi, and, indeed, the Quaker writings of the slave owner William Penn, as well as the sculptures and letter forms of Eric Gill.) The artistic merit of a memorial is secondary – it goes without saying that none of those who toppled the Colston statue was protesting about John Cassidy, its sculptor. There may be debate as to whether what we admire in the subject outweighs what is deplorable: in 2018, a statue of Gandhi at the University of Ghana was taken down because of his derogatory comments on "kaffirs", written as a young man in South Africa, which has not happened to any of those in the UK (there are at least six); the organisers of a petition against a new one in Leicester were themselves called "racist" by Keith Vaz MP. Others, whose racism is more incontestable – David Hume, Winston Churchill – remain on their plinths. The simplest solution, of course, is *not* to commemorate individuals in this way at all; Christopher Wren's epitaph, that his monument is to be seen in what is around us, applies not just at the architect's grave in St Paul's. For writers in particular, ensuring that their works are in print is a better way to honour them than putting up an effigy. Whether a work should be seen as tainted by the failings of its creator is

less clear: to admire a painting by Caravaggio, say, is not to condone murder (for which, *in absentia*, he was sentenced to death); and when, a few years ago, one of the shows at Venue 40 was a version of *The Just-So Stories*, it did not mean that Friends endorsed Kipling's world-view. The problem is when the approval of something frightful (or, at least, an indifference to its being so) is inferred by others, who feel pain or anger on that account.

I do not think a single principle applies here: some things I would defend, but others – the titling of a newsletter being one – I would change even at the prospect of causing upset. The same applies to speech or writing.

More than thirty years ago, I attended an event led by Philip Rack of Bradford meeting, on confronting racism (a matter not as new to Friends as some now seem to think). In the previous week, Norman Tebbit had been in the news, attacking the BBC for referring to the domestic opponents of Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms as 'conservatives', and Philip pointed out that in such a situation it is useless to *justify* the choice of a word ('conservative' *does* mean 'averse to change') if employing it is in itself an obstacle to communication owing to the other person's problems with it – even when these are unreasonable, or seem so to us. Instead, we must find other words ("Well, Norman, old chum ..." he imagined this conversation beginning), and not think that in doing so we are pandering to prejudice or letting our opponents set the terms of a discussion; rather, we are *enabling them to hear us*. I remembered this when, in the first week of the war in Ukraine, an open letter to Putin from a London-based Russian was criticised for not using the word *invasion* – in the unlikely event of its being seen by him at all, there would have been no point in making him stop reading. In 'speaking Truth to Power' – or others – we must put it in words to which Power, or the other, is not allergic.

Editor

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – One Year On

On the anniversary of its entry into force, a new and extensive briefing has been published on the TPNW and its implications for the UK: a comprehensive, detailed and referenced analysis by Dr Rebecca Johnson, which also explores challenges and opportunities in Scotland, and the constitutional question. It can read online at the ICAN Scottish website:

<https://www.nuclearban.scot/bone-up-on-the-ban/the-story-so-far/>

and is available in book form. The cover price is £10; it is on sale at the Edinburgh Yes Hub (31 Lasswade Road, EH16 6TD, 11am–4.30 pm, Monday to Saturday) or it can be ordered by emailing hello@nuclearban.scot or by phoning Janet Fenton. A copy has been given to each Scottish Area Meeting, so it may soon be in the Library at 7 Victoria Terrace.

Rebecca Johnson – *Nuclear Weapons are Banned! What Does This Mean for Britain?* Acronym Institute/CND, 2022: ISBN 978-1-9993413-2-9

News from Woodbrooke

As spring approaches, we would like to give you an update about Woodbrooke. We have already successfully navigated many unexpected challenges during the pandemic, thanks to the support of our many friends, and have moved from a handful of courses online to offering a large programme of learning and opportunities for worship in this way. This has meant our learning has become more accessible and more inclusive for many people.

We are keen to continue our focus on online learning, but we are looking forward to delivering some of our learning in person around Britain, working closely with the Local Development Workers, and possibly holding a few courses and retreats at The Woodbrooke Centre too.

Woodbrooke as a place, beloved by many Friends, has had many difficulties to overcome in the pandemic. Woodbrooke the place and the Woodbrooke learning programme have always been synonymous but the pandemic has changed Woodbrooke and we find ourselves at a crossroads. While the Woodbrooke Centre has remained open for most of the last two years, the business model that the centre was operating before the pandemic is no longer viable. For example, many people have asked when we are reopening for Bed and Breakfast, and the answer is we simply can't afford to do so. B&B was only ever intended to fill in the gaps when we had spare bedrooms from residential courses and conferences, and it doesn't work economically if you have too few residential events, as the gaps are just too big to fill.

We are heartened that many of our local customers are using us for day events and meetings, and we know how important it is to many people, far beyond just the Quaker community. We have also seen good uptake of our self-catering flat. We are not currently able to offer individual stays at the Woodbrooke Centre beyond this self-catering offer; however we do have some weekends available to book for your Meeting or group to hold a residential event. We can offer tailored teaching for these events from one of our experienced team of tutors to enhance your time together.

As anyone with responsibility for property knows, there are always choices to be made that are right for the long term and not just for the immediate future: it's about stewardship. Trustees are therefore taking time to consider Woodbrooke as a place and explore its purpose and how it fulfils our ministry. They will be working closely with staff, partners and neighbours, such as the Bournville Village Trust, as well as Friends, to discern a way forward. This isn't an easy task and we ask for your support and up-holding as we work on this over the coming months to look at all possibilities.

Please continue to take advantage of the wealth of opportunities Woodbrooke offers and do not hesitate to be in touch to share your thoughts.

Ingrid Greenhow
Clerk to Woodbrooke Trustees

Sandra Berry
Director

Email: trustees@woodbrooke.org.uk

Website: www.woodbrooke.org.uk

Wales and Scotland: TPNW and Human Rights

THROUGH devolution, Scotland is recognised as a legislative entity. Its devolved government has not, however, been granted power to refuse to have the nuclear weapons which it strongly and consistently opposes, based or stored in, or transported over, the territory under its jurisdiction.

The siting of nuclear weapons in Scotland unfairly impacts on the people of Scotland's human right to life. The people of Scotland are discriminated against by being put at greater risk of being victims of accidents or attack involving the weapons stored and deployed here without meaningful representation in decisions about them. In the UK Parliament, an overwhelming majority of Scottish MPs has rejected at every opportunity the maintenance, upgrading or replacement of the Trident system; but without effect, because they are outnumbered.

With regard to the current situation in Ukraine, the international community is struggling to fulfil its responsibility to protect and support civilians, as the risk of nuclear catastrophe rises. This is not a Russia/Ukraine conflict, nor even an east/west conflict. The real conflict to be resolved lies between those who do and those who don't believe that nuclear weapons – and ultimately the use of *any* transnational organised violence – can have any utility or legitimacy.

The Welsh and Scottish governments are taking action to support the refugees that this conflict is creating, but under restrictions imposed by the UK Government. Both would wish to do more.

On the Monday after the invasion began, the Scottish Parliament's Nuclear Disarmament Cross-Party Group heard from a human rights activist on the ground in Ukraine, and issued a statement urging the universalisation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). In Wales, the Senedd has also passed a resolution that closes by "*acknowledging that this conflict increases the risk of a nuclear war and the fear of nuclear war amongst people in Wales and beyond, and therefore calls on all states, including the nuclear states to sign and ratify the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which came into force in January 2021, and which would prevent such a threat in future*".

The territory over which the UK Government can reasonably claim a democratic mandate for their nuclear policies does not include the country where the weapons are based and stored, Scotland. The Scottish Parliament and the Senedd agree that their peoples are at risk from weapons which endanger rather than protect. Limitations on their authority should not include enforced complicity in being a launch pad for a Government they cannot influence, and both of them now urge the TPNW as the remedy.

Janet Fenton

Meeting for Sufferings: 4-6 March

SEVENTY Friends attended on Zoom and about forty in person at Friends House, London, over three days. It was my first time as a representative at this powerful gathering, with what is happening in Ukraine very much in everyone's mind.

The documents provided in advance of the meeting are at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2022-03-agenda-papers-package>.

Full minutes from the weekend can be found here:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes>

The COVID pandemic, and how it had affected our meetings, was noted.

The main items on the agenda were efficiently dealt with, focussing on the structure of our Friends' business decision-making places: Britain Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings, with regard to their simplification, and putting things in place for the next generation.

The meeting was addressed by Caroline Nursey, clerk to BYM Trustees, who have been working on *Thriving Quaker Communities*, which has involved the recruitment of Local Development Workers; a *Sustainable and Peaceful World*, which the restructuring of QPSW is intended to support; *Simple structures and practices*, such as the new finance system; with everything 'distinctively Quaker', 'integrated' and 'well governed'.

We heard from representatives to QWRC (Quaker World Relations Committee) and QCCIR (Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations). New appointments were discussed. Why is it so hard to find reps for the committees? It always seems to be "the usual suspects": people who have, in their working lives, been used to running organisations. Could Area Meetings be asked to suggest people for roles on central committees?

These things were later considered in breakout rooms, where some of us felt more empowered to share our thoughts on the process of simplification:

- How can our structures be more inclusive, more sustainable and simpler?
- Do we need so many committees?

The subject of racism in our terminology was discussed. Should we still be using the term *overseer* with its connotations of hierarchy and oppression? Most area meetings have already made changes.

Friends Maria Huff of Extinction Rebellion (XR) and Arne Springorum of Insulate Britain had been arrested at peaceful protests. We agreed to hold them in the Light.

Before Sunday worship we heard a prepared response to the Ukraine situation from Oliver Robertson, head of Witness & Worship at Quakers in Britain [see page 5]. I found it very helpful at what is a difficult time to be a pacifist. The Meeting for Worship itself was 'elдерed' at one point to ask for silence, as so many Friends were moved to minister.

The dates for Yearly Meeting 2023 were set as 29 April–1 May. (This year's dates are 27–30 May 2022 [see page 25].)

Jane Kelly

South East Scotland AM representative

Fàilte Edinburgh: March update

FÀILTE EDINBURGH includes members and attenders from three local meetings in South East Scotland Area Meeting and several non-Quaker volunteers; there are currently nine members of the Core Group. We are committed to helping one refugee family to come and live in Edinburgh, and to supporting them through their first year's residence here. This we are doing through the UK Government–UNHCR Community Sponsorship Scheme; see

<https://www.unhcr.org/uk/community-sponsorship5f9825b34.html>

After meeting the Refugee Resettlement Officer for the City of Edinburgh Council and securing his written approval, we submitted our Application in Principle to the Home Office at the end of January. We have now had our pre-approval meeting with the Home Office, and have been recommended to proceed to the Full Application, which is the final stage in the process.

The lease on a flat is being negotiated. It is expected to begin at the end of April/beginning of May. The flat is in Sciennes (about 2 km south of the city centre and immediately south of the Meadows), and will be let unfurnished; an inventory of items that we are required to supply for it is on page 20. Please have a look at the list and let us know if you can help with anything.

Our bank account is now open, and donations continue to be most welcome – see opposite. We are approximately three-quarters of the way towards meeting our projected target; however, with the rapidly changing economic situation, it is hard for us to budget precisely.

We hope that the family will arrive during the summer, ideally before the Festival begins in August. If you would be interested in joining our team of volunteers please contact us at csfailte@gmail.com, and we will get back to you with the details.

Thank you for your continuing support for Fàilte Edinburgh.

Lynne Barty – Project Lead

Donating money to Fàilte Edinburgh

Fàilte Edinburgh aims to make a difference to the lives of vulnerable refugees through the UK Government-UNHCR Community Sponsorship Scheme.

Ways to donate money:

1) By Bank transfer

Donations can be made by direct bank transfer to:

Account name: Failte Edinburgh

Sort code: 08-92-99

Account number: 67237353

2) By monthly direct debit

A small monthly amount can go a long way to help. The bank details are above. You can cancel the direct debit at any time.

3) By cheque

You can send cheques made out to **FAILTE EDINBURGH** to the treasurer, Mark Bitel [*address in the Book of Members*].

If you wish us to claim GIFT AID on your donation(s), please contact Mark Bitel for a gift aid form: mark@evaluation.u-net.com

4) By CAF voucher

Please send your completed CAF voucher made out to **SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING** with a note indicating that funds are to be earmarked for Failte Edinburgh. Vouchers should be sent to: **Treasurer, SESAM, Central Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL**



Thank you for your generosity and compassion

Failte Edinburgh is administered through South East Scotland Area Meeting
(registered charity No. SC019165)

Household Inventory

The following list, drawn up by Sponsor Refugees (the Citizens UK foundation for Community Sponsorship of refugees – see <https://www.sponsorrefugees.org/>) itemises the furniture and equipment it is thought likely will have to be provided for a refugee family of five (starred items if they have a very young child), although it is intended only as a guide: “Clearly, this list will have to be adapted to the particular family, house and Community Sponsorship group and not all items are essential.” There are certain oddities (e.g. the amounts of crockery and cutlery and the lack of an extra dining chair, which presuppose that the family will never entertain even a single guest to a meal); and members of the core group have spotted the omission of such things as coat-hangers.

If you are able to donate items for the family from this list, please contact Lynne Barty [details in the Book of Members]. Items shown scored out [~~thus~~] have already been obtained, or else are already in situ.

Bedrooms

1 double bed
 3 single beds [1 cabin bed + 1 single donated]
 3 bedside tables [2 already donated]
 3 sets of bedroom curtains
 4 bedside rugs [3 already donated]
 1 double duvet
 3 single duvets
 2 double duvet covers
 6 single duvet covers
 5 blankets or eiderdowns
 10 pillows
 10 pillow cases
 2 double sheets
 6 single sheets
 4 hot water bottles
 4 bedside lamps [1 already donated]
 3 lampshades
 1 portable radio
~~1 full-length mirror~~
 * 1 baby’s blanket
 * 1 mobile
 * 3 cot sheets

Bathroom

5 hand towels
 6 bath towels
 1 bath mat
 2 shower gels
 2 shampoos
 1 conditioner
 2 bars of soap

3 tubes of toothpaste
 5 toothbrushes
 20 toilet rolls
 1 toilet brush
 1 toilet cleaner
 1 air freshener
 1 first aid kit
 1 bottle of pain killers
 1 pack of sanitary towels
 1 shaving mirror
 1 razor + spare blades
 1 shaving brush
 1 shaving cream
 1 lady’s razor
 * 1 baby’s bath
 * 1 changing mat
 * 1 big pack of disposable nappies
 * 3 packs of antiseptic wipes

Living room/Dining room

1 medium sofa (2-seater; or L-shaped 3-4 seater)
 2 armchairs
 1 TV + satellite dish
 (for connection to Arabic channels)
 1 laptop + wifi package
 1 living room rug
 1 or 2 sets of living room curtains
~~1 lampshade~~
 2 lamps
 1 extension lead
 1 double plug

~~1 wall clock~~
~~1 coffee table~~
~~1 dining table~~
 5 dining chairs [2 *chairs donated*]
 * 1 high chair
 1 sideboard
~~1 mirror~~
 Various framed pictures [2 *donated*]
 2 vases (*with fresh flowers for day of arrival*)
 Various pot plants
 10 large knives
 10 smaller knives
 10 large forks
 10 large spoons
 10 teaspoons
 10 small plates
 10 large plates
 10 cereal/soup bowls
 3 large serving plates
 3 large serving bowls
 6 small serving bowls
 10 large glasses
 10 small glasses
 5 tea cups
 10 coffee cups
 * 1 playpen

Kitchen

~~1 cooker with oven~~
 1 microwave oven
 1 fridge/freezer
 1 washer/drier
 1 drying rack
 1 pack of washing powder
 1 bottle of fabric conditioner
~~1 iron~~
 1 ironing board
 1 vacuum cleaner
 1 dustpan & brush
 1 broom
 1 mop & bucket
 1 bottle of bleach
 1 floor cleaner
 1 cream cleaner

1 antiseptic surface wipe
 1 pack of dishcloths
 1 pack of scourers
 1 bottle of washing up liquid
 1 liquid soap hand dispenser
 1 rubbish bin
 1 pack of black bin bags
~~1 food waste bin~~
 1 pack of bio-degradable bags
 1 air freshener
 1 shopping trolley
~~+ various canvas shopping bags~~
 1 Arabic-style coffee pot
 1 milk jug
 1 sugar bowl
 1 kettle
 2 frying pans (one large)
 5 various-sized saucepans
 (at least one a very large one)
 3 spatulas
 2 sharp cooking knives
 3 wooden spoons
 1 large ladle
 2 chopping boards
 1 mixing bowl
 1 whisk
 1 cheese grater
 1 meat grinder
 Salt cellar and pepper mill
 Other pots for spices
 5 tea towels
 1 wall calendar
 1 desk diary
 Various pens and pencils
 1 kitchen scales
 * 1 baby's bottle (+ formula milk)
 * 3 baby's food bowls

Hall

2 umbrellas
~~1 door mat~~
~~1 key hook~~
 * 1 baby's pram
 * 1 pushchair

Chanonry Lighthouse

The painting reproduced on page 1 is by our Friend Simon Jackson, whose new address in the Black Isle was included in *Sesame* 239. The lighthouse at Chanonry Point on the Moray Firth was designed by Alan Stevenson (1807-1865), an uncle of RLS the writer; the tower is 13 m high, and its lamp was first lit on 15 May 1846.

“I know the plans I have for you”

World Day of Prayer, Friday 4 March 2022

Service written by the Christian women of England, Wales & Northern Ireland

THIS year, the relaxation of lockdown meant that I was able to attend a live World Day of Prayer (WDP) service in a church – St Mary Magdalene’s Catholic church in Bingham – though with the congregation still masked and well-separated. I not only attended, but had been asked to take part, reading the story of one of the women whose experience featured in the worship. Given its focus on exile and exclusion, it was fitting that we began the service with a prayer for the people of Ukraine.

Throughout the service God was referred to simply as ‘God’, and we addressed God as “God, our Mother and our Father”. The women who wrote the service explained “*We have used the phrase ... not intending to be provocative but only to draw attention to the wider imagery of God and to try to take a small step towards an understanding of God beyond gender. We have similarly avoided using either male or female pronouns but talk of God as God and not “he” or “she”. WDP is a women-led movement and perhaps by introducing some balance to a predominantly masculine view of God we can encourage women and men to be open to new and deeper experiences of the love God has for all creation.*”

I had taken part in the preparatory Bible study session on Zoom, and have been pondering the chosen passage, on and off, ever since. When I was a practising Catholic, I wouldn’t have had any problem with it, but now I find it really challenging. *Jeremiah 29:1-14* is the prophet Jeremiah’s message to the people of the kingdom of Judah who had been captured and taken to Babylon. The exiled Jews are exhorted to build houses, plant gardens and eat their produce, and marry and procreate so that their numbers won’t decrease. They are to *seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.* They are also to beware false prophets among them.

Jeremiah goes on to say that God’s plan for the exiles is to bring them back to Jerusalem after seventy years: *For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare, and not for harm, to give you a future with hope ... and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.*

The Bible study session asked us to think about ways of being exiled, and what sanctuary could look like – a place of hope, a place to heal – and how we could create this for people. In the service we heard Lina, Natalie and Emily telling their stories of exclusion – living in poverty, in fear, in loneliness and isolation – and how “God’s plans for them have blessed them in very unexpected ways”. During the service seven candles were lit, representing the seven areas of the world: our prayer was *God, our Mother and our*

Father, we light a candle of hope to celebrate with all your people as we watch and wait for your plans and promises to be fulfilled. We were encouraged to think about planting seeds of hope in our lives, our communities and our country, and we prayed for people living with hunger, in fear, in loneliness or isolation, for people who are shunned, and people living in exile.

It made sense to me that the Bible passage should exhort people to play an active part in the community in which they found themselves; but other things made less sense. The two things that kept bugging me were the passivity of the prayers (we light candles, we watch and wait, and pray for these people, but simply ask that their situations may get better without ourselves doing anything about it); and the concept of a God who could cheerfully have a plan to send a load of people to suffer exile and after seventy years bring them back to better things.

In my Catholic days I would have been perfectly happy with this scenario: now I find it really hard to swallow. I can't accept the concept of a God who deliberately plans to inflict misery and suffering on anyone, and I'm sure that the messes humans get themselves into are the result of human choices and actions. God has no hands but our hands... we can ask for God's help and strength and guidance to do what we can, but the divine hand isn't going to come out of the sky and sort everything for us while we stand around and cheer.

Maybe I was failing to practise *Advices & Queries* 12? *Receive the vocal ministry of others in a tender and creative spirit. Reach for the meaning deep within it, recognising that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be so for others...* though I think I **was** tak[ing] time to learn about other people's experiences of the Light, and trying to work gladly with other religious groups in the pursuit of common goals (A. & Q. 5 & 6). The intention of the service was to give hope in darkness: it just didn't do it for me.

It was definitely challenging to take part in this year's World Day of Prayer, but I thoroughly enjoyed the singing, including a new piece written for the service (*Surely I know the plans I have for you, the Lord said*) which is still repeating in my head. I greatly appreciated talking with people new to me over refreshments afterwards, and look forward to next year's service, which will be written by the women of Taiwan. Let us hope that next year we'll be able to sit closer to each other and sing lustily without our masks!

Mary Woodward

Biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.

As Mary says, preparations are already in progress for World Day of Prayer, 2023, on the theme I Have Heard About Your Faith (Ephesians 1:15-19); for more information see: <https://worlddayofprayer.net/taiwan-2023.html>

Sheet music of 'For Surely I Know the Plans' by Lucy Hole, and other material related to WDP 2022 is at:

<https://www.wwdp.org.uk/2022-wdp-free-resources-to-download/>

First Meeting of State Parties

(signatories of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons)

RESCHEDULED

The official dates for the First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP) to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) are now **21-23 June 2022**, in Vienna, at the UN International Centre there. The Austrian diplomat, Alexander Kmentt, one of the architects of the TPNW, will ensure that civil society groups like the World Council of Churches, Quakers, and international physicians are included. This first meeting will set rules of procedure, and, under Kmentt, hear the voices of survivors of the use of nuclear weapons, the testing and the impacts of the whole nuclear cycle from uranium mining onwards. ICAN [*the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017*], is coordinating the civil society input, and plans a two day civil society forum on **18 & 19 June**. This will be a major ICAN conference in preparation and celebration. The Austrian Government will also host an international conference on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons on **20 June**. Due to the current threats of nuclear war, work to universalize the TPNW is very urgent. Those of us working in nuclear-armed states need to hear from those in nuclear free zones, and everyone must understand the issues affecting the main decisions that will be made at the UN 1MSP in order to lobby effectively, and to disseminate the news at home afterwards. Restrictions are ending in Europe and summer looks to be less difficult in terms of the pandemic, so it is time to book the Eurostar for Vienna!

There will be a special event for parliamentarians to meet and exchange ideas, and invitations will be sent to all those who have signed the ICAN Parliamentarian pledge – make sure that your elected representative is supported and encouraged to be one of them.

ICAN's Austrian partner organisations will help to ensure that there are places to meet and that people coming to Vienna can find their way about.

The situation in the Ukraine makes it very clear that nuclear weapons can never keep people safe or meet their basic needs, Deterrence can now be seen as the soul-less and pessimistic policy it truly is, and nuclear deterrence is no more than a licence for the most extreme violence imaginable, regardless of the risk to life and to the planet itself. We all know that everyone in the world would be impacted if nuclear weapons were used.

This could be the most productive and significant meeting ever organised in this campaign - as well as planning for larger in person presence this can be a hybrid meeting, ensuring that people can participate also from home, making it inclusive for everyone.

Janet Fenton

Yearly Meeting 2022

Bookings for Yearly Meeting are now open; all members and attenders are welcome. It is however essential for all participants to book their place, at www.quaker.org.uk/ym, whether they plan to attend in person or to join online. Here you will also find all the documents to prepare for Yearly Meeting, including the calling letter from Siobhán Haire, Yearly Meeting Clerk nominate, and the volunteer calling letters. Meetings are asked to support those attending in their spiritual and practical preparation.

YM 2022 will take place 27–30 May, with preparation events from 21 May. Some will take part online, others attend in person at Friends House; everyone will be equally able to offer ministry. There will be in-person events suitable for different ages, and some online.

This year's theme is 'Faith, community and action' and will address three big questions:

Faith: *How do we experience worship, community and witness?*

Community: *How can we build Quaker communities that respond to challenges and put faith into action?*

Action: *How can we transform thinking and action in Quaker communities and wider society?*

Offering Service to Yearly Meeting

We invite volunteers to help ensure a successful Yearly Meeting. They will need to be present in Friends House to support those attending in person and online, except for Yearly Meeting Nominating Group, members of which may serve remotely. Friends must be registered for Yearly Meeting to volunteer. To find out more, see www.quaker.org.uk/ym/get-involved.

Financial help

Bursaries are available for those who need them, and no-one should be prevented from attending YM by financial concerns. When you book, you can indicate that you would like a bursary and we will get back to you with details. You will be able to complete your booking. It is possible to donate to the bursary fund, if in a position to do so. Friends willing to support the work of Yearly Meeting via the bursary fund or Quaker work in general can find more information at www.quaker.org.uk/giving.

Yearly Meeting Programme

An overview timetable is available in the *Preparing for Yearly Meeting* document, and, when published, all other YM Documents in Advance will be available to download from www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents. A detailed timetable will be available online ahead of Yearly Meeting to Friends whose registration has been processed, who will be able to view the whole of the Yearly Meeting programme and choose which events they wish to attend.

If you have any queries, please go to ym@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1040.

Preparation for the 2022 Swarthmore lecture to be delivered by Helen Minnis

In 2020 West Scotland Area Meeting (WSAM) asked elders to explore issues about racism in the Society following the resignation of a member. A small group of Glasgow elders undertook this and following powerful exploration amongst themselves set up online workshops which were well received by over thirty Quakers in West Scotland. Helen Minnis also spoke to Young Friends and WSAM. The suggestions from the workshops and requests from WSAM are being taken forward and the group has developed a list of resources for learning and met with Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, and Edwina Peart, Inclusion and Diversity Officer for Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), to explore next steps.

Subsequent to this, Helen took part in a panel discussion at Yearly Meeting in 2021 and is now preparing for the Swarthmore lecture. Her view is that it should not be a one-off event, but part of the continuing process as committed to by both BYM and Meeting for Sufferings. Helen's own words express this clearly:

My initial response to being asked to do the lecture was mixed – a rush of excitement closely followed by a flush of annoyance that, despite having spent my career researching child and adolescent mental health and becoming quite well known for my work, I wasn't being asked to speak about that. I was being asked to talk about structural racism. Of course, structural racism is something I only have knowledge about from my day-to-day experience – I am not a race scholar. I am probably just as prone to making stereotyped assumptions about people, no doubt sometimes racist ones, as the next person. Then I realised that the person giving this lecture needs what the Buddhists call a "beginner's" approach, so I probably am a good person for the task. I am aware that many Friends – white and Black – are considering this issue deeply, including Glasgow Meeting's White Privilege group and many similar groups across the UK. We are all on a steep learning curve about this pressing but sensitive topic, so I know I will be upheld in the difficult task of articulating something about it for Friends.

With that beginner's approach in mind, I am hopeful that Friends might be willing to do some thinking and preparation about this topic in advance, so as to come to the lecture with an open mind and heart. Through West Scotland Area Meeting, the Glasgow White Privilege group is planning to circulate some easily digestible materials, with questions for consideration, in the months leading up to the lecture. Some Learning Groups are planning to discuss these, but please feel free to use them in whatever way you find helpful.

So far, the group has circulated resources and questions for two study sessions which can be undertaken individually or in groups, and are happy to share these and other resources more widely.

Ann Kerr
(Glasgow LM)

Quaker Parliamentary Engagement in 2021

I want to thank Friends for their continued encouragement and support of the work I and the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) undertake to articulate Quaker views to politicians and civil servants in Scotland, and to support Quakers to work within the Scottish political scene. I recognize that it is the witness of local Friends faithfully living out the testimonies that gives authenticity to the work we do with parliamentarians. Whether it be protesting against nuclear weapons; providing practical support to refugees or those in prison; or meeting, or writing to, your MSPs, the actions of Friends gives depth and weight to our calls for a more just, peaceful and sustainable world. Here I wanted to give you a brief overview of some of the work that has been done by the PEWG on your behalf over the last year. I hope this will both encourage you that work has been done and progress made, while also strengthening your resolve that there is still much to bid for in the weeks and months ahead.

Human Rights

All our Rights in Law

At the start of 2021 we were involved in the National Human Rights Taskforce's "All our Rights in Law" consultation: a process advising the government on the incorporation of further human rights treaties into Scots law (see <https://www.allourrightsinalaw.scot/>). This includes, among other things, the rights to food; to adequate housing; and to a healthy environment. We held a very fruitful online discussion with Scottish Friends. You can read our input into this consultation here:

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/OiS%20submission%20to%20All%20Our%20Rights%20In%20Law%20consultation%20Final.pdf>

and the final report to the government (which quoted us twice) here:

https://hrcscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/HRCS_all-our-rights_report_48pp_web_single-pages.pdf

The commitment to bring a new Human Rights Bill before the Scottish parliament was in the Scottish Government's programme for government, and we expect the Bill process to begin later this year.

Incorporation of Children's Rights

Alongside the Children's Rights charity Together Scotland we actively campaigned for the incorporation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child into Scots law. See:

<https://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/about-childrens-rights/monitoring-the-uncrc/incorporation-of-the-un-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child/>

The relevant Bill was passed unanimously by the Scottish parliament, but then subject to a successful legal challenge by the UK government. The legislation has now returned to the Scottish parliament for amendment

and, through Together Scotland, we are working to ensure that the Bill proceeds in its strongest possible form. The Bill has many strengths and we see it as an important tool in enabling young people to recognize and question military involvement in the education system.

The Climate and Ecological Crisis

With Scotland hosting the UN Climate Conference, COP26, it was obvious that 2021 offered a significant opportunity regarding government action on the climate and ecological emergency. In February we responded to the consultation on Scotland's Land Use Strategy; and before the election we worked closely with Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) to get candidates and parties to commit to doubling the Climate Justice Fund – see:

<https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/media-statement-scottish-government-climate-justice-funding/> –

and to supporting loss & damage finance for the global south. This involved meetings with manifesto writers, workshops to encourage the lobbying of candidates, and a workshop with new MSPs. Lastly, in September, SCCS hosted a series of dialogues between the Scottish Government and representatives from the global south. This initiative eventually led to the Scottish Government's taking a firm stance in favour of loss & damage finance. (See <https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202100252499/>)

While Scotland's ambition to tackle the climate and ecological crisis is commendable, it has frequently been criticized for not providing a clear plan of how it will achieve its emissions reductions. Together with members of SCCS I will be meeting civil servants responsible for producing the government's next Climate Change plan to discuss this. [*This meeting should now have taken place.*]

Peacebuilding

Enterprise Scotland and the conflict in Yemen

Following the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) report *Made in Scotland* (see <https://caat.org.uk/publications/made-in-scotland/>), we arranged to see Ivan McKee MSP, Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism & Enterprise, to raise concerns that public money was funding companies profiting from the conflict in Yemen. Mr McKee, who has spoken against the sale of armaments to Yemen, was sympathetic to our concerns, but stated that Enterprise Scotland did *not* fund the manufacture of munitions, and that the projects it had funded had civilian purposes. We have pressed Mr McKee to explore whether further conditionality might be applied to Enterprise Scotland to exclude certain markets; the conversation is ongoing.

Peace Institute

In September, in its programme for government, the Scottish government announced its intention to establish a Peace Institute by the end of 2023. We have written to the First Minister expressing Quakers' interest in this and asking for further information, and have received a response inviting us to be part of a roundtable to discuss the plans.

Peace Education

We have also been actively talking with partners about ways in which we might promote peace education to teachers, Local Authorities, and the Scottish government. So far this has involved conversations with QPSW, the Education Institute of Scotland, Peace & Justice Scotland, the Church of Scotland, and the Catholic Justice & Peace Commission. I hope to do more work on this in 2022.

Supporting Friends to engage

Lastly, within our capacity we have tried to support Friends to engage with Scottish politics. This has involved guides for holding a hustings or election meeting; issues briefings; and information about motions in parliament on which Friends may wish to contact their MSPs. In November we supported a representative from South Edinburgh Meeting to give evidence to the Equalities, Human Rights & Civil Justice Committee. See:

<https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/equalities-human-rights-and-civil-justice-committee-november-2-2021>

We have also had direct enquiries from local Friends about a number of issues such as the treatment of victims of human trafficking in the penal system, and proposals for new firing ranges in Dumfries & Galloway, and have tried to offer support and advice where appropriate. In this coming year we hope Friends locally will continue to engage with Scottish politics and we have produced some briefings to assist those who might wish to lobby MSPs on the three priority areas set by General Meeting for Scotland: the climate crisis, peace building, and economic justice. We are also glad to be building a connection with the newly formed Scottish Quakers Community Justice Working Group.

Andrew Tomlinson

Parliamentary Engagement Officer

Trauma, Justice and Imprisonment

A Day of Quaker Reflection, organised by members of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network.

***Saturday 26 March, 10am–3pm: online, and at Glasgow Meeting House
38 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow G2 4PS***

This will be a day of discussions around trauma-informed practice and criminal justice from the perspective of Quakers in Scotland and will cover topics such as the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences, therapeutic alternatives to prisons, the Scottish context for trauma-informed practice, and prison abolition. There will also be a 'self-care healing' session led by a member of the group Capacitar.*

If you wish to attend, to receive the Zoom link, or if you have further questions, please email Anneke at anneke.kraakman@gmail.com. In person places will be limited, and you will need to bring your own lunch!

* See <https://www.capacitaruk.org/scotland.html>

Book of Discipline Revision Committee: March update

The committee met again by Zoom at the end of January. Unable to attend on Wednesday evening, I was delighted to be at both weekend sessions.

We had hoped to welcome a second Welsh member, but for personal reasons the Friend appointed by Meeting for Sufferings had to ask for release, meaning that Catherine James is still the committee's only Welsh-speaking representative. We very much hope an appointment will be made soon, to help Catherine with the incredible work she does. Another member is taking time off for maternity leave – we look forward to welcoming her back later this year, and to meeting the new baby as soon as this is practicable.

Our clerks gave a report to Meeting for Sufferings last December, which was well received (and prompted an Area Meeting to invite us to talk to them). We began considering what part we wanted to play in the 'special interest groups' (now re-named *Faith in Action*) prior to Yearly Meeting in May – something I'm happy to leave to others, as at that time I'll be representing Friends at the Church of Scotland's General Assembly. It is hoped to offer sessions updating Friends on the process so far, inviting creativity, and outlining what we are doing with submissions already received.

Yearly Meeting is conducting several reviews of its central governance, which will inevitably impinge on the work we are doing on church government (how we do things). Our clerks attended a meeting with the Recording Clerk and representatives of central committees, which aims to ensure that consistent decisions are made and that the BDRC is kept up to date on matters which directly affect our task of describing Quaker structures and how they work. I am profoundly grateful for the people on our committee who not only understand but relish working in this area!

Several task groups reported. The 'Communicating with Friends' group is engaged in creating clear guidelines for visits to Quaker groups – of which one took place in February and two more are due soon – and group members are working on sessions to present at BYM. The 'Tagging' group is continuing its work on submissions already received, and beginning work on a 'how to' guide for the rest of us to search the submissions. (They will test it on people like me, who are not the most tech-savvy among us...) The 'Testimony' group is needing more members, as two have had to drop out. The group working on 'Community' presented a draft, to be kept with other 'finished for now' pieces until we are ready to return to them. 'Trusteeship and Charitable Status' are continuing their admirable work, which will soon be 'finished for now', though the reviews current in BYM will undoubtedly have an effect on the final piece.

The group looking at 'Reviewing Text and Compiling a Glossary' reported, and suggested a number of principles for us to use and test as we work on topics. At the moment, most of our work is on Church Government, where we need to demonstrate the unity of our Quaker practice. When we work

on other sections we will want to show the rich diversity of our Quaker experience. We were reminded that, while we must use simple language wherever possible, we must not simplify the *ideas* we are trying to express. The use of quotations will be very helpful here.

We also began to look at when and how we might start sharing text we have written. Until now only the 'Trusteeship and Charitable Status' group has involved non-committee people with its work – seeking the advice and understanding of a few relevant individuals. In future, we will want to share some of our writing more widely, and we hope to submit sample draft text to Meeting for Sufferings in December.

In small groups we shared our experience of Membership and what it means to us. This enables us to get to know each other better – especially those appointed since lockdown, who have not had the opportunity to meet any of us in person. Sharing our thoughts once we were all together again gave us useful material for when we return to this topic – but we wondered how representative our thoughts are of the Society as a whole.

We were reminded that we need not wait to be invited to work on topics – there is plenty still to do! We were asked to tell the clerks if we are willing and able to take on any more. At present I have to decline – managing our 'engagement diary' is enough for me just now – but I hope to have the time and energy to do more as my health improves.

It was a long and challenging weekend, and I confess to not having fully digested all the reports, trusting instead that the Spirit had guided Friends working on each topic, and that they would be fine without my input. We are looking ahead to our next meeting which will, please God, be in person at Woodbrooke over a long weekend in July: I am keen to catch up with old friends and to get to know all the 'new bugs' who've been appointed these last two years. I hope to have a lot of positives to report in autumn!

Meanwhile, I end with the Key Messages from the committee, and remind you to look out for the BDRC sessions in the week leading up to BYM 2022.

We continue to liaise with the various review groups of BYM central governance, so as to inform our relevant church government text.

We are developing the 'voice of the book'. There are some sections where we need to show unity of practice and others where we want to represent diversity of experience.

We have looked at all of the 750 + submissions sent by Friends so far to understand the range of contributions. We thank everyone who has made suggestions. There's still plenty of time to send more ideas and you can do this here:

<https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qfp-idea/> (or email qfp@quaker.org.uk)

We are looking forward to BYM 2022 and will be offering Faith in Action sessions to share about our work so far – more information coming soon.

Thank you for your interest in our work, and your prayerful support – without which the task would be so much harder.

Mary Woodward

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Monday 17 January 2022 by remote videoconferencing

2022/01/01 Worship and introductions

During worship, we have heard read *Quaker Faith & Practice* 23.48, from Parker J. Palmer in 1977. God comes to us in our need, and our needs are met in community. It is in community that we support each other and learn how to live and act together.

We ask Phil Lucas to serve as Elder for this meeting.

We have made available the names of those nominated for appointments. We will record our decisions at item 10.

We have ensured those present know each other's names and local meetings. The attendance will be recorded in the concluding minute.

2022/01/02 Minutes of Meeting of Saturday 27 November 2021

The minutes of our meeting held on 27 November 2021 at 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, and by remote videoconferencing, have been signed and entered in the minute book.

[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]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

2022/01/11 Closing minute

53 Friends (47 members, 5 attenders and one visitor) have been at all or part of this meeting. We have welcomed Anna Levin, formerly of Polmont LM and now of Jesus Lane, Cambridge.

Local meeting attendance is indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 20	Central Fife 2	East Lothian 5	Kelso 3	Penicuik 2
Polmont 4	Portobello & Musselburgh 6	South Edinburgh 10	Tweeddale -	Visitor 1

We next meet on Saturday 26 March 2022 at 10.00 am, in person, at Greenpark Community Centre Polmont, as guests of Polmont LM.

Facilities for a blended meeting are unlikely to be available. This arrangement is subject to pandemic conditions, and further notice will be given as appropriate.

(Signed)
Alastair Cameron, *Clerk*
Cath Dyer, *Assistant Clerk*

THE BOOK OF MEMBERS

The Book of Members and Attenders lists the names, addresses, and other contact details of members and of known attenders. Copies are available (at £3.99) to anyone listed in it; however it is a **confidential document**, only to be used for the purposes of the Religious Society of Friends.

It assumed that readers of *Sesame* have access to it.

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

Sundays at 11.00. No booking required. Tea & coffee provided; you can bring a packed lunch.

Wednesday, 12.30–1.00 pm. Tea & coffee, etc., as on Sundays

Contact the office, centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk or 0131 225 4825, for updates; see also <https://www.quakerscotland.org/central-edinburgh/covid-guidance>.

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

On the 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays at 10.30 am; no pre-booking required. Meetings on 1st Sundays in Dunfermline will resume on 3 April - contact **Laurie Naumann** for venue details.

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

On the 2nd & last Sundays of the month at 11.00 am. Please contact **Di Simcock** if you plan to attend, and for updates.

Kelso – QMH, Abbey Row, Kelso TD5 7JF

Sundays at 10.30 am; pre-booking no longer required. Contact **Marianne Butler** for updates.

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** for updates.

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 Drive, Polmont FK2 0PZ

Sundays at 10.45: contact **Marriot Dallas** for updates, and if bringing children.

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

On the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 11.00 am.

1st Sundays: Evening meeting at 7.30 pm. Children's meetings at morning AND evening mtg. Please contact **Mary Jane Elton**, if you plan to attend at either time.

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

Sundays at 10.30 am. Contact **Rici Marshall Cross** for information/updates.

Tweeddale – No meetings in person at present. Contact **Anna Lawrence** for updates.

MEETING BY ZOOM

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

Every Sunday at 9.30 am (Zoom only); and at 11.00 am (blended with the meeting in person).

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

On the 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**

Tuesdays at 7.30 pm; NO meeting on the 1st Tuesday in the month.

Kelso – for login details contact **Marianne Butler**; blended with mtgs in person, as above.

Penicuik – for login details contact **Mark Hutcheson**

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

Also Wednesdays at 8.00 pm (online only).

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

Sundays at 10.30 am, blended with meetings in person.

1st Thursdays at 8.00 pm (online only). Meeting for worship (30 mins) followed by chat.