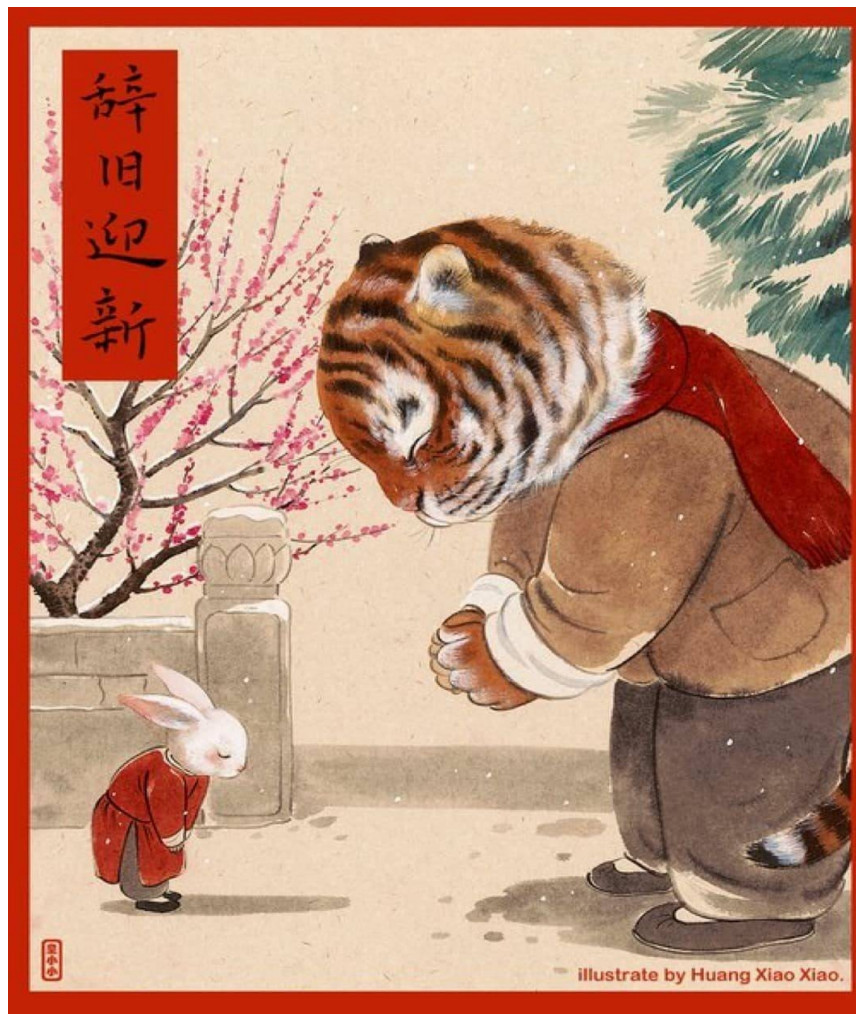


# wsqn

- connecting local meetings



**April 2023**

# West Scotland Area Meeting Newsletter

## Contents

The Cauldron of Time	p. 3
West Scotland Area Meeting 14 <sup>th</sup> January	p. 4
Special West Scotland Area Meeting 25 <sup>th</sup> February	p. 5
West Scotland Area Meeting 6 <sup>th</sup> March	p. 7
Thinking of membership	p. 9
Forward Preparation for General Meeting	p. 10
Report on Options for Scotland 2 Group	p. 11
General Meeting for Scotland	p. 13
Quakers in Scotland Parliamentary Officer	p. 15
Book of Discipline Revision Committee	p. 19
Balancing Individual Responsibility with Community Connections	p. 23
Putin's Silent Killer	p. 24
Book Review: Healing Grounds: Climate, Justice and the roots of Regenerative Farming	p. 26
Let Your Life Speak – Castle Douglas LM	p. 28
Inspiration – Sally Beamish	p. 31
Friends go to the Palace	p.33
News from Local Meetings	p. 35
West Coast Friends' Gathering	p. 36
Friends' Special events	p. 37
Poem for Patrick Bealey	p. 38
Regular Meetings for Worship outside LMs	p. 39

**Frontispiece** This year sees the beginning of the Chinese Year of the Rabbit 卯 that takes over from the Tiger. The Rabbit is associated with qualities such as tranquility, relaxation, intuition, sensitivity, and creativity. It symbolizes vigilance, wittiness, cautiousness, deftness, self-protection, and the moon. Let's hope this will be a good year for peacemakers especially between China and Taiwan.

# The Cauldron Of Time

--James O'dea

We who live and breathe in a body  
see the Creator's signature as living gold:  
the gold of a magnificent sunlight splashed on the active rivers  
of our hearts' generosity, pouring molten love into the world,  
glowing in our greatest stories  
signaling beauty  
celebrating the courage to go outside and be  
more than reflections, instead to be living flames of gold  
burning in existence as naked human God sparks.

But gold is not the goal as some profess  
it is the gate through which we pass into  
the new life, into the greening of our spirit  
into an aliveness vitalized in worlds unseen by the material eye,  
the green soul force growing in vibrant concentrations of consciousness  
where perception begins to merge with Source  
and with all the incorruptible energies of Life Eternal.  
Up to this point all is energy, energized by the green waves  
of the heart's subtle compassion.

But still there is an invitation beyond the gold of inspiration  
and the green of illumination,  
an invitation that seems to seep out of a velvet darkness  
a lake of nothingness  
an invitation to no space, no time,  
no movement, no thought  
no accomplishments, no accolades,  
no echoes of the world  
gone, gone, all gone  
nothing left but the empty well of original bliss.

Only those who enter this dark night  
can look up and see the hidden face of God  
where Nothing and Everything are one.

# **West Scotland Area Meeting 14 January 2023**

**Daphne Wassermann, Glasgow**

Unfortunately we were not able to hold this meeting in person in Glasgow. Late last year some of the harling (render) fell off the gable end of the Meeting House and the City Council erected barriers to protect the pavement. This prevents use of the fire escape from the Meeting Room on the first floor which means that it is unsafe to use that room at present. Glasgow LM Property Committee is working hard with the roofing contractor and clerk of works to effect repairs and persuade the Council that there is no longer a risk of falling debris. We hope that the barriers will be removed soon.

In the meantime, Area Meeting was held by Zoom. 30 Friends logged in with almost all the Meetings represented.

During our opening worship, Quaker Faith and Practice 10.02 was read. This reminds us of the different ways that we come into the community of Friends and the various ways in which God's transforming spirit works in all of us.

For many years Mary Latham has printed the labels for this newsletter, stuffed envelopes and taken them to the post office. Malcolm Crosbie of Lanark Meeting has offered to take over this task. This only applies to those people who wish to have a hard copy of the newsletter.

In noting the death and funeral of Les Dunford he was described as a very able person, willing to share his knowledge and support other people.

We accepted a transfer of Ian Neale from Northamptonshire Area Meeting. He attends Dunblane Meeting and Robin Davis will welcome him. He was present at the Area Meeting.

In other personal matters, the marriage register was checked and information on the marriage of Tina Cunningham and David Forsyth will be sent to Friends House.

We also noted who were Trustees at the end of last year.

Each year we also prepare a tabular statement which lists the numbers of members and attenders (including children) in each Meeting. Ruth Bacon prepared this for us and it will be sent to General Meeting and Friends House. There were small changes but the total number of members in the Area Meeting remains unchanged at 228.

On nominations, Mark Coleman, Sheila Semple and Margaret Munro were appointed to Area Meeting Nominations Committee. Willoughby Densham

was appointed to attend Junior Yearly Meeting and Senior conference. There is still space for other young people to be appointed to attend and expenses will be paid.

The financial report centred on the repairs to Glasgow Meeting House. Roof repairs are underway and payments will be staged. Funds have been allocated to this work from Glasgow Local Meeting and Area Meeting.

With regard to Glasgow Meeting House, a Strategy Group was appointed and has worked very hard to produce a report on the way forward. At this time it is not possible to put costs to any proposed future work. The first phase, already underway, is the work to the roof (and now the gable end) to make the building safe and watertight. The group, supported by Glasgow Local Meeting, asked for permission to proceed to the second phase. This is to apply to the Quaker Housing Trust for a grant to employ an architect to look at the possibilities of bringing the top floor flat back into use and possibly converting other floors into residential accommodation. This would provide an income for the Meeting. In addition, the architect will be asked to look at the accessibility of the building. Area Meeting agreed for the strategy group and Property Committee to take this stage forward. More details of the Strategy report are in the minutes.

On other financial matters it was noted that grants are available for personal needs and for travel, particularly for young friends to attend events.

The meeting considered the report of Meeting for Sufferings. The full report by Elaine Millar appeared in the January newsletter. Area Meetings are asked to stop using the term 'Overseer'. 'Pastoral Care Friends' is a possible alternative. Local 'Overseers' are asked to bring forward suggestions. The second request was for Meetings to consider the concept of Membership and also the process of discernment. Elders were asked to take this forward.

Finally we agreed to hold an additional Area Meeting, hopefully in Glasgow, to follow up on Helen Minnis' Swarthmore Lecture. This will probably be on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February from about 11am to 3pm. Detailed arrangements will be circulated later.

## **Special AM on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2023**      **Margaret Munro, Dunblane**

### **Race and Privilege**

As you will all receive the minutes for this event I'm going to focus on my own personal experience of this meeting and my own subsequent reflections.

We were reminded in the introductory input that capitalism and slavery underpins our society as a nation. In our resolve to be an antiracist church what practical action does this imply for us as Friends together and as individuals? What do love and justice require of us? Have our own ancestors been involved in the slave trade and if so can we make some form of reparation?

As often happens our deeper awareness and challenge came from interaction in small groups and over the lunch break. Most of my small group had come from working class backgrounds where equality had been stressed and attitudes to people with all kinds of skin colour encouraged to be the same. Far from benefitting from the slave trade some of our ancestors especially those who worked as miners were treated along with their families as the property of mine owners until well into the twentieth century.

Crawlin aboot like a snail in the mud,

Covered wi clammie blae'

Me, made after the image of God-

Jings, but it's laughable, tae! (The Image of God by Joe Corrie, Lallans 53)

On the other hand being poor meant that many of us received grants and bursaries to enable us to benefit from further education. And who knows the origins of that money?

Some in the group had had pals who were black and were barely aware of their skin colour, and were far more aware of the brilliance of their minds. Others had worked alongside black and brown colleagues and had occasion to question openly derogatory attitudes expressed by others. As we reflected on the past I started to think about the destruction of the identity and culture of our Scottish ancestors after the Jacobite uprisings and the Clearances in the nineteenth century and the appalling cruelty meted out then. Is reparation for these and other historical horrors ever possible?

In the group we also had those who had been treated as "other" not because of their skin colour but because of other physical differences which were not seen as normal. And therefore feared.

Most of the group who attended this special AM are retired and reflected therefore on what action we can take now.

Two themes emerged;

### **1 *Involvement with refugees.***

1. For many of us our only close contact with other races is through our friendship with refugees. Maybe we need to talk to them more about their experiences and share these with others in our meeting so that we can speak up more on their behalf?
2. Secondly, as many of us are at the stage of tweaking the details of our wills, maybe we could consider leaving a proportion to a charity or group dedicated

to supporting victims of race and privilege? Many universities have schemes whereby our donations are matched by the university, meaning that a student degree course can be completely funded by a gift of a few thousand pounds. In fact if preferred these donations can be made now enabling donor and beneficiary to meet.

**2 Investing in Shared Interest**-- a charity that offers finance to individuals and cooperatives in over 45 countries across the globe. This type of investment seems to me to be a different kind of reparation but no less valuable.

There was little discussion what the Society of Friends as an organisation could do. However one Friend spoke of a centre that she visited in Australia which had been set up by Quakers there and fostered interrelations and practical activities for the Aboriginal community. The importance of working with other faith groups was also flagged up in this regard.

Although I listened to the Swarthmore Lecture by Helen Minnis of Glasgow meeting "Perceiving the temperature of the water", I have not read her book, an omission I mean to rectify soon, as I believe there are many more stories, ideas and hints which could inspire us to work together to challenge race and privilege both in word and in deed.

Taking part in Area Meeting can be profoundly disturbing!

"Until we are all free none of us are free"

## **Area Meeting Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March by zoom**

**Martin Mansell, Glasgow**

The March Area Meeting was rather unusual. Firstly, it included a custom rarely seen in our Meetings now, which is considering the welfare of a member who is in trouble with the law. In the old days it usually involved the suffering of a Friend imprisoned for their beliefs (and is the origin of our Meeting for Sufferings). In our case it concerned Fern Mills, an Attender at Glasgow Local Meeting who was arrested and charged with 'wilful obstruction of the highway with a non-motor vehicle' as a result of taking part in a *Just Stop Oil* protest in London. Fern's lawyer successfully argued a defence based on the European Convention on Human rights in that the action was done out of necessity due to the government's inadequate response to climate change and Fern was found not guilty and acquitted. It is interesting to note that if the charge had been 'causing a public nuisance' this defence would not have been available, and several protesters are currently in prison because they faced this charge.

The other unusual feature of the meeting was that it was mainly devoted to one issue which was the work of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice

Working Group and its associated Community Justice Network. One thing I admire about Quakers is that they are so often at the forefront of social change. In the sixteenth century they were advocating the abolition of capital punishment (which took 400 years): in the nineteenth century they were advocating the abolition of slavery. More recently, we were again ahead of the game in being the first church to allow same-sex marriage.

Our interest in prisons came from the direct experience of early Friends of imprisonment for their beliefs. We initially supported prisons as a better alternative to corporal punishment but have since campaigned for more humane treatment of offenders in prisons. The question we face now is whether we should continue to advocate for the reform of prisons or for completely replacing them with non-punitive, life-affirming and reconciling responses. Advocating for reform can make it less likely that real radical change will happen.

We began the sessions by reminding ourselves of our current position which is the statement adopted by General Meeting in March 2022. This is largely based on a minute from Canadian YM in 1981 and highlights how the roots of crime lie in the violence and inequality in our society and that overuse of prisons as a response to crime is a destructive and expensive failure. However, our minute stopped short of calling, as the Canadian minute does, for the abolition of prisons as a 'process and a long term goal'.

We then had a short quiz: (The answers are at the end of the article.)

1. There are 15 prisons in Scotland. How many are in our West Scotland Area?
2. When is, or was, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Barlinnie Special Unit?
3. Who is the current Justice Cabinet Secretary?
4. There are about 7,500 people in custody in Scotland. How many deaths in custody occurred last year?
5. How many Quaker prison chaplains are there?

We then went into small groups and considered how we can help reduce the overuse of prisons and achieve justice by fostering peace and inclusion, and whether we should consider in future adopting a minute leading towards prison abolition. Most people in my group agreed that there needs to be a change of ethos within the prison service away from containment towards rehabilitation, following the Scandinavian model. Maybe we should bring the statistics from Finland and other countries to the attention of Scottish politicians. Some felt the word 'abolition' might be misunderstood as simply opening the prison gates, rather than establishing a different more humane, therapeutic alternative – perhaps another word could be used?



This is clearly a subject close to the heart of many Friends and the Working Group are making similar visits to the other Area Meetings before bringing the topic back to General Meeting in September.

For those who want to understand more about prisons and community Justice the Scottish Community Justice Network recently produced a booklet: *Breaking Chains and Building Change* which I can send.

Martin Mansell [mamansell69@gmail.com](mailto:mamansell69@gmail.com)

### Answers

3. There are about 8 prisons in WSAM (i.e. about half of the national total), depending on how our boundary is defined.
4. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Barlinnie S.U. was in February 2023.
5. The current Justice Secretary is Keith Brown.
6. There were 42 deaths in custody last year. The total for the last three years (121) is the highest on record.
7. There are currently no Quaker Prison Chaplains recognised by the Scottish Prison Service, although a few Quakers do act as chaplains unofficially. In England, nearly every prison has a recognised Quaker Prison Chaplain.

## THINKING ABOUT MEMBERSHIP?

You have maybe been coming to Quakers for some time. You'll have noticed that some people are members of the Society of Friends, while others are 'attenders'. Maybe you are thinking about the difference, and whether you might make the step to closer commitment. There is a whole chapter of *Quaker Faith & Practice* on membership (chapter 11), and there are people in your meeting to talk to about it – particularly elders or pastoral Friends.

But if you want something more, try these events, put on by South East Scotland Area Meeting for anyone in Scotland considering membership.

**MEET A QUAKER, Zoom meeting, Saturday 13 May 2023, 10.30-13.00 and in person, Falkirk, 23 September 2023, times and venue tbc.**

We will share our personal experiences of being a Quaker and the journey to membership. There will be plenary discussions and small group conversations and suggestions for reading and other resources. We hope to be warm and welcoming and to help you on your way to membership.

**Book your place by contacting Mariot, [dallasfalkirk@btinternet.com](mailto:dallasfalkirk@btinternet.com) or 01324 639245**

---

*“If the Society can be thought of as a ship, I would like to be one of the crew, not a passenger, and to be seen like this”. QFP 10.34*

---

# Forward preparation for the General Meeting called for 11th March 2023

## Scottish Quaker Safeguarding Guidance

Dear Friends,

Owing to their size and complexity, documents to be received from GM Trustees on revised Safeguarding policy and guidance are not being sent out by email in advance, but are placed on the General Meeting for Scotland website for prior reading.

These are a 2 page model safeguarding policy, and a 52 page safeguarding guidance manual. Trustees have sent these to us for adoption.

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/Safeguarding%20email%202023%2002.docx>

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/Scottish%20Safeguarding%20Guidance%20%20final%20working%20group%20draft.pdf>

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/Scottish%20Safeguarding%20model%20policy%20final%20working%20group%20dra%E2%80%A6.pdf>

Please refer first to the Introduction on page 3 of the guidance document.

Please notify me of any queries, comments and points that will assist the General Meeting in receiving these documents.

Also let me know if you, or anyone else, need a paper copy.

I propose that we do not attempt to edit the documents in open meeting, but consider any substantive issues that may arise. Points of detail, format and grammar will be referred to Trustees separately.

The agenda and other papers for General Meeting on 11th March will be sent out towards the end of this month.

**Michael Hutchinson, Clerk to General Meeting**

## **The report of the Options for Scotland 2 group,**

*ED. You should have received this by e mail from Sue Proudlove GM Administrator. For your convenience, have printed some extracts below. The full version is available on <https://www.quakerscotland.org/general-meeting/options-scotland>*

**The aim of the report** is to look at the simplification of Quaker structures in Scotland. The report, including the recommendations, along with further documentation, is on the GM website.

The report will be considered at your Area Meeting in April or May, and then at General Meeting in June.

We would be happy to answer questions or help your meeting think about the report.

In Friendship

Pam Apted (ESAM)    Brian Ashley (NSAM)    Peter Christy (WSAM)  
Gisela Creed (WSAM)    Kate Gulliver (WSAM)    Robin Davis (WSAM)  
Neil Turner (SESAM)    Zoe Prosser (LDW)  
Lesley Richards (Convenor) [lesley.richards@rocketmail.com](mailto:lesley.richards@rocketmail.com)

## **Changing our structures for the future benefit of Quakers in Scotland**

### **Our discernment**

As Quakers in Scotland, we come together in worship and to witness to the world. The deep spirituality of worship, silence and stillness in community matter greatly to us, and out of this we discern the call to witness our concerns for truth, justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

To thrive we need to be of strong heart, and be forward looking, ready to make strong representation on the issues that matter. We also need sound arrangements to fulfil our legal obligations, to support those who act on our behalf, and in managing our resources.

Across Scotland we see new ways in which Friends can meet and connect, to serve, and to make our voice heard in the corridors of power. Yet, for some time now, we are hearing ever louder calls for help. Vital roles can't be filled and some who offer service on our behalf are finding it hard. Right now, our organisational arrangements are creating burdens and anxieties. One Area Meeting faces the possibility of being laid down. Are we ready to listen?

The Options for Scotland group has considered these issues carefully and challenged ourselves about what is needed to support the Quaker community as it is now and in the years to come.

We have united in a clear sense of what is required of us.

You asked us to consider how things might be different. We have listened to what is happening in other parts of Yearly Meeting. We have even imagined what new arrangements might look like in practice, but we know we should not get ahead of ourselves. As we explored this, the more we realised that small changes would solve little and, at best, would simply delay the inevitable.

To create new space and energy for spiritual growth, for the building of community, and to act out our concerns, we need to be kind to ourselves. We came to see that grasping the nettle, shaping our own future, could be invigorating and inspiring in and of itself.

So, our recommendations to Area Meetings and to General Meeting in Scotland are that:

- We form a single body, 'Quakers in Scotland' through which we support all our Local Meetings, where our membership is held and which enables us to speak, as Quakers, on Scotland wide issues.
- We form a single charity (a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), to be responsible for the stewardship of all our resources across Scotland.
- We develop further the use of paid professional support to undertake routine tasks and provide advice, easing the load for the Friends we ask to give the greatest practical ministry

The space that this will create, will allow Quakers in Scotland to gather in spaces and places that work for them – which could be based on geography, age, interest or concern. This already happens but is too often little known.

Friends, we have learned that working through change is as important as the change itself.

Involving more Quakers in Scotland in what it will look like and how it will happen, will breathe life into our community. Think it possible that we might enjoy ourselves.

11 By 'Quakers in Scotland' and 'Friends' we mean all members, attenders and those who identify as Quakers

## Recommendations

Therefore, we recommend that Area Meetings and General Meetings agree that:

- a single body, 'Quakers in Scotland' is formed through which we support all our Local Meetings, where our membership is held and which enables us to speak, as Quakers, on Scotland wide issues (Option C).
- a single charity (a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), is formed to be responsible for the stewardship of all our resources across Scotland.
- the use of paid professional support to undertake routine tasks and provide advice is further developed, easing the load for the Friends we ask to give the greatest practical ministry

## General Meeting for Scotland

In Quaker faith and practice 2,85, John Punshon writes, *“The meeting for business cannot be understood in isolation: it is part of our spiritual discipline.”* We seek together to know the will of God for us, and to help us to do this, we anchor our decision making in worship. We have developed practices, which guide us through our collective discernment in an orderly way. As a church, we care for and engage with our community, Quaker and non-Quaker, locally, nationally and globally. Given that we are a DIY church, this is a challenge, but our committees and structures, which have evolved and continue to evolve, assist us with the many facets of our Quaker work.

Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) is our national church body. All our Quaker structures connect either directly or indirectly to BYM. Through our structures we are accountable to and connected with one another. General meetings were part of this web of connections, but most were disbanded. However, General Meeting for Scotland (GMS) is one of the few remaining general meetings, as it carries out essential national responsibilities on behalf of BYM. It connects directly to BYM through representation on Meeting for Sufferings and annual input into Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee.

The responsibilities of GMS are stated in Quaker faith and practice 5.03. As well as the particular requirements of acting within Scots Law, and relating to Scottish institutions, the main purpose of general meetings has been retained, *“...for conference and inspiration and for a broad oversight of the life and witness of the Society...” Church Government 19,772*

When describing General Meeting for Scotland to people who are not Quakers, I refer to it as Quakers in Scotland, since it is made up of all Friends in membership of Scottish area meetings. It meets four times a year and all members and Friends not in membership who wish to come, are welcome. There are strong functional links with the four area meetings in Scotland, and each General Meeting is hosted by one of them. At each meeting we hear about our Quaker activities in Scotland. Here is a glimpse of what General Meeting for Scotland does.

Our spiritual life and worship happens within our Quaker communities. GMS provides opportunities for the community of Quakers in Scotland to come together four times a year, and for families to gather annually. On these occasions, we find joy and strength in our fellowship. To help us keep in touch, GMS provides our newsletter, “The Scottish Friend”, the Quakers in Scotland website and Facebook page, and the GMS administrator sends out information sent by email.

Of course, the core of our spiritual life and witness is our local and area meeting, and the role holders appointed by these meetings support it. But the role holders themselves need support and GMS, with the help of our Local Development Worker, has set up groups for many of our role holders in Scotland, including elders, AM clerks, trustees and nominations committee members. GMS helps area meetings work together by setting up working groups, the latest one has produced our new Scottish Safeguarding Policy. The help goes two ways, and area meetings organise the annual Scottish Enquirers' events, on behalf of GMS.

GMS promotes and supports Quaker witness in Scotland, both directly and through working with other bodies. Community Justice is an issue of concern to many Quakers in Scotland and GMS is supporting this work and facilitating advocacy on it. Quakers everywhere are campaigning about environmental devastation and the injustice that results from climate change. At a national level, we work with others on these issues: GMS has linked with Stop Climate Chaos Scotland. Through GMS links with other bodies, our witness is extended to cover issues including peace, refugees, domestic abuse, poverty, and the rights of the child.

BYM Quaker advocacy work is focused on the Westminster Parliament, but as many significant matters are devolved to the Scottish Parliament, it is necessary for there to be Quaker advocacy work focused on this institution. It is carried out by our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, who is a BYM member of staff, in conjunction with the GMS appointed Parliamentary Engagement Working Group. At each General Meeting we are given an update on our Scottish parliamentary engagement work, which has grown over the years and is focused on priorities set by General Meeting in session, currently: peacebuilding, including peace education; climate justice; economic justice.

Since the Scottish ecumenical and interfaith bodies are different from those in England and Wales, GMS has the role of representing BYM in ecumenical and interfaith matters. For years GMS has been represented on ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland), and as this body transitions to the Scottish Christian Forum, it is represented on the relevant committees, including the Church Leaders' Forum and the Ecumenical Officers' Forum, and it takes up invitations to the annual gatherings of many of the churches in Scotland. GMS has a representative on Interfaith Scotland and on the Scottish Religious Leaders' Forum, and also has regular meetings with Christian Aid Scotland.

GMS is more than a quarterly meeting for business. Through its activities, GMS promotes, supports and enriches the community of Quakers in Scotland and in doing so benefits all members of that community. Through GMS, Quakers are

visible and active in the faith community in Scotland and increasingly in civil society – indeed, we are part of the tapestry of Scotland.

**Elizabeth Allen, retired as Clerk 2022**

**March, 2023**

## **Quakers in Scotland Parliamentary Engagement 2022**

Dear Friends,

I hope that this letter finds you all in fine fettle. As we begin 2023 I wanted to offer a round up of the work that the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) and I undertook on your behalf in 2022.

Sadly this will be my last round up as Parliamentary Engagement Officer as I will soon be moving on to take up a role working for Christian Aid. I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to you all for your continued support and engagement as I have undertaken this role, particularly the members of the PEWG both past and present who are all wonderful individuals and have been so brilliant to work with. I hope that you will hold them, and my successor, in the light as they continue to take this work forward.

As you will see, 2022 saw some notable successes, some disappointments and some continued work in progress. All in all I hope that this round up will encourage you that progress has and is being made and strengthen your resolve that there are more opportunities for change that we can seize over the months ahead.

### **Peacebuilding**

#### Scottish Peace Institute

In its 21/22 Programme for government, the Scottish government announced its intention to establish a Scottish peace institute by the end of 2022. We approached the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Culture and External Affairs about this and were invited to engage with the expert working group that were advising the government on their plans. Our engagement with the working group was extremely positive and we were able to see and comment on some of their draft recommendations, and were referenced a number of times in their final report to government. However, after the recommendations were submitted to government there has been very little progress or communication. We have written to the cabinet Secretary and received a polite but uninformative response. Similarly, we have worked with opposition MSPs to ask written and verbal questions in the parliament about the progress of the initiative and when the expert working group's recommendations will be made public. The responses to these questions have

been equally uninformative. As of the end of 2022 the Scottish government have not established a Scottish peace institute and there is little publicly available information about their intentions. We will continue to try to engage with the government and opposition parties on this issue.

### Peace Education

In May of last year colleagues in Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) launched [“Peace at the Heart”](#) a report on the state of, and case for, peace education in Britain. Working with colleagues in QPSW we met with a number of MSPs to discuss the report. This work culminated in Paul McLennan MSP placing a [motion](#) in the parliament commending the report. This motion was signed by over a third of all MSPs in the parliament and we are now working with Paul’s office to hold an exhibition in the parliament on Peace Education. In addition to this work we submitted a response to the Scottish government’s consultation on education reform where we again made the case for further integration of the principles of peace education within the curriculum.

### Childrens Rights and proposals for a new Human Rights law

On behalf of General Meeting for Scotland, the PEWG remains a member of Together Scotland, a coalition an alliance of charities concerned about Children’s Rights in Scotland. As many of you will know, through Together, we campaigned for the incorporation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child into Scots law, and a Bill to this effect was unanimously passed in 2021. However this was subsequently subject to a legal challenge by the UK government, who had concerned that it would place duties on UK Ministers and would therefore be out with the competence of the Scottish parliament. The Supreme court ruled in the UK government’s favour, and Together have subsequently been trying to work with Scottish ministers to amend the Bill so that it can be introduced while not falling foul of further legal challenge. Our understanding is that there have been detailed conversations between the Scottish and UK officials and there had been hope that the Bill would be introduced before Christmas. That didn’t happen and we are waiting for more information.

Many of you will also remember from my 2021 roundup that we were involved in a preliminary consultation on a new Human Rights Bill for Scotland that would incorporate additional international Human Rights treaties directly into Scots law. The progress on this Bill has been slowed by the legal challenge to the UN convention of the Rights of the Child Bill. Through Together I have met with the civil servants working on this potential new Bill three times and the expectation is to see something introduced within the next year.

### **Economic Justice and Land Reform**



### Land reform consultation

In September of this year the Scottish government consulted on a new Land Reform Bill. Working with a group of interested Friends we were able to respond to this consultation, welcoming the draft proposals for the Bill while also saying that the proposals were insufficient to meet the stated ambition for the Bill.

### Wellbeing economy, doubling Scottish child payment

In November this year Elizabeth Allen, on behalf of General Meeting for Scotland, signed up to an open letter from the Wellbeing Economy Alliance to the First Minister setting out a vision for a wellbeing economy. Elizabeth also signed an open letter to the First Minister calling for the Scottish child payment to be doubled and was part of a statement from Scotland's faith leaders on poverty in Scotland, during Challenge Poverty week.

## **The Climate and Ecological Crisis**

### Finance for the global south for loss and damage caused by climate change

At COP27 of this year the Scottish government announced that it would increase its contribution to loss and damage finance to £7 million. This came off the back of intense engagement with the Scottish government from our colleagues in Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS). SCCS is a coalition of over 60 NGOs in Scotland who are concerned about climate change. In my role as PEO I currently chair SCCS' policy and advocacy group. Following this announcement we wrote to Màiri McAllan, Minister for Environment, Biodiversity and Land Reform to ask for more information. From our correspondence it appears that while this money is welcome, and symbolically significant, it is not additional money from the Scottish government as it will be coming out of it's already existing climate justice fund.

### Decarbonising domestic Heat

This year the PEWG met with Patrick Harvie, Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights to discuss the new Heat in Buildings strategy. We expressed our support for the overall strategy and our concern for the huge task that the government has in delivering it. We have had similar conversations with civil servants working on the strategy, inviting one of them to speak to the PEWG, and will continue to explore ways to support and challenge the government on this issue.

### The fourth national planning framework (NPF4)

On behalf of General Meeting for Scotland the PEWG submitted a response to a consultation on the fourth national planning framework for Scotland (NPF4). NPF4 is significant as it will set the parameters for local development plans and local planning in Scotland up until 2045 and so will have a significant

bearing on Scotland's ability to meet its ambitious climate targets. We were able to produce quite an extensive response, and working with partner organisations we were able to get some significant changes to the proposals: the amended draft taking on board a number of our recommendations.

### Climate Change Committee progress report

In December of 2022 the Climate Change Committee, the official advisor to the UK and Scottish governments on climate change, published its annual progress report for Scotland. The report highlighted a significant gap between Scotland's ambitious targets and what is managing to deliver, and stated that without a detailed delivery plan Scotland's targets risked becoming largely irrelevant. This is something that we have been concerned about for some time now and through SCCS I contributed to a statement responding to the report, and was interviewed on the BBC Politics Scotland show giving a response.

### Beyond Oil and Gas

Through SCCS we were involved in producing a briefing on phasing out North Sea oil and gas. Thank you to a number of you who have subsequently shared this briefing with your MSPs and asked them to encourage Scotland to sign up to the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance. It has been helpful for me to see the responses that you have received from MSPs. As always Friends engaging directly with their MSPs can often unlock conversations that it is harder for us to do, so we are very grateful for your engagement and continued support.

I hope this is a helpful summary. There are things that I haven't been able to include for brevities sake, but I hope this gives you a sense of the work. For copies of our consultation responses, statements and information about our other work you can go to <https://www.quakerscotland.org/documents/468> , and if you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the above then please do get in touch.

In Friendship,

**Andrew Tomlinson, Parliamentary Engagement officer**

*"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.*

*This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children."*      Dwight D. Eisenhower

# **Book of Discipline Revision Committee update Jan 2023**

**Mary Woodward, Portobello and Musselburgh**

It being winter, your committee met using Zoom. On the Wednesday evening we dealt with some basic 'nuts and bolts', and used the following weekend to address matters requiring more time.

We were delighted to welcome Jess Hubbard-Bailey back into our midst and Andrew Williams who joins us for the first time. Andrew lives in Crail, in Fife, and brings to us his experience of working on the Revision Preparation Group, which paved the way for the work we are doing now.

Our clerks told us about their report on our work to Meeting for Sufferings [MfS] at which our two draft texts on Marriage and Nominations were presented, and were well received. Our clerks have also met with the Recording Clerk and Yearly Meeting clerks to talk about the projected timeline for our work, and how future Yearly Meetings will consider draft text as we produce it.

The Communicating with Friends group reported briefly on recent 'visits' to Area Meetings, and the challenge of getting Friends all round the UK involved in giving feedback on the draft texts.

The Reviewing Text and Glossary Group felt that they had got as far as they could with their work on some of our "yet-to-be-banked" draft texts. These were written some time ago - before we had developed clear guidelines on how to write about a topic. Readers were appointed to look at these particular texts in the light of our guidelines before they are "banked". Having carried out the tasks it was charged with, this group could now be laid down.

It was decided to make a specific Glossary folder on Teams so that each topic group, as it worked on text, could add words it felt needed to be explained. We were all very grateful that Tas Cooper volunteered to look through all the already-banked texts for words we might need to add to this folder. Writing the explanations for these words will come later.

We received two minutes from Meeting for Sufferings. One informed us that the word "overseer" should no longer be used but replaced with a more appropriate term such as "pastoral friend". The other recorded that they'd not been able to reach unity on whether attenders could be appointed to central committees. Hopefully, more discussion about membership will take place at all levels in BYM with a view to gaining more clarity on the subject: until then, the Membership topic group will pause their work

Having got these 'simple' matters out of the way on Wednesday night, we started our Saturday sessions with reports from all our topic groups. Some of these groups were only appointed in October; others have been working for longer. Some groups were making good progress, while others took the opportunity to ask for clarification about aspects of their topics. I'm in the group writing about Worship: we wanted clarity about whether we should include Meeting for Worship in our work [yes]. We also expressed our concerns about how to avoid unwittingly excluding those Friends who do not use conventional 'god language' to describe their spiritual experience. Our core text will try to explain Worship clearly and simply: there will be plenty of 'anthology material' – Friends' accounts of their own experience – to show that there is no 'right answer' or 'one size fits all' when we talk about God [or whatever you want to call it].

The committee felt that the group working on Community had produced a draft that was "good enough for now". The groups working on Spiritual Experience, Testimony, Conflict, and Accessibility are proceeding at various speeds. We are aware that there will be considerable overlap between some topics: we will address this more particularly when we start to look at the book as a whole.

On Saturday afternoon we shared our reflections on the process of sharing draft text for the first time. We have already received some feedback, much of it positive, though some Friends obviously have a pet axe to grind! Some responses make it clear that some people haven't quite grasped what we are doing – we are writing a whole new book, not making changes to *Quaker faith and practice*; we are writing a book which contains the core of Being and Doing Quaker, while supplementary material will outline the more detailed matters which may change more frequently. Your committee is NOT sorting out differences in the Society of Friends: our job is to reflect the Society as it is! Others were confused about what 'the voice of the book' is – it's the narrative describing what things are and how / why we do them.

So far we've had a slow trickle of responses. The deadline for responding is the end of May, so there is time for the flood to engulf us! South East Scotland AM is having a session with their MfS reps to look at the two draft texts in February – will other Scottish AMs follow? Your committee will consider all the feedback at our July committee meeting.

There will be two sessions about the draft texts as part of the weekend for special interest groups prior to this year's Yearly Meeting [28 April – 1 May] – one for the Marriage draft text and one for the Nominations text. You are also

most welcome to read the texts and listen to the audio versions by yourself and submitting your own feedback – we'd love to hear from you!

*You can find the draft texts and the audio versions, together with details of how to submit your comments and suggestions on the "Revising Quaker faith and practice" page of [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk) . There is also a wealth of other information, including social media links.*

We spent time in small groups reflecting on how things are going for us as individuals – how are we managing? What are we learning? What can we do to make the next stage of the process manageable both for us as individuals and for the committee as a whole? When we re-gathered as a group we were asked to let the clerks know what we felt our capacity is for the next round of topics: and assured that it was perfectly in order not to be able to take on any more work at the present time.

Our final session on Saturday looked at the guidelines that have been produced on "the process of drafting text" on a topic, to enable us to work more quickly and produce text that fits with that already written. We also spent time discussing which topics we should tackle next, and how to approach the whole question of diversity and inclusion [and the accessibility of all our text]. It is very clear that these questions need to be in our minds as we work on text now rather than waiting till it's all done [rephrase].

There was general agreement that the next topics should be Diversity and Inclusion, Witness/ service in the world, Service in the community (roles in meetings/ other religious service), and Concern. It was also agreed that, as we will not be meeting again till July, it would be helpful to have an on-line meeting in May to enable Friends working on the new topics to report their progress and ask for clarity on any matters that may have arisen during their initial work. Our clerks met on Sunday morning to consider how best to share out the work among those of us who had indicated they had capacity to take on another topic. When we met together to hear their discernment, I was delighted to find myself appointed Reader to the group working on Service within the Meeting – Ben Pink Dandelion, Rosie Carnall and Michael Phipps. I've not worked on text with them before, and relish the prospect of getting to know them better as our work progresses.

We also considered our meetings for the rest of this year. Some topic groups had asked to have face-to-face meetings as part of their work. We were told that it was not certain that we would be able to do this and have our October meeting in person. There was much discussion, from which it emerged that we felt very strongly that we needed to meet in person as a whole committee – our experience last year showed us that we discern more deeply and make

much greater progress when we are physically together. We therefore said that this was our preference for 2023, and asked whether there might be the possibility of small group meetings in addition to two in-person full committee meetings in future years.

We now see our next steps more clearly: we will continue working on those topics which we began in October, while some of us will start work on the new topics. Readers have been appointed to look at the yet-to-be-banked texts which the Reviewing Text and Glossary Group had been considering. Some of us will meet in May to consider how the new groups are getting on, and the whole committee will meet again 14-16 July.

Our weekend closed with an hour's worship.

Our key messages from the weekend are:

*We continue our work together to ensure that our new book will reflect many voices, but one community of Quakers in Britain.*

*We continue to aim to maximise the accessibility of the various formats of the final publication.*

*We have begun the process of sharing drafts of two topics and will continue to engage with Friends and seek responses to both the written and audio versions of these by 31 May 2023.*

*We welcome the ongoing dialogues about our work with other Quaker committees and groups. Please continue upholding us, Friends: we can't do this without your support, which we really value.*

## **The Future of the Woodbrooke Centre – Trustee Statement 28 February 2023**

In its 120-year history Woodbrooke has grown and changed to meet the changing needs of Quakers both in Britain and further afield. From its initial conception as a one-year experiment, Woodbrooke has enabled thousands of Quakers to learn together as part of a much-valued Quaker community, supported by a dedicated team of staff, associate tutors and volunteers. After careful discernment Woodbrooke Trustees have decided the time is now right for a new chapter in Woodbrooke's history. Our intention is to allow Woodbrooke to focus on its founding purpose of *fostering the vital ministry of Friends* and transition responsibility for the buildings and grounds of The Woodbrooke Centre to our trusted partners at Bournville Village Trust.

You will find the full statement on the Woodbrooke website.

## *How Do We Balance Our Individual Responsibility with Community Connections?*

*This is part of an article from the Friends Journal [Nothing Can Separate Us from the Light](#) by Linda Seger. You will find the full article on their website.*

*Quakers are always balancing our individual responsibility and our need for connection to a spiritual community. We tend to be independent thinkers; we often come out of other traditions and have had to struggle to find our way; and we've had to think for ourselves rather than have others tell us what to think.*

*Part of being a Quaker is the willingness to wander through the labyrinth, to take turns that don't seem to lead us anywhere, and to take other turns that get us closer to the Center. Quakerism rubs off on us through a long period of time as we read, try to find new ways to approach conflicts and decisions, experience how Quaker business is done, sit in the gathered meeting (recognizing something wonderful has happened), sit in a clearness committee, or learn a particular process for sorting through our problems. It is our choice. When we feel alienated, struggle, or search, we do not need to be isolated. We have a community that is often local, and always national and international.*

*Through my 50-plus years as a Quaker, I have seen decisions that lead to isolation and estrangement, and I have seen Quakerism at its best: how it overcomes the flailing that can go on individually. I have seen life changes that have occurred as a result of Quakers sitting down one-on-one or in clearness committees of four or five people. I have seen those who choose to get engaged with the community and those who do not. For some, involvement is a challenge, and it is much easier to just sit in the silence once a week and let the Light shine as it will.*

*I have also seen the bonds of community strengthened as people in the rich silence of a meeting—whether in-person or on Zoom—move through threshing sessions that have tears, anger, and the smoothing out of hostilities. I have seen difficult decisions dealt with wisely through shared reflections. I have seen those who choose the bonds of community and get involved with the magic and wonder of the Quaker process.*

## Putin's silent victim

### SIGN THE PETITION

**Governments and lawmakers across Europe, the world, and State Parties to the International Criminal Court:**

**We, citizens of the world, cannot remain silent while our planet's natural resources and biodiversity are threatened by ecocide. We urge you to take all measures necessary to criminalise ecocide in national and international legislation. We demand urgent legal protections in the whole world that can ensure the preservation of our planet's precious natural resources for generations to come. We also ask for the investigations and prosecution of any war crimes against the environment committed by Russian troops in Ukraine.**

Paul W. United Kingdom



500,000

**298,144**

**298,144 have signed. Let's get to 500,000**

Russian troops have killed thousands and displaced millions. They are also **destroying Ukraine's environment**, toxifying its soil, and burning its forests and fields. 600 species of animals and 880 species of plants are now under threat.

Altogether, the damage to the environment amounts to over 50 billion dollars.

But **ecocide, the act of severely destroying the environment, is not considered an international crime.**

But there is hope: the European Union is about to decide on making the mass destruction of its nature illegal. **If they act, it could set an example for the world to follow** -- and a campaign supported by 1 million of us would show that people everywhere are against the destruction of Mother Earth.

**Sign now demanding the criminalisation of ecocide** and we'll deliver our voices straight to key decision makers.

[https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/putins\\_silent\\_victim\\_cph/?fGzdrjb&fbclid=IwAR2-wSxgDKwz\\_vKOrBFm\\_KT\\_I5WX-7pVBvm7f6](https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/putins_silent_victim_cph/?fGzdrjb&fbclid=IwAR2-wSxgDKwz_vKOrBFm_KT_I5WX-7pVBvm7f6)

THE WORLD IN ACTION



## HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2023

As a rather last-minute gesture, the local Interfaith group decided to invite friends to a short gathering to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, which, of course, also remembers other more recent genocides; Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

The impetus for this was learning of the existence of something called the Kindertransport Tree, located in Castle Douglas. No-one seemed to know much about it. However, I can now tell you that this native oak was planted in 2021 by the Association of Jewish Refugees in honour of their 80th Anniversary and HM Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The inscription reads "With sincere thanks to the local people of Castle Douglas for housing Jewish refugee children during WWII, also in loving memory of Lily and Heinrich Schmerling, who found refuge in the UK from Nazi persecution in Austria." So it was that eight of us gathered at the tree, in Carlingwark Park, for a short time of quiet reflection on this year's theme of 'Ordinary People'. Ordinary people facilitate genocide. They are the oppressors, the persecutors, the killers - and, of course, they are also the victims. Ordinary people are you and me. Perhaps focussing on this theme will help us to challenge prejudice today, when we meet it.

### Summer Shindig Young People Applications

Applications for Summer Shindig 2023 are open!! We've sent emails to parents of young people who have attended previously but we'd love it if you could circulate this information throughout your Meetings. Get the news out there.

28<sup>th</sup> July – 4<sup>th</sup> August. More info at [summershindig@gmail.com](mailto:summershindig@gmail.com)

## Climate Justice in London in April.

Quakers across Britain are planning to meet in London from Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April as part of a mass gathering to demand climate justice. The gathering is organised by Extinction Rebellion who plan to bring as many groups across the UK as possible to unite and show the UK government that there are hundreds and thousands of people who want decisive change. The action is about demonstrating the number of people who are seriously concerned about the ecological and climate crisis. It is not about causing a disruption to raise awareness, but showing the world 'look how many people are concerned.'

Meet at Westminster Meeting House, near Charing Cross Station at 10am. There will be a meeting for worship at 10:30 - 11am then we join the demonstration around the Houses of Parliament. We hope to have a period of silence during the demonstration. More details to be confirmed. There are additional plans being made for Quakers meeting up on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>, Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Monday 24<sup>th</sup>.

## QUAKER UNIVERSALIST GROUP

**Our annual conference in 2023 – Friday May 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday May 14<sup>th</sup> at Woodbrooke and online**

*Universalism and Creativity - how creativity expresses and enhances spirituality across the world.*

## Book Review:

### Healing Grounds: Climate, Justice, and the Deep Roots of Regenerative Farming *By Liz Carlisle. Island Press, 2022.*

Reviewed by Pamela Haines

[Buy from QuakerBooks](#)

The starting point of *Healing Grounds*, that regenerative agriculture is good for the soil and for the climate, is familiar to me and rings true. Consider the vast capacity of our soils to store carbon—currently three times more than the amount in the atmosphere—along with the fact that industrially farmed monocultures are the major cause limiting that capacity. What was fresh for me, and what gives this book its great strength, is the author’s emphasis on the people who tend the soil.

Many of us have some understanding that the traditions and wisdom of Indigenous groups throughout the world have much to teach industrialized countries. We may also be aware of critiques of the industrial agricultural model in this country, and of movements to think in fresh ways about farming and grazing methods and our relationship with the soil. But this book goes farther, throwing open a window on the Indigenous practices that are flourishing within our borders and the challenges facing the communities of people who practice them, whose well-being we threaten at our common peril.

The author discusses four communities: Indigenous North Americans, African Americans, and Mexican and Asian immigrants. Centering each section on the stories of particular individuals, while weaving in related current efforts and historical background, makes for a very accessible read that’s full of new information and surprising connections.

Who knew that Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) “corn growers produced three to five times as much grain per acre as European wheat farmers in the same time period”? More broadly, we see that forward-looking agricultural practices like no-till farming and regenerative grazing just scratch the surface. We are called to not only listen to the voices of Indigenous people and learn from species like the buffalo, but consider how we can participate in an interdependent web of life. Or we can become the broken link that prevents everything else from working in concert.

Turning to the African American experience, we face the staggering costs of 98 percent of Black agricultural landowners becoming dispossessed between 1915 and 1995, and learn that George Washington Carver was the first U.S. scientist to reject industrial farming for regenerative, organic agriculture. This section centers around a young Black woman who brought her farming experience to a family wood lot in

North Carolina. She was unwilling to have that bit of her heritage sold-off and equally unwilling to clear-cut for more traditional agriculture. A history of agroforestry in Africa, as well as the tradition of intensively productive dooryard gardens during slavery, offer examples of biodiversity disrupting the sea of commodity monoculture that is the mainstay of colonial and slave-based agriculture.

A soil scientist from a Mexican immigrant family in California's Central Valley anchors the next story. While a third of U.S. produce is grown in the valley's massive industrial monocultures, 2,000 small farmers on less than 1 percent of its acreage are the ones bringing the land back to life. They support the microscopic fungi that have been in symbiotic relationship with plant roots for 500 million years and are threatened in soils that have been repeatedly disturbed, poisoned, and left bare. Mexican polyculture farming, more productive per acre than any monoculture, has been key to creating hot spots of biodiversity that are critical to soil, plant, and human health.

Finally, two small farmers of Hmong and Japanese ancestry illuminate the role of Asian immigrants, highlighting the traditions of recycling nutrients in closed-loop systems that have made Asia such a source of inspiration for the organic movement. Yet, as with the Mexicans, coming as farmworkers with hopes to become farmers, they face formidable obstacles to citizenship and landownership.

The lessons are painfully clear. This stark inequality in agricultural landownership is not only unjust, it is also blocking our access to a heritage of regenerative agriculture practices that we desperately need to combat climate change. The extraction of carbon from soils is just one integral piece of a much larger process of extraction that lies at the heart of our continent's history, including theft of land, enslavement of human beings, and extortion of labor. The vital work of rebuilding soil carbon is inextricably woven together with the vital work of racial justice. To repair the soil, the author contends, we need to repair it all.

For Friends who care about race and justice, and for those who care about climate, this book is a testament to how closely they are intertwined.

---

**Pamela Haines is a member of Central Philadelphia (Pa.) Meeting. Author of *Money and Soul*, her newest titles are *That Clear and Certain Sound* and a second volume of poetry, *Encounters with the Sacred and the Profane*. She blogs at [pamelahaines.substack.com](http://pamelahaines.substack.com).**

# Castle Douglas LM Book Group reading Parker Palmer's

*Let Your Life Speak* Jossey-Bass 2000

Gavin Phillips, Castle Douglas Meeting

Castle Douglas meeting decided to create a Zoom-only book group and recruited some members from other neighbouring meetings to join. I have found the discussions absorbing and enjoyable. Assuming you can assemble a minimum of 8 persons you probably will have a viable group of probably 5 people at each session. Any less than 5 I think won't work.

We settled on *Let Your Life Speak* (Parker J Palmer). Although I am an irregular attender at Sunday meeting I chose to be part of the study group because I could join the online Zoom sessions around my work schedule.

I say Parker Palmer's thesis is that by looking at the results of your life you get an idea of who you are and what you really want to do. Amazon gives this precis: "Telling stories from his own life and the lives of others who have made a difference, he shares insights gained from darkness and depression as well as fulfillment and joy, illuminating a pathway toward vocation for all who seek the true calling of their lives. "

Each week a different member would draft approximately 4 questions

Here is an example:

**session 3, Mon 13 Feb 2023** Chapter 3 pp 37-55,

## Closing way

p38 ***But a lot of way has closed behind me, and that's had the same guiding effect***

1. When in your life have things closed behind you and thus guided you to something new?

## Loss of identity

p39 ***My sense of identity ... crumbled around my feet***

2. If you ever felt your sense of identity crumble, what supported you either then or later?

## Feelings and feedback

p41 ***...the life one is living runs crosswise to the grain of one's soul***

3. Share one occasion when your life ran across the grain of your soul and you found yourself being what you did not want to be

## Strength and weakness as yin and yang?

On p51 we read:

***... a moment when things went so well...***

and then:

***...a moment when things went so poorly you wished you'd never been born!***

**On p52 ... see how limitations and liabilities are the flip side of our gifts, how a particular weakness is the inevitable trade-off for a particular strength**

Parker Palmer suggests things going well and going badly are opposite ends of the same thing.

4. Do you agree with him?
5. Perhaps you have an example from your own life to illustrate this?

Give it a go! Ask *Do we want to have a book group* ? I reckon this book as good as any other so you could start with *Let Your Life Speak*. Best to have a short book with not too many chapters so you could cover each chapter within a session of 90 minutes.

### **And from Chapter V Leading from Within Clare Phillips, Castle Douglas**

1. How do you respond to Parker Palmer's descriptions of Leadership? p74
2. What leadership qualities have developed out of your unique life?
3. Leaders like Vaclav Havel and Nelson Mandela came to power following years of oppression and imprisonment. What leadership qualities are needed to promote a more inclusive society?

The above questions were ones I wrote to share with a small group of Castle Douglas friends (plus one from Glasgow) a few weeks ago. We'd been meeting to discuss the book 'Let Your Life Speak' by an American Quaker Parker J. Palmer and the Chapter I chose to focus on was all about leadership.

This is a topic I became very interested in during the years my professional life as a social work educator ran alongside my development as a Quaker. What Palmer says on page 74 of his short but powerful book begins as follows: -

*"Leadership" is a concept we often resist. It seems immodest, even self-aggrandizing, to think of ourselves as leaders.'*

This was the matter I found myself grappling with as a teacher of people hoping to help those who are vulnerable (the reason most people become social workers). As a Quaker the dilemma was the same – leadership meant being a boss, telling others what to do, having a loud voice etc. It wasn't right.

Sadly I didn't actually make it to our Chapter V book group session as I was away at the time and couldn't get the technology to work. However, I did think deeply about Parker Palmer's ideas on leadership and agreed to write this short piece for the newsletter.

As well as modesty, Palmer suggests we resist the idea of leadership because of cynicism. As he says – *our declining public life has bred too many self-serving leaders who seem lacking in ethics, compassion and vision*. He is talking about America but considering recent events here in the UK it's easy to agree!

However, he goes on to talk about Nelson Mandela (South Africa), Vaclav Havel (Czech Republic) and also all of us as having leadership potential. *The power for authentic leadership, according to Havel, is found not in external arrangements but in the human heart* (p76) Palmer states.

The core of Palmer's position on ethical leadership is authenticity and our ability to face the shadow side of our nature. He goes on to describe what he calls "*hidden wholeness*" (p81) drawing from another American – Annie Dillard – author of Pulitzer Prize winning *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (1975) who described the place we reach, having faced our demons as "*the unified field, our complex and inexplicable caring for each other*". That's the kind of leadership I'd like to see more of in our troubled world.

## Courses at Glenthorne      Centering Prayer

**12 places, £245**

Persons under 35 qualify for £100 reduction

**Friday 19th- Sunday 21st May**

**Led by Richard Eddlestone & Rosemary Field**

Centering Prayer is a specific method for opening to the presence of God, the sacred, ultimate reality. It's one of a range of personal spiritual practices available to Friends, and one that may be particularly suitable for us. The weekend will welcome those new to Centering Prayer and those with more experience. It will include introductory talks, time for reflection and sharing, and, above all, practice. Richard has been a Quaker for over 30 years and practising Centering Prayer for over a decade. He has facilitated three local groups for over eight years. He has run a course on Centering Prayer at Woodbrooke and attended various retreats. Rosemary has been practising Centering Prayer for five years and believes it to be at the heart of her Quaker Faith. Course finishes Sunday 1.00pm.

## Inspiration: Sally Beamish

It was great joy to be able to attend a lecture given by Sally Beamish, on 15<sup>th</sup> February, to the Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow at the University. There are monthly lectures and you don't have to be a member to go, although a small donation is requested if you are able. Sally is a foremost British composer who for many years was a member at Glasgow Quaker Meeting. So it was a joy to see her again.



Her lecture title was 'Inspiration' and it was a delightful and informative talk about how her life opportunities had let flow her musical talent and her composing. It began with her mother, a violinist, giving her a blank book at the age of 4 to record her inspirations, which she did at first by drawing from the nature she saw around her. The house was always full of music, and she described it as her 'first language'. So she soon picked it all up. She could play a range of instruments at school in those days when public education allowed free choice and free teaching. She was born in London and began her career as a viola player with the Raphael Ensemble, Academy of St Martins and London Sinfonietta, She always knew she was a composer, though, from an early age, but never realised she could make a living from it. Marriage brought her from London to Scotland and a lovely house amidst beautiful scenery. It allowed concentration on composing too. She found far more opportunities to develop herself in Scotland as everyone knew everyone and orchestras linked up and were interested in using her in a way that would have been impossible for a new composer in London. She was also inspired by the pipes, and they influenced her composing. She lived here thirty years and raised her children. Although some of her opportunities came by chance and privilege of birth, much came from her being creative with what she was given. A second marriage has taken her down to Brighton, but also opened up new links and opportunities. Since returning to England, and to playing, she now combines composition with solo and chamber concerts, and a band specialising in popular songs. Her main joy, though, in composing is for ballet, where she works closely with a choreographer and is thrilled by how the dancers work to the shape of her music. It feeds back to her composition, altering it to fit the dancing. Her talk was illustrated by video and recordings of her playing and of her compositions. Inspiring indeed, and fascinating to hear how she'd

developed her confidence in the process and was now very much at ease in the public setting. It is so exciting, she said. She took up the viola again, after a 25 year gap in playing an instrument, and it had taken a while to get back to the standard, but it had come again. It helped her in a different way with her composition as well as allowing her to be back on the stage. There was strong applause when she finished and then we have a short break before the president directed questions to Sally. These ranged from the technical – how did she write a score? (She explained how all the instruments went down the side of the page and she started on the left and wrote for all instruments at once as she progressed) - to those about how she worked in the field. She said she'd had relatively little formal training and had learned on the job. We also learned that in 2018 she won the Award for Inspiration at the British Composer Awards, and in 2020 was awarded an OBE in the Queen's birthday honours. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and of the Kungliga Musikaliska Akadamen in Sweden.

A full list of Sally's compositions can be found online through Wikipedia (just type in Sally beamish Wikipedia under 'search'). This list doesn't include 'A knock on the door' a choral work designed for local choirs that a Quaker charity I'm involved in, the Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture, commissioned from Sally. It had its première last November and we hope it will be sung at Yearly Meeting Gathering next year.

**Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow**

## **Sufi Festival brings audiences a phenomenal one-off showcase Nasheed Concert in aid of people impacted by the earthquake in Turkey-Syria.**

Sufi sounds and artists at the Tramway in Glasgow on Friday 5th May 2023 @ 7.00pm

An evening of heart touching Poetry and Nasheeds from some of UK's finest spoken word and nasheed artists including the outstanding poet [Sukina Noor](#) and highly acclaimed international nasheed artist [Khaled Siddiq](#).

Sufi Festival favourites [Ahmad Ikhlās](#) and Humza Bouzhar together with others will also be there.

Come along and join an evening of sharing goodness and happiness and to raise funds to benefit people who need your support.

**Strictly Limited** early bird discount, use code: **Early-Bird** at checkout for **15% discount** on each ticket

Insha'Allah a beautiful evening for all the family



## Friends go to Palace

On Thursday, 9th March a group of Friends went to Buckingham Palace to present a Loyal Speech to the King for his accession to the throne in May. Quakers belong to an old group called Privileged Bodies (stems from 16th century) and on



special occasions are invited to present Loyal Speeches to the King. Up to twelve Friends were invited and I was selected to go as Rep for Scotland.

Totally out of my comfort zone, but helped and supported very well by Michael Hutchinson and Paul Parker, off I went down to London and met up with the others at Friends House on Euston Road. From there it was taxis to the Palace to enter another world, so far removed from reality. I think as a group we all struggled with that and the fact that the speech was to be Loyal to the King, However, the speech was written and we as a group had the opportunity to read and approve it beforehand. There are twenty seven Privileged Bodies who are invited to attend and so twenty seven short speeches were duly read and given to the King. Our speech was delivered by the lovely Leasa Lambert, who read it beautifully. Most of the speeches were expressing loyalty to Charles, sending condolences on the death of his mother, the Queen, and thanking him for support given. Our speech, I am delighted to report, acknowledged those facts and was the only one that was proactive as you can read for yourself.

Following the speeches we went into the Picture Gallery where a reception was held and we had the opportunity to speak with other groups. Several commented that our speech was the most relevant for the day.

In summary, this is an experience I will never forget and cannot doubt the history of the occasion. It was a privilege to go. Royalist or not, you cannot fail to sense the history and majesty of the event. It was only as we left and climbed into our taxis and went back to Friends House that we felt we were back in the real world again. The contrast is stark and I found it deeply disturbing to have been among so much grandness and privilege and then be back in reality again with so much poverty and need so close to all of that.

**Angela Stather, Islay & Jura.**

## Loyal address – spoken version

As representatives of Quakers across Britain and Northern Ireland, we give thanks for the grace of God shown in the life of the late Queen Elizabeth and offer congratulations on your coronation.

We thank you for speaking out for the environment. Quakers believe that the climate crisis requires questioning our economic systems, which are not operating within ecological limits or upholding the equality of all.

For us, equality means everyone feeling valued for who they are. We rejoice in our differences.

We welcome trans and gender diverse people within our Quaker communities. We commit to being an anti-racist church, and to making reparations for our involvement in slavery.

We are grieved by the conflicts in Ukraine and elsewhere. Every casualty is a valued human life lost or damaged. Wars end through force of arms or negotiation, but peace comes by building relationships, mutual dependency and shared prosperity.

We pray you will be guided by Jesus Christ's example to serve wisely and lovingly, and counsel your governments to do the same.



## News of Local Meetings

### Dunblane

In order to include as many people as possible we have recently tried doing things a bit differently.

First, we are running an experiment for three months of NOT blending our Sunday morning Meeting for Worship on the first Sunday of the month and having a midweek evening MfW as well. We thought about having the two meetings (in person and Zoom) running concurrently but felt that might be divisive.

Second, knowing that not many Friends come to our local business meeting or to Area Meeting we decided to try to ask as many of our members and attenders as possible what they thought about the Options for Scotland Report. So we wrote to everyone saying '*we need your help*' and invited them to join a meeting either in person or on Zoom. In this way we have reached more of our meeting so that when we come to send a minute to AM we feel it may bring a fuller sense of the whole meeting. It is a bit more work but if it helps Friends to feel more involved then it is worth it.

### Glasgow

See AM minutes for decisions on the Meeting House. The roof work and repairs to the gable end progress and we hope that they will be finished in a couple of weeks. Lori Sullivan, the centre co-ordinator, is settling into the job and there is a new mobile number for the Meeting House: 07761 096664.

**Community gardening** This continues on the 1st Saturday of every month 11am at Steph's labyrinth garden, Duncruin St, G20 0EZ, near Maryhill railway station, (1 minute down on the right from Helen and Steph's house).

So please join us for this reflective working party. Bring a spade or other suitable tools for weeding and cutting edges, garden gloves and some refreshment.

Around 12.30 we will down tools, when the weather is good we have a short period of quiet reflection, share some refreshments, tidy up, and rejoice in the views from this bit of lovely rescued land.

Further Information from Steph: 07766 708363

### Climate Café

Thursday 27th April at 5.30 in person, 6.30 by Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84122430642?pwd=c2FGWUhcTjYmM2R6WEVzSEsyU2IEUT09> Meeting ID: 841 2243 0642 Passcode: 280761

**Quaker Walks next on** Saturday 22 April, then Friday 26 May and Saturday 24 June This might be to the North Third Reservoir but will be confirmed later.

Further information and to be on the mailing list contact Daphne Wassermann – [daphne@aquarius1000.plus.com](mailto:daphne@aquarius1000.plus.com) - 0141 357 0396

## West Coast Friends Gathering

Angela Stather, Islay & Jura

writes

over the weekend of 17th to 19th March our usual gathering was held in the Youth Hostel in Crianlarich. As ever it was lovely to see each other once again and share in company and good food. People began to arrive soon after 4pm and settled into their rooms.

Our guest speaker this year was Alistair McIntosh who spoke at length over the sessions about Spirituality in our lives and about moving forward as elders. It was fascinating and he is such a good speaker, both educational and funny at the same time. He has the most wonderful and infectious laugh. Worship throughout the weekend was deep, rich and meaningful.



On Saturday evening a ceilidh was held with good participation, beautiful poetry and plenty of humour. For me, apart from our speaker, the worship and friendships create a loving and safe space. Following each Worship and at meals we all, as Friends do, talked endlessly with each other.

Another gathering will take place next year at the same Youth Hostel in Crianlarich and if you can come and be part of it you'll have a special time. We all leave reluctantly but feeling refreshed and inspired. See you next year!





Our afternoon stroll enjoying the surrounding hills.

## Friends special events

- Arran** Tessa Smith will be 80 on 9<sup>th</sup> June  
Judith Baines was 90 on 8<sup>th</sup> January
- Glasgow** Michael Hutchinson was 75  
Derek Read was 70

Special congratulations to Alastair and Gill Reid on their Silver Wedding.



**For Patrick Bealey who died on 20<sup>th</sup> March in Portsmouth, formerly of  
Castle Douglas LM**

We shared deeply over these few special months,  
We shared our times of stillness,  
And the Amazing Presence in our midst,  
We encouraged one another in our discussion times,  
And you felt you should live adventurously,  
And we felt together the pain, the joys and the transitions of life.

You talked with understated pride of your granddaughter,  
Of music festivals,  
And we learned more of the challenges when kerbs are not dropped,  
And the environment is designed unthinkingly,  
And people with disabilities then,  
Have to navigate our thoughtlessness.

We shared in your excitement and anticipation of your move,  
And you talked of having brown rice,  
And the freedom to be arrested for your beliefs,  
Your campaigns for a better world,  
And we laughed gently with you,  
And hoped the move would be more than that for you,  
And suddenly you were gone.

And the shape of the feeling was sharp and abrasive,  
And our hearts miss you already,  
But we hope that you felt you were going home,  
And that your spirit was carried,  
With and in gentle companionship,  
And that you are even now,  
Becoming more of who you are,  
And that All is Well  
And Will be Well,  
Patrick.

**Laura McMurtrie, Ayrshire.**

## **Regular Meetings for Worship other than Local Meetings**

### **Time for Stillness**

Every Tuesday, 8.00 to 8.30am

Time for Stillness (T4S) is now weekly and blended.

Friends and visitors are welcome to join us in the Meeting House (Elizabeth Fry Room) or on Zoom, 7.50am for an 8am start. After 30 minutes stillness, there is time for some conversation and a cuppa.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84827220311?pwd=ESsbnvJlkQgeuWh9PWkM76UoTnuCKs.1>

Meeting ID: 848 2722 0311

Passcode: 123456

Note that this link is not listed on the Meeting Zoom website but should still work.

### **Deepening Spirituality**

Early morning meeting at 10am on Sundays 2 and 16 April

This is a half hour space for those who want a deeper connection with the divine, God/Jesus, the God of your Heart. In the full half hour of silence, our experience is that we can go deeper in our connection. One Friend will give a brief introduction to set the tone and there is time afterwards to share thoughts and experiences, and still get to you usual MfW at 11am.

Any queries contact Margaret Roy at present.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7613798296?pwd=enZDWS9iRHNHUIlZR2dBb3N2YjBoZz09>

Meeting ID: 761 379 8296

Passcode: EwLWed

### **Young Friends Epilogues**

Youngish Friends' fortnightly epilogues are continuing by Zoom on Wednesdays April 5 and 19 at 7.30pm.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81286554225?pwd=ay9GNVg5Z0JmTThocjkxc0R2dVlaUT09>

### **Experiment with light**

Wednesdays 2pm to 4pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86735884524?pwd=WIFJNHRQd1NPTGNsVmE5QmkyTFVBZz09>

Meeting ID: 867 3588 4524

Passcode: 139515

### **Sunday evening Area Meeting for Worship**

The meeting is open from 7.15pm to give time to say hello and settle in, the worship starts at 7.30pm for half an hour after which there is time for chat.

Details are circulated weekly.

If anyone has any difficulties please call Kate Gulliver on 07596725387.

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

15 <sup>th</sup> April	Area Meeting	Dumfries/Castle Douglas	11.30am – 4pm
5 <sup>th</sup> June	Area Meeting	by Zoom	(7 – 9pm)
19 <sup>th</sup> August	Area Meeting	Tarbert/Lochgilphead	11.30am – 4pm
7 <sup>th</sup> October	Area Meeting	Dunblane/Lanark	11.30am – 4pm
11 <sup>th</sup> March	GENERAL MEETING	10.30 am	Glasgow

### **Hold in the Light**

Penny Lilley and family following the death of Paul, her former husband. Edie Phoenix at the first anniversary of a bereavement.

***West Scotland Quaker News is published by West Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 38 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow G2 4PS. Telephone 0141 248 84 93***

**The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individuals, They do not necessarily present the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The deadline for contributions or the next issue of WSQN is 15<sup>th</sup> July 2023.**

**And, good to see the enthusiasm, but please do not sent in articles over 1000 words should be send in Word format only to the editor Margaret Roy.**