

Spring - Summer

My work in the Second Quarter of 2024



East Lothian coastline on the summer solstice

On the summer solstice I left my house after the children were in bed and walked along the coastline near my house. The light nights are a blessing for someone who occasionally cannot cram a walk into my busy days. Summer solstice is bitter-sweet for me, I know we are sliding towards shorter days and worse weather. I have to remind myself that we have months of summer left. That the summer will come again as sure as the winter. That this is all part of an ever-changing cycle.

It is the end of the school term today. My girls' school changes the composition of their classes every year.

This last year has been a very happy one for my two and the prospect of change is scary. Having children is challenging in all the obvious ways, but you can be surprised by unforeseen challenges too. I don't think I had realised how powerless children really are before having my own. They are buffeted by the decisions of every adult in their lives. It's no wonder that as adults we often cling to control.

When I work with Friends I often have to take into account the instinctive dislike of change most of us have, the fact that we so often cling to control in a sea of uncertainty. This could be read as a very specific dig at the proposed changes by the Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group, but I promise it isn't. A fear of change and a need for control is at the heart of so many of the conflicts I work with in my role in Scotland and the rest of Britain.

The aim with working through these conflicts is that we can get ourselves to a point where the change can be understood and "owned" by the people who will be most affected by it. If we can do this with respect for one another and the support of our faith we can find the process healing, even if it was not comfortable.

I take comfort from the fact that, as Quakers, we give up control in our worship, opening ourselves up to divine guidance and inspiration. A people who choose such an uncontrolled, unpredictable way of expressing their faith must surely be more at home with change than many.

News and Opportunities for Scottish Quakers

There's loads going on at the moment, with lots of exciting opportunities and things to think about. Please go to the end of this newsletter for more information about:

- What is the Quaker Way? Monthly online sessions for newcomers to Quakers (next session 11 July)
- An invite to a Quaker Communities Day at Swarthmoor Hall (15 July)
- Quaker resources for the General Election
- Information about Yearly Meeting 2024 (26-30 July)
- Request from the Quaker Arts Network (deadline 10 August)
- Information and dates about Quaker Week 2024 (28 September to 6 October)
- George Fox 400 resources (2024)
- Quaker Grants available to Friends
- Opportunities for connection and learning for adults, families and children

Ways in which I can support you:

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



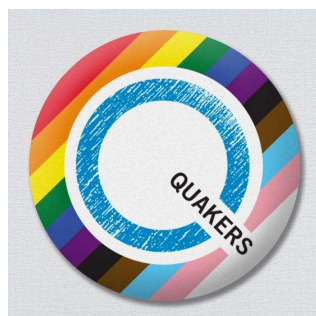
Slightly old picture of me

- Quaker networks for role holders, such as Elders and Pastoral Care Friends.
- Support for Quakers – whether those are as individuals, groups, local and area meetings, or General Meeting.
- In person “getting to know you” visits to your meeting – do invite me, I would be delighted to meet you!
- Bespoke workshops and events for your meeting – is there something you need particular support with? Please get in touch and we can see if I can help.

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

Highlights from my work – April-June

June’s Elders and Pastoral Care Network Meeting



Quaker Q badge with a rainbow flag background

In June we were grateful to hear from two members of the network who spoke about the experiences of LGBTQIA+ Friends. We considered ways in which elders and pastoral care Friends may be called on by LGBTQIA+ members of our meeting. Thirty-four Friends took part in these wonderful, challenging sessions and it felt like a fantastic way to recognise Pride month.

For those who may not know LGBTQIA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and non-binary, Queer and questioning, Intersex, Asexual and aromantic and the 'plus' represents other experiences and identities not named in LGBTQIA.

I run network meetings for a variety of roleholders. These are great opportunities for Friends to meet other people who are taking on similar roles and learn from one another, if you want to find out more, please email me.

Nominations work with General Meeting for Scotland

On 8 June I was grateful to have the opportunity to speak to General Meeting for Scotland on “The Principles behind Nominations”. I love nominations, it’s been a passion of mine since I worked for Central Nominations Committee in my previous role. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to share my passion and excitement with other Friends.

If you need support with nominations, please contact me by email.

Exploring class workshops with Woodbrooke

Following a debate on the Quaker Facebook page – Quaker Space, I teamed up with colleagues in Quaker Peace and Social Witness and Woodbrooke to design and host a session to support Friends to explore class and wealth within our Quaker communities.

There were two parts to the series and the first part was divided into two separate sessions, designed to help people feel safe to share and learn. One session was designed by and for people who identify as having less wealth or class privilege. The other was facilitated by and for people who identify as having some form of class or wealth privilege.

I was sadly only able to facilitate the first part of the series, but it was fascinating to work with Friends across Britain to consider how best to create a culture of welcome, that did not have assumptions of wealth or class background within it.

Surprise article in the Friend



"Should' should never be seen", the Friend, 9 May

I was pleasantly surprised by a compliment from a Friend who congratulated me on my article in the Friend (the Quaker magazine, produced weekly - <https://thefriend.org/>).

I had not deliberately offered it to the Friend thinking it would be printed. I had sent it in to them asking if it was the sort of thing that they might be interested in. The auto reply had informed me it was likely too long for a one-page piece and too short for a two-page piece so I filed it away for a time when I could edit it appropriately. It was quite a shock to hear that it had been printed.

The Friend had chosen a new headline for the piece. The new title, "Should' should never be seen" implies a certainty that I naturally shy away from. I dislike absolute statements more than I dislike the word "should".

Whether it was intended or not, it is flattering to have something published in the Friend and I stand by the article, if not the title of the article.

Gifts workshop with Kelso meeting



Cherry blossom and shared lunches

I had the lovely experience of visiting Kelso meeting to run a Gifts workshop with the Friends there.

The last time I attempted to attend Kelso meeting my satnav got turned around and I ended up in a random English village. This time I brought my mum.

Even with the power of my mum we didn't set off to a particularly good start, the car suddenly started to give off warning "bings" as we went down a series of increasingly windy roads. We eventually turned onto straighter roads and the bings stopped.

We have not heard them again, even on equally windy journeys.

Once in Kelso the meeting was lovely, and the Gifts workshop was beautiful. It can be hard to identify your strengths, but this workshop empowers others to do so for you. Friends reflected that it can be hard to hear compliments, or positive things said about themselves, but that it is very worthwhile.

We had a shared lunch together after the meeting and workshop. It was a lovely, calm, positive day.

Community subgroup of the Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group

The Community subgroup has been collecting feedback from Local Meetings and other worshipping communities about how they fit into the wider Quaker world and what it is that they need. I have been doing some work to encourage groups to take part. At this point we have over 30 responses, the majority of which come from meetings and worshipping groups and the rest are from individuals.

We are now at the deadline for the answers to the questionnaire but if Friends have anything that they would like to add, please email me.

Other News and Opportunities in 2024:

What is the Quaker Way?

What is the Quaker Way? is a monthly series of online sessions for newcomers to explore Quaker spirituality and community. Each session includes small group sharing and listening. They are led by staff from Quakers in Britain.

All sessions are on Thursdays from 7.30pm-8.30pm on Zoom. You are welcome to attend one or more sessions, and you can join on any date for the first time.

For dates, and to receive a Zoom link for the sessions, please register here:

https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=MGHYU_KJUq_K4_1UYIBaC6sKC-7eK5LkJYiC58JmIdURTFKRiHrK8zNihKNkVEVfDFNVFITEpaVi4u .

Quaker Communities Day at Swarthmoor Hall on Monday 15 July 2024



Swarthmoor Hall

You are invited to a Quaker Communities Day at Swarthmoor Hall on Monday 15 July 2024!

This is part of a weeklong celebration to mark the 400th anniversary of George Fox's birth (see George Fox 400 resources p5).

Swarthmoor Hall, [the cradle of Quakerism](#), has been going through exciting renovations and re-interpretation and this will be the first chance to see the Hall, gardens, and the rest of the site after the completion of some of this work. It is a unique opportunity for Quakers from around Britain to come together in this special place

where many early Quakers, including George Fox and Margaret Fell, met, worshipped, and built the foundations of the Religious Society of Friends.

The whole site will be open from 10am-4pm. There will be hot drinks and light refreshments available through the day and you are welcome to bring your own lunch to enjoy on the lawn or in the barn. A meeting for worship in the Hall will start at 2pm. The Hall and gardens will be open to explore, and our brilliant staff and volunteers will be on hand to answer questions.

Resources for the General Election

Colleagues who are involved in parliamentary work have put together a pack to prepare meetings for the general election. It is available here - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/politicalengagement/general-election-2024>.

It includes:

- An **election guide** for individuals, groups and meetings on the upcoming general election.
- **Template emails** for individuals to adapt and send to their local parliamentary candidates.
- **Children and young people's packs** for Friends who work with CYP.
- **Parliamentary candidates pack** for Friends to use when contacting the candidates.
- Local meetings can order up to three printed copies of the election guide and up to five **greetings cards** to send to local candidates on behalf of the meeting. These resources are free but are strictly for local meetings (not individuals) and limited in numbers. *The deadline for this has been extended and no new deadline has been publicised, I suggest applying as soon as possible if you would like this.*

If Friends have any questions about these resources, they can contact politics@quaker.org.uk or call Grace Da Costa on 020 7663 1138.

Yearly Meeting 2024

Yearly Meeting is open to all Quakers (whether members or attenders). It is the opportunity for all British Quakers to consider topics, learn from one another, name what we feel led to do as a whole body and affirm our Quaker community.

This year Yearly Meeting 2024 is happening in Friends House in London (just by Euston train station). You can attend in person or online. For more information please go to the Yearly Meeting website here - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym>.

I will be attending in person for the first time since I started as a Local Development Worker. If you are likely to be there, would you like to meet me for a Scottish Quaker chat? If you are interested in meeting up, please email me and I will contact you with more information as soon as times are confirmed.

Quaker Arts Network at Greenbelt 2024 Slideshow – OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE

The Quaker Arts Network is asking for contributions of artwork linked to any of the Quaker Advices and Queries. They are asking for a maximum of three artworks each one has to be linked to a specific one of the Advices and Queries.

These will be shown at the Quaker Arts Network Gazebo at this year's Greenbelt Festival. If you would like to know more, please email me and I will send you more information.

Quaker Week 2024: 'Simple. Radical. Spiritual.'



Simple Radical Spiritual tote bags

Quaker Week runs every year to help Quaker meetings to attract new people and share their faith.

In 2024, Quaker Week will be from 28 September to 6 October, with the same theme as last year of 'Simple. Radical. Spiritual.' Britain Yearly Meeting are planning to produce some new materials, as well as those they offered last year. Britain Yearly Meeting are experimenting with having the same theme for two years running as this campaign was very warmly welcomed by Friends and there's more we can do to explore how this theme can speak to newcomers. New materials will be available to order from July.

George Fox 400 resources

2024 marks the 400th anniversary of the birth of George Fox, the best known of the group of men and women who founded Quakerism. Quaker meetings across Britain are organising events to celebrate. Here are some helpful tools you can use if your meeting is interested in getting involved:

- George Fox 400 information section of the Quakers in Britain website: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/george-fox-400>
- George Fox 400 resources page for Quakers: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/george-fox-400-resources>.
- You can add your event to the map on the Get involved page by submitting this form: <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/quaker-week-map/>.
- You can add your event to the monthly events thread on the Quaker Space page on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/quakerspace>.

Quaker Grants

- **Yearly Meeting Bursaries:** can be found on the YM booking form or by email, grants@quaker.org.uk
- **Hope Grants:** Information and application form available here <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/grant-making/hope>

- **Pastoral Care Grants:** contact by email grants@quaker.org.uk, or phone 020 7663 1053, for information and an application form.

Opportunities for connection and learning:

Opportunities for Parents, Children and Young People:

Please consider passing this information on to other parents/carers or young people in your worshipping communities:

1. Giant Online Childrens Meeting on the first Sunday of every month - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/communities/children-and-young-people-2/i-work-with-children-and-young-people-in-a-quaker-setting/online-meetings-for-children-and-young-people>.
2. Europe and Middle East Section - youth group which meets online regularly and in person annually: <https://fwccemes.org/emes/emes-youthgroup>
3. Rising Up!, the newsletter for Young Adult Quakers - See the Spring 2024 edition here - <https://us7.campaign-archive.com/?u=7506c29d95944ba554b4871f8&id=a2065014ac>. You can subscribe to this newsletter here <https://quaker.us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=7506c29d95944ba554b4871f8&id=60726d085b>.

Woodbrooke's 2024 programme

Woodbrooke, Britain's Quaker Studies Centre, have some wonderful courses. Do have a look and see if anything appeals to you. You can find the information about their upcoming events here - <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/our-courses/>

Discovering Quakers website

The Discovering Quakers website is run by Friends who want to encourage those who might find a home in Quakers to attend and try out meetings. It is full of articles, blogs, posts, videos and podcasts, and you can also join online events organised by the group. To find out more, please visit their website <https://discoveringquakers.org.uk/>

Contacting me:

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

My email address is zoep@quaker.org.uk

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