

Summer-Autumn

My work in the Third Quarter of 2024



The window – that didn't quite end up how I wanted but I promise took hours!

My last newsletter spoke about change. I love this Octavia Butler quote:

All that you touch you Change
All that you Change Changes you
The only lasting truth is Change
God is Change

In fact, I love it so much that it is currently decorating my office window for “[Window Wanderland](#)” a rather fun initiative that has residents decorating their windows for others to wander around and enjoy. As you can see from the picture (to the left) I cut out the words rather too large so they only fitted in columns. It makes it a bit tricky to actually read.

Now admittedly Octavia Butler wrote this as part of a religion in her speculative fiction novel “Parable of the Sower”. However, it rings powerfully as part of my understanding of the human condition.

With all that in mind, my non-work life has entered a period of change. Sammi and Andy, two grown ups who have lived with my family since our girls were very young, have just got the role of Central Edinburgh Meeting House Manager. This includes residential accommodation by the Meeting House. While they will not be moving out fully from our house (they will be back here regularly, our house is still their home) it heralds a time of exciting, scary, complicated, positive change. We'll need to refigure some childcare plans and we'll miss them when they are in Edinburgh. I'm excited to see what they will do for Central Edinburgh Meeting House though – they will be superb.

It feels very strange that a lot of this newsletter will focus on things I did in the height of summer. It is firmly autumn now, I've dug out my winter coat and have been craving soups and stews. I hope the rest of this newsletter will bring some summer sun to you as you read it.

In terms of planning for change - General Meeting for Scotland has asked Friends across Scotland to feed back on my priorities for my work in 2025. Understanding what Friends in Scotland would like me to prioritise helps me to plan my work load and think about what needs to be done. This is the third year that we have been doing this and it has been very helpful.

Last year you suggested that I focus on:

- **Expanding role-holder networks**
- **Supporting Quaker community building - locally, for families, and for everyone**
- **Pointing the way to information about available resources and materials**
- **Supporting the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to work for change**

You can see my report about what I have achieved so far in regards to these priorities (this year) here:

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/newsletters/Priorities%20Report%202024.pdf>. If you have any suggestions about changes to my priorities do please contact me (my email address is at the end of this document).

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 17 October, which I will be facilitating).
- I've been made aware of a couple of news articles about Quakers in Scotland – linked below.
- Scottish Interfaith Week (11th - 18th November) and an invitation to an interfaith conference in Dundee.
- Information about a new network for Quakers interested in peace work, the Quaker Peacebuilding Network.
- Offer of support from the Quaker Peace and Social Witness team for Quaker communities.
- 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:

- 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 [\[https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings\]](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

Trip to Orkney and Shetland



On our way to the first ferry

This summer I went on a trip to visit Quaker communities in Orkney and Shetland. I was particularly invited by Friends in Shetland meeting, and it seemed sensible to include a trip to visit Orkney as well. In consultation with my manager we turned this into part work

trip/part holiday and I brought my husband and children as well.

En route we managed to fit in a brief meeting with some Friends from Inverness, which was a joy.

Orkney included Quaker worship hosted in a United Reformed Church. Wordship was followed by a rich sharing



In the rain by an old stone (at the Ring of Brodgar)

of our individual faith journeys. I met with a number of Friends over the rest of the time I was there. I was invited to a Friend's house where we explored a lovely garden (with trees - which are rare on the island). My children played with the Friend's grandchildren while I had a fascinating discussion.

In Shetland we worshipped with Shetland Friends and discussed the experience of being a



After worship with Shetland Quakers

Quaker in Shetland over a shared lunch. Our children were delighted to go swimming with other Quaker children while their mum and I discussed pastoral care and eldership.

In both Orkney and Shetland I had very valuable, but tricky conversations about Britain Yearly Meeting's stances on faith and/or concerns and a conversation about the changes proposed by the Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group and how that might impact Friends in more isolated Scottish communities.

We also dragged our children to a lot of Neolithic sites, had glorious family time and were shown very welcoming hospitality by very kind Friends. It was an incredibly enriching experience and I was very grateful to all the Friends who welcomed us so warmly.

Trip to Britain Yearly Meeting

We only had a few days at home after returning from Shetland before we had to pack again to go down to Yearly Meeting. Being in London was complicated for us. The first visit as a family since we moved from London in 2021. We spent some time around Yearly Meeting seeing Friends who were about to emigrate to the USA. Lots of "big feelings" alongside the first Yearly Meeting I have attended in person since before Covid.

Yearly Meeting was interesting. I particularly valued the session around Speaking and Living with Integrity. Friends were asked the question "do Friends at Yearly Meeting, or those who read a Yearly Meeting minute, hear it as a call to personal or collective action?". This was a really valuable session to hear Friends minister in. You will notice that my current priorities as suggested by Quakers in Scotland do not include any of the current concerns referenced in the minute that came from that session:

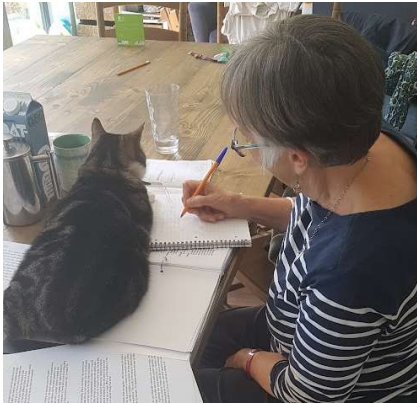
- The climate emergency
- Anti-racism
- Affirming and welcoming transgender and gender-diverse Friends

I felt that we heard many of the opinions I hear from local Friends during that discussion (not from them directly, but from other Friends in the room). The minute arising from that session includes the passage:

We need to spend due time in our Local and Area Meetings considering Yearly Meeting minutes, what we as a Local or Area Meeting might do and what we as individuals might do. Our time at Yearly Meeting can revive energy in our local Quaker communities to look again at commitments we have previously made.

If there is any support that your meeting would like in considering this work, please do get in touch and note the offer from Quaker Peace and Social Witness colleagues of mine in the Other News and Opportunities section of the newsletter.

To read the minutes of Yearly Meeting please go to www.quaker.org.uk/documents/yearly-meeting-2024-minutes.



Rocky, our cat, "helping" Madeleine with our work

Safeguarding

I have been "teasing" the work that I have been doing on Safeguarding for just over a year. Last summer Friends in South East Scotland identified that we need a way of encouraging all Quakers to understand our communal responsibilities towards safeguarding. So I have been working with Madeleine Harding and other Friends and Local Development Workers on a workshop that would offer a "panic free approach to Safeguarding" for all. I am very proud to say that it the workshop available here <https://padlet.com/Quakerscotland/keeping-our-meetings-safe-apevs5ekhvdjuz1t> for you to access, review and use.

The idea of this webpage is that you can access all the tools that a meeting might need to run your own Safeguarding workshop. Please have a look at it and let me know how you get on!

NSAM - Plusgarden



Me and my water bottle in a field of barley at Plusgarden

After all this I also went to the North Scotland Area Meeting residential in Pluscarden Abbey.

On the first day I was there we did a workshop facilitated by Friends from Woodbrooke on Active Hope "How to face the mess we're in with unexpected resilience and creative power". I came away with some great tools and it was wonderful to be in session and having meals with Friends, I parted promising to follow up on conversations at the business meeting the following day.

By the end of the day I was feeling a bit under the weather. The next day I was feeling worse, so halfway to the Abbey from my accommodation I realised how silly it would be to go onto meeting and turned around to go home, just stopping to pick up a bottle of water. When I was parking a high kerb caught my slightly dodgy bumper. The bumper and half of the wheel arch then fell off the car in such a way that I would not be able to put it back on again.

I then waited hours for the AA. When they arrived and fixed the bumper on with cable ties and gaffa tape (I presume – they suggested I should get it to the garage as soon as I got home) I was finally able to be on my way. Driving through town I saw one of the Quakers I had been in a session with yesterday crossing the street. The area meeting had obviously finished some time before. I don't know if you saw me Friend, but I promise I wasn't skiving from the business meeting (or at least not skiving without a good reason)!

Networks for Role Holders



Still from the video of Julia and me

We have had some great network meetings in the last few months, chats with clerks, trustees, nominations Friends and Elders and Pastoral Care Friends. There has been a lot of interesting sharing and finding out about one another's work across Scotland. For the Elders and Pastoral Care Network meeting we discussed approaches to outreach.

Here is a short video that you might be interested in <https://youtu.be/Bp7BZJS230w>.

It is a 15 minute video of a chat between myself and my Quaker Life Youth Development Worker colleague Julia Dover. We talk about an interesting and very successful approach to outreach that a meeting that Julia supports initiated. Julia also poses some important questions about outreach and how we do it.

Wiston (a short visit)

As our family had done a lot of Quaker things I felt that bringing them to Wiston, a wonderful all age residential weekend in South Scotland, was a bit too much for us all after such a Quakery summer (much to my children's sadness). However, I did get in touch with the Friends organising Wiston and asked them if it would be helpful if I were to come down for a day on my own and do some work for them or support someone else's work.

They suggested that I support a Friend who is fairly new to Quakers and who wanted to facilitate a conversation about "What it is to be a Quaker". I had a wonderful call with this Friend who had a very clear idea of the sort of conversations that she was hoping to encourage. We agreed on what we would do in the session and then met properly in person at Wiston.

The Friend running this session could have done it on her own without my support, but I hope that I gave her the confidence to take the work forwards and have the sort of conversations that she was hoping for. I definitely enjoyed the session and was very pleased to have some fascinating conversations with the Friends who were attending on the day.

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-7eK5LkJYiC58JmldURTFKRIhIRk8zNIhKNkVEVFdFNVFITEpaVi4u .

Quakers in the news

Scotsman (Edinburgh)	19/09/2024	400 years	Quakers celebrate 400th birthday of founder (scotsman.com)
North Edinburgh News	18/09/2024	Global week of action Climate Finance	Edinburgh climate justice campaigners join global action to demand an end to fossil fuels – The NEN – North Edinburgh News

Scottish Interfaith Week

This year is the celebration of 20 years of Scottish Interfaith Week! The week is taking place from 11th - 18th November and the theme is 'Discovery'. Opening up our hearts and minds to discovery is one of the biggest gifts we can give ourselves and those around us. Learning about others opens us up to different ways of being; different cultures, beliefs and perspectives. Through discovery we can challenge prejudice and misunderstanding, both inside of us and in the world around us. Nurturing curiosity is a powerful step towards building bridges between communities.

For Scottish Interfaith Week 2024, we encourage you to celebrate and explore discovery as a powerful way to bring people together and nurture a culture where connection is what sustains us.

Please find some practical information about the week below:

National Interfaith Conference

To mark the 20th anniversary of Scottish Interfaith Week we are hosting a National Interfaith Conference as the festival launch event at the Dundee City Council Chambers. You can book your ticket here. Places are limited so do book your place as soon as possible!

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/national-interfaith-conference-tickets-912053635977>

Quaker Peacebuilding Network

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

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

Offer of support from Quaker Peace and Social Witness team

Your contribution to Quakers in Britain supports national and international work for climate justice, peace and social witness (internally known as Quaker Peace and Social Witness or QPSW).

The QPSW team and the Central Committee who discern and uphold the work would like to share with you some case studies and stories about the current work. We are available to deliver a short overview presentation after Meeting for Worship or as part of any in-person or blended events you are planning in your Quaker Community.

We think the work we do is really inspiring and we couldn't do it without you, so we want to share it with you! If you want to request a speaker for your local area, please email qpsw@quaker.org.uk. Also for more opportunities and news, please sign up for the monthly Faith in Action newsletter - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/newsletters/quaker-faith-in-action>.

Quaker Grants

- **Meeting House Fund:** can be found on the BYM website here <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/grant-making/meeting-houses-fund>
- **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>