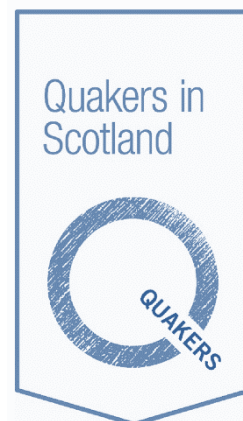


GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

Hybrid Meeting to be held the Spectrum Centre, 1 Margaret Street, Inverness, IV1 1LS, and by Zoom

21st September 2024 11 am – 4:00 pm



PAPERS FOR THIS MEETING

Note that one document under paper B is to be found on the GM website, with other reference documents indicated in the papers.

A Minute from East Scotland Area Meeting	page 2
B Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group	
Paper B1 Introduction for 21 September	page 3
Paper B2 <i>Possible patterns of relationship between meetings of Scottish Friends</i>	pages 4-9
Paper B3 <i>Possible charitable structures</i>	page 10
Paper B4 Draft Governing Document updated September 2024 see https://quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/Draft Governing Document September 2024.pdf	
C Evaluation of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group 2024	pages 11-22
D Prisoners' Week (SQCJWG)	page 23
E Scottish Christian Forum & ACTS	pages 24-30
F Parliamentary Engagement Working Group & GM Climate Justice Report reports	pages 31-33
G Local Development Worker priorities review	pages 34-37
H Gerald Richards bequest book collection	page 38

PAPER A. Minute from East Scotland Area Meeting

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) East Scotland Area Meeting Saturday 10th August 2024

Held at the Subud Centre, Perth, and online.

24.08.05 Nominations (in part)

Cathy Kinnear of the Nominations Committee has given a verbal report highlighting the number of posts vacant or about to fall vacant. They include: Clerk, Assistant Clerk, AM Nominations Convenor, GM trustee ESAM Rep, four Elders and a Pastoral Friend. Others are: AM Safeguarding Officer (covered at GM level), CYP Advocate, NFPB Rep, Archivist, AM Web updates.

This is a major crisis and the very survival of ESAM is in question due to the number of significant AM posts unfilled. This has not suddenly happened. A minute from Area Meeting in February 2023 reads '23.02.08 ...East Scotland Area Meeting is facing a critical situation with our nominations committee having increasing difficulty in finding names for essential roles including trustees, treasurers and clerks and if this continues there will no longer be sufficient names to undertake these functions beyond the end of 2023...'

We will copy this minute to General Meeting for their information.

We noted at GM that there is a vacancy for a GM Trustee from ESAM.

Signed:

Alice Curteis, assistant clerk

PAPER B Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group

Paper B1 GM clerk's Introduction for 21 September

We have been collectively working on movement towards a single charity/Quaker body for Scotland for some years now, since North Scotland AM requested help in maintaining itself. All Area Meetings and the Dundee Friends' Property Trust have agreed that we should move towards a single body, but some reservations were expressed by some AMs that needed answering before we formally set up such a charity. There are three main issues here to which we return.

1. How local meetings would work together and relate to each other within a new single body (including how geographical boundaries would be treated and how spiritual and pastoral care would operate).

The Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group, through its Community Subgroup, brings to us **Paper B2** *Possible patterns of relationship between meetings of Scottish Friends* and members of the Sub-group will speak to it. Area Meetings have been sent this prior to this meeting with a request that Friends have opportunity to ask questions of, and make comments to, the members of the Sub-group from their Area Meeting. See page 4. (The paper builds on the responses of the extensive survey through a questionnaire made by the Sub-group (which can be downloaded under 'Documents' on the first page of the General Meeting for Scotland website. Or click: <https://www.quakerscotland.org/documents/79>)

We will consider this paper B2 and discern whether we have any guidance to Area Meetings and/or the Coordinating Group.

2. Choosing the SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) model for the potential new Scottish Quaker charity.

Paper B3 *Possible charitable structures* summarises the options here, and Robin Waterston as clerk of GM Trustees will speak to the issues raised previously as to how other charities are viewing it as a model and how our membership system would work within (and outwith) it. See page 10.

3. Whether the draft Governing Document for a new charity is now serviceable as a working document.

Friends were asked last year to arise any issues or concerns on the draft with the Coordinating Group. Amendments subsequently made are incorporated on the draft on the General Meeting or Scotland website. See paper B4: [https://quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/Draft Governing Document September 2024.pdf](https://quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/Draft_Governing_Document_September_2024.pdf)

Kate Gulliver of the Co-ordinating Group will speak to the changes made.

PAPER B2 Possible patterns of relationship between meetings of Scottish Friends

The following document has been created in response to the questionnaire sent out by the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group Community Subgroup. It aims to synthesise feedback we have received from Friends across Scotland and present possible future church government options in line with this. These options are being presented to General Meeting and Area Meetings, in line with GM's request for the QiSCG to "bring us proposals both for our future potential governance and how Friends within Scotland can work in community – i.e. the 'charity' and the 'church' aspects." (Minute 24/04/06 *Quakers in Scotland: proposals for a single Quaker charity/body*).

In the following list of structures, we have attempted to include an "at-a-glance" table to illustrate which level certain processes would be formally carried out at. These tables are intended to be quick guides, rather than comprehensive descriptions, which are contained in the paragraph text. A glossary fully explaining what words refer to which processes is appended. As part of their brevity, the tables exclude any mention of informal support groups for role holders. It is imagined in all cases that witness currently organised nationally, such as the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group, would continue to be done so.

The list entirely excludes consideration of any financial aspects of governance (i.e., treasurers, trustees and property) as this was not part of the community subgroup's purview. The list also excludes some structures that are not in keeping with our discipline. For example, we considered a hyperlocal structure, where only LMs and QiS existed and responsibility for Eldership, Pastoral Care and Membership are held at the local level. We were advised by the Recording Clerk, as 'keeper and interpreter' of the regulations surrounding church government (*Quaker faith & practice* 8.21), that this hyperlocal structure is not in right ordering due to its potential for congregationalism.

Drafted by Robert Rayner, with contributions from Lesley Richards, 05/08/24.

1. The status quo

This model keeps the existing structure made up of GM, the four AMs and Dundee Friends Property Trust as six separate charities, operating as at present.

Advantages

It is understood.

Disadvantages

Two of the charities are on the point of collapse being unable to find sufficient trustees. Other AMs are struggling to find new AM clerks for when their current clerk's term of service comes to an end. There is no reduction in the number of role holders, nor relief for AMs who are struggling. In addition, worshipping communities who cross AM boundaries are unsupported. LMs which are in different AMs but geographically close feel separated.

	QiS	Intermediate	Local
Eldership and Pastoral Care		Nominated, Appointed	Suggested
Membership	Registered	Applied for, Visitors Appointed, Discerned upon, Recorded	Poss. Visitors Suggested
Clerking team?	Yes	Yes	Yes

2. The 'Welsh model'

The four AMs in Wales and the Marches together with Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales (CCQW) have set up a single charity, known as Cymar, to which they are in the process of transferring their assets. Only 3½ of the AMs are in Wales. All four AMs together with CCQW are regarded as constituent bodies in the constitution of the charity and will continue to operate as before, being responsible for all their usual business except that relating to trustee matters.

Advantages

It allows for a single charity but within an AM structure which Friends are familiar with. In Wales it copes with the complication that not all the Friends in the four AMs are members of CCQW, but that is not an issue in Scotland. It would deal with the problems faced by some of our AM charities.

Disadvantages

There is little reduction in the overall number of role holders required. It doesn't have a place within its structure for worshipping groups outside the existing constituent bodies or encourage the development of relationships across AMs. In these ways, it doesn't match what Scottish Friends have said they want in response to our questionnaire.

	QiS	Intermediate	Local
Eldership and Pastoral Care		Nominated, Appointed	Suggested
Membership	Registered	Applied for, Visitors Appointed, Discerned upon, Recorded	Poss. Visitors Suggested
Clerking team?	Yes	Yes	Yes

3. Only recognising QiS and LMs (Centralist)

Within a single charity Quakers in Scotland, there would only be Local Meetings, with no recognised intermediate level meetings. Membership, pastoral care and eldership would be administered (at least appointed at) from the QiS level, although LMs may still be involved in bringing names forward for these roles.

Advantages

There would be a significant reduction in the number of role holders. Discipline and unity would hopefully be easier to maintain. Discernment on membership and Es and PFs would be disciplined – there is a higher meeting that can say “no/not yet”.

Disadvantages

It doesn't have a place within its structure for worshipping groups outside the existing constituent bodies or encourage the development of relationships between LMs. Many Scottish Friends have said they desire an intermediate level for community building and learning. Many friends have said that a Scotland-wide body for considering membership and appointing Elders and PFs would be too remote.

	QiS	Intermediate	Local
Eldership and Pastoral Care	Poss. Nominated, Appointed	N/A	Suggested, Poss. Nominated
Membership	Applied for, Visitors Appointed, Discerned upon, Recorded, Registered	N/A	Visitors Suggested
Clerking team?	Yes	N/A	Yes

4. Intermediate meetings for community and learning which might host some 'in-between' QiS meetings

Friends expressed a wish for intermediate meetings for learning and community building. These meetings were variously described as optional, flexible, perhaps overlapping and not bound by current AM boundaries or geographical proximity but could be groups of meetings with a common interest or experience. Some Friends suggested that this was the best level to discern matters such as applications for membership at, while not having to deal with the full panoply of AM responsibilities. In option 4, this could be done by holding 'in-between' meetings of QiS. What is described here may be unfamiliar to Friends so this description will necessarily be longer; this option still fits within our discipline, as set out in Quaker Faith and Practice. For it to be appropriate for any intermediate meeting for learning or community building meeting to undertake QiS business:

- It must be organised by a team comprising some mixture of Elders, Pastoral Care Friends and LM clerks to ensure Gospel order
- These Friends must come from at least three different worshipping communities to avoid congregationalism
- A Friend must be named to act as clerk so that there is clear responsibility for managing the business
- The meeting, with its agreed agenda, must be advertised and open to all Friends in QiS to permit any Friend to attend if they are so led

If an intermediate meeting wished to consider items of business that are the responsibility of QiS, they could approach the QiS clerk to designate part of their intermediate meeting as an in-between meeting of QiS. An in-between meeting would consider specific pre-approved items of QiS business which only closely concern Friends from the organising meetings. There is a balance between wishing to make decisions at a meeting appropriately close to those it most greatly affects, avoiding congregationalism and empowering Friends who want to be part of a decision-making process to participate in it.

Friends at a meeting of GM or an early meeting of QiS would need to work together to minute guidance on what matters might be appropriate to consider at such a meeting. Such guidance would describe what *could* be considered at an in-between meeting with the agreement of the QiS clerk, not what *must* be considered. The most obvious matter is receiving applications for membership, but other matters which Friends might consider suitable include membership transfer, appointing a chaplain to a local institution, writing testimonies, marriage arrangements and involvement in the appointment of Elders or Pastoral Care Friends. The agenda of an in-between QiS meeting would have to be written in accordance with this minuted guidance and agreed with the QiS clerk,. The QiS clerk would not need to attend an in-between meeting. The in-between meeting must follow the agenda agreed to and publicised by the QiS clerk, without additions. Unlike a scheduled meeting of QiS, Friends from elsewhere would probably not routinely attend an in-between meeting; the details of such meetings and their agenda must be publicised beforehand, so Friends can be sure whether there are any agenda items for which they feel led to be present.

The minutes of an in-between meeting would be full minutes of QiS and would need to be sent to the QiS clerk as soon as practicable after the meeting and shared in the same way as any other QiS minutes. These matters would not need to be minuted again at a 'regularly scheduled' meeting of QiS. There might be other items of business which are not part of the QiS agenda, for example, planning the next intermediate meeting for community and learning for that group; these would be considered in a separate part of the meeting and these minutes would not be minutes of QiS.

There is no necessity for Friends arranging an intermediate meeting for community and learning to seek to host an in-between meeting of QiS. Any QiS business relevant to the members of the intermediate group can still be taken at the next scheduled meeting of QiS.

Advantages

This option allows for the flexibility which Friends desire. Friends have said that they want to hold intermediate level meetings for community building and learning. Intermediate groups could be linked by geography or circumstance. This would eliminate the anomaly where LMs are close but separated by an AM 'border'. One LM could be part of several intermediate groupings. Pooling resources between worshipping communities would support role holders in carrying out their responsibilities. Having the *possibility* of holding in-between QiS meetings allows more local participation in discernment for those that think this is important, while freeing up intermediate groups where this workload would be a burden. It would also reduce the amount of business to be taken at regularly scheduled QiS meetings. There would be a significant reduction in the number of role holders.

Disadvantages

There would be a moderately increased workload for the QiS administrator and clerk. It could be unclear to attenders where their application for membership might be considered. Elders and Pastoral Care Friends might feel more pressure to organise community-building and learning activities (although this option does not place them under any necessity to organise such meetings). There needs to be more discernment on what matters these in-between meetings could consider.

	QiS	Intermediate	Local
Eldership and Pastoral Care	Probably appointed	Possible involvement	Possibly nominated
Membership	Registered <i>If taken at a scheduled meeting of QiS</i> - Applied for, visitors appointed, discerned upon and recorded	<i>If taken at an in-between meeting of QiS</i> - Applied for, visitors appointed, discerned upon and recorded	
Clerking team	Yes	Fulfilled by Es, PCFs and LM clerks	Yes

Glossary

Applied for – This meeting would receive an attender's membership application

Appointed – This meeting has the authority to give final approval over a name brought to it

Discerned upon – This meeting has the power to admit someone into membership after careful discernment

Visitors Appointed – This meeting has the power to formally appoint visitors

Recorded – This meeting would welcome Friends into membership and record any births, deaths, marriages and transfers of these members

Registered – To comply with charity regulations, this meeting maintains a list of members

Nominated – This meeting, or its nominations committee, formally brings names forward for consideration

(Visitors) Suggested – This meeting, or its nominations committee, informally and non-bindingly suggests names for a higher body to nominate/appoint. For example, when an LM NomsCom suggests a local Friend as an elder to the AM NomsCom if it struggled to find a name.

Poss. – Possibly

Scheduled meetings of QiS - a meeting of QiS set up and clerked by the QiS clerk in the traditional way.

PAPER B3 Charitable structures open to Scottish Friends for Quakers in Scotland

The possible charitable structures are:-

An unincorporated charity – a voluntary association

An incorporated charity – a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

A charitable company

A charitable trust

An unincorporated charity – a voluntary association

The word unincorporated means the charity is not in itself a legal entity. The trustees are personally liable if there are legal problems, for example the trust runs into debt, or is taken to court. It is possible to take out insurance which would cover any financial loss faced by the trustees as long as the problem was not caused by their negligence. Any contract, for example an employment contract or that relating to property, is signed by the trustees as individuals rather than as the charity. This can cause problems when the trustees change.

An incorporated charity – A SCIO

An incorporated charity is a legal entity which is able to enter into contracts. This means that when trustees decide the charity should enter into a contract, they sign the documents on behalf of the charity, not as individuals. They are not personally liable for any debts. In case of legal action being taken, it is the charity that is taken to court, not the individual trustees. The only exception is when the problem is caused through trustee negligence. There is a legal duty of trustees to act in good faith when exercising their powers. Scottish law requires that a SCIO keep a register of its members.

A company limited by guarantee

A charitable company is bound by the regulations relating to both charities and to companies, so it reports both to OSCR and to Companies House. This is an extra burden on trustees. It is an incorporated organisation and so benefits from the same advantages as a SCIO. Like a SCIO it has to keep a register of its members.

A charitable trust

A charitable trust is an unincorporated organisation and its trustees face the same problems as an unincorporated charity. Assets are owned by trustees and managed in the interests of the beneficiaries.

Options for Scotland 2 was asked to take legal advice on the suitability of a SCIO for Quakers in Scotland. The answer was unhesitating, a SCIO was the most appropriate form of structure.

PAPER C. EVALUATION OF THE SCOTTISH QUAKER COMMUNITY JUSTICE WORKING GROUP 2024

Quakers have a very long history of engagement in penal issues, as reflected, for example, in the topic of this year's Swarthmore Lecture. In Scotland the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network was set up in 1999 to provide a) a channel for information and consultation, and as b) a support for Friends involved in some aspect of community justice work. It was held together largely by the committed effort of our Friend David Turner. It went into abeyance about 2016, but the need to uphold these purposes remained, and the Network was reconvened in 2020. In the autumn of that year, members of the Network asked General Meeting for Scotland (GMS) to consider how Quakers in Scotland might have an authoritative national voice on community justice. To help consider this, GMS set up an Advisory Group that reported back in March 2021. Their advice was that the Network should continue as a self-selecting informal body and it should be partnered with a Working Group, appointed by and accountable to GMS. The recommendations were accepted.

The Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group (SQCJWG) was established by General Meeting for Scotland minute 21/03/11, to serve for one triennium until the end of May 2024. The minute asks for a review of the group's work to be carried out towards the end of the triennium, and that this review includes recommendations for the group's future. In November 2023, General Meeting extended the term of service of the SQCJWG to the end of 2024.

In March 2024, General Meeting for Scotland set up this review of the SQCJWG, and appointed Elizabeth Allen and Mike Nellis, both members of the Network, to carry it out, and report to General Meeting in September 2024. The review covers the composition, size, purpose and objectives of the SQCJWG, and how it relates to other parts of our Quaker structures in Scotland. In conclusion, the review makes recommendations regarding the continuing structure and work of the SQCJWG.

The review was undertaken by first asking the Working Group for copies of the written documentation it has produced, including minutes. We also asked individual members of both the Working Group and the Network to complete open-ended questionnaires devised by the reviewers, and subsequently supplemented this by separate Zoom meetings with the Working Group and the Network (with as many people who could manage to attend). The questionnaire templates are included as appendices to this review. The completed questionnaires, for reasons of confidentiality, should be destroyed once the review process is complete. The Clerk of the Working Group had sight of this final report before it was sent to GMS, to check its factual accuracy and to seek and necessary clarification. Any remaining errors of fact or interpretation are the report's authors alone.

Although the purpose of the review is not to appraise directly the substantive activities of the Network or the Working Group it is the view of both reviewers that the accomplishments of both entities have been considerable, in many ways surpassing such expectations as were had of them at their onset. Such

critical comments as are made here of the structural aspects pertaining to the two entities, and in particular the Working Group, should be seen in this light. As members of the Network themselves, both reviewers have been participants in some of the activities referred to. It is for GM to discern in the light of this review whether these arrangements continue to meet its expectations and express its concerns, and what, if any, adjustments need to be made.

A word on terminology may be useful. "Community justice" is an established term used by policymakers in the Scottish Government to denote the range of local and national services offered to people with criminal convictions, and the statutory and third sector agencies which deliver them in the community, instead of, or after, a period of imprisonment. It does not, strictly speaking, refer to services delivered by the Scottish Prison Service, although some of these are provided by agencies within local communities. Quaker usage of "community justice" differs from this official usage in that it quite explicitly covers what goes on in prisons as well as in the community: prisons are seen as segregative institutions which should nonetheless serve communities and prepare prisoners for release and eventual return to communities. To a significant extent, "community justice" among Friends has replaced the formal use of terms like "penal affairs" and "penal reform" in order to enable comment on a broader range of services and agencies than prison alone, not least "alternatives to prison" themselves. The term "community justice" is preferred to "criminal justice" because it gives a focus to wider issues, beyond law and legal institutions, and loosely expands on the non-punitive vision associated with "restorative justice."

Composition and Size of the SQCJWG

The group was set up with five members, appointed by General Meeting: one member from each from the four Scottish Area Meetings, where possible from members of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network (the Network) within their area; and with a convener nominated from the membership of the Network. Although it now has six members, to allow it to retain a member who moved to a different area meeting, this amendment does not in itself permanently increase the size of the group, although as will become clear below, Working Group members have views of their own about its optimum size.

COMMENT

The group has gelled and its small size has allowed members to get to know one another and work well together. However, it has struggled to cope with the work when its numbers were diminished for any reason. Raising the total membership of the group to seven or eight would give it more buoyancy. The composition of the group might then be: a member from each of the four Scottish Area Meetings, two members who bring particular skills to the group, and a convenor, or two joint convenors. Considering skill gaps, the group has identified the need for a 'note keeper', and it would benefit from consistent recording formal minutes.

Purpose and objectives of the SQCJWG

The purpose of the SQCJWG is to act as an authoritative voice on community justice matters, for Quakers in Scotland.

The agreed objectives of the SQCJWG are:

1. to facilitate the work of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network (the Network) as a body linked to GM;
2. to provide initial input and regular (at least annual) feedback to GM on the work of the Network, keeping Scottish Quakers informed on community justice issues;
3. to represent GM in communicating discerned Quaker views on community justice issues to other bodies and to the Scottish public;
4. to work closely with the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group where community justice matters arise in the Scottish Parliament, always ensuring that such advocacy reflects Quaker positions and priorities which have been appropriately discerned by GM. This will require regular communication between the convenors of the 2 groups to inform each other of advocacy opportunities which arise and agree possible actions which may involve work by the Parliamentary Engagement Officer, depending on priorities and capacity.

Here are some of the ways the SQCJWG (also referred to as the Working Group) has met these objectives, and how it relates to other parts of our Quaker structures in Scotland.

Objective 1 Facilitating the work of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network

Four agreed objectives of the Network that might benefit from SQCJWG engagement have been identified (A to D), and examples given of assistance provided by the Working Group.

- A. *liaising and working with others who share involvement and interest in community justice, especially those of other faith traditions*

The Working Group had a follow-up conversation with James Docherty, after his talk to the Network on Trauma Informed Justice. They noted the importance of publicising stories about restorative practices, and the suggestion of promoting Homeboy Industries in Scotland.

- B. *bringing a Quaker perspective into the discussions and action*

Where possible, the Working Group has acted on the Network's requests for help in pursuing a particular issue, if appropriate making a formal response on behalf of Quakers in Scotland. In addition the Working group has developed and shared outline guidelines for individual Quakers to write advocacy letters on community justice issues.

C. *identifying and addressing issues relating to community justice which may be of concern to Friends*

The Working Group continues to focus on the promotion and understanding of Restorative Justice, including meeting with senior civil servants on the proposed roll out of Restorative Justice by the Scottish Government, as part of their official “Vision for Justice”. Two members of the group, and one member of the Network, have undergone training in restorative practices on a well-respected programme offered by the University of Strathclyde.

D. *providing learning opportunities for those involved in and those interested in community justice*

The Working Group helped the Network with a day-workshop on Trauma, Justice and Imprisonment – a Day of Quaker Reflection, and with the production and distribution of the booklet “Breaking Chains, Building Changes”. They also assisted with preliminary exploration of Prison Abolition, reflecting the longstanding interest shown in this by Canadian Friends, and growing anxieties about the capacity of traditional approaches to penal reform to address the continued expansion, overcrowding and under-resourcing of Scottish prisons (a crisis reflected in the recent emergency early release programme). Both working group and network are considering when and whether the time may be right for this topic to be brought before Friends more widely for their consideration. Later they assisted in the production and distribution of the booklet on Prison Abolition and supported the discussion day on it, in Glasgow Meeting House.

COMMENT

To facilitate the work of the Network, the Working Group needs to be well informed about that work. Full and excellent notes are taken at every Network meeting and the meeting is usually also recorded. This gives all Working Group members the opportunity to keep abreast with the Network’s activities and discussions. The Working Group is grateful for the Network’s activities and recognises the knowledge and expertise within it. Members of the Network are occasionally invited to assist the Working Group with a particular task, where expertise is needed.

However, to complete the picture the Network needs to know what the Working Group is doing and currently this is not regularly communicated. Although the Working Group ensures that at least one of its members, and often more, is in attendance at every Network Meeting, there has been no formal expectation that they would report about the Working Group, although this has happened when requested.

Informally, there is much overlap between the SQCJWG and the Network, in that all members of the Working Group are members of the Network. Despite this, we think the relationship of the Network and Working Group is not always well understood and it has been described as ‘fuzzy’. The different roles are helpful but if misunderstood, may lead to some tension: the Network is free to explore radical ideas on community justice, but the advocacy of the Working can only be on issues on which there is a discerned Quaker view, including, for

example, responding selectively to relevant consultations put out by the Scottish Government.

The working Group has been very active and its work with prison chaplains, which it initiated with the encouragement of the Network, has grown in character and sensitivity to become a significant part of what it does. The delicate nature of this work, providing safe spaces for chaplains to have in-depth conversations, is reminiscent of Quaker United Nations Office Geneva's work with diplomats. From the perspective of taking on new work, it would help if the Network was more aware of the character of what the Working Group can take on and its capacity to do so.

Objective 2. Keeping Scottish Quakers informed on community justice issue and providing input and feedback to GM on the work of the Network

Members of the Working Group have given a talk to their area meeting on aspects of community justice. At each talk, Friends were invited to consider a couple of challenging questions on community justice matters.

The SQCJWG reports to General Meeting annually, and these reports include information about the work of the Network, as well as what the Working Group are doing. Again, after each report Friends are asked to reflect on challenging questions, such as:

Who goes to prison and why?

How effective and useful are current approaches to penal reform?

How can we achieve a justice which transforms lives and fosters peace and inclusion in society?

Objective 3. Representing GM in communicating discerned Quaker views on community justice issues to other bodies and to the Scottish public

In October 2023, Meeting for Sufferings consulted General Meeting for Scotland about the position in Scotland regarding Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP). GMS passed this request to the Working Group, and after consulting relevant specialists, it wrote an informed briefing paper for GMS. GMS used this information to reply to Meeting for Sufferings, pointing out that the nearest Scottish equivalent to IPP is the better thought out Order for Lifelong Restriction, and that there are no current issues of concern with this, although there may be in the future, when more prisoners have been released and/or recalled on such licences.

Prisoners Week

Immediately after the Working Group was formed, it prepared a paragraph on how Quakers promote restorative justice, for a Prisoners Week blog on restorative practices. This was in response to a request sent to Quakers in Scotland by the Chair of Prisoners Week.

The Working Group has continued to engage with Prisoners Week and to send a representative to their meetings, thus renewing General Meeting for Scotland's longstanding link, which had been broken. It is worth noting that the Quaker representative has put Prisoners Week in contact with Interfaith Scotland and initiated a conversation about alternatives to custody and the possible of inclusion of information on this in Prisoners Week resources.

Working with Scottish Prison Chaplains

The working Group has set up and facilitated two Away-a-Days for Prison Chaplains in Scotland - May 2023 and March 2024. These have been very successful and much appreciated events. Through participation in these events the chaplains experience how Quakers work and the skills and values we bring into that work; our quiet worship; the provision of a safe space; creative listening. To organise the events the Working Group has had regular engagement with the Scottish Prison Service Chaplaincy Advisors, building trust and a good working relationship.

Faith Hubs - a Barlinnie Prison initiative

The Working Group has had an active interest in a project to help prevent re-offending - Glasgow Faith Hubs - a Barlinnie Prison initiative for congregations to support a prisoner who was about to be discharged.

The Working Group engaged with the development of this project and explored whether Scottish Quakers might have a role to play in providing a 'hub'.

Hope Connections

Encouraging the use of alternatives to prison, is a discerned Quaker view and the Working Group explored how Friends might get involved with community payback through unpaid work as part of Community Alternatives to Prison. This has led to conversations with various agencies and charities including Hope Connections. However, when the Working Group reviewed its priorities in 2023, it decided that it would not pursue Community Justice initiative in Glasgow, in the meantime.

Communicating Quaker views on community justice to the Scottish public.

The Working Group is exploring how the press might be a channel they could use to help change public perception of prisons, prisoners and community justice, and has sent a letter to Paul Dacre of the Daily Mail regarding stigmatising prisoners.

Objective 4. Working closely with the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group where community justice matters arise in the Scottish Parliament

Initially, it was suggested that the convenors of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) and the SQCJWG have a regular catch-up, but that was replaced by communication between the Scottish Quaker Parliamentary Engagement Officer (PEO) and the SQCJWG Convenor. The PEO monitors parliamentary business and flags up community justice matters and gives

advice on drafting correspondence. In 2022 the Working Group met with Andrew Tomlinson. They discussed how to be effective, how to work with MSPs from different parties, which ones are likely to be sympathetic, how policies are delivered and identifying partners outside parliament. When Sarah Komashko became the PEO, she had a meeting with the Working Group and is in regular contact with them.

The Working Group has always sought to engage with Scottish parliamentarians. Early in its existence, the group sent a letter of introduction to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice (2021 -2023), Keith Brown. Over time, the Working Group has also contacted the following Members of the Scottish Parliament:

- Angela Constance, current Cabinet Secretary for Justice, cutting support for Turning Point's charity 218, which provides a residential facility for women offenders in Glasgow with drug use as their main problem.
- Pauline McNeill following her question in the Scottish Parliament about the closure of 218
- Jamie Green
- Maggie Chapman
- Audrey Nicoll

In addition, the Working Group has responded to the following consultations and Bills on behalf of Quakers in Scotland:

A National Care Service for Scotland - November 2021

National Strategy for Community Justice – two parts, November 2021, May 2022

Bail and release from custody arrangements - February 2022

Response to Scottish Government's 'Vision for Justice' - Feb 2022

Children's care and justice bill - June 2022

Long-term prisoner release process- consultation August 2024

COMMENT

Members of the Working Group were dispirited by the lack of response they received to their communications with MSPs and their submissions to Scottish Government consultations, given the considerable time and effort they had put into this. They pointed out that unless you are accustomed to the language used in such consultations, this is a burdensome task, and they asked, is it worth it? We suggest the Working Group speak to the PEO about their concerns about what it may be feasible and sensible to pursue, given their limited resources.

In addition, building alliances with other groups who have likeminded concerns about aspects of community justice is both good in itself, but might also reduce the need for individual Quaker responses to consultations.

Summing up

To date, essentially the work of the SQCJWG has focused on advocacy with politicians, outreach with AMs, and work with SPS Chaplaincy Advisors and Chaplains. It also has a place on the Quakers in Criminal Justice committee, a recognised body in BYM, operating in England and Wales, although that role was delegated to an informed Network member after ill-health prevented the original Working Group appointee from taking on the role. Future plans include: developing links with the Scottish Howard League; learning more about Norwegian attitudes to community justice and models of community justice in action; continuing to support prison chaplains.

Conclusions

We conclude that the Working Group continues to fulfil all of its objectives, and it is raising the profile of GMS in community justice matters around the network of Scottish bodies involved in this field.

Although the SQCJWG was set up as the voice of Quakers in Scotland in community justice matters and as a conduit between the Network and GMS, its most notable practical accomplishment has been to forge meaningful links with the SPS Chaplaincy Advisors and Chaplains, through meeting their need for a safe space to listen to each other and explore their own issues. Although this work was not envisaged and arose opportunistically, it is very precious, not least because of the trust that has grown out of it. We think it is important for the work with prison chaplains to continue.

Members of the Working Group identify coming together as a cohesive, supportive group as one of their significant achievements. This reminds us of the essence of all our work: we offer our service in faith, that regardless of our human frailties the spirit will work amongst us and God's work will be done.

Recommendations

For General Meeting for Scotland

1. The SQCJWG continues.
2. Membership of the group is increased to eight: six members, including a representative from each of the four Area Meetings, and two clerks. Appointments should be made on a rolling basis, to retain continuity whilst bringing in new members every couple of years. Consideration should be given to appointing some members for shorter terms of service, to avoid burnout.
3. The remit of the group be extended to allow some flexibility in the work undertaken.
4. A budget is set for the group.
5. GMS formally appoint the representative(s) on Prisoners Week from the membership of the SQCJWG.
6. Considering the intricate relationship between the Working Group and the Network, GMS might consider periodically asking the Network to share some of its reflective work on a wide range of community justice matters.

For the SQCJWG and the Network

7. The Working Group consider holding regular meetings at times to suit members of the group, but keeping in mind the caveat that much of the success of their work has come from being responsive and setting up meetings at short notice.
8. Minutes are taken at Working Group meetings and circulated timeously.
9. The Working Group and the Network explore effective ways of communicating with each other.
10. The Working Group and the Network might consider doing more work together in a co-ordinated way, perhaps, starting with holding the Scottish Government to account on the lack of progress on delivering their plans for a 'Vision for Justice'. This requires a more clearly articulated Quaker view of what the "Vision for Justice" actually envisages, jointly produced by the Network and the Working Group, and made accessible to all in Friends in Scotland.
11. The Working Group has identified that to use its energy and resources well, it needs to know 'which doors are worth pushing and which are not'. The Network might help assess this and in so doing, assist the Working Group to set priorities.

Elizabeth Allen and Mike Nellis, September 2024

This evaluation has been informed by the following:

SQCJWG PAPERS

Minutes of Working Group

2021 - 2 June, 16 June, 2 September, 16 September -

2022 - 4 April, 31 October

2023 - 8 August, 30 November

2024 - 31 January, 25 April, 21 May

Working Group Reports

To GMS - 2022, 2023

SPS Chaplains' Day 10 May 2023, 7 March 2024

Briefing for WSAM 6/3/23

Presentation to ESAM 27/5/23

Report on workshop on Community Alternatives to Prison 13/4/24

Working Group Correspondence

To Cabinet Secretary for Justice (2021 – 2023), Keith Brown MSP-
introducing Working Group

To Chief Executive Scottish Prison Service, Theresa Medhurst - appreciation
of film Prisons on the Brink

To Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Angela Constance MSP (2023) - cutting
services 218

To Paul Dacre, Daily Mail- understanding and changing public opinion on community justice

General Meeting for Scotland

Relevant GMS Minutes

Consultations

Questionnaires sent to:

- Members of Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network
- Members of Quaker Community Justice Working Group - *complete*
- Scottish Quaker Parliamentary Engagement Working Group

Zoom meetings with:

- Members of Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network
- Members of Quaker Community Justice Working Group – *complete*

APPENDICES

Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network Questionnaire

We invite members of the SQCJN to respond to the questions below by email.

The Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group Review for General Meeting

Questionnaire for the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network

The present Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network (SQCJN) was established in 2021. The Working Group was set up shortly afterwards. General Meeting has asked for it to be reviewed for its meeting on 21st September 2024. Elizabeth Allen and Mike Nellis were appointed by GM to undertake the review.

The Review will consider the place of the Working Group within the wider structures of GM, in particular its relationship with the SQCJN itself and with the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG). It will look at the Working Group's purpose and objectives, its activities and accomplishments, its size and composition, and make recommendations about its future to GM.

Individual replies will be treated confidentially by the Reviewers. Please email your reply to Mike Nellis and Elizabeth Allen by **August 8th** at the latest, using this form.

Name

1. How would you describe your awareness of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group and what it does?

2. The roles of the Working Group and the Network are different and were agreed at GM in March 2021. It was anticipated that these groups would have a working relationship with each other and be of value to each other. Specifically, the Working Group was asked “to facilitate the work of the SQCJN as a body linked to GM”.
To what extent do you think this objective of the Working Group has been achieved?
3. What would you say are/have been the achievements and strengths of the Working Group?
4. How would you describe the SQCJN’s relationship with the Working Group?
5. What would you say, if any, are/have been impediments to the effectiveness of the relationship between the Working Group and the Network?
6. What changes do you think would make this relationship more effective?

The Working Group of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network
Review for General Meeting

Questionnaire for Individual Members of the Working Group

The present Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network (SQCJN) was established in 2021. The Working Group was set up shortly afterwards. General Meeting has asked for it to be reviewed for its meeting on 21st September 2024. Elizabeth Allen and Mike Nellis were appointed by GM to undertake the review.

The Review will consider the place of the Working Group within the wider structures of GM, in particular its relationship with the SQCJN itself and with the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG). It will look at the Working Group’s purpose and objectives, its activities and accomplishments, its size and composition, and make recommendations about its future to GM.

Individual replies will be treated confidentially by the Reviewers. Please email your reply to Mike Nellis and Elizabeth Allen by August 8th at the latest, using this form.

Name Area
Meeting

Length of time on the Working Group.

1. How have the purpose and objectives of the Working Group been met?
2. How would you describe the Working Group's relationship with the SQCJN?
3. How would you describe the Working Group's relationship with the PEWG?
4. What would you say are/have been the achievements and strengths of the Working Group?
5. What would you say, if any, are/have been impediments to the effectiveness of the Working Group?
5. What changes do you think would make the Working Group more effective?
5. What plans, if any, has the Working Group made in respect of its future activities?

Questions to the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group

When the SQCJWG was set up, the remit of the group included:

“to work closely with the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group where community justice matters arise in the Scottish Parliament, always ensuring that such advocacy reflects Quaker positions and priorities which have been appropriately discerned by GM. This will require regular communication between the convenors of the 2 groups to inform each other of advocacy opportunities which arise and agree possible actions which may involve work by the Parliamentary Engagement Officer, depending on priorities and capacity.”

For the Review, we need to know how this collaboration between the PEWG and the SQCJWG is working in practice, and if anything needs to be changed. Could you please give us your views on this, specifically mentioning:

- communication between the groups.
- Has this arrangement put a strain on the resources of the PEWG?
- What difference has the existence of the SQCJWG made to the range of advocacy work Quakers in Scotland does - which advocacy opportunities have been taken up?

Is there anything else you want to tell us about this arrangement?

PAPER D Interim Report for General Meeting from SQCJWG.

The Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group (SQCJWG) has reengaged with Scottish Churches Prisoners' Week (November 17th-24th), participating in the planning committee. In the past Quakers were involved in the planning and execution of this Ecumenical initiative which aims to raise awareness of all those who are incarcerated. We are grateful that General Meeting continues to make an annual contribution to Prisoners Week Trust and we would ask all local meetings to encourage their members to focus particularly on our concern for people who are in prison and their families during this week.

This year it is apposite that Ben Jarman's Swarthmore Lecture also draws attention to those people with long-term gaol sentences, while the SQCJWG has been looking at the inappropriate nature of short-term sentences. This is all against a background of such extreme prison overcrowding that there is great pressure to discharge prisoners before they complete their allotted sentences (in order) to prevent the prisons being completely overwhelmed.

Alongside our financial support and prayer for people in prison and their families the SQCJWG and the SQCJ Network plan to mount *an event during Prisoners' Week* in November using materials developed by the Prisoners' Week Planning Committee, the Swarthmore Lecture and our own Prison Abolition literature (e.g. Alternatives to Custody and Restorative Justice). We aim to develop an informed and humane approach to people who find themselves at odds with society and the law.

Kate Philbrick, clerk SQCJWG

PAPER E SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN FORUM

Below are two documents: the proposal for the Scottish Christian Forum and its Nature, Purpose and Aims.

For some time representatives of the various Christian denominations in Scotland have been working to establish a replacement for ACTS [Action of Churches Together in Scotland]. We are members of ACTS. The idea is to have broader, low key and informal structure for ecumenism here. We are asked to endorse the proposal for the Scottish Christian Forum to act an umbrella body (non-charitable) for the existing bodies of the Scottish Church Leaders Forum and the Ecumenical Officers Forum, in which we already participate. We are being asked to give our formal recognition that SCF is now the ecumenical instrument within Scotland.

Matters had been held up over the future of ACTS, which, unlike SCF, is a charitable body with trustees and holds some resources. The future of these resources continues under discussion, and we will hear from Martin Burnell, a trustee of ACTS, on the proposal that ACTS is disbanded and a new charity set up with tis resources that can act as a funding charity.

Michael Hutchinson, clerk GMS

Proposal for the Scottish Christian Forum

Background

There has been work for a number of years around the future shape of the ecumenical landscape in Scotland and, within this, the place of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) and the Scottish Christian Forum (SCF). This proposal relates directly to the Scottish Christian Forum but will include appropriate references to other groups and bodies.

The Ecumenical Officers Forum (EOF) was charged to undertake this work following the gathering of ecumenical stakeholders on 16th of January 2023, and to report back in the autumn of 2023. At the further meeting on 28th November 2023, stakeholders agreed to proceed with 'option two' in the paper *Proposal for the Scottish Christian Forum v0-5*, which tasked the EOF to prepare more detailed plans for setting up the Scottish Christian Forum under a lead church model. The EOF agreed to report back to the wider group in early February 2024.

Both option one and option two as presented in November are described in the appended paper.

Current situation

After the meeting in November, the EOF began work on preparing detailed plans for the SCF, beginning with a meeting in December to explore some broad questions with the assistance of Robert Marshall (Senior Public Sector Policy Adviser) and the Rev Dr Liam Fraser (Church of Scotland). The EOF intended to meet in January to discuss governance of the SCF, with the assistance of Pauline Weibye (Church of Scotland), and Martin Burnell (Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)).

During the intervening weeks, however, one of the participating denominations held discussions with its senior leadership and ecumenical advisors about its future relationship with ACTS and the Scottish Christian Forum. The results of these discussions made it clear that that the proposed 'option two' agreed at the roundtable in November would not be compatible with the way that this denomination wants to engage ecumenically in Scotland.

The EOF met in January to discuss the situation, and agreed that it would not be advisable to proceed with establishing the SCF under a lead church model without the full support of the churches involved on the journey so far. In order to avoid defaulting to 'option one' (ceasing all work on the matter), the EOF agreed to recommend an alternative proposal which effectively tightens up the current system without any significant changes.

New Proposal

- That the existing bodies of the Scottish Church Leaders Forum and the Ecumenical Officers Forum form the Scottish Christian Forum, by slightly amending their current terms of reference but without significantly altering their objectives. Both bodies would continue to carry out the work they do currently.
- That the Scottish Christian Forum exist only in the two bodies working together, and as an umbrella term encompassing both and their shared work.
- That the Ecumenical Officers Forum undertake secretarial responsibility for the Church Leaders Forum by nominating two of its members to serve as co-

secretaries, and that the EOF as a whole would function, effectively, as the executive arm of the Church Leaders Forum.

- That the 'ecumenical instrument' sit with both bodies collegially. The EOF would act as first point of contact.
- That participating in one of the bodies would not automatically mean participation and association with the other. Each church and tradition would participate in each body as it desires to.

There is still some work to be done before the proposal, if agreed at the roundtable, can be shared with the churches for approval within their respective processes. The EOF would like to discuss how the two bodies of the Forum communicate with each other and coordinate their work, and how communication is managed externally, e.g. a potential website. It is hoped that this will take no more than two weeks.

If this model, or some amended form of it, is not adopted then, given the amount of work done previously, and the lack of support for a model, the EOF feels that we have reached an impasse and cannot foresee undertaking further work on this matter.

Timeline

Assuming that **the new proposal** is agreed, the EOF propose the following draft timeline for the work to be implemented:

- Early Spring 2024: write up proposal in form to take to churches and governing bodies.
- Late Spring/Summer 2024: approved document then to be taken through formal approval process of respective church traditions, including approval at relevant governing bodies.
- End of process: date of last church meeting, or 31st December 2024.

Scottish Christian Forum: Nature, Purpose & Aims

Vision:

1. The vision for the Scottish Christian Forum is rooted in the belief that the Holy Spirit is calling the churches, inter-church and Christian organisations in Scotland to a pilgrimage of greater unity, cooperation and common witness. The Forum will create an open space where respectful conversation between leaders and representatives from these bodies can take place.

2. The vision is inspired by a renewal of the call to prayer and our common witness to the Gospel. Embracing this vision will lead to the deepening of a shared spirituality; support for ecumenical initiatives at all levels; and the exploration of common challenges. It will foster ecumenical relationships which respect the variety of Christian life and witness in Scotland and encourage participation in the shared life of the Church.

3. The foundation of the Forum is mutual respect, acceptance and attentive listening, allied to the recognition of diversity among the participants, The Forum will seek to discern the work of the Holy Spirit and to respond in an ecumenism of action. Implicit in this is the recognition that participation will not require any church or organisation to abandon particular theological perspectives or traditional religious identities. Participation is to be understood theologically, whereby it is acknowledged that all participants are members of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

Constituent Elements:

The constituent elements of the Scottish Christian Forum, in the first instance, are the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum. As the Forum evolves it is anticipated that other forums will develop and become an integral part of the body.

National Ecumenical Body:

The Scottish Christian Forum will be designated the National Ecumenical Body, and will relate as such to the other ecumenical instruments within Britain and Ireland through the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum.

Scottish Church Leaders' Forum

Nature and Purpose:

The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum is a forum in which designated senior leaders within particular churches in Scotland gather together for the purpose of sharing fellowship, information and insight. At present, the Forum offers a meeting place to the following churches and communities:

1. Church of Scotland
2. Catholic Church in Scotland
3. Scottish Episcopal Church
4. United Free Church of Scotland
5. United Reformed Church
6. Methodist Church
7. Religious Society of Friends
8. Salvation Army
9. Congregational Federation
10. Baptist Union of Scotland
11. Free Church of Scotland
12. Redeemed Christian Church of God
13. Greek Orthodox Church
14. Ukrainian Catholic Church

The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum is a participatory body and is, in nature, a voluntary association and its purpose, as stated, provides the basis on which

the Forum is established. The Forum welcomes the participation of other churches within its life on the basis of agreement with the stated Nature, Purpose & Aims, and on the basis of the consensus of the Forum.

The Forum was initiated in March 2020 and the catalyst for its initiation and subsequent development was the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for a shared response to the challenges of the pandemic. Subsequent to this, the aims of the Forum have evolved in relation to the present context of the church in Scotland.

Aims:

The Forum seeks to:

1. Encourage the mission of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in Scotland;
2. Encourage the living out of our shared response to the prayer of Jesus that we may 'all be one' (John 17: 21);
3. Encourage the Church to share in the call to prayer;
4. Encourage a broad spectrum of churches to participate in its life;
5. Encourage the commissioning of research into areas of mutual interest;
6. Provide a platform for working cooperatively with other churches and ecumenical bodies within Scotland, and within Britain and Ireland.

Cooperation:

The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum will work cooperatively with other church and ecumenical bodies, as appropriate, including:

1. Ecumenical Officers' Forum
2. Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office
3. Scottish Churches Committee
4. Scottish Church Planters' Network
5. Evangelical Alliance (Scotland)
6. Churches Together in Britain & Ireland
7. Churches Together in England
8. Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting
9. Churches Together in Wales (Cytûn)

Convener:

The Convener of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum shall be appointed from amongst the members of the Forum and shall serve at the pleasure of the Forum.

Secretary:

The Secretariat of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum shall be provided by the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum.

Annual Review:

The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum shall conduct an annual review towards the end of each calendar year and set goals for the calendar year following.

Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum**Nature and Purpose:**

The Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum is a forum in which designated Ecumenical Officers, and those with ecumenical responsibility within their church, gather together for the purpose of sharing fellowship, information and insight.

Further, the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum serves as the Secretariat of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and in that capacity shall record the Minute of meetings of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and, where appropriate, to forward initiatives agreed by the latter Forum.

The Forum offers a meeting place to the following churches and communities, and includes, where appropriate, representatives from the respective Committees of those churches and communities:

1. Church of Scotland (Ecumenical Relations Committee)
2. Catholic Church in Scotland (Bishops' Ecumenical Reference Group of the Scottish Catholic Bishops' Conference)
3. Scottish Episcopal Church (Inter-Church Relations Committee)
4. United Free Church of Scotland (Ecumenical Relations Working Group)
5. United Reformed Church (Ecumenical Relations Task Group of the National Synod of Scotland)
6. Salvation Army
7. The Redeemed Christian Church of God
8. Religious Society of Friends
9. Methodist Church in Scotland
10. Churches in Communities

The Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum is a participatory body and is, in nature, a voluntary association and its purpose, as stated, provides the basis on which the Forum is established. It was initiated in November 2019.

Aims:

The Forum seeks to:

1. Encourage the living out of our shared response to the prayer of Jesus that we may 'all be one' (John 17: 21);

2. Encourage the Church to share in the call to prayer;
3. Encourage a broad spectrum of churches to participate in its life;
4. Provide a platform for working cooperatively with other churches and ecumenical bodies within Scotland, and within Britain and Ireland.
5. Encourage the witness of the Church to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, by encouraging, enabling and supporting the formation, development and ongoing life of ecumenical partnerships at a local and national level.

Local Ecumenical Partnerships:

The Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum will seek to encourage and support new and innovative forms of local ecumenical partnership. Further, it will seek to fulfil the responsibilities of Oversight and Review which are written into the constitutions of established Local Ecumenical Partnerships, and will liaise with the parent bodies of the churches which are members of such Partnerships.

Cooperation:

The Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum will seek to work cooperatively with other church and ecumenical bodies, as appropriate, including:

1. Scottish Church Leaders' Forum
2. Ecumenical Committees of the Scottish churches
3. Local Ecumenical Partnerships and the governing bodies of the churches party to them
4. Churches Together in Britain & Ireland

Convener:

The Convener of the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum shall be appointed from amongst the members of the Forum and shall serve at the pleasure of the Forum.

Secretary:

The Secretary of the Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum shall be appointed from amongst the members of the Forum and shall serve at the pleasure of the Forum.

Annual Review:

The Scottish Ecumenical Officers' Forum shall conduct an annual review towards the end of each calendar year and set goals for the calendar year following.

JLM/JSB
January 2024

PAPER F: Report of the Parliamentary Engagement Working group (PEWG) to General Meeting for Scotland meeting on 21 September 24

1) Summer Update

a) **Parliament and Politics:** MSPs returned to Holyrood on 3 September. The SNP will feel chastened after their poor results in the UK election and will have one eye at least on how to defend their dominance of the Scottish Parliament in May 2026. Meanwhile, the Scottish Conservatives are in the midst of a leadership election. The UK election delayed several Scottish Government policy announcements and so there will be much activity this autumn addressing the Government's priorities as stated by the First Minister in May: eradicating child poverty, growing the economy and tackling the climate emergency, all linked to improving Scotland's public services.

b) **PEWG work:** our focus has remained on peace-building and climate justice. Examples of recent work are:

- a meeting with Scottish Enterprise to learn how it fosters the transition to Net Zero via its funding decisions and how it implements human rights checks, particularly in relation to grants to weapons and weapon components manufacturers
- supporting QPSW's peace education work through fostering links to allies in Scotland
- presenting our work to the Northern Friends Peace Board
- responding to a Parliament consultation on the new climate targets required to be established.

Behind all our work we are considering how to foster truth and integrity in parliamentary life and a more open politics. This is in line with the advocacy work run from Friends House focused on Westminster and also that of the Quaker Truth and Integrity Group. Our recent meetings with MSPs Maurice Golden and Maggie Chapman featured this in discussion.

2) Plans for the new Parliamentary session

We await the Programme for Government due to be published on 4th September, and will firm up on plans at our next PEWG meeting at the beginning of November.

a) **Preparation:** one pitfall with advocacy is that we spread ourselves too thin across an ever-growing list of initiatives which can all be linked back to GM priorities. To get the best from our work, we must focus on areas where we have already made inroads, done the groundwork. Easy to write, harder to practise. We must remember we have allies pushing in a similar direction; we are not alone. We are always asking “Where can we Quakers add something specific?”.

b) **Truth and Integrity in politics:** we try to make this a guiding light for our communications with MSPs, Government and its officers. This encompasses not only seeking transparency from them, but giving it too. We need a preparedness to listen and understand as well as present our desired outcomes.

c) **Peace-building:** two areas: following up with Scottish Enterprise and Richard Lochhead, *Minister* for Small Business, Innovation, Tourism and Trade, on strengthening human rights checks linked to grants to arms manufacturers, and becoming more demanding of recipients of grants in terms of their carbon emission cuts. Second, continuing dialogue with Government agencies on strengthening Peace Education within schools. There seems to be an opening at the moment and the Friends House team is working closely with IDEAS to take advantage, all supported by our PEO, Sarah. This has sprung from the Peace Education exhibition and Wangari’s Trees for Peace event in the Parliament a year ago.

d) **Economic Justice:** recent work under this heading has been limited to Land Reform. We have responded to Government consultations and await developments. It is a “watching brief” area at the moment. Aspects of Climate Justice work overlap with economic justice.

3) **Climate Justice**

a) **Action, not plans and consultations:** new carbon emission budgets have to be established for Scotland and the overdue Climate Change Plan has to be published. The Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan has to be finalised. All this is way overdue and expected in the near future. We have contributed to consultations ourselves and via the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) coalition. With SCCS we will push for action to get these done and move to implement the plans.

b) **Our Allies:** SCCS is our conduit for much of this work, where we would expect to have input, for example, into a Heat in Buildings Bill and Energy Strategy when they come out, building on what we have said in the past.

c) **Loss and Damage:** this is the focus of BYM climate work and we aim to push for greater Government action in Scotland. The “Developed Nations” which have built their wealth and way of life upon fossil fuels must now step in to help the nations which are facing constant disruption and destruction from the changing climate. Scotland at COP26 in Glasgow played a significant role in getting this agenda accepted at COP, but the rich nations are dragging their feet.

What has Scotland done? The Government has pledged £10m since Glasgow COP in 2021 and it has all been allocated/committed up to the end of this Parliament in May 2026. The money is being dispersed through Scotland’s Climate Justice Resilience Fund and Humanitarian Emergency Fund. It recognises that disaster, disease and conflict suffered overseas are increasingly driven by climate change. Aid agencies – Christian Aid, Oxfam, SCIAF and Tearfund – are doing the work on the ground to get the money to those in need in Malawi, Kenya and Pakistan.

How can PEWG help the cause? We have a strong connection with Christian Aid, meeting monthly. We will work closely with them to see where we can add to their advocacy. Our current idea is to build contacts with Government to push for additional funds if possible (e.g. at future COPs), but also to do the groundwork to understand how the allocation of Government money is run, how the system works so as to have an early influence on the next round of funding.

4) Communication with PEWG

The Group works for Quakers in Scotland. Do get in touch with us if you have any questions about our work. It is very good for us to hear from you.

Richard J Raggett
(4 September 24)

PAPER G Local Development Worker priorities for 2025

Our minute last time explains the process:

23/09/20 Local Development Worker – priorities for 2025

Our Local Development Worker (LDW) for Scotland, Zoe Prosser, works annually with her Britain Yearly Meeting line manager and ourselves to determine her priorities for the coming year. In 2023, General Meeting endorsed a mechanism for Friends in Scotland to contribute to this process.

The Area and Local Meetings in Scotland and Scottish Friends are invited, therefore, to submit suggestions by the end of September, for the priorities of the Local Development Worker's work in Scotland for the following year.

Suggestions will be passed to the LDW for sorting and if necessary, distilling, in preparation for a meeting to select the suggestions to be brought to General Meeting. In mid-October GM Committee, the four Scottish AM clerks, the LDW, and the LDW's line-manager will consider the suggested priorities and select those to bring to General Meeting in November. These suggested priorities will then be put before Friends for their consideration and agreement.

The current priorities agreed by this process last year are:

1. Expanding role-holder networks
2. Supporting Quaker community building - locally, for families, and for everyone
3. Pointing the way to information about available resources and materials, including videos and non-traditional resources, to help Quaker Meetings and role-holders identify what they need.
4. Supporting the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to work for change.

Friends and Meetings are now invited to consider what help from Zoe do Quaker communities in Scotland require over the next year.

Suggestions may come to us through minutes, messages or emails. General Meeting on 21st September will hear from Zoe on what she has done and what she sees coming ahead which should help the process.

Michael J. Hutchinson, Clerk

Local Development Worker's Report 2024

Supporting Quaker Communities Across Scotland

Hello Friends,

I am Zoe Prosser and I am the Local Development Worker for Quakers in Scotland. As Local Development worker I support Quaker communities across Scotland. This role is managed and paid for by Britain Yearly Meeting (the central body for Quakers in Britain).

I am the first Local Development worker for Quakers in Scotland. As such I work alongside Quaker communities, supporting their work, enabling them to share their wisdom and helping them to overcome any blocks or conflicts that they might face. All of my work within this role is rooted in worship and Quaker spiritual practice.

It is important that I ensure that my work is both welcome and responsive to the needs of Scottish Quakers. I also appreciate guidance as to how to prioritise requests for support.

For the past two years Quakers in Scotland have helped me with this, by suggesting what they feel I should prioritise for the year ahead. I hope that you will do the same this year.



My gloriously sunny visit to Pluscarden Abbey for North Scotland residential area meeting

Reflecting on Priorities for 2024

In 2023, General Meeting for Scotland suggested that I prioritize the following areas of work:

- **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**

Below, I share the progress made in each of these areas throughout 2024. For more information you could also review my quarterly newsletters, which are available at <https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>.

Expanding role-holder networks

I have continued to develop and support network meetings for:

- Elders and Pastoral Care Friends (bi-monthly)
- Nominations Friends (quarterly)

This year, I also initiated new network meetings for:

- Clerks of Local Meetings (bi-monthly)
- Trustees of all Quaker Area Meetings and Dundee Property Trust (bi-monthly)

Impact of Network Meetings

These networks have fostered:

- **Collaboration:** Sharing experiences and advice has helped role-holders across Scotland learn from each other. For example, the Elders and Pastoral Care network benefited from hearing about Central Edinburgh Meeting's efforts in revitalising spiritual nurture.
- **Change:** Practical changes in meeting practices have emerged from these discussions.

- Identification of Gaps: We have collectively identified areas where we need more understanding or resources, leading to more targeted support.
- Community Building: Friendships have deepened across Scotland as we work together.
- God and Quaker Processes: We are able to support one another to root our work in the spiritual side of our Quakerism, avoiding our work becoming process or outcomes led (for example, reminding ourselves of the need for worship and discernment within our nominations meetings).

“You go to a lot of time and trouble to lead the meetings. You do them very well. Interesting and informative. I learn a great deal.”

– Friend attending the Elders and Pastoral Care Meetings

Looking Ahead

In 2025, I plan to maintain and support the existing networks rather than expanding further. I need to be sure that we have the best format for the clerks and trustees networks and that they are working well before I consider expanding further.

Supporting Quaker community building - locally, for families, and for everyone

Workshops and Community Initiatives

One of the highlights of my year has been the further development of a **Gifts Workshop**. This session, which can be held after a meeting, provides an opportunity for Friends to discover and celebrate their unique gifts in a supportive environment.

Additionally, I have supported a local meeting in launching an experimental series of **All-Age Worship and Children’s Meetings**. I am very excited about these, and I will use the learning from this experience to support other meetings with doing the same work.

Celebrating Existing Community Strengths

We should recognise that Friends in Scotland are very good at community building without my help. Events like the Children and Families weekend and the Wiston Weekend builds a sense of community across the country. In some cases I have participated in these events as a joyful attendee, rather than in a support role, which speaks to the existing strengths of our community.

Pointing the way to information about available resources and materials, including videos and non-traditional resources, to help Quaker Meetings and role-holders identify what they need.

Pointing the Way to Learning and Growth

A key part of my role is connecting Quaker Meetings and role-holders with the resources they need. This has been particularly evident in my comprehensive network meeting notes and quarterly newsletters, where I frequently share useful materials, including videos, articles, and non-traditional resources.

Addressing Gaps in Knowledge

This year, alongside General Meeting for Scotland’s Safeguarding Coordinator, we developed a workshop for Meetings to run themselves, offering a simple guide to safeguarding. This resource should be available by the end of the year (although we hope it will be sooner).

Supporting the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to work for change

Working for Change Together

I have valued the opportunity to support the work of the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group and their community subgroup. It is important to ensure that my role is clear; while I support the work of the group, I am not an appointed member and so I make sure to work within appropriate boundaries.

Achievements

I am particularly proud of helping to establish the community subgroup and distributing their questionnaire, which has been instrumental in gathering feedback from Friends across Scotland.

Additional Work and Personal Growth

Learning and Development

Beyond the core priorities, I have focused on learning more about reconciliation, conflict resolution, and how we can disagree well together. This journey has taken me to various inspiring places, including Corrymeela in Northern Ireland, Coventry Cathedral, and St Ethelburga's in London, where I engaged with Christian peacemakers and faith leaders through the reconciliation pilgrimage Journey of Hope.

This learning has not been abstract; I've applied it in discussions and support requests from Friends who are navigating disagreements within their meetings.

Other Contributions

- Supported Friends and role holders across all area meetings in Scotland.
- Clerked two threshing meetings.
- Co-developed and facilitated sessions on Quakers and Class for Woodbrooke, in collaboration with colleagues from the Faith in Action team.
- Had the joyful experience of visiting Quaker meetings on the Scottish mainland, as well as Shetland and Orkney!

Looking Forward to 2025

This year has been incredibly rewarding and I am so grateful to Friends in Scotland for your continuing support, friendship and enthusiasm. I am excited about what we will achieve together in 2025.

Thank you again. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

In Friendship and Service,

Zoe Prosser

Local Development Worker for Quakers in Scotland

zoep@quaker.org.uk



My (and my family's) visit to Shetland Local Meeting

PAPER H Report to General Meeting on the Gerald Richards bequest book collection

Minute 22/9/15 General Meeting for Scotland refers.

This collection of books was bequeathed to GM in 2004 with the intention of it forming the nucleus of a Quaker study centre in Scotland. This obviously has never come to pass and the books have been housed in Glasgow Quaker Meeting House since then. Due to lack of space Glasgow LM asked that the books be moved.

We were asked to triage the books into those that could be disposed of; those that may be of interest to Friends' House library (or Woodbrooke, though this is unfortunately no longer relevant); and those which could go to a charity shop.

Nick Trevor, the former Glasgow Meeting librarian (and part of the GM appointed group) had already done quite a bit of work on the collection. Those books which he felt were useful in a Quaker collection have been added to Glasgow Meeting library. He also made a list of books which have no particular Quaker relevance, but would be saleable (he has previous book selling experience). Many of the other books are either out of date on their subject or are physically in very poor condition.

Nick is now limited physically in what he is able to do, so Margaret Roy and Ruth Bacon have looked at the books still housed in Glasgow Meeting House and separated some volumes of Quaker relevance, which are already in the meeting library, but might be offered to Friends in case anyone would like them. The possibly saleable books are still shelved separately in the library. The list which Nick made is attached to this report. Nick used to sell books online and had offered to add these, but unfortunately is no longer in a position to do this.

The rest of the books are currently stored in the flat at the top of the meeting house and we found very little there that was really worth keeping. Having checked with the Oxfam bookshop in Glasgow, they would be happy to take all of these books if that is what the meeting decides. They would sell those worth selling and they have an arrangement for unsaleable books to be collected, for which they also receive some money.

Is the meeting agreeable to the books being disposed of? Do we want to try and sell those which might be worth something, in aid of Quaker funds?

Ruth Bacon
Maragret Roy
Nick Trevor