



A QUIET REVOLUTION
Trustees' Annual Report
1 July 2018 - 30 June 2019



Charity contact information



A QUIET REVOLUTION

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Objectives and activities



“Rites of passage
for major life events
from birth to death
and everything
in between”

Co-founders: Barbara Chalmers and Erinclare Scrutton

In 2015, Barbara Chalmers and Erinclare Scrutton got excited about the prospect of improving how we engage in ritual to mark life's big moments, public celebrations, private grief and times of momentous change.

The idea for A Quiet Revolution began to grow... a collective of like-minded folks, sharing Humanist principles who want to serve others in their pursuit of meaning to support them through life change – from birth to coming of age, through parenting to empty nests, from ageing to death. Barbara went about setting up a small charity to progress ideas with an aim to generate funds from those who could afford services to help those who couldn't afford to find the support they need.

In 2016, Barbara conducted the first legal wedding for AQR and invited 2 other celebrants to join her. In 2017 she trained 4 more celebrants. In 2018 the team worked across Scotland and beyond to support individuals, couples and families with rites of passage.

Our purpose

- 1) The advancement of the philosophical belief and the promotion of the values of Humanism.
- 2) The relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.

We aim to achieve the first purpose by composing and conducting rites of passage to support individuals, couples, families and their extended family – significant others, friends, neighbours, professional and volunteer supporters and communities of interest – at key life stages. We promote positive attitudes, encourage open conversations and carry out legal ceremonies and rites of passage for major life events from birth to death and everything in between. We have built a small fund and are beginning to offer to relief to others through our support.

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document

Our charity is governed by a Constitution. This is available on request.

Trustee recruitment and appointment

Our helpful and generous Trustees remain constant in 2018/19. All Trustees share A Quiet Revolution's Humanist approach to the promotion of equality and diversity and the compassionate support of people who wish to shape and create their own rites of passage and life experiences. Meet our Trustees:

Jane Alcorn, Chair (from 30.1.17)



Jane has been Chair of *A Quiet Revolution* since its launch. She has worked across local authorities and the independent sector for 30 years in social work, education and health services for children, young people and their families. In 2015 she transitioned into self-employment, working across child and adult care with a particular interest in learning and development. She continues to do this work at present. In 2018, Jane decided to embark on a new venture when she moved to the far north of Scotland to run a small Bed and Breakfast with her husband.

Erinclare Scrutton, Treasurer (from 13.2.17)



Erin has spent 25 years as a percussionist, teaching women across Scotland, Ireland and Wales. She started Scotland's longest running women's samba bands: SheBoom from Glasgow and Beat That from Stirling. She has performed with Jools Holland, Horse, the Pet Shop Boys. She runs workshops for community groups, mental health groups and in the corporate sector. Erin has had a therapeutic practice, holding qualifications in body work and kinesiology. She is currently studying Contemporary Art Practice.

Jacquie Winning, Trustee (from 27.4.18)



Jacquie is a third sector leader with extensive experience of supporting disadvantaged people and communities in the context of vision and hearing loss, homelessness and welfare. She is Manager of the Sensory Centre in Forth Valley. She works with diverse clients, offering support and nurturing to improve the quality of life. She is skilled in coaching, management, leadership, project management and customer service. She has a Master of Arts (MA) in English Language and Literature from the University of Glasgow.

Maggie O'Hara Watt, Trustee (from 27.4.18)



Maggie is a retired health professional with 40 years' experience of providing care to people unable to access routine services due to health, behavioural, communication and other difficulties. Maggie contributed to the development of Forth Valley Dignity and Respect at work policy.

Achievements and performance

2018/19 was AQR's second full year of activity. The charity continues to promote Humanism, deliver ceremonies and rites of passage and generate funds from member donations to support people in need.

Disbursing funds

For the first time, we felt able to take action to begin to disburse funds.

We contacted a number of potential partners to offer support with the costs of celebrant services to plan and deliver funerals and funding towards related events that promote support at end of life:

- *Pushing Up the Daisies*, part of the Home Funeral movement. Based in the north of Scotland, they promote alternatives to traditional funerals but didn't have local partners or need in West or Central Scotland.
- The Beatson, a Glasgow-based charity supporting people living with cancer: we had no response.
- Caledonian Cremations, a Scotland-wide not for profit supported through Lottery funding. They welcomed the contact and will bear us in mind for clients in need of support.
- Glasgow's internationally acclaimed health partnership, *Improving the Cancer Journey*. Their Link Workers team offer direct grants of £250 to individuals in support of end of life needs.
- Fuze Foundation, another celebrancy charity.
- Living Well Dying Well, a charity that is developing a network of death doulas across the UK.

The Improving the Cancer Journey team were interested in the potential of funding for individuals but to date, have not reverted to take up the offer of funding.

Living Well Dying Well determined that they would organise an event to promote doula training and end of life planning in Scotland for the first time and A Quiet Revolution agreed to subsidise places for people who could not afford the fee. This would take place in 2020.

Humanist ceremonies

Celebrants continued to carry out mostly weddings and baby naming ceremonies, with only a handful of funerals. Some prefer to deliver weddings. Some are unable to deliver funerals because they have full-time work or care responsibilities that mean they can't respond to the short notice nature of funerals.

Over the course of the year we conducted ceremonies across Scotland and in Devon, in art centres, old churches, castles, crofts, cow sheds and farms, a golf club, a brewery, hotels and stately homes, in living rooms and back gardens.



Celebrant activities

In 2018/19 our celebrants were Barbara Chalmers, Irene Edgar, James Oakley, Kenny Gray, Jess McEnaney, Jude Williams and Iona Goldie. Iona left during the year.

Barbara Chalmers



Barbara delivered 10 weddings, one renewal of vows and one funeral. 3 weddings were for same sex or gender fluid couples. Ceremonies were delivered in Devon, Loch Lomond, Ardwell near Stranraer, Glenskirlie, Aberfeldy, Comrie, Barrhead and Glasgow.

"Just wanted to say thank you so much for everything you did for us both on Friday and the lead up to the wedding :) You made us feel so at ease throughout the whole process and can't thank you enough for that.

You are one of the coolest and nicest people we have ever met and are proud to welcome you as the third member of Team Moshi ♥" Love always, The Baxters

"Terry and I would like to say a massive thank you for the beautiful ceremony you gave us. Your presence immediately calmed my nerves. All our guests have commented on how lovely the ceremony was and loved how personal and intimate it was. We could not have asked for anything more. What an amazing way to start our lives together. Thanks again." Terry and Lindsay

James Oakley



James conducted 15 weddings in 14 different venues including a farm, a golf club, various hotels including country house hotels and stately homes, Glasgow University Chapel, House for an Art Lover, Brewery, Arta and The Cruin at Loch Lomond.

"We got married in April and James played a big part in making our day so special. James listened to the story of how we met and took time to understand who we are as a couple now. He made sure to incorporate this into the day so that we had something really personal."
Elle Chandler

"Thank you so much for taking on the enormous role you had on our big day and carrying it out with absolute aplomb. Guests commented it was the most memorable wedding ceremony they'd ever witnessed. We are so grateful." Pamela Reid

Irene Edgar



Over the year, Irene delivered a funeral and solemnised 13 weddings, one in the newly renovated Civic House. "It was their first wedding and the staff were so excited. The atmosphere was electric even before the wedding guests arrived. The couple just laughed and hugged throughout the whole wedding. The groom's mother recited a poem she had written about him growing up and guests roared with laughter. It has to be the most fun I have ever had at a wedding."

"I attended a wedding fair this year and have taken the decision not to do so again. I found it to be quite distasteful as our table was between a makeup artist and a company selling slimming tablets. I wasn't upset that there were no bookings but that no-one enquired about the process of a humanist wedding. I found that quite sad." Irene

Jude Williams



Jude carried out 6 legal marriages, one with combined baby naming, 1 funeral and 1 wedding ceremony in England - without the legals. Like the other celebrants, there was a wide range of venues, from The Tin Shed in Fintry to a cliff edge in North Berwick, a garden, old church, burgh hall and stately home.

"From our very first meeting with your wonderful self we knew we were in safe hands. Your warmth, humour and compassion permeated the entire ceremony. Everybody felt included and countless people told us how perfectly you set the mood for the entire day. Thank you so much for creating such a joyful atmosphere on our wedding day." Kathryn and Michael

"You were amazing. A love bomb. People months later were still talking about the atmosphere you created. Just brilliant. Absolutely spot on. Thank you so much." Lesley Mackie

"Where do we start?! Thank YOU so much for holding us together. We loved the WHOLE day and it was as if time stretched somehow, it was the best happiest most joyful day ever! So many people have commented on the service and how moving it was. We loved your balance of the ceremonial and personal, which was also humorous! thank you thank you thank you."
Nicky and Phil

Kenny Gray



Kenny conducted his first wedding in Aberfoyle. For the couple, Kenny found that creating their ceremony was more fulfilling and enlightening than they had realised it would be. It was an opportunity to really consider what they wanted from the future and how to express their feelings in the here and now.

"Every event is designed to be memorable and meaningful for those seeking support. It is a learning journey for me as a celebrant as I grow my skills and capacity to meet the needs of the people I support, helping guide them through momentous life events." Kenny



Left to right: celebrants James Oakley, Iona Goldie, Jude Williams, Jess McEnaney, Kenny Gray, Irene Edgar

National Records of Scotland changes

The NRS operates the Marriage & Civil Partnership Section that authorises celebrants to solemnise legal weddings. They provide guidance for celebrants on their legal role in marriage authorisation. They reinforced that they will assess a celebrant's resources and activities to ensure celebrants behave within the spirit of the guidance and they will act to stop celebrants' from performing legal ceremonies if they do not adhere to guidance.

We have been following the changes within the NRS and incorporated the new guidelines into our practice. Our celebrants and Trustees agree it is a good thing that the NRS is tightening up. Celebrants all always taken their role and its responsibility as an honour and would not want to see the role being brought into disrepute or cheapened in any way. Below are the key issues the NRS is aiming to manage or influence and AQR's position:

- **Celebrants should not carry out ceremonies for profit or gain.**
AQR sets a standard rate for celebrants that should reasonably cover the costs of the celebrant for all the hours involved in planning, preparing and delivering the ceremony.
- **Websites, fliers, social media and other promotional materials laying out price lists or other clear indications of *business activity* as distinct from legitimate activity to uphold a body's philosophical beliefs.**
AQR provides information about celebrancy and how we can help people achieve meaningful ceremonies with a Humanist perspective. Individual celebrants have been advised they should not produce or issue their own information.
- **Proof of excessive income generated solely from marriage or marriage-related activity.**
Being a celebrant is not 'a job' for any of our celebrants.
- **Proof of excessive numbers of weddings undertaken, not properly seen to be fitting and appropriate in quality and duration and therefore likely to undermine the integrity of marriage.**
Our celebrants performed between 1 and 14 wedding ceremonies in the year. We have asked for clarity on what 'excessive' means but this has not been forthcoming.
- **The provision of services ancillary to the marriage ceremony.**
AQR celebrants do not offer other services as part of their celebrant role.

“Celebrants meet regularly and connect constantly to discuss philosophy, share ideas and experience and enhance their skills.”

- Any other evidence that the interests of enacting, celebrating and promoting the celebrant’s religious or philosophical beliefs are being subordinated to commercial interests.

Our celebrants meet and connect regularly to discuss Humanist philosophy, their role and share ideas for improvement and personal development. AQR intends to promote its Humanist services and ceremony-making skills; no one is trying to grow a business.

- Witnesses and guests should understand that the ceremony involves an enactment of the celebrant’s philosophical beliefs.

AQR celebrants have access to a range of wording to help inspire how to frame their Humanist celebrant role.

AQR has been limited in growing the number of affiliated wedding celebrants by the NRS who are still developing policies, regulations and guidance around the role of Humanist celebrants in solemnising weddings. This has meant we have had to turn down individuals – some trained, some interested in training – who want to be affiliated to AQR. We understand the NRS wants to ensure that the integrity of legal ceremonies is protected as Humanism grows.

To uphold and promote that integrity, AQR celebrants reviewed our Code of Conduct and developed Principles to guide celebrants in how they work with people (see over). These standards of behaviour and consideration are particularly important to ensure celebrants perform offer person-centred support.

Our Humanist values

- Think for ourselves about what is right and wrong, based on reason, fairness and respect for others
- Recognise the dignity of individuals
- Respect and promote freedom, democracy and human rights
- Work together for the common good
- Celebrate human achievement, progress and potential
- Find meaning, beauty, and joy in the one life we have, without the need for an afterlife
- Use empathy and compassion to make the world a better place for everyone.

How we apply our values

- We embrace broad spiritual thinking in our work recognising our innate human spiritual selves.
- We are curious and open-minded.
- We are honest with ourselves and others in a considered way.
- We are thoughtful, reflective and aim to embody integrity in our work.
- We promote diversity and not just tolerance but understanding and celebration of otherness.
- We aim to treat others with courtesy, dignity and respect.
- We treat information shared in the context of our work with appropriate confidentiality.
- We pay regard to the law and where we're not clear about boundaries, take professional advice.
- We work within the bounds of our skills and abilities, always stretching ourselves but never at the expense or risk of others and seek guidance where we feel we're out of our depth.
- We will offer and accept feedback, learning as we go.

Our principles and standards:

These principles and standards aim to help guide celebrants who carry out legal ceremonies under the Marriage Scotland Act 1977 with permission from the National Records of Scotland.

- The principles of Humanism should be reflected throughout the ceremony.
- Celebrants should be dignified, legal and decent, acting with respect and decorum.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion should be at the heart of every ceremony, with proper regard to gender, identity, race and other personal characteristics covered by EDI.
- Celebrants should take care to balance solemnity and humour and carefully ensure that their style, tone and language are deemed appropriate by those they support by checking in on scripts.
- Celebrants are entering into a contract for services and they must deliver in line with our packages and fees. They should never charge more than the agreed rate.

- The celebrant should not offer any additional services that are in conflict with the role of a Humanist celebrant.
- The celebrant should be careful not to undermine their important role or the reputation of the charity by their behaviour before, during or after the ceremony.
- If in doubt, it is the responsibility of the celebrant to sound out other celebrants or Trustees on the appropriateness of actions, settings, interactions and scripts.
- Any celebrant who behaves in a way that is considered counter to the Code of Conduct may lose their right to practice as a Humanist celebrant affiliated to A Quiet Revolution.

Financial review

The charity's funds have grown organically from donations from individuals, couples and families our affiliated celebrants have supported by crafting and delivering ceremonies – baby namings, weddings and funerals.

Starting with a balance of £1,507 after the first full year of operation, the charity raised £1,530 in in 2018/19. With no costs, this meant there was £3,037 for disbursing to those in need, in line with our charitable objectives.

Statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The charity currently operates with zero costs. Growth is planned to happen organically among the members, volunteers and celebrants who currently make donations – financially, energetically and in kind. There are no restricted funds. The current balance of £3,037 is available to support the growth of the charity and to make donations to support the charity's purposes.

Donated facilities and services

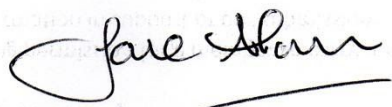
Barbara Chalmers, a co-founder of the charity is the volunteer Administrator for A Quiet Revolution and organises meetings of celebrants and Trustess. Since the Chair has moved to Thurso and Trustees are based in Glasgow, Falkirk and Dunblane, their meetings and connections are by online meetings.

Future plans

AQR aims to sustain its current practice. Our small group of celebrants will be trained to a high standard to deliver ceremonies in line with our Principles and Values. Member donations will organically grow our funds. We will offer services and financial support to individuals – sometimes through partner charities, groups and organisations to support people in need, particularly in the space of ageing and end of life. Celebrants will continue to meet regularly and connect constantly to discuss our shared philosophy, share ideas and experience to enhance skills and find creative ways to support people through major life milestones.

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Alcorn', with a horizontal line underneath.

Jane Alcorn, Chair, 9 February 2020