

# A QUIET REVOLUTION

## Trustees Annual Report

1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 - 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023



PROMOTING SMALL ACTS OF HUMAN KINDNESS SINCE 2016

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# THE CHAIR'S REPORT

## Welcome

I hope this report will give you a good idea of who we are, our accomplishments so far, and how we are looking forward to the future.

## Endings and New Beginnings

We have come a long way since our beginnings. It was around 2013, ten years ago, that Barbara first thought about starting this charity and now Barbara has decided it is time for change. Barbara has worked hard over this time and we are all very proud of her accomplishments and bravery to hand over management to a celebrant-led committee.

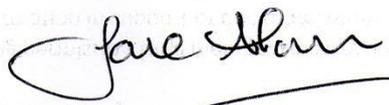
A number of trustees who have been with the charity over the years have also decided now is the time for change, to take stock of where we are, how we got here and encourage new members to come forward and take on the challenge of looking forward to the future.

Read on to find details of our celebrant's work this year and our first film project. I am sure this story of a women's samba band will be of interest to many.

I have stayed on to ensure a smooth transition and I am excited for the future of A Quiet Revolution. There are a few hints of our direction of travel, firmly rooted in our past and in our Humanist outlook but looking forward to the future which I can confidently say is in very good hands.

## Declaration

It gives me great pleasure to sign 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, 24 February 2024

# ABOUT US

A Quiet Revolution was launched in 2016.

Since then, our charity has worked across Scotland and beyond to support individuals, couples and families with rites of passage.

This year our 7 celebrants delivered around 150 ceremonies. With an average of 100 guests per ceremony, we might have reached 15,000 people this year.

We can achieve more, and reach a bigger audience with our message when we work together.

# OUR PURPOSE

We are A Quiet Revolution a Humanist charity, registered in Scotland SC046655. As specified in our constitution, our purpose is twofold;

## 1) the advancement of the philosophical belief and the promotion of the values of Humanism

We understand Humanism as an ethical life stance and our constitution describes it using these seven key points;

- 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.

## 2) the relief of those in need

...by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage by:

- Supporting the community through key life stages and promoting positive attitudes, encouraging open conversations and carrying out legal ceremonies and rites of passage around major life events from birth to death;
- Supporting women, people who identify as LGBT, BME or disabled and other minority groups to have positive experiences of life;
- Promoting positive images of ageing and encouraging active participation in life at all ages and stages, encouraging dialogue and support to address loss, grief and social isolation; and
- Providing access to creative engagement activities and retreats, health and wellbeing workshops, support events and life coaching in order to expand individuals' horizons, skills, and sense of self and provide new experiences that enhance confidence and wellbeing.

# ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

## Annual Summary

2022-23 was A Quiet Revolution's sixth year of activity. The charity continued to promote Humanism, deliver ceremonies and rites of passage and generate funds from donations to support those in need.

During the year, we continued our activity conducting ceremonies to mark important life events for everyone.

Featured celebrant stories in this report include our Funeral training, wedding and funeral ceremonies and the conclusion of our first film project.

Over this year we started a transition to a new management structure with new shared goals to simplify our working and add efficiencies so that we can have an even bigger impact in future.

# CELEBRANT ACTIVITY

## Celebrant Network Update

Our celebrant network is the life blood of our organisation, and a vital support mechanism in the community.

They share expertise and experience to establish best practice and deliver excellence.

This year we reached-out and upskilled with funeral training and we are planning wedding training for next year.

We believe everyone deserves a dignified ceremony.

We are so proud of the work of our celebrants.

Here is a summary of some of their activities, some of their stories and some of the ceremonies they have delivered this year.

# CELEBRANT TRAINING

## Funeral Training

Over the long weekend in September, we ran our first funeral training. Using the flexible, large, informal and open spaces of the newly refurbished Kinning Park (where we held our first wedding training), we supported 10 people to learn about end of life rituals and hone their skills in co-creating ceremonies, write scripts and deliver them with heart and care.

At that point in time, all new trainees were invited to join an extended family group for support and to share learning and experiences. Some time after the training we offered four participants the opportunity to join us.



Images: Barbara Chalmers, Kinning park Complex Funeral Training, September 2022

## Quality and Targets

In terms of how many ceremonies celebrants are expected to do there are no numerical 'targets' to meet. The only target we have is for quality. We believe it is important to focus on quality and creating an authentic ceremony that is personal, meaningful and comes from a genuine place of understanding people.

## Impact and Vision

Every ceremony has a major impact. And many ceremonies will impact hundreds of individuals, couples and family members, with an average of 100 guests at each ceremony, we are reaching thousands of people every single year.

We are a small charity, but we have a big vision.

## Learning and Giving back

All our celebrants make a monthly payment to support the administration of the charity and the celebrant network so that 100% of donations can go directly to further our aims.

We are always looking at how we work and how we can improve.

We have evaluation forms for those we support and a self-reflection process for celebrants to ensure we can constantly learn from our experiences and improve what we do.

# BARBARA CHALMERS

## Ceremonies, Training and Endings

The flavour of this year for me was wedding ceremonies, funeral training and 'endings';

- Ceremonies: I co-created 6 weddings and led a baby-naming ceremony.
- Funeral training: I organised and led funeral training in Kinning Park Complex alongside celebrants Jude and Yva, with ten participants taking part
- Herstory Film: I acted as AQR's Creative Producer for the first project under our charity's strand of activity: promoting creative ageing.

*"The perfect mix of fun and loving, we were completely in the moment during the whole ceremony and Barbara was just the perfect celebrant ... totally flexible in terms of the special bits we wanted for the ceremony and used her warm wit and personality to make it such a memorable and unique ceremony."*

*"Being able to plan on Zoom was great - we live in Canada."*

*"Our intimate Scottish beach wedding was better than we thought it could ever be and our celebrant Barbara was amazing."*

The baby naming was for the lovely Maeve - my nephew Tom's daughter. The ceremony was at Maeve's granny's house in Girvan. I married Tom and his wife Rachel - now living in London - just a couple years ago 'back home' in the Rhins of Galloway where both Tom and I grew up. I've since married Tom's best man and in 2023 will marry another couple of Tom and Rachel's mutual friends who were at that wedding. That's how this thing works. Celebrancy is the business of family and friends, of ties and traditions, of love and loss, of rituals and meaning-making, of sharing stories and creating memories. I love that we weave links together that build and layer over the years.

I married the son of another of my siblings. Iain and Kirsten had an outdoor wedding - also 'back home', on the sands at Port Logan. Kirsten was nearing the end of her pregnancy and looked radiant in her white dress. How far we've come... no more shame-making society... able to celebrate love and childbearing properly - the Humanist way.

In more traditional venues but not always traditional relationships, I married Jen and Emma - a Scot and an Irish woman - in Oran Mor and married Lauren and Lee - home from Canada - in Giffnock.



I married Mohammed and Anna Marta in the woods of Roslin Glen. An unlikely setting for this Egyptian- and Latvian-born couple. Saying their own heartfelt words of love to each other with friends, fizz and flowers in their hair, this was my ideal sort of ceremony. Properly doing it their own way. Sophie and Stuart's wedding took me back to Pollokshields Burgh Hall... the site of one of my first ceremonies and my partner's mum's funeral.

I was thrilled to marry Anna and Kyle in West Brewery. Anna came to stay with us for a retreat week with her new baby. I was first to cuddle her baby to sleep. When she and Kyle later decided to marry, they asked me to conduct the ceremony. What a joy. Their ceremony was carefully planned with baby support built in for other young parents there.

We seed so many connections as we go. We craft our ceremonies with care and love.

# JAMES OAKLEY

## A Gift of a Wedding

This year I conducted 14 wedding ceremonies, I was in castles, hotels, pubs, converted churches and a very intimate ceremony in a living room in Argyll and Bute.

There are two ceremonies I delivered this year that really were very different than any other ceremonies I have done before and I would like to take this opportunity to say a bit more about them.

### 1. A Living Room in Argyll and Bute

This couple was incredibly private, so at their request I did not take a single photograph or post anything online about their ceremony. In their living room there was just the couple and their chosen two witnesses, local friends and it was a very short and simple affair in keeping with the wishes and the beliefs of the couple.

Why I mention it here is because I created something for them. It was profoundly moving to the couple, they were not expecting to cry, not expecting to be emotional and it really took them by surprise that something small and intimate would be more moving and more meaningful to them than a bigger ceremony would have been.

And that for me is the joy of a Humanist ceremony, how very personal and unique they can be.

### 2. At Beancross Farm

I was honoured to be asked by the charity to conduct a wedding at Beancross Farm, Polmont, Falkirk, on Friday 26th May 2023 between Mathew Bodie & Annmarie Maclean. Mathew had a terminal cancer diagnosis and there was a Facebook appeal for help as his dying wish was to be married to Annmarie.

Here is an extract from a local news report;

## Gift of a wedding: Dream day for Grangemouth couple after groom given terminal diagnosis

A community rallied round to provide a couple with a dream wedding after the groom was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Annmarie Maclean and Mathew Bodie were preparing for the birth of their daughter, Grace, on March 11 last year when days before he was given the shock news that he had stage four bowel cancer and his life expectancy was shortened.

The following month he proposed to his partner of two years but with Mathew, 34, having to give up his work with Freeflow Traffic Management to receive treatment, and Annmarie on maternity leave from a counter assistant at [Patrick's of Camelon](#) , the couple's hope of saving for a wedding appeared dashed.

Full article at:

<https://www.falkirkherald.co.uk/news/people/gift-of-a-wedding-dream-day-for-grangemouth-couple-after-groom-given-terminal-diagnosis-4161540?fbclid=IwAR3I2az-db2dlhMF3QniW82wPt5f6-z1frUVH2Cvlp0U7HVPobdmUVwmJ2Y>

Feedback from the bride:

"Thank you so much James for marrying us on our big day you were absolutely fantastic and honestly they couldn't have choose a better person to do it we just want to personally thank you for everything and helping make our day as special and magic as it was thanks so much love Mathew and Annmarie xx"

Mathew died nearly nine months later on Saturday 30th December 2023.

Following his death Annmarie made this public post to thank all those who helped with their 'Gift of a Wedding'.



Top fan

**Annmarie Bodie**

Thank you to everyone who helped give Mathew and myself the most best special day ever it will be memories that I will cherish forever ❤️ I will never forget everything you done for us it was absolutely perfect xx

3 w Like Reply



This is the first 'Gift of a Wedding' A Quiet Revolution has supported and it was a very emotional affair.

I am sure this will be the start of a long relationship between these two charities, as this is exactly the sort of good cause we want to support.

# JUDE WILLIAMS

## Wherever there's love

This year I had 16 weddings and 8 funerals.

This year I have had ceremonies at Netherbyres House, Civic House and House for an Art Lover. I've been in gardens, barns, fancy hotels! Wherever there's love!



PHOTO: @joystory

Case study - grief / joy

Pre-wedding - I was quietly going over my script - tweaking/tending - practising the comic punchlines! Marking in additional spaces to breathe and pause. And I clocked this man - sitting alone on a couch. Everyone else was getting gladly torn into the booze.

I smiled - asked how he was and he said he was heartbroken.

He'd lost his wife last year - having been together for 68 years - and miss her every day. Oh, it's hard, I said. These days are so full of grief as well as joy - they're kind of the same thing, huh? He smiled. Yes, yes I suppose so.

They are really happy you're here - I said - we'd chatted about elderly folks in the lead-up and he was a question mark. I might just go after the ceremony he said.

I told him I'd lost my mum 7 years ago and that was in some way my nudge towards celebrant work.

There's often/always someone missing.

I found his eyes when I said '... as loved ones gather we keenly feel the absence of those loved ones that are no longer with us'. We took a breath together.

So when this speech time photo came in from Joy - I was full of it.



PHOTO: @joystory

# YVA

## 3 Weddings and 96 Funerals

96 Funerals

3 summer weddings

One wedding under 50 guests in New Lanark Mill, (2 grooms)

One wedding hotel just outside Glasgow (2 brides)

One wedding in Edinburgh military private club (bride and groom)

### Funeral case study - 'my gran would have loved it'

I led funerals for a couple who died within weeks of each other, meeting to discuss the husband on the 16th of Feb for a funeral on the 22nd only to meet the family again on the 8th of March for a funeral for the wife on the 15th March. She died the day after they had placed the ashes for her husband.

They were a couple who had been together since their teens and who maintained their romantic gestures across decades of marriage - he brought her a single rose (never red) every Friday from their courting to the last days. A single rose was the only flower on each of their coffins.

They were a couple who had known challenge - lost babies in their early years and a daughter estranged with grandchildren they had never met.

They made an unusual choice - in order not to highlight this estrangement which happened many years ago, so many that some of the mourners would not know the other daughter existed, they did not want to name the family members in any

kind of family tree. This despite being very close to the other daughter and grandchildren. It made things challenging but we crafted the tribute they wanted.

What surprised me a little was how different the stories were for each of them - they were a couple who rarely spent time apart and yet they were so different in personality that life told from each of their perspectives sounded quite quite different!

I must stress that there was no hint the wife would follow her husband so quickly - no illness or underlying health conditions, she was as hale and hearty as anyone of her age could be ... she just laid her husband's ashes to rest and went to sleep to not wake up.

Feedback from the client was lovely, and I will sum up with this email comment after the 2nd service – 'my gran would have loved it' (the client was the granddaughter)

# PROJECTS

## ‘HERSTORY’ FILM

To celebrate 30 years of the women’s samba band, Beat That, Barbara scoped the project, raised funds, commissioned the film-maker and facilitator, organised co-creation workshops and developed and delivered a short documentary. The film is a joyful and honest celebration of this unique piece of the women’s movement’s “herstory”.



*30 Years of Beat That: Erin under the spotlight during filming at The Tolbooth in Stirling with film-maker Dianne Barry*

A Quiet Revolution with its aim to promote creative ageing seemed the natural home to drive and capture this major bit of ‘herstory’.

The film can be viewed from A Quiet Revolution’s website: see the page Our Charity.

The film tells the story of the unlikely vehicle of a women’s samba band to the positive, creative experiences of hundreds of women in Scotland and beyond.

# GOVERNANCE

## Our Governing document

Our charity is governed by a [Constitution](#).

This is available publicly on our website.

## Trustees

Our Trustees all share A Quiet Revolution's Humanist approach to the promotion of equality and diversity. We aim to provide empathetic, compassionate support to people who wish to shape and create their own rites of passage and life experiences.

We are grateful to our trustees for their support as they volunteer their time and insights with philosophical discussion, guidance and governance.

This year was a real transition as three long standing Trustees had their final meeting as Trustees at our Spring Quarterly.

Founding member Erin stepped back and Jacquie and Maggie who joined us in 2018 both also had their last meetings with us as trustees. We thanked them for their service and their profiles are all available in last year's annual report.

We ended the year with three trustees and will make efforts to add additional Trustees to replace the longstanding trustees who have recently departed.

### **Jane Alcorn, Chair**



Jane has been Chair of *A Quiet Revolution* since its launch in 2017. 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.

### **Eddie White, Treasurer**



Eddie White has had a lifelong passion for supporting the arts and creative industries. He has extensive experience working in Culture and Business Development for Local Authorities. He is currently Funding and Partnerships Manager with Wasps (Workshop & Artists Studio Provision Scotland Ltd.) a registered charity that provides studios to support artists, makers and creative industries.. Eddie also has his own business strategy consultancy as Edward White Creative Services.

### **Murdoch Rodgers, Secretary**



Murdie joined the charity in December 2021. A retired television producer and journalist, during his career in television, Murdie worked for the BBC on award-winning films (BAFTA, Royal Television Society, Foreign Press Assoc, British Journalism Awards) including investigations into the care industry and historical child abuse. He believes he was fortunate to have worked with some great people who shared his passion for using the medium to expose injustice and the conceit of the powerful. He's a former Children's Panel Member and remains committed to the principle that everyone should enjoy the right to be treated with dignity and respect ... in life and death.

## Leadership and management transition

Barbara Chalmers, Founded A Quiet Revolution with former founding Trustee, Erinclare Scrutton. At the end of this year Erin stepped down as Trustee and Barbara stepped back from her management role.

We consider Barbara as the original Revolutionary, she single-handedly managed the charity until this year when she handed management over to a celebrant-led management committee.

As our founder, Barbara remains an inspiration and an important part of the organisation, both as a celebrant and as our lead trainer inspiring a new generation of revolutionaries. Barbara has extensive qualifications and experience which make her an invaluable resource to A Quiet Revolution.

## Barbara Chalmers, founder and lead trainer

Barbara founded a Quiet Revolution, and has managed things from that point up until June 2023. Barbara is a qualified Funeral Director and has trained in Counselling Skills, Life Coaching and Executive Coaching.

Barbara runs the consultancy Only Human Ltd and is a service designer, working mostly in the arts and wellbeing with end-of-life as her specialist subject. She has a double award-winning Masters in Design Innovation from Glasgow School of Art focussing on designing-out funeral poverty and reimagining 21st Century Funerals, building on her award-winning work innovating the end of life planning website, Final Fling.

Barbara was a Director on the Board of Caledonia Cremations, Scotland's only not-for-profit funeral service, 2020-2023. She is also a Director on the Board of DGUnlimited, the arts development agency for the south west of Scotland and Langholm's Outpost Arts.

## Steering Group: Jude Williams, James Oakley, Yva McKerlich

The Steering Group is the name of the new celebrant-led management committee of the strategic planning, management and day to day running. Their first formal meeting was in January 2023 and began with asking a question about what the future of A Quiet Revolution could be like.

We started by remembering our values, our ethos, and by asking the questions;

What do we want to be and how can we best get there together?

We took a moment to remind ourselves of who we were, to recalibrate and re-consider what the best way forward is. It is often said that 'Revolution is an act of hope', it is perhaps not always the sudden change we might imagine;

“How do we want to work”?

We answered this question with five thoughts about the future.

We want to work;

In accordance with our values;

1. Everything we do, must adhere to our values.

Our shared humanist values.

2. When we agree on shared goals we can work together to achieve them.

Complementing our strengths and kindly identifying weaknesses.

3. Working in Harmony.

Communicating with clear understanding and expectations.

4. Communicating Clearly and listening actively.

We can only work together if we can understand each other. Having confidence in our own and each other's strengths and abilities.

5. Understanding our roles.

How our structure works for the benefit of all. With strong Frameworks and Accountability and our shared Shared Goals in mind.

Working towards our shared future.

And that is where next year's Annual Report will begin.

With our shared plan for the future.

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

## Annual summary

*Charity accounts are independently audited and filed with OSCR, the charities regulator. Our annual financial reporting is publicly available.*

Total receipts: £8,734

Total payments: £11,331

Balance at year end: £1,943

Surplus/Deficit: £2,597

A reduction in our balance is a planned reserved reduction in accordance with our reserves policy and future growth plan. The balance is still in excess of our reserves policy.

## Reserves Policy

- A Quiet Revolution receives funds from celebrant contributions, celebrant training, donations from the public and donations from those who request Humanist Ceremonies from our celebrants as well as applicable project grants and funding.
- The overall financial position of the charity is strong.
- As there are very few regular outgoings for this financial year the level of reserves is set at £100 to maximise our potential charitable contribution.
- This reserves policy is subject to annual review. It is not a static figure, it is actively monitored and reviewed annually.

## Donated Services & Facilities

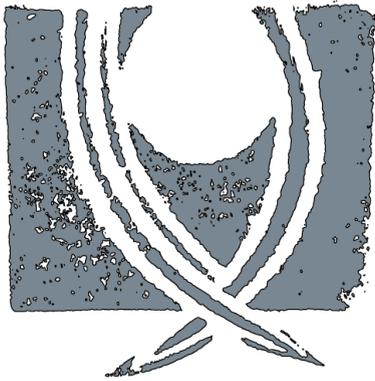
All our charity Trustees donate their time to ensure our governance and give guidance on philosophical matters.

For many years Barbara has led management of A Quiet Revolution on a voluntary basis and managed the organisation from her home address, so there has been no office costs.

Celebrants regularly donate their time and space too.

Like a lot of small charities we thrive on goodwill and kindness and we are always looking for ways to pay that forward.

# Contact information



A QUIET REVOLUTION

Scottish Charity Number: SCO46655

[www.aquietrevolution.org](http://www.aquietrevolution.org)

Contact via our Admin, James Oakley at [team@aquietrevolution.org](mailto:team@aquietrevolution.org)

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[instagram.com/quietrevolutionaries](https://www.instagram.com/quietrevolutionaries)

[twitter.com/TeamAQR](https://twitter.com/TeamAQR)