5 Quakers in Scotland (QiS) Proposed Document Issued for Consultation

*5/24 (i) We heard a number of shared concerns over the document.*

*(ii) We ask the clerk and assistant clerk to raise the following shared concerns with the Coordinating Group and ask for these concerns to be addressed in further revisions of the document.*

*(iii) We agree to send a copy of the minute directly to the clerk to NSAQM.*

CONCERNS OF THIS MINUTE AT APPENDIX 1 HERETO.

APPENDIX 1 which forms an integral part of Minute 5/24

Comments and queries—clause by clause:

4.4

Whose concerns are being considered, individual meetings, all meetings, QiS in session?

This clause covers all concerns, those of local meetings and those that are a Scottish wide concern.

4.6

This clause refers specifically to meeting houses:

maintaining and developing Quaker meeting houses as places for public worship and from which to carry out our witness into the world;

Area meeting trustees also have responsibility for burial grounds, office and other types of buildings. These should be included through such wording as: "and other properties."

This clause refers to our purpose, so includes maintaining and developing our meeting houses for worship and witness. Yes, we do have other properties but that is not a charitable purpose. Where we hold other property, it is generally held as investment property to provide income.

5.1–5.8

We find the use of the word 'power' incompatible with the spirit of Quakerism.

Powers

5 The organisation has power to do anything lawful

We suggest the use of 'authority' because it is the body of Quakers as a whole under which authority role-holders serve, the body does not abdicate its position.

We can ask either SCVO or OSCR if authority would be an acceptable alternative to power. (The current governing documents use the word power)

11

We question if this clause leaves membership open to someone, for example, who lives permanently in Fiji but worships on line with NSAQM's Sunday morning Zoom meetings? Would friends find this acceptable?

I hope so.

36

We find the use of the term "Office bearers" incompatible with the spirit of Quaker service.

We suggest something on the lines of:

Those appointed to serve QiS in the following roles: . . .

We are uncomfortable that we adopt secular terminology which does not encapsulate the spirit of Quakerism.

Office bearers appointed by members could be replaced by Members will appoint Friends to serve in the following roles

57

‘The individuals who signed the trustee declaration forms . . .’.

Who are these and who is responsible for their appointment? We are not aware that when GM Nominations recommended names for the Co-ordinating Group that those appointed would automatically come Trustees of the new body. If it is to be so, would it include members of the group from outwith Scotland? (Refer also to Clause 11 comment.)

We ask that trustees to QiS will be appointed by the Quaker method pending establishment. We suggest that the Coordinating Group was appointed to take forward the development of QiS as a concept—not its implementation. It would therefore be appropriate for the Clerk to GM and the clerks to the other trustee bodies in Scotland to sign the SCIO document, as representatives of the trustee bodies which will be demit their responsibilities to QiS and its Trustees.

Who the first trustees are has not been decided yet. If GM does decide to ask the coordinating group it will be Scottish Friends. It may be that the Friends currently serving as clerks of trustee bodies do not wish to take on the additional responsibility.

We can ask OSCR if it would be acceptable for the current clerks of trustees to serve as initial trustees of the new body.

Clause 59:

. . . trustees will have the power to ask nominations . . .

We think the use of the word 'power' to be incompatible with the spirit of Quakerism.

This process, might be seen as implication of acceptance by Nominations of names put forward by trustees. This would be a dangerous route as it effectively demeans Nominations to a 'rubber stamping' process in regard to such names.

We question if this clause is necessary, because it is incumbent on Nominations to consider nominations for vacancies.

Thank you for raising this. We need the clause to clarify what would happen in the situation. Would the following be acceptable:

“If a trustee is unexpectedly released from service for any reason, trustees may ask nominations committee to find names to fill the vacancies. Trustees may invite a nominee to attend prior to their appointment being considered at the next meeting for worship for church affairs.

60.6

To which 'organisation' does a trustee wishing to be released write: clerk to the trustees; clerk to QiS; clerk to nominations?

The use of the word 'resign' is inappropriate, one asks to be released.

As they are appointed by QiS it would be the Clerk of QiS they would need to write to. Asked to be released could be used to replace resign.

80

A quorum of just 5 members seems low if Trustee numbers achieve 15 in number. We suggest 5 or 50% which ever is the greater.

There has been some discussion on this as there was concern that if there were only 7 trustees for any reason would you end up with only 3 trustees responsible for making decisions which feels too low.

5 or 50% which ever is the greater is a good way of putting it, thank you.

Definitions

Quaker: The definition of a ‘Quaker’ implies anyone who identifies with a definition of the Society of Friends. This could include those who have never even attended meeting for worship? Is this the intention?

Yes, there are people who identify as Quaker but do not attend a local meeting for worship, but they may attend Young Friends General Meeting or other Quaker activities. There are people who come from Quaker backgrounds but current life circumstances prevent them from attending a local meeting regularly but they still identify as Quaker

We find it to be too loose a definition, and a better definition is needed. The definition in the MoU is better, but still not perfect.

We still think it is important to ask whether a definition of 'Quaker' is required in the context of this document. Is a definition of QiS more appropriate? If a definition of Quaker is required it surely needs a fuller treatment or statement than a brief sentence under Definitions.

The term is used in the document so there needs to be something in the definition.

Should 'Quaker' and more specifically 'QiS' be dealt with in an Introduction to the document?

We can give this further consideration.

General comment

We find the use of the term 'organisation' confusing because it seems to encompass different things in different contexts.

Noted. There will be another round of tidying up the wording so we will see if this can be addressed.

General queries

*Generally these reflect items included clearly in our NSAQM governing document where the responsibility lies with the trustees.*

The answer to many of these questions is that Trustees will have legal responsibility for signing contracts, but the details of delegation will be in the Memorandum of Understanding MoU

1. Who appoints the auditor—Trustees or QIS in session ?

In some current governing documents it does state that Area Meeting in session appoints the auditor or independent examiner. This can be clarified in the MoU

1. Who is responsible for appointing and managing staff ?

Trustees will have legal responsibility for signing contracts, but the details of delegation will be in the MoU

1. Who is responsible for opening bank accounts?

Trustees carry the legal responsibility to authorize opening bank accounts

1. Who is responsible and accountable for undertaking financial investment and the performance thereof?

Hopefully a finance committee will handle the detail and advise the trustees

1. Who is responsible for appointing Insurers, dealing with annual renewal terms and any claims?

Hopefully a property committee will handle the detail and advise the trustees

1. Who is to be the signatory on property title deeds and transactions ( including tenancies)?

Trustees on behalf of Quakers in Scotland

1. Who is to be the nominated person in regard to QIS relationship with OSCR?

Probably the QiS treasurer as currently happens in Area Meetings.

1. As Trustees are to be appointed by QIS following discernment by a nominations body, is the work of the Trustee body, by definition, subject to oversight by QIS in session? If the Trustee body does not act in accordance with the wishes of QIS in session, what process is available for its discipline and in the extreme, dissolution and replacement?

Trustees will answer to QiS as current trustees answer to AMs now