

DRAFT How it might work

When the Options for Scotland 2 group recommended the formation of a single body for Quakers in Scotland the vision was that all local meetings and worshipping groups came together as a single body Quakers in Scotland. To strengthen the sense of single Quaker community and identity, enabling easier community connections to develop, and building on the Scotland wide activities that already take place.

The single body would be the church body and the charitable body, as our current area meeting bodies are.

We cannot have a church without the charity or the charity without the church, it is one body which we are all members of and share responsibility for creating and maintaining.

Our membership of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain would be as a member of Quakers in Scotland as our current membership of an area meeting does.

The change to a single body would have minimal impact on our local worshipping communities which would continue to function as they currently do. They would continue to be the focus of our worship and our local community identity. But the burden of responsibilities, the number of Friends required to fill roles, and the handling of administration would be reduced by having one charity instead of the current six charities.

The larger body would enable more sharing of skills and knowledge, e.g.

- a property committee made up of representatives for each meeting house could work together and support each other managing the various properties.
- a finance committee made of representatives for meetings holding bank accounts and/or managing a high volume of transactions.
- an employment committee made up of representatives for meetings which employ staff.

The larger body would only need one set of trustees, who would be able to focus on the legal compliance and trustee duties, supported by the property, finance and employment committees managing much of the detailed work and being able to advise the trustees.

We would still meet together in our local communities and have the opportunity to meet with Friends throughout Scotland. Whilst some Friends may feel it is harder to be part of a larger body and more difficult to get to know one another, for other Friends it provides more opportunity to get to know others with similar interests and circumstances and provides a wider range of experiences and situations to learn from.

We have heard concerns over how such a large body could operate, how could Friends individual voices be heard within such a large organisation, how could they maintain their current community feel and connections. We hope we can work together to find ways to encourage and enable as many Friends as possible to contribute and feel valued within the community. We can join together and support each other in multiple different ways and combinations. Retaining our current communities and building new ones.

Possible ways of doing things.

Meeting for worship for church affairs

We are still exploring how we might manage the holding of business meetings, and what might be delegated and what can be done as a whole community.

Spiritual and pastoral care

We will still need local Friends serving in these roles. How and where they are appointed, and work together is still under consideration.

A Quakers in Scotland team of spiritual and pastoral care Friends could work together to identify and arrange meetings for learning or discussion either on a Scotland wide basis or to meet the needs of smaller groupings of Friends.

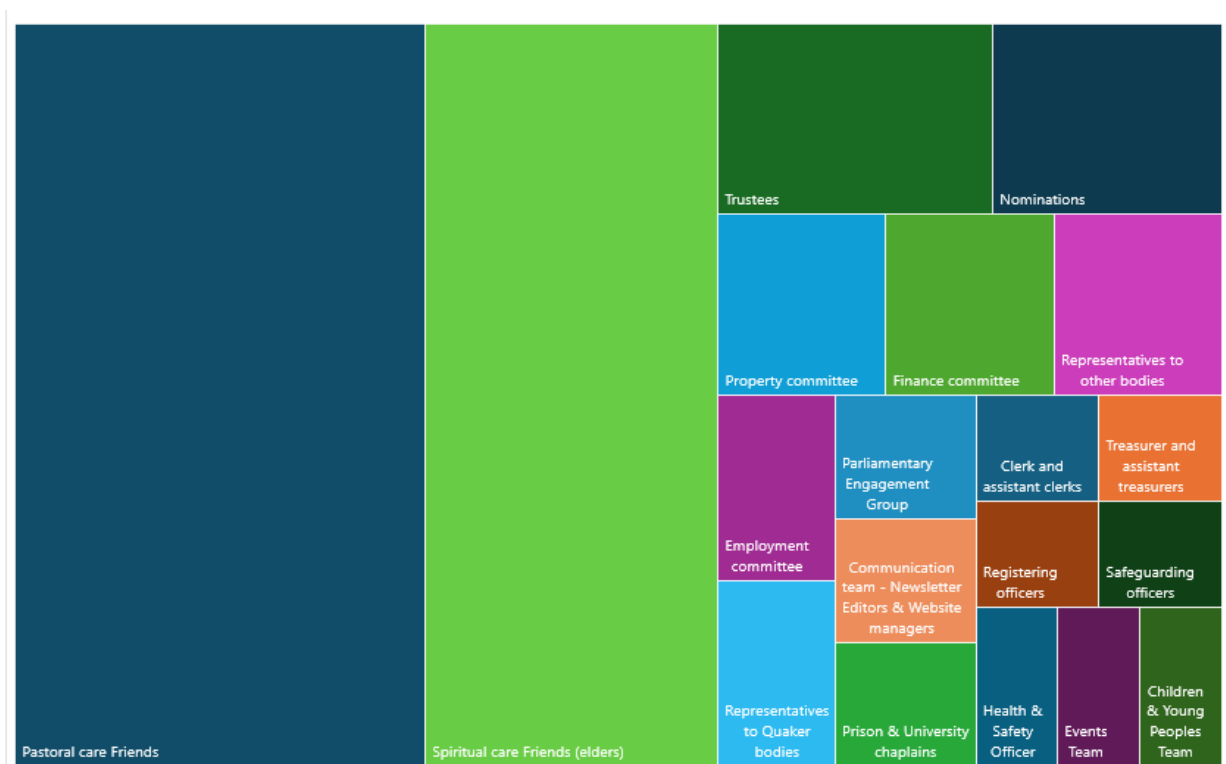
Membership applications

How membership applications are handled is still a matter for consideration as we explore the possible community structure options.

Nominations and appointments

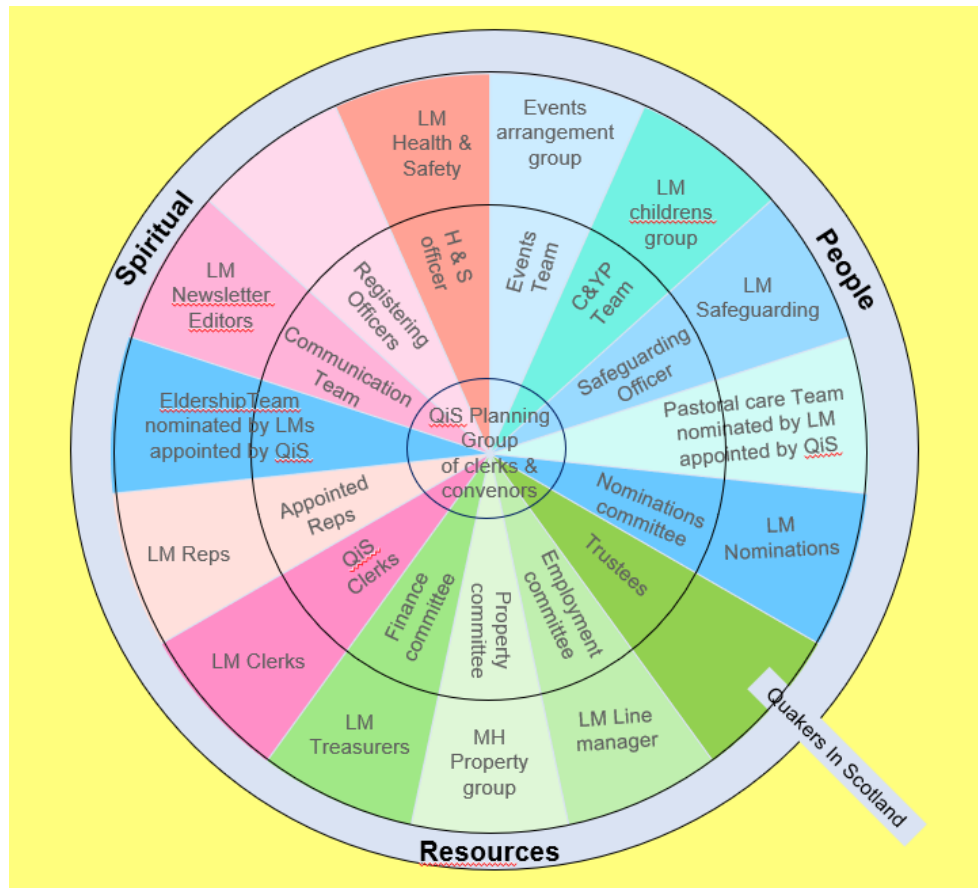
Local meetings could be encouraged to be more proactive in supporting the nominations process in finding names to take on responsibilities and fill roles.

Our biggest need is for Friends to serve as Spiritual and Pastoral care team upholding the spiritual and community life of our meetings. The change to a single charitable body reduces the number of Friends needing to serve as trustees and the duplication of roles in our current separate area meetings, as indicated in the diagram below



Planning and organisation

As currently happens within General Meeting, there would need to be a planning meeting made up of clerks, treasurer and convenors of all committees. This could meet regularly to discuss agendas and ensure there are effective communication links between all aspects of the organisation.



Finances

The draft General MoU – finance and property, provides a broad outline of how responsibility for these matters might be shared within the community once it is established.

Restricted funds and Designated funds would continue to be held and used for their specified purpose.

General funds could be pooled into Quakers in Scotland general fund to be used for paying all administrative costs (insurance, salaries, training, learning, communication, expenses, governance costs)

Once an area meeting has transferred all the assets and responsibilities to Quakers in Scotland and laid itself down contributions would be made directly to Quakers in Scotland.

Local meetings funds would be held within the Quakers in Scotland bank account to remove the need for every meeting to manage a bank account. Local meetings with meeting houses may wish to manage their own bank accounts.