

Ideas for QiS Nominations Process

Importance of Nominations: Nominations lies at the heart of Quaker meetings at all levels and it is important to get QiS processes right, with our testimony to equality, diversity and inclusion at the forefront. Nominations is the uniquely Quaker, tried and tested method we use to keep our meetings glued together, our living testament to the belief that there is God within everyone. We all learn and develop as Quakers through the roles we hold and have held. We therefore want to reach out to all Friends and attenders locally in searching for people that have the potential to fill our necessary roles. QiS is an opportunity for fresh thinking. Keeping an eye on what is necessary within the new QiS is inherent in this process and we hope that we find opportunities to simplify our structures whenever possible.

We want to put Quaker discernment at the heart of the nominations process; discernment about what roles are needed (in conjunction with QiS), who is right for those roles and what is right for individuals themselves. An emphasis on discernment helps us remember the important spiritual dimension of nominations. It is not a mechanical process. It is a practical application of our faith with a firm spiritual foundation arising from our testimonies. Discernment can be deep, prayerful, careful, powerful.

Nominations Committee: Currently there is a clerk and a representative from the four area meetings. Initially, we expect to bring the nominations committees from area meetings joining QiS together with the existing QiS Nominations Committee. These Friends could form an enlarged interim QiS Nominations Committee to carry on the work required whilst giving time to find the way to form the permanent core Nominations Committee and to form a Nominating Group and process for the appointment of future Nominations Committees. We would ultimately like a core group of about 8, plus the clerk and assistant clerk. It will be important to have a spread of geography, age, interest and experience.

Reaching out to all Friends: Being such a large national body, it will be important to create and maintain strong linkages and communication with Quakers locally – this means local meetings, worshipping groups, any intermediate meetings that are set up and special interest groups, for example, Young Friends and Children and Young People's Advocates. We want to avoid the dangers of centralisation, which could lead to a disconnect with local Friends. It would be good to build our nominations processes from the ground up, making sure people know what we are looking for and empowering them to engage. We want to hear from everyone, all over the country, including people nominations committee has never heard of. Below are some ideas for how this could be achieved:

- To feed into nominations committee, named individuals from local meetings and other Quaker groups (including Young Friends) who will be asked for suggestions of names; aiming for ongoing two-way communication (these may be thought of as corresponding members of the committee)
- Strong presence at our QiS meetings, perhaps an informal table at coffee and lunch times with committee members with information about roles and a more formal but brief presentation about how nominations work is going overall

- Web page with a brief description of QiS roles and a short paragraph written by a previous role holder
- Presence at various gatherings – Wiston, Pluscarden, Westerly Friends Gathering, Families' Weekend, YFGM, etc.
- Regular updates in *The Scottish Friend*
- Good linkages with Elders' and Pastoral Friends' support groups and other Quaker groups
- One or two nominations events per year, maybe one blended and on online to look for new ideas and keep up the communication flow
- A Woodbrooke-sponsored nominations course for people in Scotland, both from QiS and local meetings nominations committees (and any intermediate meetings)
- QiS Nominations Committee may on some occasions delegate particular nominations tasks to an intermediate meeting
- Reinvigorate Local Development Worker's nominations network meetings?
- Forms expressing personal interests and experience?
- Openness to other suggestions to improve linkages, communication and transparency

Records: We aim to set up robust processes, systems and records to ensure that handover in the future can be carried out efficiently. We welcome the use of the QiS administrator's time and expertise in both setting up and maintaining records. Confidentiality is crucial and records need to be password protected. Will we be able to use the new web storage domain? We want to keep our processes as simple and streamlined as possible.

Opportunity for community building: Getting our nominations process right can promote spiritual growth in both individuals and our meeting communities. It is an integral part of creating and maintaining our faith communities. Nominations offers an opportunity for community building in the infancy of QiS and can help knit us together. We want to be creative, accessible and adventurous and are open to new ideas from all sources. Please connect with us!

Marilyn Higgins, Clerk, QiS Nominations Committee