

Summary of how Intermediate Meetings might work

It has become apparent that Friends in different parts of Scotland favour differing forums for conducting Quaker business. Quakers in Scotland (QiS) is made up of worshipping communities of Friends. Assuming all four current AMs decide to formally become part of QiS, Quaker membership, for all Scottish Friends, would be held by QiS as their new AM. Worshipping communities may be geographically based Local Meetings (LMs) or Worshipping Groups (WGs), e.g., Nairn WG, or they may be online e.g., WSAM Sunday Evening Meeting or a group such as Glasgow Young Friends. Friends from these communities could, as sometimes happens at present, come together into what we are calling intermediate meetings (IMs). We originally imagined these meetings as being flexible and fluid, but it would be possible to have a group of worshipping communities decide to meet regularly and to appoint a clerk for a set term, as current AMs do. Friends connect in a variety of combinations and patterns as suits them, for example

- residential events, e.g., Pluscarden, Wiston weekend, Away Days and West Coast Friends Gathering,
- meetings of the Friends in one of the current AMs
- learning events, e.g. study groups, discussion groups, Woodbrooke courses, held in person, blended or online
- joint meetings for worship
- social events, meetings for eating, ceilidhs, poetry reading groups, walks etc
- some outreach events.

The initiative and planning for these events comes from Friends in the worshipping communities involved. It may, or may not, be appropriate for some intermediate meetings, to choose to handle, with agreement, some items of QiS business. For example, it might be appropriate to have, for some Intermediate meetings, a minuted, standing agreement that they take certain items of business, such as applications for membership, appointing a chaplain for a local hospital, arrangements for marriage, alongside other items of local business, not the

responsibility of QiS. Less regular Intermediate Meetings might take some of this business, agreed on a case-by-case basis with the QiS clerk, but they are under no obligation to do so. Where an Intermediate Meeting, by minuted standing agreement or in agreement with QiS clerk, takes on formal QiS business, whether as a one-off basis, or more regularly, it would need to comply with some agreed principles:

- It is organised by a team comprising some mixture of Elders, Pastoral Care Friends, and LM clerks to ensure that the Quaker business method is correctly followed.
- These Friends must be from at least three different communities to avoid congregationalism.
- A Friend must be named to act as clerk so that there is a clear responsibility for managing the business.
- The agreed agenda must be advertised.
- The meeting must be open to all Friends, therefore it must be advertised so that all Friends are able to decide if they feel led to attend the meeting. A flood of separate emails giving notice of meetings would be counterproductive, the details of ongoing communications will need to be agreed
- No Intermediate Meeting should agree a minute that imposes an obligation on QiS Friends whose worshipping communities are not part of the Intermediate Meeting.
- The minutes would be minutes of QiS business and would need to be sent to the QiS clerk as soon as practicable. They would be received at the next meeting of QiS where their acceptance by QiS could be minuted.

Lesley Richards and others May 2025