

Changing our structures for the future benefit of Quakers in Scotland - 2

This report seeks to assist Area Meetings (AM) and then General Meeting (GM) to provide a clear view on the next stage in developing future arrangements for Quakers in Scotland. It follows the report considered by AMs and GM in May and June 2023.

This is what the Options for Scotland 2 group recommended in June 2023 (GM 23/06/11):

- *We form a single body, 'Quakers in Scotland' through which we support all our Local Meetings, where our membership is held and which enables us to speak, as Quakers, on Scotland wide issues.*
- *We form a single charity (a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), to be responsible for the stewardship of all our resources across Scotland.*
- *We develop further the use of paid professional support to undertake routine tasks and provide advice, easing the load for the Friends we ask to give the greatest practical ministry.*

This is what we heard from Friends in response:

GM received Minutes from all four AMs. GM was *"not in unity over the recommendations at this point"*, but felt it *"could unite about moving to a single charity for Quakers in Scotland as a first step."* Most of the answers to the specific points raised by Friends in May and June will come from the detailed work required from Options for Scotland 3 before final decisions are made.

This is what you asked us to do next:

GM asked the Options for Scotland 2 group to continue working until September, answering practical and legal questions about a new single charity for Quakers in Scotland, and providing a basis for an Options for Scotland 3 group that will be appointed in September.

This is what the Options for Scotland 2 group has done since June 2023. We have:

- taken stock of Friends' queries, concerns, and also of their encouragement to proceed
- listened to ways in which Friends gather and witness outwith AM arrangements
- identified steps that could be taken to support current structures where they are in difficulty
- imagined the specific steps we would need to take to become a new single body, Quakers in Scotland, that would embrace the functions of Area Meetings and General Meeting
- obtained legal advice confirming that a SCIO is the appropriate charity model in our circumstances
- prepared early drafts of documents that would be needed for the proposed new arrangements

We remain in unity with our June report.

This is what the Options for Scotland 2 group suggests should happen next:

In hearing responses to its recommendations, we have heard from those:

- confident that the recommendations were grounded in detailed work and clear discernment
- concerned that new arrangements should provide sufficient support to worshipping Friends

- who are very anxious that their cries for help will be overlooked once again.

In order to make progress we want Friends to feel that they will enjoy and be energised by being part of a single community of Quakers in Scotland. To get there we have to undertake the administrative and legal steps required to make the transition to new arrangements. This transition must be flexible to accommodate the pace of change at which the AMs and GM feel ready to move. We imagine that the Options for Scotland 3 group will undertake its work by involving Friends across Scotland so that what emerges feels realistic, hopeful and worthwhile.

The questions before the Meeting are:

1. Is the AM interested in taking the planning for a single charity further? (A definite commitment will come later when we have done more detailed work on things like the constitution so that Friends can have a clear idea what they are considering joining.)
2. Is the AM happy to have the GM nominations committee find any further names needed for Friends to serve in particular ways in relation to Quakers in Scotland? (For example they may need to find Friends to serve as the first trustees of a new SCIO.)
3. Are Friends happy to work with Friends across Scotland in fleshing out the various aspects of Quakers in Scotland beyond the work towards the single charity?
4. Are Friends content that General Meeting write to Meeting for Sufferings on behalf of all Area Meetings explaining the work we are engaged in?

Options for Scotland 2 group