



New ways into membership

Preparation for YM 18 July 2026

The full agenda and supporting papers will be published on 3 July 2026. One of the agenda items we will be considering together is about new ways into membership. This sheet offers some suggestions for how Friends and meetings might prepare for the discernment at Yearly Meeting.

Why is this on the YM agenda?

Many Quakers in Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) today do not attend local meetings in the traditional sense. They belong to and receive spiritual support from non-geographic or online worshipping communities. At the moment, to become a member of BYM, you need to apply to your area meeting. If you aren't part of a local meeting then you may have no practical route into membership.

Our current ways of doing things therefore exclude some Quakers who are worshipping regularly. Quaker Life Central Committee was asked to consider how we could make membership more accessible.

What is the proposal?

The proposal is to create a new way into membership. This proposal suggests a way in which those who belong to online or affinity-based Quaker groups could be supported through a membership process. Those groups could become known as "Home Meetings". In addition, we could create a new, non-geographic body that could be known as an "Anchor Meeting". Quakers worshipping in Home Meetings could then request membership of the anchor meeting.

[Read the full proposal document \(PDF\)](#)

You may also find it helpful to read '[Why belonging matters: A young Friend's thoughts on Membership](#)' (PDF) reproduced with the permission of Michael Forde and *Friends Quarterly*.

What can we do to prepare for the discernment at YM?

We are all encouraged to attend a Quaker meeting for worship for business with 'hearts and minds prepared'. The queries at the end of this document are designed to help everyone to draw on their own experiences and to move to an understanding of how the needs of others might be different.

You can use these queries in different ways. For example:

- Someone could read out one of the queries after Meeting for Worship and leave Friends to reflect on it in their own time
- Someone could share the queries in your notices/newsletter and encourage Friends to think about them for themselves
- Someone could suggest one of the queries as something for Friends to chat about informally over coffee after Meeting
- Someone could set up a discussion group, either to meet once to focus on one or two queries or to meet several times to cover them all.

If you want to explore this topic with younger Friends, take a look at this other [preparation document for children and young people \(PDF\)](#).



Queries for reflection

1. Where would you say your sense of Quaker belonging is located: In your meeting house (or venue)? In a community of like-minded Friends? In the community you happen to find yourself, warts and all? In the service you undertake and the Friends you work with? Somewhere else?
2. The proposal before Yearly Meeting is for certain kinds of non-geographic Quaker groups (such as those who worship together) to become equivalent to local meetings, and for Friends to be able to apply for membership via their connection with a community of that kind. How do you feel about that?
3. How do you respond to the idea that Quaker practices should adapt to situations changed by new technology, in particular the rise of online communities?
4. For various reasons some Friends have no real connection with a local or area meeting. Should these Friends be able to apply for membership of BYM by a different route? Does it make a difference whether their lack of connection is a choice or outside their control?
5. Quaker worship in the UK might be evolving into three practices: in-person, online and hybrid; does this matter? Does it matter if the same applies in our community life, business practice and Quaker service?

How can we take this further?

You can [read the full proposal document \(PDF\)](#)

You can read this [related article \(PDF\)](#)

You might then like to consider what implications you see the proposal having for:

- The ways that Quakerism engages with the modern world
- Inclusion, diversity and equity in Quaker communities
- Intergenerational engagement among Friends