

GLOUCESTERSHIRE AREA QUAKER MEETING JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: Member of AM Nominations Committee

General Context of the Role:

Gloucestershire Area Meeting Nominations Committee is currently formed from representatives (where available) from each constituent Meeting, with the possible inclusion of one or two representatives from the AM as a whole (*ie*, not representing any specific Meeting). Its purpose is to recommend to AM, after prayerful consideration, Friends (or Attenders) to undertake the variety of necessary tasks which the ongoing work of AM involves. Such tasks may include a wide range of levels of responsibility. Some are pretty demanding and time-consuming roles, like that of Clerk to AM; some involve weekend conferences, or meetings at Friends' House, in London; some may mean simply representing AM at one meeting a year. Nominations Committee is not an appointing body; its remit is to bring forward a suggested name or names to the AM, which, when appropriate, will make the appointment. Nominations Committee meets regularly, usually about once each two months, to consider names to recommend to AM for particular tasks, and to keep under deliberation the ongoing pattern of replacements as triennial appointments reach their conclusions. QFP chapter 3 is helpful.

Experience and qualifications sought:

So that the work of the AM may be done efficiently and with pleasure, those who serve on Nominations Committee should have (ideally):

- 1 a knowledge of the nature of the roles covered by the work of AM, and a clear understanding of what each job involves in terms of time and other costs;
- 2 a sense of the qualities needed in those who may fill them;
- 3 knowledge of the gifts and interests of the members of their own Meetings;
- 4 most importantly, commitment to the working of the Spirit through the practices of Friends' usual business methods.

In practice this means...

For (1) and (2) it's helpful to attend AM whenever you can, so that you can begin to understand the work that various appointed Friends do to support the AM, and what their roles seem to involve - you will be surprised by how much work goes on behind the scenes.

For (3) you will need a loving and positive knowledge of the members of your own Meeting. We may know a lot about the friends in our meeting, but we don't know everything, so it's important to be able to consider everyone seriously, and not, in Noms Cttee Meetings, to dismiss possibilities out of hand ("*Oh, he'd never do it, he's far too busy...*" etc). Some Friend may imagine that he or she is simply indispensable, and able to do every job that's going (a situation that is, however, quite rare). Some generous Friends may feel they ought to take on work they genuinely haven't time for, and that's not good, either.

(4) Tact, discretion, and patience with the process are needed. It's important to remember that Noms Cttee is engaged in working with the Spirit not only to meet the needs of the AM comfortably and rightly — to plug the gaps, so to speak — but also to meet the needs for spiritual service in the hearts and minds of Friends whose names may be brought forward. So tenderness, and gentle understanding are required. The way in which a possible Friend is approached, the care and honesty with which the job is described, the support offered in making a decision about whether or not to accept — all these tasks require delicacy and grace. And courage is required, too, since there are...

Difficulties:

Though you may spend a great deal of time considering the needs of AM and the Friends in Meetings, Friends often aren't willing to say "Yes" when invited to consider themselves for service. Friends are often shy or diffident; they may think they're "not good enough", or are inadequate in some other way; the jobs may appear to them too daunting or difficult. Friends are genuinely often very busy and have a great many calls upon their time - especially if they're the only Quaker in their family... and so on. Invited to serve, Friends may be dismayed at the prospect; or, at best, they may say they'd do it if no one else can be found, or only for a limited period, not the full triennium...

So there is also a need for optimism, imagination, boldness, and practicality of outlook, since:

- (a) the jobs may not need to be done at all;
- (b) they may not need to be done exactly as they have been done in the past;
- (c) the Friends you know may be more willing than you think they'd be;
or they may be willing to serve in a particular role you'd never have imagined for them;
or they may be willing to job-share, or...

Rewards and satisfactions of the job:

Becoming more fully involved with the work of AM in this way has its own rewards. There's a sense of belonging, in the company of others, to a spiritual process which serves the whole Area Meeting, which deepens your own experience of Quaker business practice, and which may lead you into a fuller understanding of the way the Spirit works — in others as well as yourself. There are times of quiet satisfaction, too, when someone who timidly takes on an appointment finds it fulfilling and right and joyous.

Drafted by R Bailey
Approved by Nominations Committee 30 April 2002

Updated 'monthly' to 'area' 02.11.2010