

GRASP

Survey of membership trends

This section gives a survey of the trends in membership in Quakers in Yorkshire over periods of time. The data is derived from the annual Tabular Statements and from the QiY Book of Members and Attenders.

The Tabular Statements are published annually by Britain Yearly Meeting based on returns from each area meeting on 31 December of each year. The Tabular Statement Membership numbers should be an accurate record of Friends in membership of each area meeting. The Tabular Statement also contains the number of Attenders, but as there is no unique definition of who counts as an Attender this number is better treated with some caution. Similarly the number of Children not in membership is included and this is also uncertain. (Children who are in membership are included in the Membership numbers). Prior to 2003, the published Tabular Statements were only for regions, meaning in our case for Quakers in Yorkshire. Since 2003, the data shows numbers for area meetings but not for each local meeting (although this is submitted and is available from Friends House).

The Book of Members and Attenders is compiled triennially from data supplied by each local meeting in Yorkshire.

Long-term trends in QiY

Chart 1 shows the trends in Members, Attenders and Children (not in membership) over the period 1985 to 2018. The data is taken from the Tabular Statements.

The number of Members was roughly constant from 1984 to 2000 but since then has shown a steadily decline of about 1% per year. The number of Attenders has fluctuated with peaks in 2000 and 2012 but is now showing a decline. The number of children (not in membership) has declined steadily over the whole period and has done so at the rate of about 4% p.a. (i.e. four times faster than the decline in the number of members). It is this trend which is most worrying as children are tomorrow's potential members.

Trends in AMs 2003-2018

Charts 2a, b, c show the change in the number of members, attenders and children (respectively) in each of the seven AMs over the 15 year period 2003 to 2018.

There are significant differences in trends between area meetings. In the case of Members, Brighouse West Yorkshire AM has grown by 22% whilst Sheffield & Balby AM has been constant. The other five AMs have all decreased in membership but at different rates. Craven & Keighley AM and Leeds AM have decreased by 12%; Central Yorkshire AM and York AM by 23% and Pickering & Hull AM by 38%.

The trends for Attenders and Children show more variability. Part of this is down to the lack of firm definition of who counts as an Attender and a child not in membership. But most of the overall decline is in three AMs: Central Yorkshire, Craven & Keighley and York.

Trends in local meetings 2009-2018

Charts 3a-g show trends in local meetings over 2009 to 2018 using the total number of entries in the Book of Members and Attenders (i.e. sum of members + attenders + children). This number indicates the total number associated with a meeting and is, of course, far higher than the number who come to meeting for worship. As expected, some meetings show big decreases whilst others show relatively big increases over the nine-year period. Thus against the general pattern of an overall decrease in numbers, there are meetings with increases which indicates that it is possible to grow numbers.

To study the changes more clearly, chart 4 shows columns for each meeting sorted into order of size for 2018 and with 2009 for total. This clearly shows the meetings which increase or decrease. To show the changes more clearly, chart 5 plots columns for the percentage change over the period 2009 to 2018. The smaller meetings (less than 30 in 2009) have been omitted as the % changes are less meaningful.

Out of the 30 meetings on chart 5, 8 meetings show increase over the 2009 to 2018 period. The largest positive increases are Hebden Bridge (52%), Wooldale (25%), Sheffield Central (12%), Acomb (11%) and Harrogate (8%). There is a group of meetings who either show small increases or small decreases and then a long tail showing significant decreases with the three at the end of High Flatts (65%), Ackworth (43%) and Malton (41%). It should be noted that the above figures are simply snap-shot totals at two dates. The next Book of Members in 2021 might show different trends.

Other information which can be deduced from the data:

- (a) the median totals have decreased from 50 in 2009 to 40 in 2018.
- (b) Chart 4 indicates that 45% of the total in Quakers in Yorkshire is in the six largest meetings with a large number of meetings clustered around the median and a tail of small meetings. There are six meetings less than 20 and twelve meetings less than 30.

Apart from Otley, which closed in 2018, the other small meetings seem to be able to survive either by being looked after by a larger meetings, or having special circumstances.

Chart 1 - Quakers in Yorkshire 1985-2018

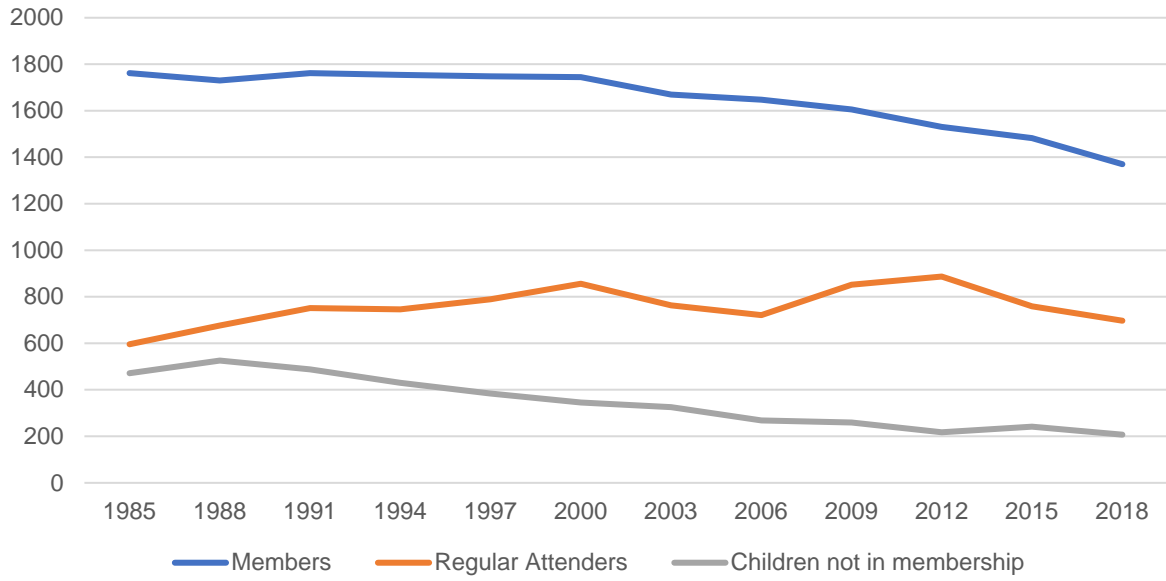
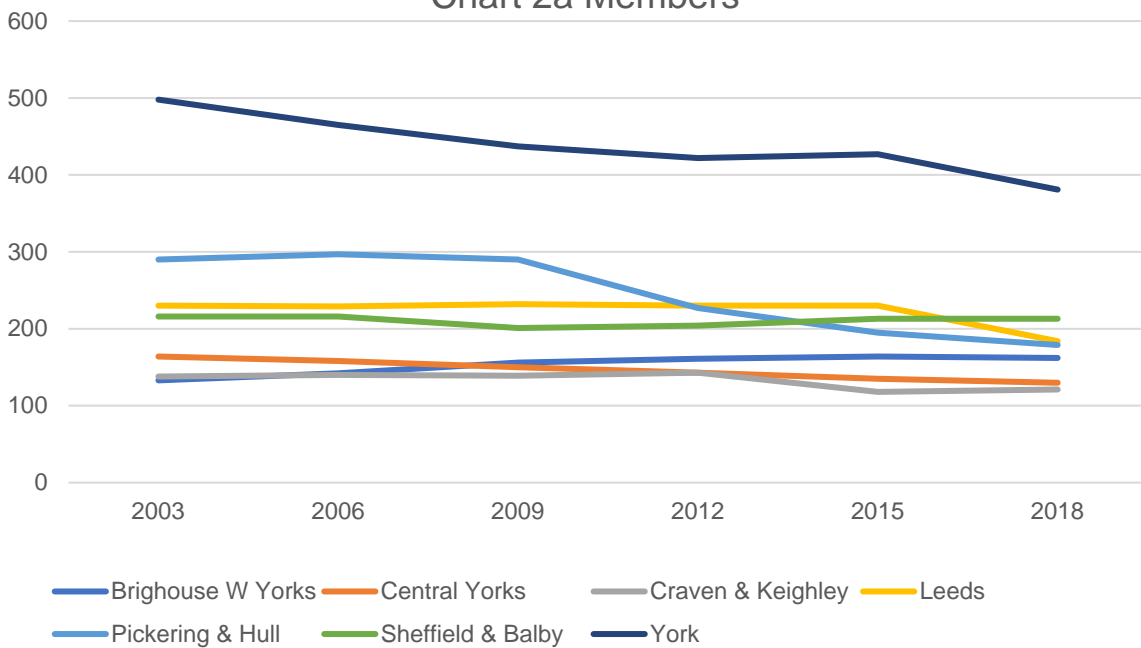


Chart 2a Members



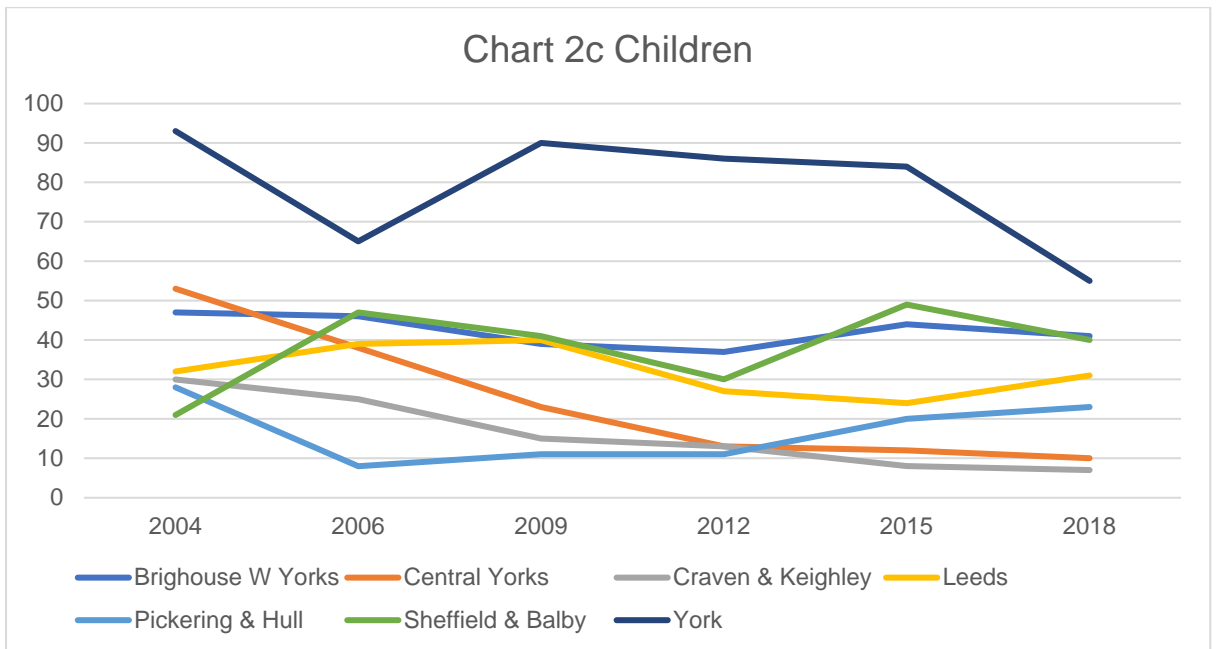
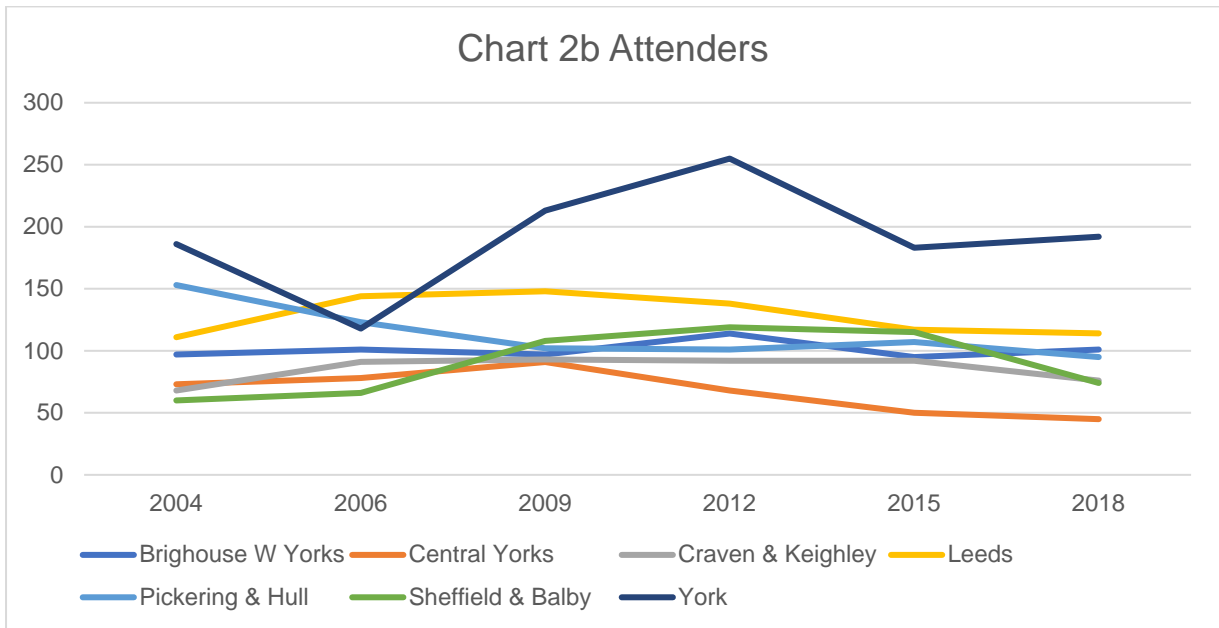


Chart 3a Brighouse W Yorks - Totals

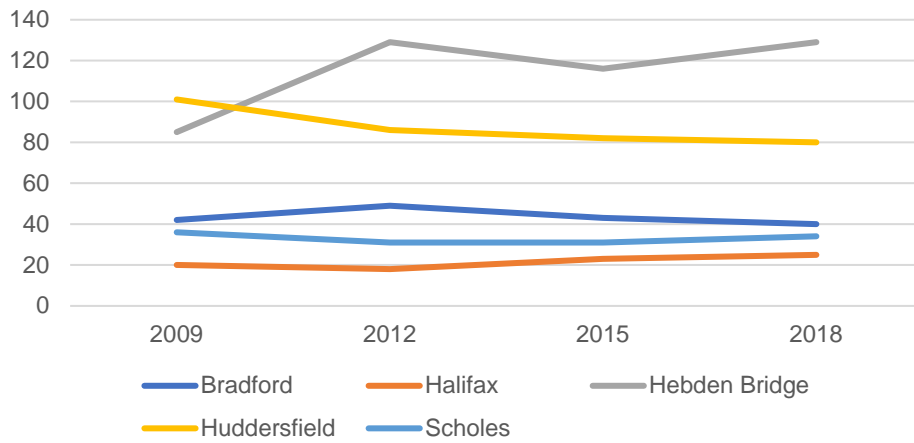


Chart 3b Central Yorks - Totals

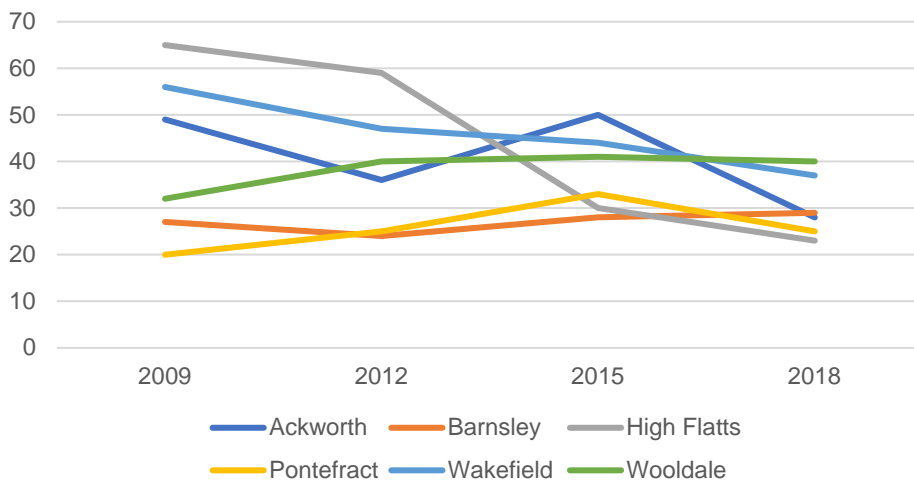
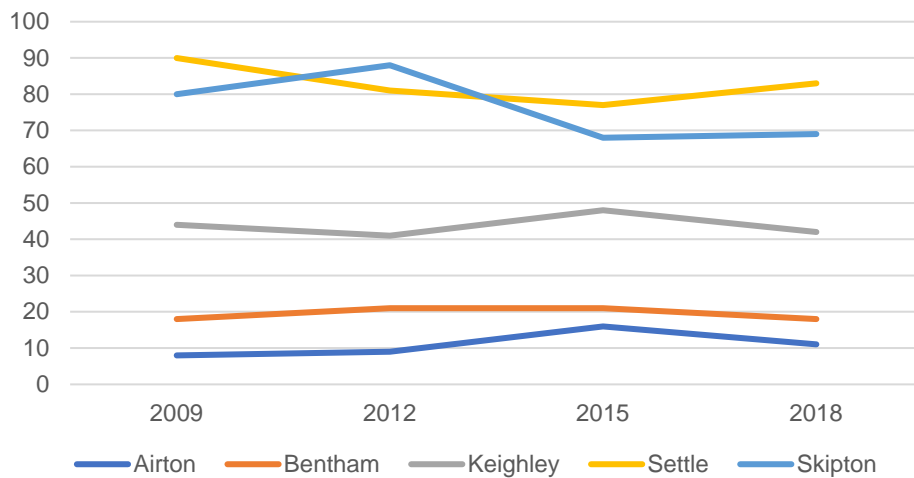
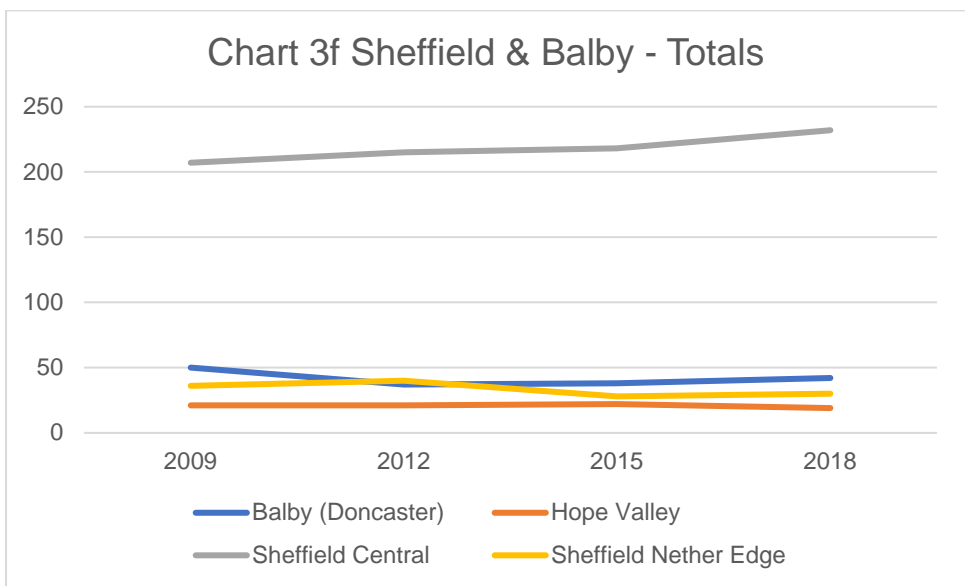
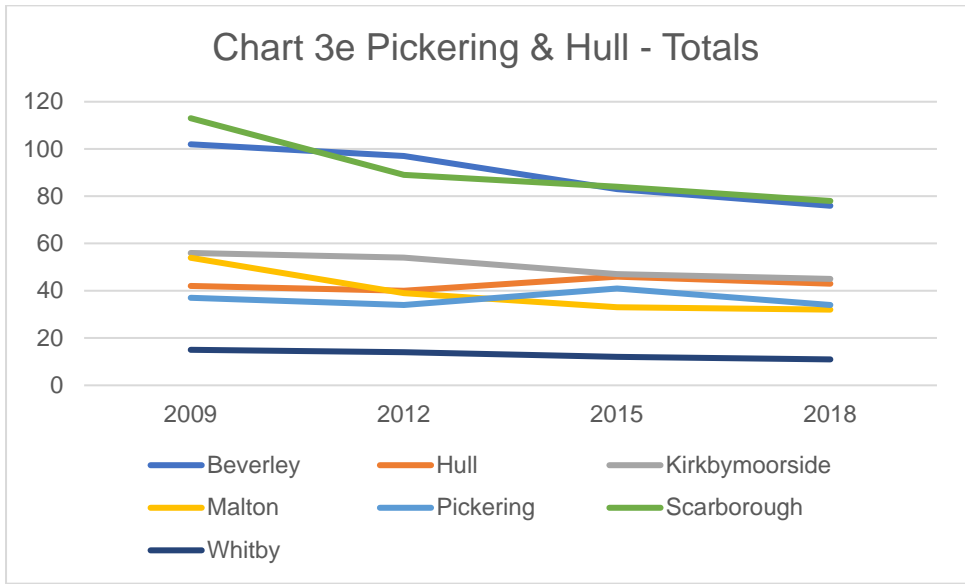
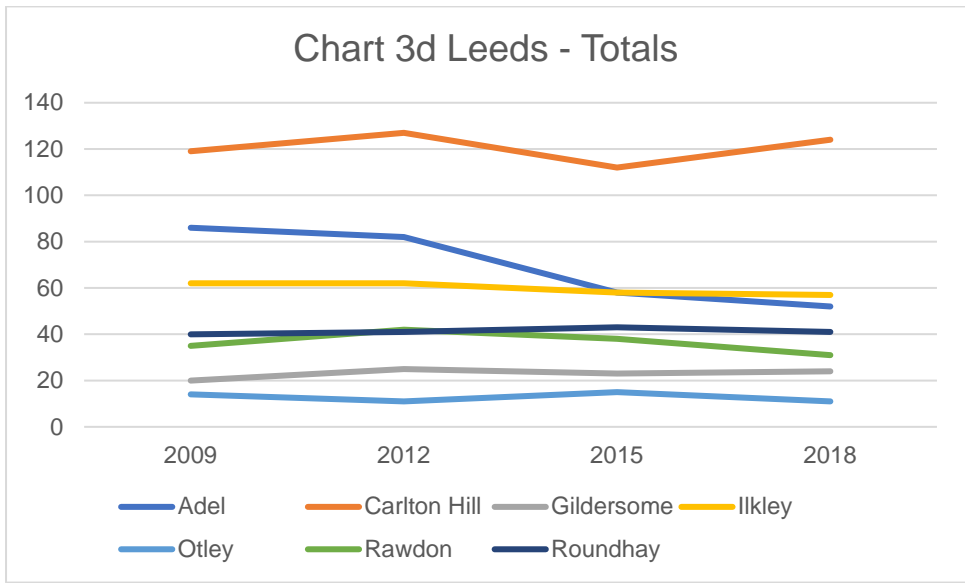


Chart 3c Craven & Keighley - Totals





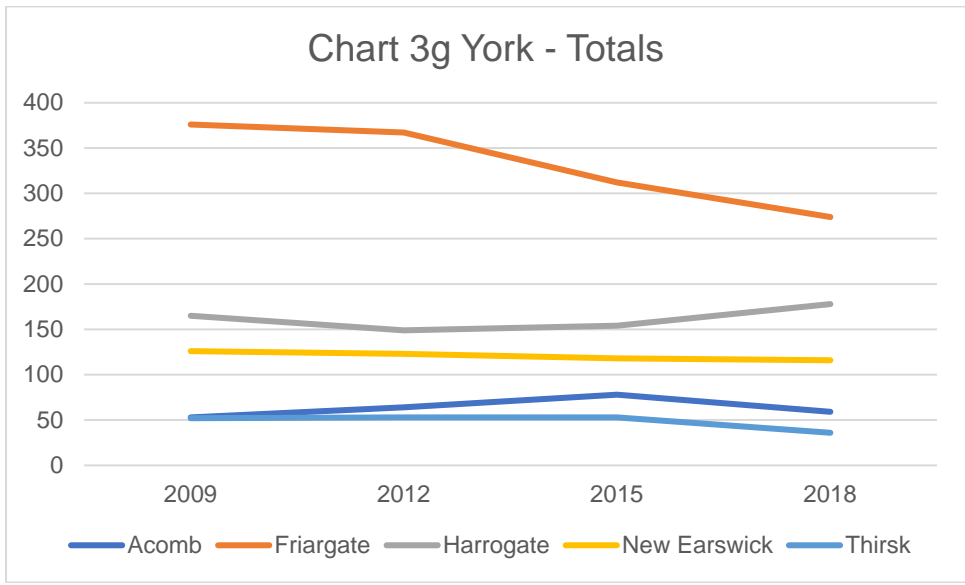


Chart 4 Size of meetings 2018 and 2009

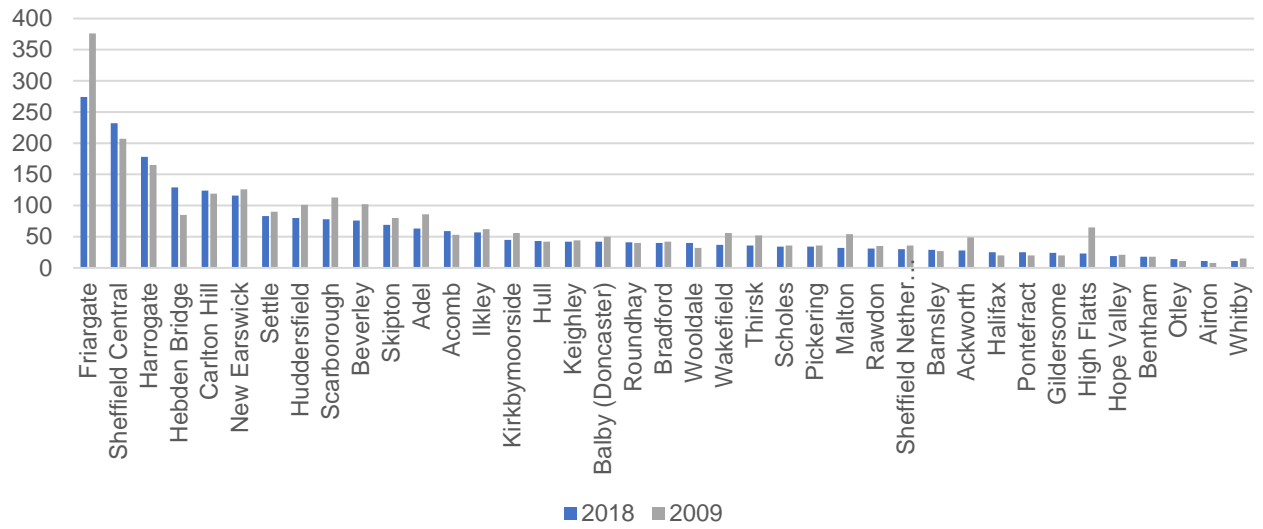


Chart 5 % change in LMs 2009 to 2018

