

'Willing and Able'
A GRASP Production
Quakers in Yorkshire
NOMINATIONS

This 'talking heads' video was made following a GRASP workshop about sharing positive ideas on the Quaker process of Nominations. There is an accompanying leaflet, 'The Work of Nominations Committees' (see below). The video is 'rough and ready', having been recorded during a one-hour Zoom using Speaker mode, with subsequent editing. 'Willing and Able' might be used to introduce a discussion about the work of nominations.

<https://youtu.be/Yo9xJdvGc9o>

'WILLING & ABLE' CONTENTS

The video opens with a scene-setting song 'This World Goes Round and Round' leading into "These roles come round and round it all comes back to you"; and ends with "It all comes back to us all with joy and love and fun, the meeting goes round and round".

'Chapters' and timings are:

1. SONG	0.08
2. INTRODUCTION	1.34
3. DISCERNMENT IN THE NOMINATIONS PROCESS	2.24
4. ABOUT ROLES	3.30
5. ABOUT TOO FEW PEOPLE	5.12
6. NOMINATIONS CYCLE	7.28
7. POOLING RESOURCES ACROSS AMs	11.15
8. TRAINING FOR NOMINATIONS	12.10
9. BEING PRO-ACTIVE	13.50
10. JOY OF SERVICE	15.17
11. SONG	16.34
12. CREDITS	17.24

If you are using 'Willing and Able' to introduce a discussion about the work of nominations, here are some questions that might help to get things started.

1. If you were recommending 'Willing and Able' to a Friend, what might you say to persuade them to watch it?
2. Did you hear anything that was new to you, and that sounded interesting? Could you try it in your meeting?
3. Did you hear anything that you didn't agree with? What were your reservations?
4. What did you like? Not like?

'The Work of Nominations Committees'

This is the companion leaflet to 'Willing and Able', printed in full below.

The Work of Nominations Committees

It is (our) responsibility to enable (our) members to discover what their gifts are and to develop and exercise them to the glory of God. (based on QF&P 3.22)

Be bold; welcome the chance to give opportunities to younger Friends and to those more recently arrived, and encourage those who underestimate their own potential for service.(from QF&P 3.25)

“A team approach can be exciting, especially for young people; a way of coming to know each other” “Joy is available” “There can be job delight” (Yorkshire Friends)

1. Background

The work of Nominations Committees is fundamental to The Society of Friends. Quakers rely mainly on unpaid members and attenders to undertake the work of running the organisation locally and regionally.

(for the remainder of this document ‘Friends’ refers to members and regular attenders)

2. The work of Nominations Committees

2.1 Discernment is central to the work of Nominations Committees (see Appendix 1 below)

2.2 It can be helpful to distinguish between ‘roles’ and ‘functions’ since functions can sometimes be distributed in new ways between roles.

2.3 As for service in various roles, new members to Nominations Committees need induction, training, and support. They may not know the Quaker nominations process, or how to do it. This leaflet may be helpful as a general explanation

2.4 Nominations Committees need to be aware of the roles which they are asking Friends to consider undertaking. Each needs its up to date job description. When a post becomes vacant, ask the previous holder to review the job description and let the Committee know of any changes made during their tenure, or any they would recommend. Ask: “Do we *really* need this role?” All terms need a start and end date, with the possibility of re-nomination and number of terms clearly stated.

2.5 Part of Nominations’ brief is to help and advise a Friend unsure of their ability to take up a role. Draw attention to training opportunities offered by Woodbrooke. Suggest someone to support them as necessary, in addition to the essential, possibly updated job descriptions mentioned above.

2.6 Nominations need to be aware of external changes (e.g. re law, money or property) which may affect suitability; especially for roles such as Treasurer or Trustee, where legal changes may override lived experience. AMs or FH website may have access to professional advice, or may set up paid advice as needed. If Nominations cannot fill a role, consider alternative approaches, e.g. asking two or more people to share a role; reconstructing the work by amalgamating it with other tasks or similar roles in other AMs. If appropriate, the Meeting may discern the need to employ someone.

2.7 Nominations Committees’ work is advisory. Discernment about making appointments is for Business Meetings for Worship in session. Nominations Committee members need to be prepared to explain a suggested name, but theirs is not the final decision.

3. Nominations is a pro-active process

- 3.1 A skills survey in the meeting can be useful
- 3.2 Getting to know people is an essential element
- 3.3 Be open with everybody about how nominations works
- 3.4 Clarify and promote understanding about different roles
- 3.5 Be *positive* about nominations

4. The nominating process: a 'Forth Rail Bridge' job!

- 4.1 Someone in the Committee (the Convener?) takes responsibility for keeping the required work of the Committee up to date (e.g. job descriptions, terms of service, roles needing to be filled etc.)
- 4.2 Dates of meetings need to be tied in with those of Meeting for Worship for Business (MfWfB), so that names are brought in good time. Circulate papers in advance so that members come with hearts and minds prepared, having thought about the roles and possible names.
- 4.3 Meetings work best using Quaker Business Method, starting and ending with worship and seeking guidance in discerning who to nominate; and/or what alternative arrangement might be proposed.
- 4.4 For each role, it is helpful to discern several names if possible, decide which member will ask which Friend, in what order. Establish a kind of 'telephone tree'; with the Convener receiving the final call.
- 4.5 If possible ask Friends face-to-face if they are willing to be nominated; if not, speak by telephone. Email seems to work much *less* well for all. NB a Friend may not be able to serve at this time, but indicates they may be happy to be asked again later – something definitely worth knowing!
- 4.6 Finally, the Convener sends nominations to the clerk, in good time for the next Business Meeting.

5. Nominating a Friend to serve on a Nominations Committee ('Noms for Noms')

Nominations Committees cannot, of course, nominate Friends to serve on their own committee. This is usually done by an ad hoc group appointed during a Business Meeting. Friends serving in this way need to be aware of the work of the Nominations Committee and the strengths and experience of those already serving. Ideally, the ad hoc group will seek people who enjoy making contact with new members and attenders, and will represent diverse ages, situations, interests and experience.

Appendix 1: About Discernment by Nominations Committees

(a handout from Woodbrooke's Nominations Course)

Requisites for discernment

- A sense of community in the committee – knowing each other
- Developing a sense of the life and needs of the meeting, group, etc.
- Knowledge of what each task entails
- Knowledge of Friends in the meeting, their gifts, circumstances, needs, interests, energies, current commitments
- Loving and caring attitude towards the meeting as a community
- Caring and supportive approach to Friends, especially those being asked to serve

Requisites for how we discern

- Prayerful consideration as an individual and as a committee in our deliberations
- Time – for unhurried deliberation
- Listening to each other
- Silence - listening to what arises in the silence
- Being “adventurous” if that is where we are led
- Resisting the temptation: to take short cuts or to invite a nomination that is inappropriate just to involve someone (esp. a new member or attender), to rush to make a major appointment because of traditional timescales, to make a decision on behalf of a potential nominee
- To be aware of our own perceptions and prejudices

Our discernment as a committee

- To be aware of our own perceptions and prejudices
- Allows names to rise and fall, being honest and tender with those names until we feel a “rightness”.
- Continuing our discernment beyond the committee meeting
- Discernment in how the approach is made
- Discernment in supporting and negotiating with the potential nominee during *their* personal discernment
- Discernment of alternative ways of fulfilling a role if Friends cannot be found who are able to serve, and how to bring that to the meeting
- Continuing discernment and watchfulness of Friends' needs after appointment, especially in terms of training and support