**QUAKER JARGON EXPLAINED**

The organisation of Quakers is very much linked to the way Quakers think, namely that there is that of God - however one understands that - in everyone, and that we experience this in our communal form of worship. The latter is very central to our faith but so too is the concept of testimony - that our lives should speak through our actions - as well as the way we speak.   
  
Therefore, our structures and conventions seek to ensure equality, since there is that of God in everyone. It is consequently important that, as far as we can, everyone should seek to play a part in our structures, since the way we organise is so linked to our faith. Our Meetings for Business are at the same times Meetings for Worship, seeking to discern the right way. The structures have changed a little over the centuries and will do so in future, though there seems to be much strength in the core concepts. However as the Elders of Balby in Yorkshire emphasised, when they set out their understanding of our structures and conventions in 1656 “these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by; but that all, with a measure of the light, which is pure and holy, may be guided: and so in the light walking and abiding, these things may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not in the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.”

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| **TERM** | **EXPLANATION** |
| **1652 Country** | The area of North-West England known as ‘1652 Country’ is where George Fox gathered many of the first Quakers. It is now frequently visited by Quakers from around the world. |
| **Advices** | Ideals stated as a continuing reminder of the basic faith and principles held to be essential to the life and witness of Friends. Friends have found it useful regularly to remind each other of their nature through the periodic reading and discussion of advices along with related queries. See also 'Queries for Serious Consideration'. |
| **AFSC** | American Friends Service Committee - As Quakers traditionally oppose violence in all its forms and therefore many refuse to serve in the military, including when drafted, AFSC's original mission grew from the need to provide conscientious objectors with a constructive alternative to military service. In 1947 AFSC received the Nobel Peace Prize along with its British counterpart, the Friends Service Council (now called Quaker Peace and Social Witness) on behalf of all Quakers worldwide. |
| **Attender** | A person who worships regularly with Friends but has not joined the Religious Society of Friends. |
| **Birthright** | A person born where both parents are Friends automatically becomes a member of the Society by right of birth, hence birthright! Nowadays some meetings do not adhere to this principle and encourage teenagers to apply for membership of the Society when they are ready. Compare with 'convincement'. |
| **Blended Meeting** | A new term since the pandemic, where a 'Meeting for Worship' is available via a video-conferencing platform as well as in a Meeting House. A computer with a camera and microphone links those in other locations and vice versa. |
| **Book of Discipline** | More formally known as 'Organisation and Christian Discipline'. It establishes clear guidelines for the correct holding of Quaker business meetings, marriages and all matters of governance within Ireland Yearly Meeting (IYM). |
| **Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM)** | The body of Friends in Wales, Scotland and England. |
| **Christian Experience** | See 'Quaker Life and Practice'. |
| **Christocentric** | A Friend whose inspiration is based on the inward light of Christ and who holds that the Religious Society of Friends is essentially a Christian denomination. Compare with 'Universalist'. |
| **Clearness** | A condition in which there are no perceived obstacles to a proposed course of action by an individual or meeting. |
| **Clerk** | A person appointed by a business meeting or committee to take a meeting through its business and write the minutes. See also 'Convener'. |
| **Closing Meeting** | One Elder or Overseer 'closes' the 'Meeting for Worship' by shaking hands with the person next to them or makes a gesture similar to Namaste. Following this, the time of worship has finished. |
| **Concern** | An idea or prompting by the Spirit which leads a Friend to take on an issue as a personal strong issue. The Friend will probably bring their concern to their business meeting to be tested, that is to see if it is a true concern. |
| **Consensus** | The aim of a method of decision-making which does not rely of taking a vote, seeking to reach the point where all are agreed. It is not the aim of the Quaker business method, which depends on the assumption that all or most of those present are trying to perceive the purpose of God for the matter under consideration. |
| **Convener** | Interchangeable with 'Clerk' but usually applied to a person who is responsible for a group or committee that is less formal in structure or work. It can also be for a one-off meeting for business. Compare with 'Clerk'. |
| **Convincement** | A discovery of truth, as in 'Quaker by convincement', one who has become convinced of the truth of the Quaker way. It is used to describe anybody who joins the Society. Compare with 'Birthright'. |
| **Correspondence Clerk** | The 'clerk' who is tasked with communication across the Meeting. |
| **EAPPI** | Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel is an international programme coordinated by the World Council of Churches. It brings people from around the world to the West Bank to serve for three months as human rights monitors called Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs). It was founded in response to a call from the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem. Since 2002 over 1,500 international volunteers from twenty-two countries have served as EAs. In the UK and Ireland, it is coordinated by British Quakers on behalf of sixteen churches and NGOs. |
| **EcoQuakers Ireland** | A committee of 'Ireland Yearly Meeting' that seeks to promote sustainability and a greener approach in Meetings across Ireland. |
| **Elder** | As a noun: a member of a meeting charged with responsibility for the ordering of the spiritual life of that meeting. As a verb: the process of gentle redirection of a person by an elder back onto the path of right ordering. |
| **EMES** | European and Middle Eastern Section of FWCC (see 'FWCC'), one of four sections worldwide. This is the organisation that brings together the roughly 25,000 Quakers in the area, and in particular supports the smaller meetings outside the Britain and Ireland. |
| **Enquirer** | Someone enquiring about Quakerism. |
| **Epistle** | Quaker gatherings often send a report of their deliberations to other Quakers. The best-known example is the Yearly Meeting Epistle. They often start "To Friends everywhere..." |
| **FMH** | FMH - an abbreviation of Friends Meeting House. Mostly used to describe Friends Meeting House London. See 'Friends House', 'Meeting House' and 'Quaker House Dublin'. |
| **Friend** | A member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). We get our name from the original title of 'Friends in the Truth'. This doesn't mean that we have to be nice to each other, rather our first loyalty is to Truth. Quakers often refer to themselves collectively as 'Friends' and will address a Quaker as 'Friend' if they don't know the person's name. |
| **Friends Book Centre** | A very useful source of books on all matters Quaker-related, you'll find it at Friends House in London. |
| **Friends House** | The central offices of Britain Yearly Meeting, opposite Euston Station, London. |
| **FWCC** | Friends World Committee for Consultation is a Quaker organisation that works to communicate between all parts of Quakerism. FWCC's world headquarters is in London. It has General Consultative NGO status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 2002. FWCC is split into four sections: Africa section; Asia West-Pacific section; Europe & Middle East section (see 'EMES'); and Section of the Americas. |
| **Gathered Meeting** | An occasion when the meeting for worship or business feels like it attains more than the usual sense of divine presence, which touches the worshippers and unites them in holy fellowship and often shows in united themes of ministry. |
| **General Christian Counsel** | A short document published by Ireland Yearly Meeting raising theological ideas and beliefs considered important by Irish Friends. Intended as a spiritual guide and challenge to our members. |
| **Hold in the Light** | To ask for God's presence to illumine a person, situation, or problem, whether in concern or thanksgiving. |
| **Hope so** | The traditional form of words Quakers use to indicate our assent to the minute – we indicate that we “hope so”. We “hope” that the minute is acceptable. We hope to make a decision that does not reflect our desire but seek to work out between us, intellectually, what is the best thing to do. We seek to make a guided decision, guided by something beyond our conscious minds – to many, something entirely beyond ourselves – and answering to a higher agenda than any we might have in mind at the time. |
| **Ireland Yearly Meeting** | A meeting for decision making and business administration for Friends in Ireland. It meets over several days each year and can be attended by all members. Abbreviated to IYM. |
| **IYM** | An abbreviation of Ireland Yearly Meeting. |
| **JYM** | Junior Yearly Meeting |
| **Lay Down** | To terminate a committee or concern when its work is completed or no longer felt necessary. A monthly meeting may be laid down when it is no longer functioning. |
| **Leading** | A prompting thought to be received from the Spirit. It can turn into a 'Concern'. |
| **Letter of Introduction** | A communication signed by the clerk of a monthly meeting that identifies the person who is traveling as a Friend or regular attender in good standing. See also 'Travel Minute'. |
| **M&O** | An abbreviation of 'Ministry & Oversight'. |
| **Meeting** | Used in different contexts, and so confusing. It can be as shorthand for 'meeting for worship', or it can refer to a 'meeting of Quakers' that has gathered for business and administrative matters, for example: 'Preparative Meeting', 'Monthly Meeting', Quarterly Meeting and 'Yearly meeting'. |
| **Meeting for Worship** | The great mystery of Quakerism: what happens in meeting for worship? We don't actually worship using a liturgy, agreed words or ritual in the way that other traditions do. Friends believe that when we gather together in silence we can engage in a direct and personal relationship with God. |
| **Meeting for Worship for Business** | A Quaker business meeting is essentially a meeting for worship, except that it has a pre-arranged agenda. |
| **Meeting House** | A place where Friends gather for worship, though not the only place that they may do so. Early Friends referred to churches as 'Steeplehouses'. |
| **Member** | Someone who has joined the Religious Society of Friends. Members join a 'Monthly Meeting', not a 'Preparative Meeting'. See also 'Attender'. |
| **Membership** | What you apply for when you decide to want to join Friends. Two people will be appointed by your local 'Monthly Meeting' to help you and the 'Monthly Meeting' decide if the commitment to membership is right for you. They will write a report to help your 'Monthly Meeting' reach its decision. See also 'Attender'. |
| **Ministry** | This is the term for what a person gives/says when they stand up and speak during 'Meeting for Worship'. Ministry should be inspired and prompted by the Spirit. The term can also be used to describe a service given. |
| **Ministry & Oversight** | A committee made up of 'Elders' and 'Overseers' that is responsible for the spiritual life of the meeting and for the pastoral care of members and attenders. |
| **Minutes** | These are the record of the proceedings of a business meeting written by the 'Clerk' or 'Convener' of that Meeting. Quaker minutes are written and agreed as the meeting proceeds with its business. See also 'Meeting for Worship for Business'. |
| **MM** | MM - an abbreviation of 'Monthly Meeting'. |
| **Monthly Meeting** | A meeting for business administration and decision making for a group of local 'Preparative Meetings'. Monthly Meeting is responsible for the administration of its members, including membership and marriages. A monthly meeting can be a grouping of multiple meetings, usually called 'preparative meetings', coming together for administrative purposes, while for others it is a single institution. |
| **Moyallon** | A purpose-built residential centre set in the grounds of Moyallon Meeting House near Portadown. |
| **Nominations Committee** | The tradition way by which Quakers identify those amongst us for service of various kinds. |
| **Nontheist** | A Quaker who does not necessarily believe in a theistic God or Supreme Being, the divine, the soul or the supernatural. Like other Quakers, nontheists Friends are interested in realising peace, simplicity, integrity, community, equality, love, joy, and social justice in the Society of Friends and beyond. |
| **Organisation and Christian Discipline** | Ireland Yearly Meeting’s book of guidance on the right ordering of Quaker affairs. |
| **Overseer** | A member of a 'Meeting' charged with responsibility for the general welfare of the members of that Meeting. |
| **Plain Speech** | This is how Friends aspire to speak ('Let you Yea be your Yea'). |
| **PM** | An abbreviation of Preparative Meeting. |
| **Preparative Meeting** | A group of Friends, generally under the care and guidance of an established 'Monthly Meeting'. The term was originally used to refer to one of a group of meetings that 'prepare' business to be brought before the 'Monthly Meeting'. South Belfast is a Preparative Meeting. |
| **Programmed** | Describes a meeting for worship that has an order of service and is led by a pastor. Two thirds of Friends world-wide belong to yearly meetings that hold programmed meetings. Meetings for worship in Ireland are 'unprogrammed'. |
| **Public Lecture** | A lecture given at the time of Ireland Yearly Meeting by one or more Friends, it is an important platform for the continuing development of Quaker thought and theology. |
| **QCEA** | Quaker Council for European Affairs - provides a locus for Quakers across Europe to act jointly. The Council's centre is in Brussels, Belgium. |
| **QM** | Abbreviation of Quarterly Meeting. |
| **Quaker** | Originally a pejorative name for a member of the 'Religious Society of Friends', now a title worn with pride and probably more widely known by the public than the more correct term of 'Friend'. |
| **Quaker Faith and Practice** | The 1994 revision of BYM's Christian Faith and Practice and The Book of Discipline, a compilation of texts intended to provide guidance, example and encouragement in Quaker life. |
| **Quaker House Dublin** | The central offices of Ireland Yearly Meeting in Stocking Lane in south Dublin. |
| **Quaker Life and Practice** | A book which seeks to express in words the workings of the Spirit as experienced by Friends in Ireland and elsewhere over the past 350 years. It is both an anthology of Quaker thought and action, and an expression of Quaker faith and doctrine. It is not however a doctrinal statement. It is revised periodically to reflect the continuing revelation and understanding of the Spirit's work among Friends. Along with Organisation and Christian Discipline, General Christian Counsel, and Queries for Serious Consideration it makes up the formal publications of Ireland Yearly Meeting. |
| **Quaker Quest** | A series of meetings, usually four or six evening meetings, aimed at introducing the Quaker experience to member of the public who have no or very little knowledge of Quakers. |
| **Quaker Service** | A charity which works with disadvantaged and vulnerable families and individuals across Northern Ireland. Visit www.quakerservice.com |
| **Quarterly Meeting** | A meeting for business administration and decision making for a group of local Monthly Meetings. There are 3 Quarterly Meetings in Ireland, namely Ulster, Leinster and Munster. |
| **Queries for Serious Consideration** | A group of open-ended questions devised by Friends in Ireland to help individuals consider their spiritual wellbeing and the life of the meeting. At present there are eleven queries which deal with all aspects of Christian living. |
| **Query** | See 'Queries for Serious Consideration'. |
| **QUNO** | Quaker United Nations Office(s) - located in Geneva and New York, they enable Quakers to have an active role in the work of the United Nations, as well as providing opportunities for diplomats to meet in quiet neutral surrounding for informal conversation and discussion. |
| **Recording Clerk** | The Recording Clerk of Ireland Yearly Meeting (IYM) is the paid administrator. Other Yearly Meetings may vary on this. In Britain Yearly Meeting the Recording Clerk is effectively the chief executive. In smaller Yearly Meetings, the role is voluntary. |
| **Religious Society** | Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) - the correct title of the organisation to which Friends/Quakers belong. |
| **Right Ordering** | Done in the correct manner, in keeping with Quaker tradition and practice. A body of wisdom and insights that has evolved over three hundred years of seeking the guidance of the Spirit, it is captured in part by 'Organisation and Christian Discipline', but only in part. |
| **Sense of the Meeting** | A perception of Truth that emerges from the corporate business process as Friends seek God's will. After full consideration of a matter and allowing for the development of new insights and wisdom with God's leading, if the clerk feels that a decision has been reached, they state the sense of the meeting as a minute for the meeting's approval. No vote is taken. Unity is sought, but if it is not attained to a reasonable degree, the clerk can hold the item over for reconsideration at a later time. The clerk must decide on the degree of unity required, basing that judgement on the importance of the subject and the experience and wisdom of those who speak to it. |
| **Speaks to One's Condition** | this means 'that it is very helpful/apt/timely to me at this moment'. |
| **Swarthmoor Hall** | A historic hall in Cumbria, England recognised as the ‘birthplace' of Quakerism. |
| **Testimonies** | The cumulative lived witness of generations of Friends. Aspects of our witness on which most Friends can actually agree! They include (in alphabetical order) Equality, Integrity, Peace, Simplicity, Sustainability and Truth. |
| **Testing a concern** | A process of deliberation by a preparative or monthly meeting to examine whether a Friend's concern has religious validity and should be promoted and supported by that meeting. |
| **The Friend** | A Quaker magazine published weekly in Britain since 1843. |
| **The Friendly Word** | A Quaker magazine that used to be published every other month by Ireland Yearly Meeting. |
| **Travel Minute/Travel Ministry** | The endorsement a meeting gives to one of its members who is travelling, among Friends or in the wider world, under the weight of a concern. This is different from a letter of introduction, which the meeting may approve for a Friend who plans to visit Friends in the course of travelling. |
| **Universalist** | A Quaker who believes that there is a universal truth that may be found in all faiths, as compared to Christocentric or Atheistic. |
| **Unprogrammed** | Describes a meeting for worship where all ministry and prayer is inspired by the Spirit rather than by a predetermined order of service. This is the practice in Ireland and Britain. Compare with 'Programmed'. |
| **Visitor** | Somebody new to a Quaker meeting; A Friend visiting from another Preparative Meeting; The two Friends appointed by Monthly Meeting to visit an applicant for membership. |
| **Weighty Friend/Quaker** | an informal term for a Friend who is respected for spiritual depth, experience, or wisdom (while remaining consistent with our testimony on equality, of course). |
| **Woodbrooke** | Woodbrooke - the Quaker study centre in Bournville, Birmingham, England founded in 1903 when George Cadbury gave his house and grounds for the purpose of 'a Quaker settlement'. It now offers many courses online and at Woodbrooke. |
| **Worship** | See 'Meeting for Worship'. |
| **Worship Group** | a group of worshippers who gather regularly to follow Friends practice, who may or may not have a formal affiliation with a Monthly Meeting. |
| **Worship Sharing** | Worship Sharing groups often meet to consider a set of prepared queries, offering the gathered Friends an opportunity to begin discernment on some concern and to get to know each other better. Unlike in Meeting for Worship, all participants in a Worship Sharing group are encouraged to speak, though no one is required to. |
| **Yearly Meetings Committee** | A meeting for decision making and business administration for Friends in Ireland. It is the executive body of Ireland Yearly Meeting and meets regularly at Quaker House in south Dublin. |
| **FURTHER INFO** | <https://fwcc.world/learn/glossary-of-quaker-terms/> |