

## ***Symud Ymlaen / Moving Forward* report, MFW June 2020**

Some of you will have seen our initial paper thinking about the Religious Society of Friends as a tree and asking, among other things, which parts need pruning. The Newid group has its own ideas, some Friends have sent in responses and there is a large measure of agreement. Let's try it out. Could we hear from a couple of Friends who are on their Area Meeting's Nominations Committee? In one sentence, where do you see problems?

That absolutely fits with what we're hearing. It's the 'charity' aspect of our society. Most Friends, while understanding there has to be a health and safety policy, bank accounts, someone to fix the gutter, they don't feel it's why they are a Quaker.

If you read Quaker Faith and Practice 4.02 about the functions of an Area Meeting it has two paragraphs on spiritual nourishment, outreach, children, community ... it says meetings should be enjoyable. The third paragraph is about what you might call the charity stuff needed to make possible the bits we probably all enjoy more. What if it were possible to delegate those charity bits? Can they be done in such a way that Area Meetings could share knowledge and expertise and, so free up time, energy and enthusiasm for the other stuff? That is what Newid is researching, looking at what is happening elsewhere in the Yearly Meeting and trying to work out how that experience might be adapted to fit Wales and the Marches.

But if you delegate responsibilities to other people there are certain necessary religious disciplines.

Firstly, you have to trust them. If you don't want to do the work then you have to trust the people who have been given the task when, particularly when, they don't do it how you would do it.

Secondly, although you might have pet things you're interested in, you are not necessarily the best person to discern where you should focus your energies. That's why we have nominations committees. My experience is that when I have been asked to take on a role that might not obviously be what I want to be doing, like clerking the Newid group, I learn so much from doing it. They might be scary roles, but I end up enjoying them greatly.

Thirdly, when I'm enthusiastic about something and I'm asked to report, I could go on about it for hours. But the discipline is that if you are asked to talk for ten minutes, then you take ten minutes. And if I don't stop they'll be no time to answer any questions.

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*Clerk Symud Ymlaen / Moving Forward group Convenor, Lesley Richards.*

*Simplifying meetings (previously named "Newid?")*