



## **New Members' Programme An introduction**

### **I APPLICATION**

An Associate Member, of at least two year's standing, wishing to join the New Members Programme (NMP) should contact the Glasgow office for an application form. Please note that for practical and environmental reasons we do not accept applications from people who live outside of mainland Europe.

There follows a time of discernment for both the applicant and the Community (through the Leader and Council) which involves completing the application form and then being interviewed by the Leader, with another Member of the Community, where possible face-to-face.

The names of those recommended for membership will be presented to either the March or May/June meeting of Council (with a view to starting the Programme that summer). Following Council's acceptance, the applicant will be transferred to the Members' Roll.

A personal mentor will be identified; this is usually someone in their Regional Group who will undertake to 'mentor' them and reflect with them on practicing the Rule in daily life during their period on the Programme.

### **2 OBJECTIVES AND AIMS**

#### **Objectives (what should happen)**

- 1) Getting to know the other participants on the New Members Programme;
- 2) Sharing and learning about the Iona Community, its organisation, history and traditions;
- 3) Engaging in practical tasks for the common good;
- 4) Gradual integration into the life of the Community – both formally, through such things as Family Group meetings, plenaries, working groups, and informally, through the building of relationships.
- 5) Personal challenge and reflection through a local project or placement.
- 6) Corporate reflection on the Purpose and Rule of the Community, summarised as:
  - The life of prayer in the midst of life
  - how we use our money and time and the earth's natural resources, thus giving value to them; our prioritising of meeting together;
  - The centrality of action for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, personally and in our life as community.
  - and accounting for our keeping of the Rule.

- 7) Celebrating our life and Christian faith together.

### **Aims (what we hope New Members will experience through being on the Programme)**

On the sound principle that we should reflect on experience, not theory:

- 1) That new members should not just hear about the common life, task and story, but that they should **experience** it within the programme, that is, that there should be consistency of form and content;
- 2) That the programme should move forwards (or downwards) so as to **deepen** that experience and reflection;
- 3) That the programme should be committed to moving **together**.

We realise that individual situations (including family commitments, work) may make it difficult for some New Members to attend all the Gatherings; we do our best to be sensitive and flexible, and sometimes a New Member will 'defer' for a year before starting Year 2. It is important to keep in touch with the Leader about this.

### **3 FROM THE START**

New Members will receive all communications to Members and if they do not already meet in a Family Group, this will be arranged by the Leader. Like all Members, New Members are expected and encouraged to attend:

- a) Family Group meetings;
- b) Plenary meetings of the Community: in the Autumn (at which New Members will be formally introduced and welcomed), the Glasgow Weekend/ AGM in May/June, and Community Week (usually on Iona which are held in Summer and Autumn). There will also be one or two plenaries held more locally which are organised by the Regional Groups.

### **4 PROGRAMME OUTLINE**

The NMP will be led by a small group of Members, including the Leader. The Programme usually begins in the Summer of each year and lasts for two years; it is, in itself, a 'demanding common task'.

**Both years**, New Members are expected to:

- 1) attend the residential Summer Gathering - usually a six day work week at Camas (you can bring children but would need to pay for them yourself);
- 2) attend the weekend residential Spring Gathering - usually in the North of England in early March;
- 3) attend a weekend Gathering in Glasgow which will include the Community's AGM - usually held in late May/early June.
- 4) meet with their 'mentor';
- 5) undertake a local placement or project, perhaps with a member of Community, relating to some aspect of the Community's concerns.

During **Year Two** New Members are expected to:

- 1) participate as outlined above;
- 2) report on their project to fellow new members during the Summer or Spring Gathering;
- 3) meet individually with the Leader during the Spring Gathering to account for their participation in the NMP as part of the discernment about going forward to being hallowed.

The Hallowing Service usually takes place either at Community Week or at the AGM. New Members are usually accompanied by their mentor.

At all times throughout the Programme, New Members are encouraged to discuss any aspects of the Programme, or of the life and work of the Community, with their mentor, with other members of their Family Group, and with the Leader, on an informal basis.

If you find you can't manage all the Programme, that doesn't automatically exclude you from continuing ... have a discussion with the Leader. In principle, we encourage New Members to attend at least 75% of each year's NMP, Family Group meetings and Plenaries. If appropriate, it is possible to put participation in the 2nd year 'on hold' for a year.

New Members become eligible for election to committees as they enter the second year of the New Members' Programme. You are not eligible to vote at Plenaries, whether at elections or on other business, until you have been hallowed into full membership; and you are not eligible for election to Council, or as convener or vice-convener of a committee, until the AGM after your hallowing.

Once you are hallowed as a Full Member, you will continue to take part in the annual accounting and 'with us', each Spring, discerning whether or not to re-commit to membership for another year. If we don't hear from you by the due date - **9 June** - we will contact your Family Group Convener and they will be in touch with you directly. If no reply has been received by the time of the Annual General Meeting, you will be deemed to have conveyed your intention of resigning from membership.

## **5 FINANCE**

### **General**

Year One New Members continue to pay the Associate Member's donation, until accounting to Family Groups through the 'With Us' process in the April after starting the NMP. Thereafter, New Members are expected to play a full part in the economic discipline.

### **Cost of New Members' Programme**

- 1 Initial interview costs:

We try to have face-to-face interviews and to make these possible without extra cost eg if the Leader has a meeting in the area. The applicant may choose to travel e.g. to Glasgow. However it is the responsibility of the applicant to cover the cost. When a face-to-face interview is not possible, it can be done by telephone or Skype.

## 2 Accommodation:

New Members are asked to cover accommodation costs of the weekend gatherings in the North of England and Glasgow; the cost for the latter should be minimal as accommodation will normally be with local Members.

The Community will meet the accommodation costs of the Summer gathering at Camas.

In the same way as full Members normally do, New Members will be asked to pay the full cost of attendance at Community Week and Plenaries.

## 3 Travel:

New Members are asked to cover their own travel costs.

## 4 Total:

This means that participation in the New Members Programme will cost approximately £500 per year including Community Week, excluding travel. We recognise that this is more than some people can afford, and no-one should feel unable to take part in the New Members Programme for financial reasons. The Iona Community does have ways of covering these costs where necessary and you should discuss this in confidence with the Leader as part of your application process.