



Iona Community New Members Programme

1. Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Iona Community. You can find out about our membership, our Common Concerns, our programme and our story at www.iona.org.uk. We welcome you into this discernment process and are glad to be with you on the journey.

Our New Members Programme is a journey of discernment: a time of mutual support and reflection on faith and life; reflection and action. It is a two year programme when New Members (in both first and second year) meet with one another and with Members of the Community both in person and online.

While New Members meet together as a group throughout the two years, each New Member is also expected to find their primary locus of belonging with the Iona Community in their local Family Group and Region.

Throughout the programme we will model and explore the experience of being an intentional, global, 'gathered and scattered' community.

If at any stage you have any questions, please contact me directly.

Welcome to the journey.

With love and peace,
Ruth Harvey on behalf of the New Members Advisory Group (NMAG)
ruth@iona.org.uk

2. Application

An Associate or Young Adult Group Member of at least two year's standing wishing to join the New Members Programme (NMP) should contact the Leader (ruth@iona.org.uk) for an application form. You may have begun this discernment process already by exploring membership with others in your Family Group or Region – this is normal, and is encouraged as part of the journey.

There follows a time of discernment for both the applicant and the Community (through the Leader and Council). This starts with completing the enquiry form, followed by a conversation with the Leader and another Member of the Community, where possible face-to-face.

The names of those recommended for membership will be presented to either the Spring or Summer meeting of Council with a view to starting the Programme that autumn. Following Council's acceptance, the applicant will be transferred to the Members' Roll.

3. Support and Mentoring

The Leader and NMAG are available throughout the programme to support the New Member. NMs are encouraged to reach out for support and companionship through the New Members group, and through becoming involved in their local Family Group, Region, and in Common Concern Networks. NMs are also encouraged to be deepen reflective practices throughout the journey, including e.g. journaling, spiritual companionship, or other reflective practices.

A key element of support for New Members from the beginning of the programme is to identify (with the Leader's help if necessary) a Mentor from their Family Group or Region. It is the responsibility of the New Member to initiate this relationship.

A Mentor will be an Iona Community Member from their Family Group (or 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.

The Mentor should be available for regular support, encouragement and on-going discernment, and may accompany the New Member at their Hallowing.

4. Objectives of the New Members Programme

The New Members Programme is intended to be an opportunity for NMs to

- 1) get to know the other participants on the New Members Programme; forming a cohesive and mutually supportive group. This is part of 'the common task'.
- 2) share and learn about the Iona Community, the Rule of Life, the organisation, history and traditions of the Community;
- 3) engage in practical tasks for the common good;
- 4) gradually integrate into the life of the Iona Community – both formally, through such things as Family Group and Regional meetings, plenaries, Common Concern Networks, and informally, through the building of relationships;
- 5) offer personal challenge and reflection through a local project or placement;
- 6) encourage corporate reflection on the Purpose and Rule of the Community,
- 7) celebrate our life and Christian faith together.

Through the programme, our hope is that:

- 1) 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) the programme should move forwards, or downwards, so as to **deepen** that experience and reflection;
- 3) the programme should be committed to moving **together**.

We realise that individual situations (including family commitments, work, voluntary commitments) 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.

5. Getting started

From the start of the programme, New Members will receive all communications that Members receive. If they do not already meet in a Family Group, this will be arranged by the Leader. Like all Members, New Members are expected to attend:

- a. Family Group meetings, usually monthly;
- b. Regional gatherings
- c. Common Concern Networks (you can belong to as many as you like!)
- d. 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 (alternately on Iona/mainland UK or Europe).

6. Programme Outline

The NMP will be led by a small group of Members, including the Leader. The Programme usually begins in the September 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/project, perhaps with a Member of Community, relating to some aspect of the Community's concerns.
- 6) contribute to the cohesiveness of the group and group identity through social media or through any another other medium that is appropriate

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

- 1) participate as outlined above;
- 2) share about their project with other 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 at the Glasgow Weekend which includes the AGM. New Members are usually accompanied at the Hallowing service 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.

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-convenor 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' process, each Spring, discerning whether or not to re-commit to membership for another year.

7. FINANCE

General In 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

a. Initial interview costs:

We try to have face-to-face interviews and to make these possible without extra cost e.g. 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 electronically.

b. 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.

c. Travel:

New Members are asked to cover their own travel costs.

d. Total:

This means that participation in the New Members Programme will cost approximately £600 - £800 per year including Community Week, excluding travel. We recognise that this is more than many can afford. Finance should never be the deciding factor in considering Membership. 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.

Ruth Harvey, Leader
March 2022