



# AA Service News

Winter 2019-2020

No.181

From the General Service Office of Great Britain

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**Twelve Concepts. Personal Checklist. Following the General Service Conference recommendation in 2006, the original Twelve Concepts Checklist was adapted to reflect the structure of the Fellowship in Great Britain and approved by Conference in 2007:**

While this checklist is intended as a starting point for discussion by groups, intergroups or regions, individual AA members may find it useful – in addition to our co-founder Bill W's writings, a service sponsor if you have one, and reflection on your own service experience.

Additional information about the Concepts can be found in *The AA Service Manual / Twelve Concepts for World Service* and *The Twelve Concepts (GB) Illustrated* pamphlet. (The Concepts stated here are in the short form.)

## **Concept II**

The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

- Do we have an understanding of the history of the General Service Conference (“Conference”)?
- Does our Home Group's GSR, Regional Representative, Conference Delegate, report back to the group on the highlights of the Conference and Conference recommendations?
- Is our Group meeting its wider Tradition 7 responsibilities?

## Share Your Service Experience!

### ***AA Service News***

**Contributions** regarding service in the Fellowship are welcomed from all areas – individuals, groups, intergroups, regions, Sub Committees, GSB.

**AA Service News** is published in early March, June, September and December each year with deadline dates of the last Friday of January, the last Friday of April, the last Friday of July and the last Friday of October. The General Service Conference report is published each year in the summer issue and Questions and Topics for the following year's Conference in the winter edition.

Please send your service related articles to: [editor.aasn@btconnect.com](mailto:editor.aasn@btconnect.com) \*

**\* Please see notice below about the new AA Service News email address (from January 1st, 2020).**

### **What's Happening in Your Intergroup and Region?**

Are you sending in your region and intergroup Minutes and Agendas to [aainformation@qsogb.org.uk](mailto:aainformation@qsogb.org.uk) ?

## A Note from the AA Service News Editor

The Autumn 2019 edition of *AA Service News* contained a number of errors – regarding dates for deadlines and events, items not published that were intended to be, etc. The editor takes full responsibility for all of these mistakes. A review of the process has been done and some new procedures put in place to avoid these errors in the future. I do apologise to those who were directly affected and to the Fellowship. I will do everything I can to ensure there is no repeat. – **Editor, AA Service News**

## **NEW Email Address for AA Service News!**

AA Service News is getting a new email address! **Beginning January 1st, 2020, the new address will be: editor.aasn@aamail.org.**

Please make a note of it – we go live January 1st!

## **Community Bank Accounts**

In response to Committee 3, Question 2, the 2018 General Service Conference recommended that the General Service Board “Liaise with Regional Treasurers” with regards to the issue of introducing “telephone and internet banking at all levels of service, being ever mindful of our current practice of requiring two signatories on each cheque issued.”

The regional Treasurers – who had been studying and working on this since 2017 – created the following guidelines in response to the Conference recommendation.

### **NB:**

- **Individual groups / intergroups / regions are not charities**
- **For groups, intergroups or regions outside of Great Britain, UK community accounts, UK banking laws and regulations will not apply. Members of Continental European Region should visit their local banks for requirements concerning opening a bank account. All other suggestions in regards to internet banking can still be implemented.**

### **Suggested procedure**

Before applying to open an account, it is advisable to confirm what information the Bank / Institution requires to open an account.

These days it is likely that first, second and third signatories of a Community Account will be asked for the following information:

- Provide the formal minutes of the AGM (Conscience / Steering Meeting where they were proposed and seconded for the position).
- It is suggested that any two of three signatories would help to obviate the danger of “Frozen Accounts”.

Most high street banks offer these accounts so obtain a full set of the banks paperwork for an application to see if it suits your requirements and then follow the requirements to the letter.

You will need to show the bank you are a genuine community group and show its purpose.

- Groups entry in our copyright National Where to Find (is usually sufficient)
- Also need to state that the group is an autonomous group (self-governing) affiliated to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain Ltd.

### **CHANGE OF SIGNATORIES ON THE BANK MANDATE**

- Again, a formal copy of the minutes of the AGM (Conscience / Steering Meeting) where new signatories were proposed and seconded for the position.
- Care should be taken to obtain and ensure the banks instructions for this are followed to the letter.

### **SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR OPENING AN ONLINE ACCOUNT**

#### **Introduction.**

This document is intended to share experience and offer suggestions to Treasurers considering switching to internet banking.

It is recognised that separate groups, intergroups and regions may operate different processes and procedures, and as such, the advice offered may not be universally applicable.

It is also recognised that different banks offer a range of internet banking accounts with differing associated procedures.

#### **General Notes**

It is important that any decision to adopt electronic banking be made with the benefits and advantages to the group in mind,

It is not right to move to electronic banking just because it seems fashionable.

It is essential that if you decide to use internet banking that you have the same level of financial controls that you would already have with your existing banking system.

The Fellowships money should not be held in private accounts but in official bank accounts requiring *the signatures of / or electronic authorisation by two / three persons for withdrawals.*

It is therefore crucial that there should continue to be clear segregation of duties, to ensure no one individual is able to control the groups / intergroups / regions finances.

A number of financial institutions offer internet banking that allows these requirements to be met through a dual authorisation system.

### **What is Dual Authorisation?**

Essentially, where two persons authorise a payment online using separate passcodes to sign into the same online account.

Dual authorisation method is as follows:

- **Step 1:** The Treasurer raises and confirms the payment request electronically. A copy of the internet transaction could be printed off for your records.
- **Step 2:** The Treasurer contacts a second signatory of the account about the payment.
- **Step 3:** The second signatory approves and releases the payment providing they are happy with it. If they are not, they should seek documentary evidence.

There may be a charge for this facility.

Also, some banks charge a one-off fee for providing a “Digi-pass” to each authorised user.

### **Computer Security**

- To ensure that the groups accounts are secure from external parties or any internal misuse it is necessary to look at your overall computer security. Here are some particular areas of concern that you should consider:

### **Pin Protection:**

- It is essential that you protect your PIN. Memorise your PIN and destroy any written notification you have received. Never write

down/record your PIN, or store it on your mobile phone. Never share your PIN with anyone and do not allow anyone else to use your PIN.

- If you have difficulties remembering it change to something more memorable, ensuring that it is not obvious or too simple. Do not use dates of birth, consecutive digits etc.
- If you think someone has seen or learnt your PIN, change it immediately. Always check your statements regularly to keep track of your transactions and if you see an unfamiliar transaction contact your banking institution immediately.

### **Password Protection:**

- The longer your password is the better. Do not just use letters, but also use numbers or punctuation.
- Keep your password anonymous and avoid using personal information such as birth dates, names or any other personal information so no one can guess it.
- Passwords should be changed periodically - maybe every 6 months.

### **Virus Protection:**

- Use anti-virus and anti-spyware programs.
- Update them regularly to ensure they are at their highest level.

### **Firewall:**

- Log onto the internet through a firewall, a program or technical equipment minimising the risk or access to your computer via the internet. This will enable you to deal with queries permitted by you whilst filtering out any potentially dangerous data.

### **Unknown Files and Emails:**

- Only use well known and trustworthy internet websites.
- Do not download unknown files from the internet (especially those with an EXE extension).
- Do not open emails from unknown senders or messages from suspicious names or containing suspicious contents. Delete them without opening them.
- Never respond to an email requesting your password, PIN or any personal information.

### **Enhance your security:**

- To ensure that you can detect unauthorised transactions you may wish to adopt a SMS/email message service which will let you know when transactions have been made on your account. Many banks offer this service.

### **ELECTRONIC BANKING**

A change to electronic banking needs to be carefully discussed not only with the bank but also the group / intergroup / regional members.

Banks have not indicated that cheque accounts are to be phased out.

Also, the premises Landlord will need to be included in these discussions as they may not be equipped to receive electronic rent payments.

The views of the existing signatories will need to be discussed, although they may be fully qualified as far as the bank is concerned may not have the "equipment" nor wish to get involved in electronic banking and prefer to stay with a simple cheque account.

### **ADVANTAGES / DISADVANTAGES OF INTERNET BANKING**

#### **Advantages:**

- It could potentially reduce item charges and postage due to the reduction in the number of cheques used.
- Banking can be done out of working hours in the evenings and weekends. Transactions can be carried out 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and are not restricted by bank opening times. This may be the major advantage for treasurers.
- The two signatories can initiate and authorise payments as required without needing to meet physically - useful within geographically large regions.
- You can instantly track the account so do not have to wait for statements.
- Better security – only people with the necessary passwords/bank-issued gadgets can log into the account – less risk as chequebooks can be lost or signatures forged.
- Payments are much quicker – almost instant, whereas posting cheques around is cumbersome.
- It is more efficient as there's no need to wait for unrepresented cheques.
- Overall it is easier to manage an online account.



- It avoids the problem of bank branches closing – which is happening more frequently.
- Audit-trail of banking is easier to archive – no need to keep tons of paper statements.
- Paper free banking is eco-friendlier.
- Expenses requests may be emailed in with scanned copies of receipts – the turnaround time for paying these is massively speeded up with internet banking. (Treasurers may want the originals to be posted in afterwards)

#### **Disadvantages:**

- Computer equipment and internet access is necessary and this could mean additional costs if they are not already available.
- Some banking institutions may charge for the services of the bank.
- Your existing bank may not offer the necessary dual authorisation facility necessitating a change in provider
- Internet banking requires a level of personal computer skills and some training may be necessary.

## Safeguarding (Part One)

The General Service Conference 2019 recommendation to Committee 6, Question 2 regarding safeguarding included a request that: “the General Service Board collate relevant materials, together with feedback from the Fellowship, to produce a safeguarding guidelines document for the whole Fellowship, which will be presented at Conference, preferably in 2020, which groups may adopt.”

The Board has formed a Safeguarding Working Group, which will report back at Conference 2020. In addition, as a part of the process, the Board has committed to specific safeguarding training for its members.

Accordingly, at the September 2019 General Service Board meeting, the Board saw a training presentation on safeguarding facilitated by a professional who conducts this training for organisations and companies. Included with the presentation were a series of discussions and exercises.

One of the exercises involved reviewing and discussing hypothetical scenarios which might arise or which have arisen within AA groups. In order to inform the Fellowship about and highlight some of the issues around safeguarding being addressed by the Working Group prior to Conference, this issue and the Spring 2020 issue of *AA Service News* will each feature five scenarios which present potential safeguarding issues. The scenarios are accompanied by suggested questions for discussion.

<b><u>SCENARIOS</u></b>	<b><u>QUESTIONS</u></b>
An AA Member frequently uses racist language when talking about his neighbours at home.	<p><b><u>IS THIS A SAFEGUARDING ISSUE?</u></b></p> <p><b><u>WHAT ACTION IF ANY IS REQUIRED?</u></b></p>
A sponsor asks their sponsee to loan them £500 so they can attend the AA European Convention – they agree to pay them back within six months.	<p><b><u>IS THIS A SAFEGUARDING ISSUE?</u></b></p> <p><b><u>WHAT ACTION IF ANY IS REQUIRED?</u></b></p>
An AA Member discloses to you that she was sexually abused as a child. She recognises the perpetrator at her local group. He was charged and imprisoned for the offence and has now been released. She is scared of attending meetings in case he is there.	<p><b><u>IS THIS A SAFEGUARDING ISSUE?</u></b></p> <p><b><u>WHAT ACTION IF ANY IS REQUIRED?</u></b></p>
On leaving your AA group meeting you see that a young woman, a new member to your group, has left two small children aged approximately three and seven alone in her car whilst attending the meeting.	<p><b><u>IS THIS A SAFEGUARDING ISSUE?</u></b></p> <p><b><u>WHAT ACTION IF ANY IS REQUIRED?</u></b></p>
A female AA member has sponsored several women and you become aware that three of these relationships developed into sexual relationships.	<p><b><u>IS THIS A SAFEGUARDING ISSUE?</u></b></p> <p><b><u>WHAT ACTION IF ANY IS REQUIRED?</u></b></p>

These are published here for information, for consideration or for discussion, according to the individual group consciences of the groups, intergroups and regions within AA Great Britain and the English-language Fellowship in Continental Europe.

## 20th European Service Meeting

The 20th European Service Meeting (ESM) was held in York October 18th – 20th, 2019. It was a great success! Forty-five Delegates representing 28 countries attended, as well staff from the General Service Office (GSO) and three members of the GSO-New York staff.

Belarus, Moldova and the French and Italian speaking regions of Switzerland were unable to attend, but each submitted reports. The Swiss French and Italian speaking regions report was presented by the Delegate from France.

We are all very grateful to the GSO staff and the hotel personnel who worked tirelessly during the whole weekend to make the ESM a great success. The theme was “An Unchanged Message in a Changing World”.

Old friendships were regenerated and new friendships forged throughout the weekend, with a great sense of fellowship coupled with diligence and willingness towards the tasks at hand and the sharing of deep wells of experience and knowledge.

The Delegates were split into three committees very similar to the procedures and structure used for the General Service Conference of AA Great Britain.

On Saturday morning the Delegates met in their committees to discuss the following topics:

Committee 1 – SERVICE

Committee 2 – RECOVERY

Committee 3 – UNITY

On Saturday afternoon the Delegates split into three Workshops on the topics of:

Workshop 1 – “How can we benefit from the experience of rotated Trusted Servants?”

Workshop 2 – “Back to Basics”

Workshop 3 – “Understanding and application of the 12 Concepts”

In each of the six sessions, a draft report was written which was then discussed at two plenary sessions and final reports were produced. These committee and workshop reports will be issued with the ESM final reports.

Lotus A from France presented a report from the last year's World Service Meeting (WSM) in South Africa and Nana K from Greece was selected to carry the 20th European Service Meeting report to next year's WSM.

Yury T from Ukraine was elected to serve as Chair for the 21st ESM.

The theme for the 21st European Service Meeting was selected based on suggestions from the three committees.

It is: "Love and Service".

Topics for 21st ESM Workshops in 2021 were also selected. They are:

- "Allowing our group conscience to guide our service work"
- "Spiritual Freedom"
- "How to make the newcomer feel part of the group"

The 20th European Service Meeting was closed by Rita M from Italy (Chair 2019) with Delegates saying the Serenity Prayer in their native languages followed by everyone saying it in English.

It was an exciting and truly moving weekend for all who were able to participate.

**Amanda S and Erik A, GSB Trustees for the European Service Meeting**

## "Chat Now" Service Turns Three

My name is Wullie and I am a recovering alcoholic and a member of the AA website Chat Now team. October marks three years service for the Chat Now service.

**What is Chat Now?** It's an online facility for newcomers or to have first contact with someone "live" from our Fellowship. To point them in the direction of our telephone service and ultimately, get them to AA meetings and into recovery.

### **Conference 2015 Committee 3, Question 1:**

*Would Conference discuss the idea of adding a "chat now" messenger service to the AA GB website?*

“This Committee welcomes the idea of a ‘chat now’ facility on the AA website as an additional way for the still suffering alcoholic to contact the Fellowship. However, we have serious concerns about its practicality, in particular with regard to the recruitment, training and supervision of responders. We therefore recommend that the Board undertake a feasibility study and report back to Conference 2016.

The Committee’s decision was unanimous.”

At Conference 2016 the Electronics Communication Trustees presented the feasibility study and showed demonstration chats. It was passed by Conference to go ahead.

I have to say at this point I was not a fan of the idea and was unsure how it would all work – most likely contempt prior to investigation on my part! I was coming to the end of my time as a Trustee and was looking to do some other service for the Fellowship that has saved my life, so I put my name down.

It went live October 2016, from a link to the Get Help Now page. The chat was only open a few hours a day – the rest of the time it would go to email. The team was mostly made up of members of the Online Response Service (ORS). In the first three months we took just under a thousand chats, with roughly the same going missed or to email.

Over the time the team has grown, most of the ORS went back to doing what they do very well and our team has formed, small but very enthusiastic and committed. A rota was introduced aiming to have the chat open from 7:00 am to midnight, with training to help people new to the service get up to speed quickly and to familiarise themselves with Chat Now.

In 2017 we continued to grow, changes were made where missed chats no longer went to email. When no one was available, the chat box indicated that. We took just under 10,000 chats in 2017, an average of just over 800 per month.

2018 saw another increase as we started to get more recruits and fill in the rota. There were just under 15,000 chats with only 55 going missed an average of 1,250 per month.

With the launch of the new, updated website this year, we asked if the chat button could be placed on the home page. On 10th June that was done and the result was great: this year to date, as I write (mid-September), we have had just under 11,000 chats, averaging over 1500 chats a month since 10th June.

Our team is still fairly small to cover the time we try to have someone available. We are currently about 20 dedicated responders and are training more. But we could always do with more. If you have a few hours a week and are interested, information can be found here:

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Service/Disciplines/Electronic-Communications/Chat-Now-Service>

This service that I was very unsure of in the beginning has proved me wrong. It not only takes enquiries from Great Britain and Continental Europe Region, which we cover, but people from all over the world reaching out for help.

*“I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that I am responsible.”*

**Wullie I, Member of the AA Chat Now team**

## Modem-to-Modem: The Online Response Service (ORS)

Modem-to-Modem!

I don't often read Forewords to books but with the Big Book I wanted to read every page and here is the last sentence in the Foreword to Fourth Edition: “Modem-to-Modem or face-to-face, AAs speak the language of the heart in all its power and simplicity.”

For me, those words apply to the AA Online Response Service (ORS) of which I have been a member for over 10 years.

It is manned by a small but very dedicated team of members whose main purpose is to answer emails from newcomers. We share our experience, strength and hope, direct them to the phone service and provide meeting details.

The ORS is a great way to help the increasing numbers of newcomers who are using email to contact us – whether from their PC, laptop, smart phone or tablet (and we have even had one from an iWatch!), and this trend will inevitably continue.

The ORS team speaks to the newcomer through the medium of technology with as much purpose and meaning as the telephone responder – it is a powerful tool.

So, as a very privileged member of the ORS team, I am sending out this article in the hope that it might generate interest among some members or propel members to spread the word at meetings, intergroup, region and conventions.

You can find a job description, application form and an ORS flyer for distribution via the link below but here are some of the key requirements:

- 2 years continuous sobriety
- Good working knowledge of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions
- Access to a desktop or laptop (cannot use iPhone, etc.)
- Minimum of 2 hours weekly service

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Service/Disciplines/Electronic-Communications/Online-Responder-Service>

You can also contact ORS admin via [ortadmin@aamail.org](mailto:ortadmin@aamail.org)

**Sheila, Wexham**

## Telephone Service: Is It For Me?

My name is Paul and I am an alcoholic. My Sobriety date is Thursday, 23rd June 1988. I have been lucky to serve two separate spells of Telephone Service at the Manchester AA Helpline. The first spell was I think around 1991 and for a period of just a few months. The current spell has been for the last seven years and it has been amazing to see how much the nature and style of the service delivery has changed in that time. When AAs ask me at meetings “What’s involved in doing Telephone Service?”, I am always able to say to everyone that it is the very best thing that I have been able to do that helps me stay sober.

Let me explain why I say this.

My recovery has had many, many testing times over the last 31+ years: the usual list of redundancies, job losses, relationship problems, divorce, bereavement and illness that are part of life for all of us. Our programme encourages us to “get out of self” and to work with others and, of course, this is exactly what we do when on the phones.

The calls can be from anywhere in the UK, sometimes even from elsewhere with the new, national Freephone number we have, and being based in Manchester’s AA Helpline Office, we have every resource we could possibly need to help the still suffering alcoholic. These include a comprehensive set of online information regarding details of meetings throughout the world, contacts for meetings, 12 Stepper Directories for the whole of the North West, directions to meetings from anywhere in the United Kingdom, details on Conventions, Intergroup and Regional meetings, plus links to other recovery fellowships, maps and printed meetings lists.

Training is given either with dedicated sessions organised and run by the Helpline Committee or on-shift with a variety of operatives where you are soon involved with helping the still-suffering.

From the heart, I must say that it is a privilege to often be the caller’s first contact with our Fellowship, the very first voice they will hear saying to them (as was said to me) the two most important (and hopefully most inspiring) things that they can hear:

1. You are suffering from an illness from which we can help you recover on a daily basis.
2. You are no longer alone: you are talking to someone who has felt how you feel about doing what we have all done. We are all in this recovery together.

It is very difficult to describe the rewarding feeling you have when you have connected a caller with our Fellowship, to have found a 12 Step Volunteer willing and able to carry on the process by taking the prospective member to their first meeting, or meeting them there or even just spending time talking to them again after our initial contact.

Sometimes achieving this link up can be very time consuming, involving many unanswered telephone calls, even to AAs outside of our immediate area or region, but the satisfaction in achieving such a link is enormous. As an example from Manchester, I was able to direct a caller to his first meeting in his hometown (200 miles away from our office) using a “Google Earth” App on our laptop. We were both



looking at the same images on our computers 200 miles apart as if we were walking down the actual street together! Mind-blowing to recall that to do this would have been impossible during my first spell in 1991!

Another big bonus of working a Telephones shift is the quality time we spend with others doing service in recovery, building friendships, sharing experiences, strength and hope.

Manchester AA Helpline is one of only three in England that works as described and we are fortunate to be fully funded by just three intergroups in our North West Region. In the course of our work we often find ourselves liaising with AA Home Responders elsewhere in the UK, all of which are set up to provide the same help to the still-suffering alcoholic.

Each shift we do helps us remember where and what we came from and what we can all do to help the newcomer. Many times we also find ourselves talking with the families and partners of those whose drinking has brought every one of them to the desperation of asking a complete stranger to help them.

What greater privilege can there be to be given that opportunity in our recovery?

**Paul, North West Region**

## AA Exhibition at Scottish Parliament

During March 2020 Alcoholics Anonymous have been invited to hold an exhibition within the Scottish Parliament.

The Exhibition will show the growth of AA in Scotland reflecting the support we have had from all walks of society in Scotland.

We are delighted to be given the opportunity to hold this exhibition and we will be working with all Regions in Scotland to make sure that our efforts focus around “Carrying the Message” and developing relationships that will let our friends recommend us. At the moment we are at an early stage with this but we will keep the Fellowship informed as we trudge the road.

**Stevie S, GSB Trustee for Scottish Parliament Events**

## AA Presentation at House of Commons

The 14th House of Commons AA presentation to MPs and professionals was held on 22 October 2019 at Portcullis House, Westminster, at 7pm. The aim of the event, as ever, was to show how AA can work in co-operation with the professional communities, in helping suffering alcoholics recover from alcoholism, and to demonstrate the real life personal experiences of two AA members in recovery.

The event this year was hosted by Dr Lisa Cameron MP of the SNP.

Stephen S of AA made the introductions. The professional speaker was Nick Holroyd, lawyer and ex-AA GSB non-alcoholic trustee. Cyd and Brian were our AA share speakers, sharing experience from 6 to 40 years of sobriety. Al-Anon had a stand for Al-Anon PI and literature.

The event was well attended with 80 professionals from the health and well being sectors, police and clergy. Ten MPs had signed up, but the evening was somewhat complicated by a Brexit vote at the same time – reminding us that with politics as with AA, we “take one day at a time”.

Nick Holroyd shared his experience of a professional career dealing with alcohol related issues for serving police officers and his subsequent understanding of AA, its history and Traditions, and his observation of the tremendous passion, humour and fellowship from AA members. He recommended the AA “Big Book” as an essential read for anyone working in the sector, and reminded the audience that AA was free, non-religious, and a route to happy fulfilled lives.

Dr Cameron joined the event straight after voting in the house. Dr Cameron is a consultant clinical psychologist. She has served on the Health and Social Care Committee. In her professional life she has worked in the mental health, trauma and addiction services in South Lanarkshire. Dr Cameron shared her personal experience of a family member's recovery from alcoholism through the help of the AA programme, 12 Steps and Fellowship, and the positive life changing experience that was for her whole family. She expressed her mindfulness that AA has helped many people as an effective approach, and her gratitude for the work that AA does. In her view Parliament should support AA more.

Thanks to all the AA members who made the event possible, and to all the professionals for attending. Next year's event will be announced as soon as possible.

**Louise F**

## The Magical History Tour... So Far

The Magical History Tour was born 2014. It started when a group of enthusiastic members were wondering how to pass the message from yesterday into today so those who want help can hear the message tomorrow. The talk was reminiscent of the National Archive Roadshow which visited Hereford, Oban, The Wirral and Baldock between 2002 and 2005.

The passionate group continued to discuss a mystical project, when someone at the SE Region Archive Workshop came up with the words "Magical History Tour". From that moment we were on our way.

The goal was to broaden members' awareness of our history throughout the SE Region. The project was discussed at the next assembly, and sponsorship agreed, on the basis of it being self-supporting.

The South East Region covers four counties and includes 11 intergroups. It was determined that a new committee be assembled each year to manage one event. So, a full days programme was arranged, and events held at Liphook, Hampshire, in 2015; Burgess Hill, Sussex, in 2016; and Aylesford, Kent in 2017. The total attendance was 381 members over the 3 years. It was self-supporting and £290 additional was raised through the Tradition 7 pot and sent to GSO.

Displays ranged from:

- A. A selection of archives, chosen from three collections. (It took 14 pages of A4 to record its inventory.)
- B. A Big Book table.
- C. A specialist AA History Book table of AA approved literature.
- D. An archive donations table.
- E. An Al-Anon table
- F. A *Share* stand.
- G. A Sobriety Wall.

Presentations varied from year to year, but always included the USA, UK, SE Region and Al-Anon histories. Afternoons saw a range of presentations from the making of the Big Book, Traditions and Concepts, History of *Share* magazine, the History of Prisons service, Chat Now, and even a past Fellowship archivist interviewing the SE Region archivist on stage. The day was concluded with an old-timer sharing their experience of 40 or 50 years ago.

At Liphook in 2015, visitors with an excess of 30 years sobriety were asked to make a ten-minute recording of their memories of what it was like for them entering the Fellowship all those years ago.

The project made its own website, which included 50 pages of American, 30 pages of UK, 3 pages of SE Region and one page of Al-Anon histories. It is now being updated to cover the next event, which is the celebration of 75 years of AA in the UK in 2022. The SE Region archivists have hatched another plan (discussion at 2019 AGM), for a series of exhibitions in 2022, mirroring the Scottish success at Kelvin Grove, which “normalised AA” in Glasgow and attracted considerable interest from the professionals.

To date we have seen many members participate in this project. Some... a few hours, some... a few days, and some... weeks. There are three local committees, each with 15 roles. On the day of each event somewhere between 30 and 40 members help. Everyone in service rejoiced and said a big thank you to those who went before us.

Website: [www.themagicalhistorytour.org](http://www.themagicalhistorytour.org)

**Nick H, Archivist, South East Region**

## Service in the Fellowship

One night at my Group Meeting one of our members asked if I would like to attend the next Intergroup Meeting as a visitor. Immediately I replied that I wasn't ready for Service but thank you for asking me. I had no idea that the guy was offering me an opportunity to serve others.

The member proceeded to inform me that I had already been of service within the Group over the year that I had been sober and that intergroup would be yet another way of being of some value to someone I may never meet. The impact of those few short words in the form of a question to attend Intergroup allowed me to give some thought as to the possibility of being of further service to a fellowship I barely understood. But, given the chance I would grow with understanding while helping others.

So, another new beginning in my recovery had begun where I had commenced to consider others and our joint needs in recovery, beginning with that first intergroup meeting – that I was not ready for!

Growing from group to intergroup, through to region on to Conference and the General Service Board, as exciting, revealing and enlightening, as these parts of my journey have been, the most heartening experience has been the *nomination* from other members. The idea that members took the time to consider me as a possible candidate for a position anywhere within our Service Structure has been a privilege and a pleasure.

It seems that as I began to understand and implement the guidance contained in the responsibilities attached to any of the previous and present positions held, along comes that word I have come to deeply appreciate. The hidden, important depths of meaning of *rotation* reveal themselves. For us all it gives the opportunity to grow more conscious of the reasons why such words as unity, common welfare, trusted servants, autonomy, principles, primary purpose, self-supporting, public controversy, attraction, and sacrifice – not necessarily in their order of importance. I believe that I already had some understanding of these words prior to discovering the reason for them within our structure but, through participation in Service I have realised time and again that these same words are more opportunities to discover how far I'm prepared to go to serve the Fellowship in the disciplined manner that the Fellowship requires, so that when that individual, whom I wouldn't know, and who wouldn't know me, would enter the Fellowship, it would be my responsibility to be there for him.

**Jim T, Blackpool**

## Doing Probation Service in Alcoholics Anonymous

I was encouraged by my sponsor to get into service in Alcoholics Anonymous, from the moment I asked him to sponsor me. This has served me well, and this year I turned 18 years sober, for which I am extremely grateful. All service is essential to my recovery, be it greeting and putting out chairs at my home group, or serving the Fellowship at the level of Intergroup or Region. I feel greatly honoured to have been trusted by my local Fellowship into taking on the Probation Liaison Officer role, at Intergroup and also Region. This service has had a colossal effect on my own recovery, and it is also a pleasure and a privilege to try and make Alcoholics Anonymous available for the still-suffering alcoholic going through the legal system, by liaising with professionals in this field.

Through doing Probation Liaison service at my local Intergroup, I have managed to build good relationships with various probation workers and establishments in our area over the years, including the local Magistrates Courts. In my home-town (Plymouth) we have AA members attend the magistrates' Community Court on a regular basis, to try and carry the message of recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous to the still-suffering defendant, if he or she admits that the reason they are in court is due to their drinking. We also have members attend the local probation hostel for the same reason, and we provide talks to staff at the local probation offices, offering to talk to the service-users of the probation workers, if they need the help. This is an extremely rewarding service, and one for which I am grateful to have been involved in. I currently hold the Probation position at South West Region, and have passed on my contacts and provided support to the current Intergroup Probation Liaison Officer, who has already made a great start in service, providing the help and support of AA to professionals and service-users in our area.

Through doing this service, I have learned that patience and perseverance are important qualities when doing liaison work in Alcoholics Anonymous: in other words, emails and messages offering AA talks can go unanswered. We have to remember that professionals are busy, they have a lot on their plates and are not as excited about Alcoholics Anonymous as we are, which is why we need to be persistent without being too pushy, and not giving up altogether. I've found that when all else fails, leaving the latest Where-To-Find at the reception of an office is still better than nothing.

My advice to anyone who is thinking about service is get involved! Be it a Liaison role or as a recovered AA member doing the talks and 12 step work, it's essential that we carry the message. It's not as hard as you may think, and from my experience it pays dividends in terms of strengthening my own recovery, taking insurance against the next drink. And don't be put off by the terms "Region" and "Intergroup". The first time my sponsor suggested that I start doing service at my local Intergroup I really thought I wasn't up to it, but it's really not as hard as it sounds. There is a wealth of experience in Alcoholics Anonymous, and people are happy to pass this on, and extremely supportive.

**Arash T, Road to Recovery Group (Plymouth) / Probation Liaison Officer, SW Region**

## AA Prison Service on the Costa del Sol

### Background:

At some point during 2017/2018 there was a breakdown in communication between Spanish AA, Spanish Prisons and Costa Del Sol Intergroup. At the end of 2018 it was noted that all prison passes had been revoked for English speaking AA members to attend prisons and speak to prisoners. Through Spanish AA it was established that the prison service will only speak to one AA representative (Spanish AA). This applies to all modules, subjects and activities that are available within the prisons.

### Initial Application Process

- Intergroup liaison contacted the Head of Institutions via the Spanish intergroup.
- Interested applicants completed an application that included initial personal details – name, date of birth, NIE number and mother and fathers names.
- Intergroup liaison collated applications and forwarded them to the Head of Institutions who in turn forwarded them to Madrid for an initial record check.

### Progress

In June 2019 Spanish AA contacted Costa Del Sol Intergroup to advise them that the initial applicants now had to provide a signature and passport number for their applications. In the meantime two things have taken place. First, the Costa Del Sol

Intergroup has now become an official Association called “Association Intergroup Costa Del Sol” and the Association has a working bank account. Second, members of the Public Information group had a meeting with the British Consulate based in Malaga. The Consulate agreed to raise the issue of prison service with their main office in Madrid.

It may be coincidence but several weeks after our meeting with the British Consulate in Malaga, Spanish AA in the Costa Del Sol were contacted with the request for the additional information (signatures and passport numbers) for our initial applications. This may be an avenue for any other groups experiencing problems with AA prison service (i.e., for groups and intergroups outside of Great Britain).

According to Spanish AA the fact that Costa Del Sol Intergroup now has “Association” status may carry more influence in the struggle to get our members authorised as prison visitors.

#### Current Position

The Costa Del Sol Intergroup decided at its last meeting in June to seek a new Prison Liaison Officer to coordinate the application for AA visitors using the “Association” status as a potential negotiating position.

**Raymond, Costa Del Sol Intergroup Region Rep and PI Liaison Officer**

## SPECIAL SECTION: ALTERNATE CONFERENCE CHAIR’S REPORT

Good morning. My name is Irene or at least that was how I introduced myself when I picked up the phone to the AA helpline, I didn’t know what to do I was terrified, scared, lonely. I didn’t want to live but I was too much of a coward to kill myself. I had been given two to three months to live if I carried on drinking. I did try to stop but that only lasted a few weeks. I couldn’t stay away from alcohol even though it was killing me and had destroyed everything around me. I had been given a starter pack about five years previous (still have that pack today). I had thought that AA was not for me, but there was nowhere else for me to go. I picked up the Yellow Pages and found the number of the AA helpline. A man called Alan answered and I heard children in the background. When I introduced myself, I used my middle name Irene,



I was too afraid to use Zelma. I was so afraid that if I told them my real name, they would know who I was, and I didn't want anyone to know I was an alcoholic or that I had a problem.

I was picked up by two strangers who took me to my first meeting. At that meeting I heard a lady speaking about how promiscuous she had been, and I thought that's me. A gentleman shared on his concept of God as not a Religious God but as the people around him in AA and I thought I could handle that. At that meeting there was so much honesty and openness I recall gripping the arms of the chair and speaking. I felt like a fraud and that was the first time I said the words "My name is Zelma and I am an alcoholic."

Thank goodness for Tradition 3: "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." I attended meetings for about four weeks whilst still drinking, waiting to be detoxed. I took my last drink of white cider at 5.30am on the 27th March 2000 whilst waiting to be picked up and taken to our local detox unit for a ten-day stay. What was in store for me, what would I do if I couldn't drink? How empty would my life be? How wrong I was.

I started service almost straight away although I didn't realise it at the time. It was easier to hide away in the kitchen to wash up and clean the ashtrays than to talk with the crowd after the meeting, but I was never alone. There was always someone there with me. I got myself a Sponsor who is still my Sponsor today and one of my best friends. I took on the role of key-holder and Chair of that meeting. I was asked to share in Parc Prison and then Swansea HMP. I still help facilitate a meeting in Swansea every Wednesday morning. I attended Swansea and District as Prison LO and then went to Wales and Borders as Regional Prison LO. I have also held two positions in the Welsh National Convention Committee: one of Raffle person and one of Convener. I also have the privilege of attending the Welsh Assembly Presentation in Cardiff as a greeter and I am currently in my final year on the Prison Sub-Committee and sadly my final year at Conference. My home group is the Thursday Lunchtime Ladies meeting at the Sisters of Mercy, Swansea. Here I still wash the mugs (but no ashtrays) and we take it in turns to chair the meeting. My home group is the heart of my sobriety.

I came to Conference as a red dotter and everyone said how lucky I was to be able to attend four Conferences. I looked at the agenda and wondered how I was going to manage to stay awake especially as the committees reconvened at 11pm on the

Saturday evening. I should never have worried; I was in awe as I saw AA working at its finest. The Chair of Committee 5 made sure that everyone had the chance to put their Region's opinion forward. It was possible to have a minority opinion and we could agree to disagree without fuss or bother – to listen to the question carefully and formulate a correctly worded response. Last year I was the Secretary for Committee 5 and thanks to Marc our chair and the support and encouragement of the committee we managed to get our reports out and on time.

Becoming part of the Conference Steering Committee is another exciting adventure on my AA journey. We had our first meeting 21st June 2019. This was the first time we all got to meet as a committee and get to know one another. This consisted of the Conference Chair Mark, six committee chairs, two Board members, the General Secretary and Sharon from GSO.

I was elected as alternate Chair and Adele S as Secretary. We were reminded of a brief history of Conference, the 12 Concepts and the Conference Charter, reviewed the Terms of Reference (TOR), and Mark put forward his theme for Conference 2020. We reviewed the Conference 2019 Matrix looking at activity already underway. Sharon confirmed that as soon as she received questions for Conference 2020, she would email these to the committee to look over before the next meeting. At the September and October meetings we considered the Questions and background information of the 55 questions that were submitted checking with our TOR as to which could be accepted. The identity of the senders always remained anonymous. Some of these were referred to the sender for further background information or to be slightly amended. The unaccepted questions were split between the six chairs who formulated responses as to the reasons for non-acceptance. The remaining 16 were then allocated to committees and we had our Questions ready for Conference 2020.

I wish to thank everyone at GSO for all the hard work they put in behind the scenes to make Conference possible and the help and support of all those around me who said "You can do this, believe in yourself." I wish you all a good Conference and look after the red dotters. We are all in the company of friends. I can't do this but *We* can.

I thought that if I gave up the drink my life would be boring and sad – how wrong I was. Today I share my life with a loving family, I have friends I can trust, a home to live in. Sobriety is an exciting journey.

**Zelma K, Alternate Chair, General Service Conference 2020**

# SPECIAL SECTION: CONFERENCE QUESTIONS 2020

## Committee One

### 1. Would Conference:

- a. Review Chapter 10 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2018.
- b. Consider publishing a telephone responder's leaflet to include malicious calls.

#### ***Background***

Both experienced and new responders have requested guidance on how best to handle such calls.

Chapter 10, Page 65/66 AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2018.

To assist in AA's duty of care to its members.

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

### 2. Would the fellowship share experience of appropriate resources and support for alcoholics who have special needs or disabilities?

#### ***Background***

The group's experience was that a member with autism wasn't treated fairly when sharing, and that inappropriate comments were made about this individual.

We think there needs to be more awareness of members with special needs and disabilities within AA, so groups can have a better understanding of dealing with this when it arises. This would help to support all individuals with disabilities, whether visible or not.

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

- 3. Would conference share its experience and discuss any benefits of separating intergroup meetings into a GSR section and a Public Information & Cooperation with the Professional Community section?**

***Background***

Sometimes intergroup meetings can take up a lot of time with reports and requests from the various public information officers. Would it be better for the PI committee to discuss their reports and requests separately and then send a representative to intergroup so as intergroup can then focus more on the issues and matters arising from Conference (Concepts 3,4 & 5).

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

## Committee Two

- 1. Can Conference consider whether the General Service Board be given authority to approve posters, videos and pamphlets produced by Subcommittees without these items needing additional approval by the General Service Conference, which may cause unnecessary delay?**

***Background***

“Right of Decision” (Concept 3), “active responsibility” (Concept 6), “custodial oversight” (Concept 8), “Good service leadership ” (Concept 9) and “authority” matching their “responsibility” (Concept 10).

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

- 2. Could Conference emphasis the benefits and share experience of effective formats for pre and post conference meetings at Region level?**

***Intention***

To encourage more active participation by individual members within the groups and among GSRs which then may benefit the service structure at all levels thus bringing the whole fellowship closer together (Concepts 1 & 4).

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

- 3. Review the revised chapter The General Service Conference, section 1.5 Delegates, point B, Rotation in the AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain**

***Background***

Revised chapter The General Service Conference, section 1.5 Delegates, point B, Rotation.

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

## Committee Three

- 1. Would the Fellowship consider how any person or persons wishing to open a new meeting may be guided as to the effect on other groups and AA as a whole?**

***Background***

*Tradition 4*                      *“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups, or A.A. as a whole”*

*Tradition 7:*                      *“Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions”.*

For further consideration:

- a. service positions are more difficult to fill?
- b. the ability to meet essential expenses is being adversely affected?
- c. less money is being passed along the chain to intergroups, Regions and GSO to meet essential expenses?
- d. there is less money available for valuable 12th Step work?

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

## **2. Can groups reflect on and share their experience of how they select officers?**

### ***Background***

AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain, section 2 “The Group, Officers” states:

- “The group’s welfare is of primary concern in choosing officers...”
- “Most groups make sure that their officers have had a known period of continuous sobriety, at least one year, and have shown themselves willing and available to give dependable service through regular attendance at meetings.”
- “Each nominee is usually approached by other members of the group and, if he or she agrees, that name is put forward at a business/service meeting, so letting the group conscience decide the election.”

Can groups, including intergroup and region, consider how well their processes for selecting officers fit with the above guidance? Can groups share their experience of the processes of selecting, nominating and approving officer appointments which work well?

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

## **3. One member, one vote**

**What more can be done to raise understanding across the Fellowship of the spiritual principle that we do not take part in the business or policy of groups which we visit, but which are not our home group?**

### ***Background***

- The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain 2018, page 75
- “Most members feel more at home in one particular group than in others and consider it their home group, where they accept responsibilities and try to sustain friendships. They do not take part in the business or policy of groups which they visit but in which they would accept no service assignments.” Pamphlet The AA Group Q22, p.23

- “... The home group affords individual AAs the privilege of voting on issues that affect the Fellowship as a whole; it is the very basis of the service structure... where they participate in business meetings and cast their vote as part of the group conscience of the Fellowship as a whole. As with all group conscience matters, each member has one vote.” *The AA Service Manual* (USA & Canada) p.S25\*

\*available from the General Service Office, item code 3360

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

## Committee Four

1. **Would the Fellowship share experience and make recommendations with regards to the issue of rotation within AA’s structure, as envisioned by Bill.**

*(The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, page 10, 1.10, the Older Member)*

***“Here we may find service in AA is seemingly being taken over by those much younger in sobriety. This is how it should be: our traditions have always supported the idea of rotation in our service activities...”***

*AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain 2018, p.77*

*As Bill Sees It, 307 “Circle and Triangle”; 207 “The Fellowship's Future”; 25 “We Cannot Stand Still”.*

*AA Comes of Age, page 224 - page 227.*

Concept XI: “Do we practise rotation in all our service positions”?

### ***Background***

Newly appointed Group Service Representatives (GSRs) often find it difficult to integrate at Intergroup.

Perhaps we could look at how well we cultivate a spirit of willingness for service for the younger member throughout the structure, within sponsorship and on a one-to-one.

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

- 2. Could Conference discuss ways the fellowship can assist sponsors in their responsibility of encouraging newer people into service positions?**

***Background***

Sponsoring into service is a vital link in the ongoing strength of AA to carry its message. Working through the structure of Group Service and on to Intergroup, Region and Conference should be aspired to but may be considered as unattractive or beyond reach. The Intergroup is a fundamental link between the groups and the region and need people to carry out the work.

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

- 3. Review revised Chapter 3 AA and Electronic Communications, section 3.6 The AA GB Website of *The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2018*.**

***Background***

Revised Chapter 3, “AA and Electronic Communications”, section 3.6 The AA GB Website.

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

## Committee Five

- 1. Can Conference discuss their experience of sobriety requirements for Prison Liaison Officers and members sharing at prison meetings and, if deemed necessary, recommend amendments to Chapter 8 of “The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain” in order to give more clarity?**

**Background**

Section 8.1 of *The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain* states that “Prison sponsors are appointed according to the intergroup conscience. It is recommended that sponsors have a minimum of 3 years continuous sobriety.”



There is much discussion regarding the length of sobriety required for:

1. The prison Liaison Officer
2. Members going in with the prison meeting sponsor to give a main share.

With the exception of “Regional Representatives”, all other service positions have a minimum continuous sobriety requirement of 2 years. Does this also apply to the prison liaison officer – the liaison officer may not, necessarily, be a prison meeting sponsor – rather facilitating it.

Likewise, many groups are interpreting the chapter as indicating that any member attending the meeting should have 3 years continuous sobriety, even though they are not sponsoring the meeting.

This greatly restricts the number of available members that can support the prison meeting.

Experience has demonstrated that many people are more encouraged by people in early sobriety – say 6 months – as they find it easier to relate to the rawness, and problems, in their first year of sobriety.

Guidance, and clarification, would be of great use to our Prison Liaison Officers.

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

2. **Would Conference consider the implications of the adoption of the practice by AA in Great Britain of inviting speakers from overseas and paying their expenses? Make recommendations.**

### ***Background***

This matter was brought to Conference in 1995 and dealt with by Committee No. 6, question No. 4. Here is the transcript:

“Having considered the implication of the adoption of the practice by AA in Great Britain of inviting speakers from overseas and paying their expenses, the Committee decided that neither AA money nor AA’s name should be used for this purpose, as to do so would be in breach of Tradition 4 and Tradition 12.”

***Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.***

## Committee Six

1. Conference is asked to consider and make recommendations on ways to reach out to problem drinkers in black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. Membership of AA is still predominantly white, even in racially mixed towns and cities.

### **Background**

AA Membership Survey 2015

*Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.*

2. Would the Fellowship share experience in reaching out to the growing homeless community, many of whom have problems with alcohol?

### **Background:**

Brighton Intergroup has established the role of Homeless Liaison Officer. The key features of this role are as follows:

- A weekly visit to the town's homeless day centres
- Provision of AA's PI materials to the staff
- Regular communication with clients who are struggling with alcohol problems
- Introduction to local AA meetings

The Homeless Liaison Officer works in partnership with the intergroup's PI, Health and Young People's Liaison Officers. In Brighton, the team includes a Polish AA member who can communicate more easily with homeless people from Poland and the Baltic states.

Conference is asked to consider establishing additional services within its service structure to reach out to suffering alcoholics in the homeless community.

*Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.*

## GSB Sub Committee Vacancies

When applying for any of the vacancies below please note that forms are available from Jenny Pryke at GSO, PO Box 1,10 Toft Green, York, YO1 7NJ; 01904 644 026; [jennypryke@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:jennypryke@gsogb.org.uk) or in the Document Library (Forms) of the AA (GB) website [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk).

The Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary of the sponsoring Region or Intergroup must endorse the application by way of a covering letter. The deadline for *ALL* applications is Friday, 20th December 2019.

## Archives Sub Committee Vacancies

### **There are two vacancies on the Archives Sub Committee of the General Service Board.**

The Archives Sub Committee works to preserve the history of the Fellowship as well as aiming to develop its network of Regional and Intergroup Archivists. The Sub-committee reports to the Board through the Trustee responsible for Archives.

Applicants should have a minimum of five years sobriety, will normally serve for a period of four years and should be familiar with Conference approved literature, *Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, AA Service and Structure Handbooks* for Great Britain. An interest in AA history, good communication and IT skills along with an ability to work as part of a team would be highly advantageous. Some knowledge and/or experience of archival work would also be useful. The successful candidates would be required to attend up to four meetings a year in York.

**Application forms are available from Region Secretaries, GSO or the AA GB website in the Document Library.**

**Clive K, GSB Trustee for Archives**

## Electronic Communications Sub Committee Vacancies

### Vacancies for the Electronic Communications Sub Committee

**Up to four vacancies exist for membership on the Electronics Communications Sub Committee.**

Can you help carry our message to the still suffering alcoholic?

The Electronic Communications Sub Committee (ECSC) invites members of our Fellowship to join us in the exciting work of using electronic communications to help those who need help, and to keep members informed.

In addition to the instant chat and email help desks, other roles exist:

- Postmaster – this position supports members who use the aamail.org email service, supervising the system, fighting spam, etc.
- Webmaster – this position supports the website, and coordinates new features and changes with the professional web developer.

Several other general roles are open right now where an interest in electronic communications and a desire to do meaningful service in a fascinating area is more important than anything else.

Our various IT suppliers provide technical support so although good basic computer literacy is required, more important to us is an understanding of how people communicate and the desire to help us improve what we do.

As with all Sub-committee vacancies, five years' continuous sobriety and the endorsement of your Region are required. You should be flexible in time commitments and be prepared to join us five times per year in York where accommodation is provided and expenses paid.

For details of where to obtain and return the application form please look in the Document Library (Forms) of the AA (GB) website:

[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk) or request by email: [jennypryke@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:jennypryke@gsogb.org.uk)

**Norman B, GSB Trustee for Electronic Communications**

## Employment Sub Committee Vacancies

### Vacancies for Employment Sub Committee

The Employment Committee is a Sub-Committee of The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

**We have vacancies for two Sub Committee members.**

**Our Primary Functions are:**

1. Create a consistent message externally that differentiates AA from other bodies
2. Establish and maintain good relations with professionals and professional bodies at national level
3. Establish and maintain good relations with employers and companies at national level
4. Increase public and professional knowledge of the AA programme
5. Offer support to Regional and Intergroup Liaison Officers
6. Create and maintain an accurate system of record keeping for future officers and events
7. Communicate effectively with the Fellowship
8. Comply with the principles and guidelines of AA.

The committee meets up to four times a year in York, although some of the meetings may take the form of telephone conferencing. (Skype). Much of the work is done in the interim generally in partnership with the other members of the committee.

The post is subject to rotation after four years.

**It is suggested that we follow the following criteria:**

- A minimum of five years continuous sobriety
- A sound knowledge of the AA Structure, Steps, Traditions and Concepts
- Sub-Committee applicants should be endorsed by the AA structure i.e. a serving officer in their Intergroup or Region. The serving officers endorsement should be in the form of a letter attached to the completed nomination form.

Application forms are available from GSO and can also be found in the Document Library on the AA GB website.

**Mike P, GSB Trustee for Employment**

## Literature Sub Committee Vacancy (One)

### Vacancy for the Literature Sub Committee

To enable the Literature Sub-Committee of the General Service Board of AA GB to fulfil its role of:

- Considering needs for new literature
- Undertaking selective review of the content and appearance of the entire range of the literature published by the Fellowship in Great Britain
- Assessing literature for its suitability for revision or discontinuance.

**Its members meet the following criteria:**

- Have a minimum of five years continuous sobriety.
- Have a sound understanding of the Twelve Steps.
- Have a working knowledge of the AA structure, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts, obtained through service at various levels.
- Show a commitment to service through personal experience at their home group, intergroup and/or region.
- Have a sound understanding of the Conference process (which does not solely need to come from having attended Conference).
- Are endorsed by the AA structure, i.e., a serving officer of their Intergroup or Region. (The serving officer's endorsement letter is to be attached to the completed nomination form.)

**Essential requirements:**

- Be able to travel to York, UK, four times a year (Fridays and Saturdays).
- Have time between committee meetings to work on assigned projects, liaise with other committee members, provide feedback on projects other

members are working on, and prepare for committee meetings by reading all relevant materials.

- Be able to serve a four-year term.
- Be familiar with the wide range of AA literature.
- Have a sound command of English written grammar and style.
- Be familiar with word processing and email programmes, as well as file-sharing.
- The ability to work collaboratively as a contributing member of the sub-committee. Most projects require members to work together in close collaboration, including in pairs or small groups, in the production of multiple drafts, with detailed editing, towards a final version.
- The ability to work towards set deadlines.

**Desirable requirements:**

- Have some experience in copy-editing, design, document drafting or similar work
- Be familiar with social media and other communications platforms.

**Application forms are available from the Document Library (Forms) on the AA GB website, or directly from GSO.**

**Denise H, GSB Trustee for Literature**

## **SHARE Editorial Reader Vacancy**

### **There is one vacancy for a SHARE Editorial Reader.**

*SHARE* has a vacancy for an editorial reader. The job involves: reading and scoring all articles and letters submitted, providing a guide for suitability to publish, checking quotations, suggesting titles and supporting the team to develop *SHARE* magazine.

Most of the work is done electronically and requires working to deadlines. The position is for four years.

Of particular importance for this position is a strong working knowledge of the Traditions and Concepts, both of which play a vital role in the production of *SHARE*.

### **Additional Requirements:**

- Readers are required to attend meetings at GSO York 2-4 times per year.
  - Five years continuous sobriety.
  - Experience at Intergroup and preferably Region.
  - Good standard of English language and computer literacy.
  - Familiarity with Conference approved literature.
- 
- A working knowledge of the service structure of AA Great Britain
  - The ability to work as part of a team is paramount.

**Application forms are available from Region Secretaries, GSO or the AA GB website in the Document Library.**

**Maxine W, GSB Trustee for SHARE**

## **Survey Sub Committee Vacancies**

### **There are two vacancies on the Survey Sub Committee of the General Service Board.**

The General Service Conference 2017 determined that there should be a new Survey Sub Committee to be given the task of preparing and producing the 2020 Survey and all subsequent surveys.

The General Service Board (GSB) of Alcoholics Anonymous (GB) has been conducting a survey of the Fellowship every five years since 1972. The intention of these surveys is to learn more about the Fellowship in Great Britain so that the AA message can reach the still suffering alcoholic more effectively, thus helping us to fulfil our Primary Purpose in the most effective manner.

Additional reasons for conducting this survey include: estimating the number of people in the Fellowship; informing the GSB regarding the effective allocation of resources; and gaining information that could be useful in communication with Professionals.

There are currently two vacancies for members of the Fellowship to join the Survey Sub Committee.

It would be preferable for applicants to have experience in conducting surveys and in using computer software.



Applicants should also be able to work as part of a team and to liaise with professional advisers. They should have the expertise to consider previous surveys and draft additional questions to assist in improving and building on the data available. In addition they should be prepared to undertake ad hoc tasks as required from time to time.

As with all Sub Committees, a minimum of five years continuous sobriety is required. All applicants should have experience of service at Intergroup and Regional levels.

Experience as a Conference Delegate is also desirable. They should have gained a working knowledge of the *Service* and *Structure Handbooks* for AA GB in addition to the 12 Steps, the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts for World Service.

The successful candidate will be required to attend up to four meetings per year in York and will normally serve for a period of not more than four years.

The application must be endorsed by way of a covering letter from the Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary of the sponsoring intergroup or region.

**Application forms are available from Region Secretaries, GSO or the AA GB website in the Document Library.**

**Mani Mehdikhani and Clive K, GSB Trustees for the Fellowship Survey**

## Young People's Sub Committee Vacancies

### **There are four vacancies on the Young People's Sub Committee of the General Service Board.**

Experience of working as YPLO at either intergroup or region level would be an advantage, but is not essential.

The aim of the Young People's Sub Committee is to raise awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous within the youth community.

#### **Main aims are:**

- To assist in the recruitment and support of YPLOs at Intergroup and Region levels.
- Support the development and sharing of good practice and review and update literature, media resources and guidelines (subject to approval).

- Establish and maintain good relationships with professionals and professional bodies.

**It is suggested that applicants would fulfil the following criteria:**

- A minimum of five years sobriety at time of application;
- A strong grasp of AA service structure, Guidelines and Traditions;
- A personal service history at Intergroup and/or Region in this discipline;
- Good organisational and communication skills.

If you have any questions contact Amanda S or Sandi A (Trustees of the Young People's Sub Committee) via GSO.

**Application forms are available from Region Secretaries, GSO or the AA GB website in the Document Library.**

**Amanda S and Sandi A, GSB Trustees for Young People**

# In Memoriam

## APRIL – JUNE 2019

Reeth AA Group	£ 66.00	In memory of Bridget H
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## JULY – SEPTEMBER 2019

Winton Sun, Bournemouth	£ 80,00	In memory of Pete the Stick
Basingstoke Friday	£ 40.00	In memory of Don
Ashbourne	£ 31.00	In memory of Old Kieth
Porthcawl Thursday	£ 35.00	In memory of Terry D
Lincoln Tuesday Group	£ 145.00	In memory of Denise P
Coventry Wednesday Step	£ 105.00	In memory of Joe S
Kendal Saturday AM	£ 20.00	In memory of John M
Downend Monday	£ 70.00	In memory of Jamie P
Nottinghamshire & Leicestershire	£ 75.00	In memory of Tommy F

## Seventh Tradition

“Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

### GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

“All groups, intergroups and regions should accept responsibility for the funding of the General Service Office. The financial operations at GSO, the methods of accountability to Conference through the Board, and the broad financial strategies adopted on behalf of the Fellowship, are all subject to continuous review.”

*- Taken from AA GB Conference approved pamphlet “The Pot”*

“Services can require committees, Delegates, Trustees and Conferences. They include small voluntary money contributions so that the group, the area, and AA as a whole can function. They range all the way from the cup of coffee to AA’s General Service Headquarters for national and international action. The sum of *all* these services is AA’s Third Legacy”

*-AA Comes of Age, page 140*

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### The Role of GSO

With four thousand groups to service, GSO is the vital administrative centre of our Fellowship, supported by Northern and Southern Service Offices. It produces and distributes AA literature and publications and is responsible for service meetings of Liaison Officers, for Conference and for meetings of the General Service Board (GSB). GSO liaises with and supports European and World Services. It is also responsible for Fellowship Archives. Staff also deal with all telephone calls from members, the media and outside organisations.

<b>From Regions July – September 2019</b>	<b>Contributions £s</b>
East of Scotland Region	£ 2,290.00
Eastern Region	£ 930.00
Glasgow Region	£ 15,627.00
Highlands & Islands Region	£ 5,020.00
London Region North	£ 3,055.00
London Region South	£ 8,952.00
Midlands Region	£ 1,759.00
North East Region	£ 3,920.00
North West Region	£ 11,732.00
Scotia Region	£ 24,737.00
South East Region	£ 31,183.00
South Midlands Region	£ 410.00
South West Region	£ 7,171.00
South West Scotland Region	£ 8,150.00
Wales & Borders Region	£ 3,526.00
Continental Europe Region	£ 3,474.00
Sundry & Unidentifiable Receipts	£ 882.00

## **Those in Receipt of *AA Service News***

Three copies are posted to the mailing contact for all groups in the GB Service Structure. It is also posted to all intergroup and regional officers and the General Service Board.

If your group is not in receipt of *AA Service News* please contact GSO and check who is the “mail contact” on your group’s **PINK FORM** (Registration Form) and if necessary update it. Thank you.

For special orders of extra copies for conventions,  
please see the note on page 6 of this issue.

Please note that the opinions expressed in *AA Service News* may not necessarily represent the view of the General Service Board.

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