

# Minutes

## Joint Prison and Probation/CJS Regional Liaison Officers AGM Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September and Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022

### GSO York

#### Attendees in York

Zelma K	Prison Trustee
Wullie	Prison Subcommittee
Hamish McS	Probation/CJS Trustee
Gareth P	Probation/CJS Subcommittee, minute taker
Tessa S	Probation/CJS Subcommittee
David H	Probation/CJS Subcommittee, Southwest Region Probation (outgoing)
Tom Fox	Non-alcoholic Trustee (NAT)
Mary M	Representing Northeast Region
Hugh D	Wales and Borders Region Prison LO
Graham M	East of Scotland Prison and CJS LO
Davy	Glasgow Region CJS LO
Sandy C	Glasgow Region Prison LO
Lenny C	Southwest Scotland Region Prison LO
David	Scotia Region Prison and CJS LO
Adam A	London Region North Probation LO
Anne H	Devon Central Intergroup Probation LO
Ray H	Eastern Region Prison Liaison Officer
Mike B	Midlands Region Prison LO

#### Attendees on Zoom

Marion	Highlands Region
Andrew	London Region North Prison LO

#### Apologies

Malcolm	London Region South
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- a) Zelma opened the meeting at 5pm welcomed and thanked everyone for getting here despite the awful weather.
- b) Anne H read the preamble. The 12 traditions were passed around and read in turn.
- c) Tom proposed the minutes of the last meeting and Wullie seconded.
- d) Introductions and Reports:

Anne H – Devon Central Intergroup Probation LO - over 50% of groups now participating in Chit system.

Mary M - Northeast Region – North Yorkshire Intergroups has 2 prisons - full Sutton (male maximum security) and Ascomb Grange (women's open prison). In West Riding Intergroup Newhall, Armley, and Wakefield Prisons all have ongoing plus pen pals.

Hugh D - Wales and boarders Prison LO - Attended MS Teams meetings with Swansea prison authorities, prison sponsors. There are no AA meetings running in the Prisons as yet but meetings are ongoing with prison staff. Bail Hostels and Bailiffs have been approached regarding Chit system.

Graham M - East of Scotland Prison and CJS LO – Two prisoners allowed out to attend Dundee convention. Encountered some problems with the word “Probation” on leaflets – general reluctance to engage due to changes in Criminal Justice Services in Scotland. Contact Cards given to police. Problems getting into Sheriffs Court. Tom Fox agreed to help Graham with access.

Davy - Glasgow Region CJS LO – Rota set up so that AA regularly attends Glasgow alcohol court every other Monday. AA Contact Cards with national helpline number given out resulting in some attendance at meetings. AA have been asked to attend JP training days.

Sandy C - Glasgow Region Prison LO – HMP Barlinnie meetings limited to 2 per week during the day. HMP Low Moss trying to arrange meetings on Thursday evenings for protected prisoners.

Lenny C - Southwest Scotland Region Prison LO – HMP Kilmarnock has AA meetings every Thursdays averaging between 4 and 7 inmates. Tom confirmed contract is up in 2024 after which it restores to the state.

David – Scotia Region Prison and CJS LO. Four prisons in the region, two of which are holding meetings. Only 30% of intergroup LO's in place.

Adam A – London Region North Probation LO – Been in role about a year. Started with just 2 intergroup Liaison Officers in post, after drumming up interest now there are 4. Good success with police in City of London and Denmark House Probation Office – looking to get an article published in their internal magazine. Looking to get involved with police training. Encouraging AA groups to sign up to the Chit system.

David H - Southwest Region Probation LO (outgoing) – Online presentation to Taunton Probation Office (Monday morning meeting), response was good resulting in letter of recommendation to other probation officers. Recently joined Probation Subcommittee. Prisons – some problems encountered with AA members having to go through full vetting. City of London Police – went with Adam A to go and see custody sergeants – ideas including AA details to be painted on walls of cells, dedicated room to phone AA helpline, certain

types of offences can be disposed of by the custody sergeant, for example sending them to AA meetings instead of court.

Ray H – Eastern Region Prison Liaison Officer – Spoken to Intergroups to drum up interest in Liaison officers.

Marion - Highlands Region – interested in learning more about the chit system.

Andrew C - London Region North Prison LO - 5 prisons covered by 4 intergroups. No meetings yet in Wormwood Scrubs. Pentonville opened back up. Wandsworth has 1 meeting a week, hard for volunteers because it is in the morning rather than the evenings. Polish intergroup looking to join London Region North and supply Polish language literature to Polish inmates.

Mike B - Midlands Region Prison LO – HMP Winston Green no meetings yet after the pandemic but HMP Hewell meetings have re-started again.

Hamish McS - Probation/CJS Trustee – on 2<sup>nd</sup> June members of the Probation Subcommittee attended a Plymouth Intergroup PI Subcommittee probation workshop on Zoom. This was a request following Pat McG having given a Prisons talk for the Intergroup a few months prior. I coordinated this event and Gareth P subcommittee, gave his probation slide presentation which he developed for zonal meetings. I invited David H Regional Probation liaison South West, who spoke and Zelma K gave an encouraging talk also. There were a few questions and very positive feedback. It may be possible to roll out this type of presentation online in the future for other interested Intergroups or Regions. David H has since applied to the subcommittee.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September Hamish attended an HMPPS Recovery Month Presentation to present to Approved Premises – probation halfway houses staff about AA from Geri Byrne-Thompson, Area Manager and Project lead for Recovery focused Approved Premises. Several of our Prison and Probation Liaison officers attended and we were asked to present first being the original 12th step fellowship. The event was opened with a talk from the Chief Probation Officer Sonia Flynn CBE, who gave a glowing recommendation of AA. Hamish gave a slide presentation outlining what we can offer which showed the relevant videos for professionals, ran through the meeting finder and Information for professionals, with focus on the Chit system, some information on Prison meetings and what People can expect at meetings. The event was recorded and will be available for all 104 Approved premises staff to view within England and Wales. Further discussion will take place regarding the use of QR codes linked to the meeting finder and a possible example online open meeting, your guidance will be needed. The calendar for other recovery information presentations within the month has been made available to the Board. In addition, I have received a list of contacts for all the Approved premises, intended with the sole purpose of providing

information packs to all 104 locations in England and Wales. It is hoped that through continuing to build this relationship we can reinvigorate cooperation at local levels.

- e) Hamish asked for all reports to be copied into Steve at GSO (using the email address [AAInformation@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:AAInformation@gsogb.org.uk)). Please be wary of using non-aa email address and telephone numbers as these will need to be removed from all reports.
- f) Zonal meetings – open to all interested in Prison/CJS. Normally held four times a year at Sterling, Warrington, Cambridge and Bristol. The next one is on 13<sup>th</sup> November at Bristol (10am – 3pm) – open to all interested in Prison/CJS who can travel for the day as no overnight accommodation is provided. Invitation letters will go out to intergroups and region chair/secretary. None are planned for 2023 as we'll be having a weekend seminar at York instead.
- g) The Joint Prison and Probation/CJS Seminar has been booked for Saturday July 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 at the Park Inn Hotel in York. This will be open to all prison and probation/CJS intergroup and region liaison officers. Region and Intergroups to pay travel and accommodation expenses for an overnight stay at Park Inn Hotel. Invitation letters will go out to all intergroup and region chairs/secretaries.
- h) Contacts and Communications – Using personal email addresses for AA service work is not recommended. It is important to have an AA email address in order to safeguard our members and to not fall foul of any data protection legislation. Contact Chris at GSO to get one at [AAInformation@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:AAInformation@gsogb.org.uk)

----- Meeting adjourned until 9am Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October -----

- i) Updating of Service Structure Manual/Literature/probation leaflet – Probation/CJS has been updated following conference 2021 to include guidance on Chit System and new subcommittee group email address [infoprobation.sc@aamail.org](mailto:infoprobation.sc@aamail.org). Literature given to prisoners has a problem with staples (Prison and Alcohol). These need to be removed as they are a safety issue. Enquiries on going to turn these into a foldout. Probation Subcommittee to draft a leaflet for Conference to approve specifically for Justice Service professionals with a different cover for Scotland dropping the word “probation”. Service Handbook chapter on Prison is currently sparse and need expanding. Prison subcommittee to look at expanding the detail including information on how to get clearance to do service in prisons. Prison and Probation Liaison Officer packs for internal AA use are available and will be sent out attached to these minutes.
- j) Chit System – The service handbook has been updated to include details of how to order blank chits from GSO (p61 – 62 of the 2022 edition). These are provided free of charge but will only be sent to group officers who have their addresses

registered with GSO through filling out a pink form for their group. Hamish handed out a number of chits together with the letter GSO sends out to groups ordering them.

- k) Prison Postal Service – Zelma handed out two flyers/application forms to all in attendance, one for AA members and one for prisoners. There are currently 68 active correspondents (56 male, 12 female), 215 letters were passed on through the PO Box in the period Jan 2022 to September 2022. David and Gareth shared their experience of being Prison Postal Sponsors. Anonymity and personal safety are guaranteed by the inmates never having your postal address - they send all their letters to GSO in York who then post them on to the AA member's home address. Guidelines/training is given to all AA members who participate in the service. When prisoners come up to release it is important to hand them over to local AA services/meetings.
- l) Safeguarding – Please don't give personal details such as family name, phone numbers, email/ home address to prisoners. Use the AA number/GSO addresses and only share experience "in a general way" either by letter or at an AA meeting in prison. Wullie is keen to re-start the "Through the Gate" initiative at HMP Barlinnie so that local Liaison Officers are aware and can be available the minute prisoners are released if asked to take them to a meeting.
- m) A.O.B - Ray H asked if the annual House of Commons reception is still going on. Tom confirmed that it is as are Parliamentary receptions in the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly. Intergroups and Regions are asked to put forward names of guests annually by letter. Dates for the next meeting for the Prison and Probation Subcommittees at GSO in York will be Friday 4th into Saturday 5th November.
- n) Anne H read the declaration of unity statement and Zelma closed the meeting with the serenity prayer at 12:10 on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October.