

A Summary of Questions not accepted for Conference 2007

2.

Would Conference consider recognising a separate liaison officer position for EDUCATION/SCHOOLS at Intergroup and Regional level?

Terms of Reference No. 6 Already covered by Public Information at Regional and Intergroup level.

3.

Can Conference consider making public the questions to Conference rejected by the Conference Steering Committee and the reasons why they were rejected?

Terms of Reference No. 7 Already in place. Conference 2002 recommended that these be available on request and Conference 2006 asked for them to be placed on the AA Service Site.

4.

Would Conference consider an addition to the "Beginner Pack" of a single slip of paper, approx A5 size stating that:

"If you feel you are being intimidated, bullied, or sexually harassed in this or any other meeting, please talk about it with your sponsor (if you have one) or the group secretary or group service rep".

Terms of Reference No. 7 A group conscience matter and Guideline No. 17 'Personal Conduct Matters' fully covers this.

5.

Are groups that affiliate with each other across Intergroup and Regional boundaries in danger of creating a separate Fellowship within the Fellowship?

Terms of Reference No. 7 Covered by the Traditions and also within Guideline No. 5.

8.

Does the Probation Service make use of the Chit System?

Terms of Reference No. 7 Best directed to the Board Member responsible for Probation.

11.

Conference has become distant and detached from the majority of our membership and consequently does not represent the views of AA as a whole. Do we now need to be radical about 'significant change'?

Terms of Reference No. 5 Conference 2006 directed the Conference Steering Committee to make significant changes.

12.

In the light of Conference's experience in 2006 when insufficient questions were asked, would Conference consider what, if any, procedure should be put in place to ensure that the Fellowship understand what happens when this situation arises.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Already been answered by a recommendation made at Conference 2006 resulting in a larger number of agenda items being submitted. CSC are to produce all questions not accepted for debate.

13.

Would the Fellowship work better without the legal restrictions placed on us by being a charity?

Terms of Reference No. 6 Also pointed out that the Fellowship is not a charity and that only the General Service Board is.

14.

How does the membership help the newcomers who have difficulties with the word God?

Terms of Reference No. 6 Too broad a subject for a Conference Committee but would make a great workshop topic at Intergroup and Regional level.

15.

Would Conference consider producing a brief summary of Conference outcomes in addition to the full Conference Report?

Terms of Reference No. 7 This was a local issue and that Conference delegates are responsible for reporting back to their Regions the outcomes of Conference.

17.

Would Conference approve the use of the poem “Footprints” at AA Conventions if desired?

Terms of Reference No. 7 Due to the volume of questions received this year.

19.

Regional Representation

In line with the recommendation of Committee Six, Question One, Para "a" of Conference 2006.

Would the Fellowship through the annual Conference consider the number of delegates that attend conference, with a view to reducing the Regional Representation?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The Fellowship does not need more introspection at this point but a chance to put the suggestions made at the last Conference into practice and see how that goes before discussing even more ‘remedies’ as to what we too perceive as discontent and apathy with the Fellowship about Conference.

20.

After serious deliberation by individual members, by Intergroup and by the Region I am asking that the Conference Steering Committee for Conference 2007 consider a revision of Guideline 17 to include in paragraph 2 (about behaviour) the words “that no member or visitor is subjected to or experiences bullying, religious harassment and/or religious coercion and sectarianism or any other harassment or offensive behaviour of any kind”.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Already covered by Guideline No. 17 and the Preamble.

22.

Should Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) look at reviewing the Alcoholics Anonymous charitable status as our Traditions and Concepts no longer guide the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Terms of Reference No. 7 The General Service Board only has charitable status and always tries its best to adhere to the Traditions and Concepts. The Fellowship itself does not have charitable status.

23.

Tradition 4

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

Failure to protect AA as a whole will result in its death. What simple practical steps could be taken by Intergroups to promote unity, service and recovery and encourage groups who may be unfamiliar with Traditions and the running of the Fellowship to participate in Intergroup? (including financially).

Terms of Reference No. 5/6 This matter has been well covered in the last three years although this subject would make an excellent Intergroup/Regional workshop topic.

24.

Would Conference share experience of auditing processes used by Groups, Intergroups and Regions to ensure the Treasurers are supported in managing AA money?

Terms of Reference No. 7 Guideline No. 12 deals with the issue extensively, we believe, and may serve as a base for discussion at Intergroup.

25.

Can GSO pressure the British Library to re-classify the Big Book from lending to reference?

Terms of Reference No. 7 Whilst we do not believe GSO can “pressure” anyone into doing anything – inside and out of AA – we think talking to the British Library and suggesting reclassification is a worthwhile endeavour and the Board will act on it without discussion. We encourage any group/intergroup to donate a Big Book to their local library and suggest they include it in the Reference section thus ensuring it does not get removed from circulation if it hasn’t been borrowed for a certain time.

27.

Can the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain continue to afford sending out literature orders, especially books, post free?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The CSC considers it to be apropos but does not see much merit in discussing it at Conference. Refers it to the Finance Committee to review the business model and then bring it to Conference as a Board proposal.

31.

Conference 2006 Committee 6 Question 1 (3a) invited the Fellowship to submit topics they wish to be considered by Conference, the topic of Conventions may be worthy of consideration. I offer the enclosed background to outline the reason for this submission.

BACKGROUND

Guideline 15, Conventions, revised in April 2002 offers guidance on organisation, finance, type of meetings, literature, health and safety, and best practice to run an AA Convention.

Over the past year, concern has been expressed by members of the Fellowship, that some National and Intergroup sponsored Conventions Committees are not adhering to some parts of the Guideline, causing unease within the Fellowship.

Whilst many members value the opportunity to gather together and share their experience, strength and hope, and are grateful for the time and effort the Convention Committee has undertaken to put together a one day or weekend Convention, there are questions raised over certain issues.

There are worrying signs that rotation of Convention Committee members does not happen.

Convention Committee members are not being correctly elected by their sponsoring Region or Intergroup, and the size of some Committees and number of meetings far outweigh its cost effectiveness.

With finance, there have been occasions when the final balance sheet for the Convention has not been presented back to the sponsoring Region or Intergroup, causing concern for the safety of AA money.

Do Convention Committees adhere to what AA's money does and does not pay for?

Do they accept outside contributions for raffle prizes?

Do they request only AA members contribute to any Pot collections?

Do they pay travel expenses for invited speakers? Do they hold on to surplus funds, or return them to the Fellowship?

Flyers for Conventions now inform the Fellowship that in addition to open, closed, shared platform meetings, there are Adult Children of Alcoholic meetings, Meditation Meetings.

Are Convention Committees deviating from their primary purpose?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The General Service Board has already addressed this situation.

32.

Are we carrying the message as effectively as we might? Are there other avenues as yet unexplored?

We currently have annual Gratitude and Traditions weeks to heighten focus on and awareness of these important aspects – and yet these are not our Primary Purpose.

“Specifically, would there be value to having annual “Carrying the Message” weeks to focus on and increase awareness of the Primary Purpose of every and each group at all levels of the Fellowship”.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Felt that this question was better suited as a possible Workshop Topic and would make great discussion and indeed generate many positive ideas to help improve carrying the message. Suggest that this question be discussed at Region, Intergroup, and Group level and if there are other avenues as yet unexplored they be shared with the Fellowship as a whole through communication methods available.

33.

Would Conference please approve the making of a new “Video for Young People”. The present one is approximately 20 or more years old and is completely out of date.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Passed direct to the General Service Board to avoid delaying attention to this matter.

34.

At local level, Intergroups are able to approach schools and colleges to offer them speakers from AA This is seen as a valuable means informing the students of the existence and the success of AA

Would Conference please suggest that members of the GSB approach the British Medical

Association/General Medical Council with a view to get AA speakers invited to speak to medical students during their training in Medical Schools.

Terms of Reference No. 6/7 Passed to the General Service Board.

37.

Some groups are growing steadily across all ages and ranges and Big Book sales are consistently high. They practice the principles of the Twelve Steps Traditions and have strong sponsorship ethic. AA GB generally is not enjoying the same success. Would Conference explore ways of assisting groups seeking guidance? Please consider the following points as aids to progress. Suggest ways in which the fellowship as a whole can assist groups to become more structured in their approach to carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Make suggestions to those groups who want to avoid the dilution of the steps and traditions.

Terms of Reference No. 7 This question is in fact a very good workshop topic and that much good could come from a discussion between caring loving members of Alcoholics Anonymous at Group, Intergroup, Region level.

38.

Please discuss ways in which we can better achieve unity within our fellowship, considering the following points.

Accountability not mistrust.

Responsibility and minority opinion.

Terms of Reference No. 7 As above

39.

We often hear things like “we can’t get anybody to do service and that we are struggling financially”. Some groups seem to be more effective in these areas. If we could in some way communicate experience, strength and hope between groups & Intergroups this situation could change. Would Conference discuss and recommend specific ways of doing this.

Terms of Reference No. 6 & 7 As above

40.

Is the current Regional structure in AA GB the most effective way to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers in light of declining membership reported in the Census?

Terms of Reference 5 & 6 This topic was discussed 2 years ago at Conference. Sufficient background material has not been supplied in order to guide Conference in its deliberations.

41.

Would the GSB become more transparent if minutes of board meetings be made available from GSO?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The GSB is in fact legally obligated to keep such minutes, which are legal documents, in accordance with applicable British law - confidential.

42.

Would Conference review the need for the General Secretary to sit on the Conference Steering Committee?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The General Secretary sits on the Conference Steering Committee in an advisory role only, providing valuable legal and administrative information without which the work of the Committee would be made very much more difficult and lengthy.

43.

Can we please have clarification of what Conference 2004 com.4. question 2, point 7 means when referring to future re-formations being referred to a committee of the GSB if appropriate.

Terms of Reference No. 7 The CSC felt that asking Conference 2007 to clarify the response from Conference 2004 was not reasonably possible.

44.

A Home group plays a vital role in a newcomers sobriety, to ensure the home group follows the traditions our group has found it useful to have a checklist to see how the group is running. Would Conference consider publishing a checklist to help groups follow the traditions?

Terms of Reference No. 7 Already in hand by the Literature Committee and will be presented to Conference 2007.

45.

Our home group has encouraged group members into PI service, adhering to Tradition 5. We find a substantial wider lack of interest at our local PI committee and Intergroup meetings, despite committed efforts of elected service representatives. Can Conference suggest how we may better attract others to this valuable, rewarding and necessary work?

Terms of Reference No. 7 Felt that this question was better suited as a possible Workshop Topic and would make great discussion and indeed generate many positive ideas. The CSC felt that Intergroups and Regions provide the best opportunity for discussion and solutions to local challenges in carrying the message among our members.

46.

When guidelines are updated could they be distributed free to all groups? (Most groups get a set of guidelines and never update them)

Terms of Reference No. 7 Updates are distributed to Groups upon request and they are also on the website.

47.

Can Conference suggest ways in which groups who are enjoying steady, sustained growth share their experience with local groups who are less fortunate?

Terms of Reference No. 7 It is the role of Intergroup to enable Groups within an area to come together and share their experience to benefit each other.

48.

Would Conference inform the Fellowship of any plans in terms of the PI section 17 in light of their rejection of the item at Conference 2004?

Terms of Reference No. 5 A proposal for updating Section 17 was rejected by Conference in 2004. This has therefore been discussed at Conference within the last 3 years.

49.

How can Conference ensure that all minority views from each Region are put forward, not just the majority?

Terms of Reference No. 7. At Conference every delegate has the right to speak and vote according to his/her conscience. Delegates from the same Region may offer opposing views and vote accordingly, in line with our Traditions, Concepts and Guidelines. Delegates are elected to attend Conference by their Region. There are guidelines for this process and it is up to each Region to ensure the views of all its members are taken into consideration.

50.

Would Conference consider what procedures should be put into place in order to avoid Conference, Conference Committees, Delegates and the Fellowship as a whole having to spend time and effort considering Conference questions that ultimately are referred back to the AA groups, or Regions, for further consideration?

Terms of Reference No. 7 Concept 3 'The Right of Decision'. Delegates are 'trusted servants' and as such must act according to their conscience when deciding how best to respond to questions discussed at Conference.

52.

Would Conference encourage all committees to adopt a model form for the answers provided to Questions for Conference so that their deliberations and experience can be more fully shared with the Fellowship?

Terms of Reference No. 7. The Conference Steering Committee is the forum for looking at procedures at Conference. Your comments have been noted. The chairpersons of the six Conference Committees for 2007 (who are all present at CSC meetings) have agreed to make their best efforts to keep answers simple and clear, thus hoping to lead by example for Conferences to come.

53.

Would Conference please make recommendations on Improving the organisation and accountability of the Southern National Convention?

Term of Reference No.7 This issue has already been dealt with.

54.

Would Conference please consider whether in light of events at the Southern National Convention the time is right to update Guideline 15?

Term of Reference No.7 This issue has been dealt with by GSB; adherence to the Guideline is now restored. All guidelines are reviewed on a regular basis.

55.

Would Conference consider revising the format and depth in which questions to Conference are answered?

Terms of Reference No. 7. The Conference Steering Committee is the forum for looking at procedures at Conference. The chairpersons of the six Conference Committees for 2007

(who are all present at CSC meetings) have agreed to make their best efforts to keep answers simple and clear, thus hoping to lead by example for Conferences to come.

56.

Would Conference consider:

- (a) producing a guideline for the AA Chairpersons in general?**
- (b) producing a document for guidance for the Conference Chair?**

Term of Reference No.7 There already is literature in place that covers AA Chairpersons and the Conference Chair.

58.

Would Conference consider the benefits of voting rights for GSO staff at the plenary stage?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The committee felt that it is important that GSO staff are completely impartial to all voting issues.

59.

Would conference consider the advantages of publishing all submitted questions for conference?

Term of Reference No.5 This has been passed by Conference and it is now being done.

60.

Can GSO make AA's Articles of Memorandum available to the wider UK membership by publishing them, for instance, in the Annual Board Report?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The Articles of Memorandum are lodged with Companies House and as public documents can be accessed by anyone wishing to do so.

61.

Would Conference consider how AA group feedback on answers to Conference questions can be utilized effectively by the Fellowship?

Term of Reference No.7 This is already being done and that there are feedback processes of the answers to the questions in place. It was felt that this issue would be best addressed at Regional level.

62.

Would Conference consider ways in which the Final Report of Conference could explain the reasons for committee recommendations not being accepted by Conference?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The Committee view was that each delegate votes with their conscience which represents the whole of AA. It is the responsibility of delegates to report back to the Fellowship the findings of Conference in full.

63.

Would Conference consider ways in which the quality of delegates and their preparedness for Conference could be improved?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The Committee consider the preparation of Conference delegates is the responsibility of the individual delegate and their Region. This matter is also well covered by Guideline No. 3 under the section headed 'Conference delegates'.

64.

Would Conference consider ways in which the time, energy and experience spent in committees giving careful consideration to answering a question is not lost at plenary stage following an over-short debate in plenary?

Terms of Reference No. 7. During the full debate of this question, the Conference Chairman accepted, as part of his remit, to ensure a balanced debate at the plenary sessions within the allocated time frame.

65.

Would Conference consider introducing a mechanism whereby Conference is conducted according to the normal rules of debate?

Terms of Reference No. 7 For the same reason as above and in addition the Committee Chairpersons have been advised to use numbers or letters in the Committee answers, and not bullet points, so Conference can accept or reject parts of the answer rather than the full answer.

66.

Would Conference please consider the role of the General Secretary in a policy-making Conference to ensure that the administrative role is clearly divided from the advisory and policy making role of lay members elected to attend Conference?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The Conference Chairman has a right to ask the General Secretary for advice on procedures during Conference. It is hoped to minimise this by the Conference Chairman being fully briefed, however circumstances may still occur when the need arises to seek advice from the General Secretary. To help Conference delegates it is planned to fully explain the voting procedures at Conference 2007.

67.

Would Conference discuss whether professionals need to inform AA groups of any high risk offenders that they might refer to the meetings. Do professionals need any further guidance from AA regarding this issue. Please make recommendations and discuss.

Terms of Reference No. 7 It was considered that within our Traditions AA cannot tell professionals what to do. Also the anonymity of individual members has to be respected.

70.

Would it be of use for AA to develop, for use at intergroups and regional committees, a "framework for mediation" to help solve any problems between groups?

Terms of Reference No. 7 It was felt the Guidelines already answer the question and procedures already exist to deal with these situations. The Committee considered it to be part of recovery.

72.

Are there any guidelines of children attending meetings with their parents when one adult is an AA member?

Terms of Reference No. 6 Insufficient background material. The committee considered this question is the remit of individual groups in line with Tradition 4. Guideline 15 on children and babies attending conventions could be considered by groups.

73.

Discussion took place at a group conscience – views were put across questioning the reasons behind specific meetings that have been set up in the past e.g. Women’s Groups, Gay and Lesbian. Are there specific guidelines on setting up an individual group? Could there be groups set up for parents?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The Committee considered the question was dealt with under Tradition 3, Guideline No. 1 and the pamphlet ‘the AA Group’ pages 14/15.

74.

Is there any specific guidelines on under 18’s attending meetings – should they or should they not be accompanied by an adult that is known to them e.g. parents, family member?

Terms of Reference No. 7 This issue is already in hand. The General Service Board undertook a project regarding this and recommendations will be sent very shortly to all Groups.

75.

Some members of our group have expressed concerns on the approach of the Twelve Step programme by the ‘Road to Recovery’ groups that have recently set up in our area.

Terms of Reference No. 7 It was considered this question is answered by Tradition 4.