

## Questions/Topics for Conference 2013

### Committee No. 1

1. **Review the draft Service Handbook of Alcoholics Anonymous, Great Britain.**

#### *Background*

Draft Service Structure Handbook of Alcoholics Anonymous, Great Britain

2. **Would the Fellowship share experience and then make recommendations whether to include Regional Representatives in Guideline 4 'Intergroups', with a view to keeping new members to service fully informed of our third legacy and avoiding any misinterpretation as to the role of Regional Representatives and their election at Intergroup.**

#### *Background*

The structure of AA under 'Regions' clearly states 'Representatives of Intergroups' Guideline 4 states "The GSR is the first vital link in the communications chain between Group, Intergroup, Region and General Service Board" and yet the vital link is also the Regional Representative at Regional and Intergroup level.

"It is natural and even imperative that our service concepts be based on the system of 'checks and balances'" (Introduction to 12 Concepts for World Service by Bill W.)

Clarification of AA as a democracy can only be stimulated by the Regional Representatives inclusion in Guideline 4. ('Importance of realising AA as a democracy' (AA Comes of Age page 225.)

Guidelines 3, 4 and 5

Traditions 1, 5 and 9

Concept X

Structure of AA Gt. Britain

Third legacy ( AA's legacy of service by Bill W. 1951)

Declaration of unity

### Committee No. 2

1. **Share experience on getting articles on AA in the local press and make suggestions on how the Fellowship can get articles into the national press.**

#### *Background*

1. Members are having some success on getting articles on AA in their local newspapers
2. The Fellowship has not succeeded so far in getting articles on AA in the national press.

2. **Would the Fellowship discuss, share experience and make recommendations on the question of:**

**What can AA do to better carry the message to young alcoholics both inside and outside of the Fellowship?**

**More specifically, would Conference consider, discuss and make recommendations on the following:**

- a. **What can be done to make AA more of an attractive place to young people inside of AA?**

- b. **What can be done to make AA more of an attractive place to young people outside of AA?**
- c. **Consider updating the “Too Young?” poster with input from younger members?**
- d. **Could young people be represented in the AA structure?**

*Background*

In Continental Europe Region there is a position of Young People contact who has a Liaison Officer role with full voting rights.

Ref:

Too young poster AAGB  
 Too young poster AA US  
 Too Young pamphlet

**Committee No. 3**

- 1. **Inventory Question**  
**Would the Fellowship discuss and share experience on whether we as a fellowship are satisfied with the level of 12<sup>th</sup> step work that is being done at the various levels of Service?**

*Background*

“Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick.”  
 (Alcoholics Anonymous, page 164)

Tradition 5

- 2. **Would the Fellowship share experience of Public Liability Insurance at Group, Intergroup and Regional level?**

**Committee No. 4**

- 1. **Would members share their experience on how they pass on or collect experiences and views on the Conference questions? What methods are the most successful in collecting responses from members of the Fellowship?**

*Background*

During the past 15 years of participation with the discussing and collecting of responses for Conference questions, I have observed the following:

The most effective place and time to discuss Conference questions is at the nearest point of entry for the newcomer (where the main business of AA is taking place) i.e. the individual group.

Many Groups however do not want to use meeting time discussing Conference questions.

Special meetings held to discuss Conference questions are poorly attended.

Many members regard Conference as something that happens in York in April and do not realise that conferring takes place at all “levels” and that all members can participate.

Probably less than 1 in 20 members participate.

- 2. **Would the Fellowship discuss, share experience and make recommendations whether, throughout AA's service structure, members of special interest groups are sufficiently**

represented?

## Committee No. 5

1.
  - a) **Would the Fellowship discuss and share experience of disabled AA members suffering progressive diseases who require a full-time professional carer to accompany them in their AA Home Group meetings?**
  - b) **Would the Fellowship discuss the implications within Tradition 12 of the professional carer attending meetings, thus enabling the disabled group member to continue to attend the AA meeting of their choice?**
  - c) **Would the Fellowship discuss and make recommendations on how best the special needs of disabled AA members who need professional carers might be met in closed AA meetings?**

### *Background*

#### 1. The Information Sheet on AA Special Needs Organisation in the United States:

"SPECIAL NEEDS / ACCESSIBILITIES COMMITTEES"

Some A.A. entities are attempting to meet such needs by forming Special Needs-Accessibilities Committees.

Since the goal is to make A.A. accessible, some committees refer to themselves as Accessibilities Committees. In some localities committees name themselves according to the specific need addressed, such as "Hearing impaired" committee".

When one or more members of an A.A. group have special needs (such as the need for American sign language interpreter or \*wheelchair accessibility, or has an illness which prevents them getting to the meeting room or needs special physical help, i.e., getting to the toilet during the meeting, A.A. members from that Group will see their needs are met.

The Members of Special Needs Committees explore, develop and offer resources to make the AA message and participation in our AA PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE WHO REACHES OUT FOR IT.

A G.S.O. Staff member who serves on the Special Needs Assignment is available as a resource and communicates with the local Special Needs Committees. In the interests of good communication and working together, Special Needs Committees are encouraged to keep their area Committees and local central/intergroup informed of their activities.

It is also helpful to work closely with committees handling Public Information and co-operation with the Professional Community in terms of keeping the public and appropriate agencies informed about A.A. BEING ACCESSIBLE TO ALCOHOLICS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

#### 2. This has been a local experience:

My Home Group has a long term female AA member with 24 years unbroken sobriety who suffers from a progressive disease.

She is unable to walk and has to use a wheelchair. She has valiantly attended her home group meeting regularly for some years since it was first started. She is an ex Journalist, in possession of a brilliant mind which is unaffected by her illness, but unfortunately, she is physically trapped in an extremely poorly functioning body.

When her health deteriorated she made a request to the members of her Home Group, which is a Closed Meeting, for permission for her Professional Carer to be present. There was minor dissent within the Group and the question could not be resolved as it was said that it only takes one member to raise an objection.

This incident has raised very serious, broader present and future issues for ALL AA Group members who may develop a serious progressive disease and who would eventually need a Carer present in the AA meetings.

2. **Would Conference consider what response can be given to Groups who refuse to accept the group conscience of Intergroup/Region?**

### Committee No. 6

1. **Would Conference endorse the selling of AA Conference approved literature in electronic formats?**

#### *Background*

AA World Service have developed an E-Reader which allows registered AA members to purchase the Big Book and the 12 & 12 as a download.

2. **Would Conference reconsider the decision taken in 2008 to prohibit all “external links” on the AA (GB) website?**

#### *Background to re-submission*

This Question has been re-submitted, having been rejected in 2012 by the Steering Committee on the grounds that “...the Committee felt that the question is more suitable for consideration by the Electronics Communications Sub-Committee, to which your question has been referred.”

This was discussed at the annual RECLO/ECSC meeting at GSO on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2012 at which two GSB members were present. It was thought that the Electronics Communications Sub-Committee (ECSC) did not have the authority to reverse a specific decision of Conference. As the meeting was in favour of the revision of this policy, it was agreed that the question should be re-submitted to Conference. It was felt that, subject to the consideration of certain safeguards, such as the approval of external links by the ECSC or a nominee of the ECSC, and/or the use of a disclaimer on clicking a link, as is done on the [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) website, where appropriate, external links should be permitted.

#### *Background to original Question*

In 2008 Conference accepted Committee 4’s majority recommendation that:-

*“...in principle and in accordance with Tradition 6, that:*

1. *There should be no links from the GSO GB website.*
2. *In the spirit of unity, a list of AA National websites (in a non-linkable format) is provided on the GSO website, in order that, for example, members for whom English is not their first language, will find the support needed.*
3. *Guideline 19 needs to be reviewed and reported back to Conference 2009, if practical.”*

Should Conference be reluctant to simply reverse the 2008 decision it is quite possible to add safeguards, such as requiring external links to have the approval of members or nominees of the ECSC, and/or the adding of a disclaimer as is done on the AAWS site [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org). This website links to local sites which use interactive mapping sites extensively. For these links to local sites, and for other external links, such as that to the AA (GB) website, the site displays a warning disclaimer on following the link stating that the visitor is leaving the AAWS website and that AAWS accepts no responsibility for the content of the site linked to.