

Board Reports

to

Conference 2021

75th Anniversary Convention

In the 2016 Conference there was a decision to hold a 75th celebratory convention in 2022.

Board Trustees are charged with this organisational and financial responsibility.

A committee was formed of Board Trustees and members of the Fellowship with relevant experience were invited to assist the committee.

The financial aim was to be self supporting so particular attention has been paid to budgeting and learning as much as possible from the information and records from the 50th Convention.

The venue will be Leeds Arena.

A working group was formed to produce a special historical Booklet of AAGB for the event. The working group comprise of representatives of Roundabout, Share, Archives and a member of the 75th Anniversary Committee. All Regions have been contacted so that they can participate by including their histories in the publication.

Your Committee wish everyone, Groups, Intergroups, Regions and all the different disciplines in the Fellowship to be actively involved in this event. The Logo was chosen from over 100 entries and Surveys have been distributed at Regions and Conventions so that members of the Fellowship can give the maximum input.

This will be an unforgettable celebration.

Over to you – Early Bird Tickets have been available since 1st January 2020

So here we are in 2021 and our Conference, this year, will be virtual.

Across the Fellowship we have had to adapt and our 75th Sub-committee has been no different. Our meetings are now held via Zoom which has its positive and negative aspects.

Firstly, we have had savings on the cost of running the Sub-committee, and throughout this year we will continue along the same lines. Alanon attended our last meeting and they now have a committee for the event.

To date we have over 100 volunteers from the Fellowship who want to do some service at the event... we still have yet to decide the colour of our Volunteers T shirts though I am sure they will stand out!

By June 2022 we hope that we will be free to travel and believe that this could lead to a significant uptake on our Fellowship members wanting to attend the Convention, not only from AAGB but from across Europe and further afield.

On the downside many of the people we need to speak with are furloughed! It's a bit two steps forward and one back at the moment... but we are getting there.

We have had an issue with the ticket supplier and the Committee have chosen to take this in-house.

We hope by the time of this report our Website – www.aa75.co.uk is back up and running and able to keep up with the demands of the Fellowship.

Stevie S

GSB Trustee, 75th Anniversary Convention

75th Anniversary Publication Working Group

This Working Group met four times during the last year. Only the February meeting was held in York while the others were held online via the Zoom platform.

Almost all of the 16 Regions have produced material to be included in the special publication. A generic history of the AAGB Service Structure has also been produced by my Archives Trustee predecessor.

The publication is taking shape and is on time for completion by June 2021.

I would like to thank the working group for their sterling work during this most challenging of years.

Some of them have also had health issues to contend with along with the pandemic restrictions. My thanks also go to all the Archivists and other members who have contributed to this publication.

Clive K

Chair of the 75th Anniversary Publication Working Group

AA Service News

AA Service News (AASN) is the General Service Board's principal medium for communication of service events and developments throughout all regions of AA Great Britain. It is published quarterly, with articles that emphasise in particular matters affecting our Primary Purpose: to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

The annual Winter edition contains the Conference Questions and the Summer edition the recommendations from the General Service Conference in response to those questions.

Additionally, news and details about Parliamentary events in England, Scotland and Wales, and other notable service events are published throughout the year in articles written for and by the Fellowship. These include General Service Board Sub-Committees vacancy notices (and information on how eligible AA members may apply), regional Seventh Tradition and In Memoriam contributions, as well as a Concept or Tradition and a calendar of AA events in Great Britain and overseas.

Normally, copies are posted to the mailing contacts for all Groups registered in the Great Britain Service Structure, to intergroup and regional officers, and to the General Service Board. This past year, however, because of the pandemic and so many meeting venues being closed, digital-only editions were prepared and circulated via email for the Summer, Autumn and Winter issues. In addition, the calendar has been suspended until such time as face-to-face events can again be held and the information provided for them can be verified. This will continue at least through the Spring 2021 issue, and likely beyond. Hard copy production and distribution will resume as soon as it is deemed safe and viable to pack and post them.

If your group is not receiving AASN, please check that your Group Registration details – including an email address – are up-to-date with the General Service Office. (Alternatively, fill out a new registration form – also called the 'Pink Form' – and be sure to include an email address.) If in doubt, please contact the office.

A downloadable PDF of each edition is also posted in the Document Library section of the Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain (AA GB) website.

Many thanks to the staff at GSO for their work to collate and pass along information for each issue, and especially to Sharon who maintains the database and who is enormously patient in reminding me of the deadlines.

Thank you also to the volunteers – the AA members who usually gather four times a year at GSO to stuff the envelopes (and any additional notices) so that AASN can be posted on time. We are all hopeful that this valuable service can be performed again soon.

And finally, a big thanks to all contributors without whose articles and notices AASN could not be published. Your willingness to share your service related experience, strength and hope informs the Fellowship and encourages all of us – and our groups, intergroups and regions – to keep AA's Legacy of Service alive and thriving.

Erik
GSB Trustee, AASN

Archives

The Archives Subcommittee met six times during the past year. The February meeting was the only face to face meeting held during the year due the pandemic and subsequent restrictions imposed by the Government. The other 3 meetings, along with 2 ad hoc ones were held online via the zoom platform. The main issues are the same as the previous year 2019 – 2020 and are described below.

The Borthwick Institute Cataloguing and Digitisation Project: Work is continuing apace on this project. James Neill the Archivist at the Borthwick Institute has been keeping us fully updated on progress. He is still on schedule to complete this 3-year project in spite of the lockdowns and other restrictions resulting from this pandemic.

James is now over two thirds of the way through and has started to prepare the online catalogue in consultation with the Sub Committee and Board. James will continue to keep us fully updated on progress.

The Archivist Network: The Annual Network meeting was held via the Zoom platform on Friday 25 September 2020. It was a productive day although the attendance was lower than the previous year. The Sub Committee decided to hold an additional Network meeting via Zoom on 27 February 2021 so that Archivists who couldn't make the September would have the chance to participate in this one.

The Archives Subcommittee: This report would not be complete without expressing my sincerest gratitude to this hardworking and extremely supportive subcommittee. They have adapted well to the changes imposed on us all by the pandemic and subsequent restrictions. My thanks also go to our Non-Alcoholic Trustee, Thomas for his support and for agreeing to take on the role of chairing the Sub Committee meetings in the coming year. I would also like to welcome Justin T who will be joining the Archives Sub Committee in the coming year.

I must also express my sincere debt of gratitude to Jenny, Ranjan, Emma and all the Staff at GSO for all their invaluable support and help during this past and extremely challenging year.

Archives is an extremely interesting and rewarding discipline which continues to go from strength to strength thanks to the unwavering commitment, hard work and support of the Archivist Network throughout our Fellowship, the Subcommittee and the GSO staff.

Clive K
GSB Trustee, Archives

Armed Services

There were lots of things going on before lockdown we were invited to Army Health fairs and to give talks to senior ranks and give presentations to medics, alas this all fell by the wayside as the barracks fell into the total lockdown

in March 2020 but we did have some communications and we will follow them up. Here are a few of the things we will be following up on.

There is ongoing dialogue with the RFEA, in particular, Project Nova, with regards to how a cooperation can work. It is hoped to give a presentation to them over the coming months, following which AA will become one of their “tools”.

SSAFA head office is interested in cooperation. Their local offices will not engage with organisations unless it is part of head office policy – so an opportunity.

The Armed Services 12 stepper list is being updated and a plea will go out for additional volunteers as there are, currently, only about 30 members covering the whole country.

We had some presentations in the Health Departments such as Nursing staff and some frontline staff these were well received.

One of the things that has been started in the Armed Services was the Blue Light Initiative, there has been contact with the Police and the Paramedics and we have a contact for the Fire Brigade, we are expanding this to include the HM Coastguard, RNLI and Mountain Rescue but due to Covid 19 there hasn't been a lot of movement on that front, this is also become part of other disciplines.

We are offering support to Intergroups and Regions to our ASLO'S and RASLO'S.

Mike P
GSB Trustee, Armed Services

Electronic Communications

Our website has seen a busy year with the addition of a Coronavirus News page, in which we tried to keep members up to date with the frequently changing government regulations. Online meetings were new to many and we offered tips on how to set up and securely run online meetings using a few of the platforms available. As the pandemic progressed, some face-to-face meetings were able to reopen and we tried to indicate these when the format changed. All of this involved a huge effort by GSO staff and we are grateful for the many hours devoted to the task.

The format of our mobile Meeting Finder has been changed to offer a better experience for mobile phone users. The screen has been decluttered and the option now exists to list meeting by time (soonest first), or by distance, with a choice of radius of 5 miles, 10 miles etc. Preferences obviously vary depending on the type of location: rural v urban = few v many meetings.

Also impacted by the pandemic were our email-based Online Response Service and our one-to-one live ChatNow Service. Many members and newcomers used the services to check on meeting status, and/or to take the first step on the road to recovery. It is gratifying to note just how many suffering alcoholics have been helped by ORS, ChatNow and of course the Telephone Helplines, and we say a big thank you to all of the responders who give their time to run these vital services.

To preserve anonymity and to comply with GDPR, we continue to offer generic email addresses for posts at Intergroup and Region. To avoid delays with their issue, please ensure that the Confidential Directory is kept up to date using the Intergroup and Region Officer Registration Form available from the website Document Library, which includes an optional request for an aemail.org email address.

Norman B
GSB Trustee, Electronic Communications

Employment

This has been a particularly difficult year for all of us and we in Alcoholics Anonymous are not immune. There have been a few high spots in Employment.

There has been communication in various areas, the AXA insurance asked us to have presentation given to its senior management teams so we arranged to have two a week apart, the Tech was taken care of by a member by which were able to get some feedback from the presentation. The whole thing on both occasions were a success and it was enjoyed by us as well. Several people asked questions in the Q & A sessions and told us they now knew where to send anyone who asks for help.

Our Blue Light initiative has been active and we have quite a few contact details for the Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance. We are looking to expand the list to include HM Coastguard, River Police, RNLI, and Mountain Rescue, there has been quite a bit of movement in this area due to contact from the Essex area and possible contacts in the North Wales area, a presentation was given to the Serious Fraud Office.

We have been reaching out to intergroups and Regions to give support to the relevant ELO's and RELO'S. Alcohol Awareness week saw HR directors being sent summary of stories, these were shared on the Forestry England Intranet, and viewed widely. There has been contact with Equity (the Actors Union) and Unite, the BBC has been sent a pack of Literature.

A virtual Stand has been offered from the NAPO (National Association for Probation Officers) this will be attended by approximately three hundred Delegates and will run for three days, a good way of passing the message, the idea came from their own knowledge of an increase in drinking in lockdown.

We have produced a leaflet called "Now You Are an ELO" and have some pull up banners made.

We continue to look for ELO's and RELO's for all Intergroups and for Regions.

Mike P
GSB Trustee, Employment

Health

2020 was a vastly important year on the calendar for the Health Subcommittee. For the first time in five years a Health Seminar was organised with the approval of the General Service Board (GSB).

The Professional guest speakers from within various sections of medical services, treatment centres and relevant external agencies had been invited and the Health Subcommittee {HSC} members were pleased with the response.

Then with an immediacy never experienced before, accompanied with complete understanding and cooperation, the Coronavirus Pandemic enforced all activities by Health Liaison Officers {HLOS} to cease overnight.

Undaunted the Health Subcommittee members were able to assist Health Liaison Officers to adapt and find innovative ways to continue to fulfil our primary purpose to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic. Throughout lockdown in most Regions of AAGB members of the HSC and HLOS communicated with the health professionals whenever and in whatever way possible via emails, posting literature and maintaining telephone contact.

ENGLAND

The Twelve Step Parliamentary Group at Westminster met virtually and members of the Health Subcommittee along with members from other disciplines responded to the invitation to attend.

HSC member Stephen M and Daniele V, HLO for London Region South, maintained their longstanding commitment to St Georges University College Hospital, {SGUL} to deliver the Open Meeting Workshops, {OMW's} albeit virtually.

These were delivered every six weeks to the various student/junior doctors, psychiatrists, lecturers and other interested professionals. The feedback from the question and answer section was probing and thoughtful whilst the evaluations were of the highest recommendation.

In South West Region, the Cornwall Intergroup Health Liaison Officer made contact with the Director of Nursing Training at Treliske Knowledge Spa and arranged a series of virtual presentations to the preceptor nurses which have proved to be popular and well received.

By August 2020, Robin H and Bob S HSC members and working with South West Region were able to re-engage with the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to restart their delivery of OMW's. The audience included 53 foundation GP's on their psychiatric placement. This two hour session commenced with a half hour session delivered by Dr Sarah Flowers, ex Non Alcoholic Trustee {NAT} of the GSB of AAGB followed an introduction to AA by Robin H and Bob S. The Open Meeting was then delivered by seven AA members followed by a question and answer session. A further OMW of this same format was delivered in February 2021 at the Sussex Education Centre at Mill View Hospital to 200 doctors again on their psychiatric placement. Two more OMW's will be presented in 2021 at Brighton and Sussex Medical School to a further 200 first year medical students.

SCOTLAND

At Lockdown the HSC member and HLOs in Scotland were immediately denied access to all Hospitals, GP Surgeries, Treatment Centres, and University Campuses. However, the HSC member set up an Open Meeting Workshop {OMW} with ScotGEM, a graduate entry medical course offering students an opportunity to experience general practice and remote rural working. This meeting also allowed new IHLOS along with the newly appointed Trustee to the HSC, Barbara O, to take part in and experience this virtual presentation and meeting. This meeting was very highly recommended and will be repeated.

WALES

In Bangor the 'Bridging the Gap' group members of the AA open meeting at Ysbyty Gwynedd, held discussions on the way forward during lockdown. Consideration for the safety of staff and the patients was paramount and a virtual meeting was set up within weeks of lockdown.

The hospital meeting zoom codes was advertised on the AAGB website, and also with the hospital alcohol liaison officer. This information was then forwarded to the senior staff member on each ward for circulation to patients. The group had previously created a booklet of member's stories for use on the wards this now too included the virtual meeting number. The hospital are considering providing devices for the patients on the wards to access pre-recorded members shares to aid there recovery and these shares will include meeting details.

ONFERENCES & EVENTS

The Medical Council on Alcoholism invited Alcoholics Anonymous to make a presentation at its annual Symposium in November 2020, this is rescheduled to take place in November 2021. There will also be an Open Meeting Workshop running throughout the buffet lunch break, to allow delegates to pop in and out to witness a live meeting. After lunch there will be the annual Dr Max Glatt lecture delivered by Dr Peter Rice, Chair of SHAAP and Director of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh, followed by a presentation on behalf of the AAGB General Service Board by current Non Alcoholic Trustee Dr Eric Carlin on the efficacy and sustained recovery of Alcoholics Anonymous.

HEALTH SEMINAR

The now four times rescheduled Health Seminar is booked for: date to be confirmed.

HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE

The Health Subcommittee worked diligently in their primary purpose to carry the message and to support the Intergroup and Regional Health Liaison Officers throughout AAGB and English Speaking Europe. Additionally, Robin

H, this year completed updating and refreshing the Health pages of the AAGB website, the Fellowship may access this new updated information in the near future. Bob S compiled a File store of information and copies of presentations etc which hopefully will be beneficial to I/RHLOS throughout AAGB stepping into new service posts. This is a snapshot of Health Subcommittee service carried out on behalf of the Fellowship in 2020 if your Intergroup or Region is carrying out innovative work with the Health professionals, share that information with us please, or why not consider joining the Health Subcommittee, for what may well be a tsunami of enquiries from Health professionals post pandemic.

Terri S
GSB Trustee, Health

Prisons/Criminal Justice Service

There has not been much happening in this discipline due to the Pandemic no Prison Meetings, Alcohol Courts suspended and lockdowns affecting Group meetings etc.

So we had to look at various ways of carrying the message one way was Postal Sponsorship which is working quite well as Liaison Officers in HMP Verne received an award for reaching out to prisoners by mail. (Well Done).

Another way was by Zoom which was rapidly taken up, a meeting in your home or a counselling by your Officer or a talk with your Sponsor works very well.

We are working on an Electronic Training Programme for Prison Liaison & Postal Sponsorship and we are nearing completion.

The Chit System is in operation and Chits can be obtained from GSO (New chits that cover all areas).

The Sub-Committee are also looking at a new Pamphlet as well as literature for service in this discipline.

Clearance Procedures still spring up in some areas this could be due to new Contractors not knowing security procedures and new and inexperienced staff which can be easily sorted out with engaging with MOJ contacts that the Sub-Committee sent out.

We also delivered Roundabouts and Share magazines whether it be hard copy or online which was appreciated by inmates.

That concludes my report to Conference.

Pat McG
GSB Trustee, Prisons

Probation

Activities this year have been severely affected by the ongoing pandemic. Our subcommittee meetings have been successfully run via zoom and we have maintained contact with those in service by phone as well.

We have dealt with various queries and information requests and continue to manage the chit system now adapted for online meetings.

Our zonal meetings are far from assured so may have to move online. We will be liaising with the Prison Subcommittee to organise this and our presentations.

We will be having a presence at the 75th Anniversary convention to include a history of probation services in AA.

We hope the work in the probation service will continue to grow and when situations become more normal we can continue to build new relationships by which we may carry the message.

Maxine W
GSB Trustee, Probation

Public Information

Public Information (PI) operates through AA members, Groups, Intergroups, Regions and the General Service Board and its Public Information Sub Committee. Our Non Alcoholic Trustees assist with carrying the message to every area of the wider community. PI is often the first contact the public have with the fellowship.

P.I. Sub Committee

We are grateful for the inspiration and service given by Peter F., our Chair and P.I. Trustee, who has rotated out of this service.

We welcome new committee members, and their fresh enthusiasm. Public Information offers a wide and inexhaustible range of opportunities for our primary purpose. Close communication and cooperation with other service disciplines in our fellowship is a valuable joy.

Rotation does provide vacancies for committee members for this 4year service; details are regularly published in AA and PI Service news, as well as being available' with an application form, on the AA website.

The pandemic has introduced constraints and new opportunities for our Sub Committee. We do miss the face to face interaction and networking provided by committee meetings at York. Scheduled Friday pm and Saturday am quarterly meetings have been maintained online, with additional shorter interim meetings for continuity of our working programme being a practical and desirable advantage. Our annual meeting with Regional PILO's or their representatives was well attended, enhanced by the convenience of the meeting being held online, with a useful exchange of ideas and experiences.

Media Events

The formation of a Communications Sub Committee has become necessary to co-ordinate the response of the fellowship to enquiries. This committee works and meets, on occasion, with the PI Sub Committee. (PISC) The 'Comms S.C.' consists of 2 NATs and 2 Alcoholic Trustees. The NATs are asked to represent our fellowship for the media, for example in live verbal and visual interviews, without the constraints of anonymity. This committee is able to provide a consistent and unified response to enquiries receive by our General Service Office, and any other source.

The PISC is available to help with and answer any enquiries, as required. In principle, local PI opportunities are referred by personal communication to the relevant Region or Intergroup, seeking confirmation that the PI Liaison Officer, or representative, is willing and able to respond, and has support if needed.

Specific 'Press releases' are recorded on the Fellowship website; numerous newspaper and magazine articles are generated by members. Many of these, together with increasingly numerous local radio broadcasts, are recorded in the monthly PI Service News.

Advertising Campaigns

An extensive range of 'tried and tested', as well as innovative and ingenious ideas throughout the fellowship are recorded, often pictorially, in the monthly PI Service News. The PI subcommittee shares 'what works 'and 'how it works' with enthusiasm.

New PI Video – "Young People"

Produced to attract **Young People** is available on the AA Members website, home page, and click on the picture of young people with the signage New "New to AA". A press release is underway.

Forums and Workshops.

The **South Midland** and **Eastern Region Forums** were postponed and are scheduled for this June. A P.I. in action presentation is prepared.

2 Helpful workshops to update and share experiences were held online with **Continental Europe Region**. Similar workshops with groups of GB Intergroups and Regions are planned.

PI Sub Committee Work Plan

Charts with columns defining the **Item** to be addressed, the proposed **Action** and **Timeframe**, the **Start** and **Finish** dates of the action, the Sub Committee **Member** responsible and a **Progress** report, are used and updated at each meeting.

Items include implementing PI initiatives directed by the General Service Board from Conference.; liaising with and supporting other Sub Committees in identifying, developing and implementing PI opportunities; carrying our message and increasing awareness of how AA works; establishing good relations with professionals and media; creating clear and consistent messages that that differentiate AA from other organisations; supporting Regional and Intergroup PILO's, sharing resources, information and seminars; ensure good governance.

P.I.Website.

Suggestions are prepared, in anticipation of the appointment of a professional Web manager, to simplify negotiation of the **PI website** for members and the general public. An extended, extensive **Resource Library** is proposed. A 'trial module', currently available by invitation on Google Drive, has been well received in the interim.

Public Information Service News

Circulated monthly throughout our fellowship by email, it shares current and reflective P.I. experiences, event advertisements and information related to our primary purpose. 2 'extraordinary editions' were publish early in the current pandemic to share ideas and experience of how to continue carrying our message.

A new editorial team from the PI Sub Committee has now rotated into service, with refreshed ideas! All contributions welcomed, via GSO or personal communication.

Past editions are available in the P.I. archives, containing a wealth of detail of P.I. activities and experiences.

Charles R
GSB Trustee, Public Information

Safeguarding and Personal Conduct

At our last face to face Conference 2019 Conference tasked the Board with producing Safeguarding Guidance for the Fellowship.

This Document now sits with Conference and awaits your decision.

As a Board we put together a Sub-Committee of Board members to work on your request.

Much deliberation, discussion and advice was sought by the Sub-Committee and many members of the Fellowship shared their experience which helped us in our task.

At this year's Conference we will have a presentation of our Document together with recommendations from the Board to Conference on how we can continue with this work. There will be the opportunity for Conference questions and suggestions.

We suggest that the Document becomes a part of our Strategy Handbook replacing the existing section 5.

We hope that we have delivered what Conference has asked and look forward to your feedback (Document follows below).

Stevie S
GSB Trustee, Safeguarding and Personal Conduct

Safeguarding and Personal Conduct

5.0 Introduction

The aim of this guidance is to provide the background and a general framework for AA groups seeking to tackle safeguarding issues. As a Fellowship, we have always had an understanding that safeguarding is for everyone.

From *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.

The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come depend squarely upon it. We stay whole or A.A. dies. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat, our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God. His gift to us would be spent aimlessly. Back again in their cave, the alcoholic would reproach us and say, "What a great thing A.A. might have been!"

"Does this mean," some will anxiously ask, "that in A.A. the individual doesn't count for much? Is he to be dominated by his group and swallowed up in it?"

We may certainly answer this question with a loud "No!"

We believe that there isn't a fellowship on earth which lavishes more devoted care upon its individual members; surely there is none which more jealously guards the individual's right to think, talk, and act as he wishes. No AA can compel another to do anything; nobody can be punished or expelled.

Our Twelve Steps to recovery are suggestions; the Twelve Traditions which guarantee A.A.'s unity contain not a single "Don't." They repeatedly say "We ought...." but never "You must!"

5.1 History and Background

To help protect and safeguard our AA Fellowship, the General Service Board of AAGB has produced a safeguarding policy for the AA Fellowship. This guidance, the "Safeguarding Policy Document" can be accessed via the AAGB website or by contacting the General Service Office to obtain a copy.

A continuing function of the General Service Board (GSB) as custodian of the Traditions is to inform and guide the Fellowship as a whole. The General Service Board of AAGB is a charitable company and as such has a responsibility to the Charity Commission to report safeguarding incidents under active investigation by the legal authorities.

Every AA group makes an open invitation to its meetings to any member of the public having a desire to stop drinking. In terms of AA Traditions, it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that the carrying of the message to all prospective, new, or established members is done honestly and decently. We also understand that our Twelve Traditions, including that of group autonomy, do not place groups or members above the law, and that when individuals act injuriously to others, they are legally accountable. Our First Tradition reminds us that all members and groups have a responsibility for the common welfare and safeguarding of the individual member.

Every AA group should recognise and accept responsibility for dealing with unacceptable behaviour and thereby protect the Fellowship and the overall good name of AA.

Note - Many of us who join AA have a chequered past and this is only to be expected. With recovery we can be restored to society and lead a fruitful life. Society has become progressively more concerned with safeguarding the rights of the individual and these concerns have been reflected in recent changes to the law. The Protection Against Harassment Act 1997, the Human Rights Act 1998, together with the Care Act 2014, are specific examples. Most local authorities have now established Safeguarding Adults Boards and Safeguarding Children Boards.

Neither the GSB nor AA groups are regulated care providers, but Tradition One requires that we understand good safeguarding practice and the duty to care for others in the group.

The potential damage to AA's unity and reputation arising from any wrongful/criminal acts of individual members, and of course the associated publicity, is of natural concern to the Fellowship.

To be clear - No member of AA is above the Law for any offences committed prior to joining AA or any offences committed whilst attending AA. We as a Fellowship believe that "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions" (Tradition Twelve), but this does not mean that we should allow the protection of anonymity to anyone to exploit or abuse our Fellowship, or any individual member of AA.

5.2 What Constitutes a Safeguarding Issue?

Abuse and exploitation in all forms, some examples of which are listed below, need not be tolerated at any level of the structure; our members have the right to feel secure in meetings and whilst going about AA service / business.

- Violence
- Threatening Behaviour
- Spiritual Abuse
- Racial / Sectarian abuse, extremism, or radicalisation
- Sexual Harassment, abuse, and exploitation
- Bullying or harassment
- Exploitation (criminal, commercial, financial, or otherwise)
- Forced marriage
- Modern day slavery or human trafficking
- Health and safety issues
- Discrimination on any grounds of the Equality Act 2010
- Data breaches, including those under GDPR
- Offensive language or behaviour within meetings and online

- People may be abused or exploited, for example, because of their religion, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, gender, age, stature, appearance, etc.
- Abuse or exploitation may include cyber abuse, direct physical or emotional abuse, or negligent treatment.

It is important to note that one need not be the direct object of such behaviour to feel concerned. A person witnessing such an event may deem it necessary to take appropriate action to stop such behaviour.

6.0. How Should We Address Safeguarding Issues?

Tradition 12

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Groups, through their conscience meetings, should agree contingency plans to deal with safeguarding issues and be mindful of the Safeguarding Policy Document produced by the General Service Board of AAGB. It may be that groups appoint a safeguarding representative at either group, intergroup or region level - an experienced, respected AA member may be best suited to this role. As an example, any safeguarding issues that come through our on-line services will be forwarded to our General Secretary, who may wish to discuss a particular issue with the Board's Executive Committee. This will be done in a manner that anonymity will be respected.

We believe that individual welfare coupled with anonymity are central to the Fellowship's safeguarding responsibility. Any response should be consistent and supportive. It is not our place to discuss, investigate or judge. We have one primary purpose and we will always suggest recourse through trained professionals that sit within Local Authority Safeguarding Boards.

In dealing with any unacceptable behaviour the response must also be measured and reasonable, given all the circumstances. Members should not place themselves in danger physically, nor open themselves or the group to legal repercussions. If an incident cannot be defused quickly and safely, members and groups should consider involving appropriate agencies – e.g., Police. In cases of persistent inappropriate / predatory sexual / threatening / violent behaviour that prevents the carrying of the AA message, groups may refer to the following by Bill W: *“This amount of charity does not mean that we cannot exclude those who disturb meetings in progress or seriously interfere with the functioning of the group. Such people can be asked to quiet down or go elsewhere, or, to come back when they are better able to participate.”* (Letter 1969.)

6.1 Personal Action on Unacceptable Behaviour

- It is often sufficient for the recipient of behaviour they feel is inappropriate to raise the difficulty with the person creating the problem by pointing out that his/her conduct is offensive. Anyone has the right to challenge unacceptable behaviour of any other members of AA at any stage, and request that the behaviour stop.
- Support and help – it should be possible for the recipient to prepare for this conversation with the help of their sponsor or another member if they wish. Should they find it too difficult or embarrassing to raise the issue with the person creating the problem, it may be appropriate for the recipient to have the conversation with their sponsor or another member present, e.g., the group's safeguarding rep if it has one.

6.2 Group Action

- When a personal approach fails or the recipient feels that this method is inappropriate, the recipient should approach the group chairperson, or another trusted servant for help and guidance, feeling secure in the belief that any safeguarding issue will be considered as a serious matter.
- The alleged offender should be told of the complaint as soon as possible.
- If the situation is sufficiently serious or complex, it may be necessary to involve members from outside the group.
- If the group conscience decides it necessary, unacceptable behaviour may result in temporary exclusion from the group. The ultimate decision on the return of the offender rests with the group conscience.
- You may be required to report safeguarding instances to local authorities.

6.3 Group Meetings

- Members should be encouraged to choose a home group in which true bonds of fellowship lessen the need to fear behaviour they might find offensive.
- Group conscience meetings should be held regularly (many groups hold them every three months at, say, the first meeting in March, June, September, and December) plus additional conscience meetings as they become necessary.
- Where safeguarding issues (as described in 5.1 and including verbal abuse, discriminatory jokes, disparaging remarks, etc.) occur in a group situation, members in recovery have a responsibility to ask for the offending behaviour to stop.
- An explanation of the dangers of unacceptable behaviour in AA should be given at the time, or at the end of the meeting.
- Offensive behaviour should not be condoned. Failure to challenge and stop inappropriate behaviour implies that the offender has permission to repeat the offensive behaviour and encourages others to follow suit.

6.4 Group / Intergroup / Region / Service Meetings

Our collective experience has highlighted instances where individual members and groups have actively tried to dictate the conscience of service meetings through abusive and threatening behaviour.

When these instances have occurred, experience shows that it is perfectly acceptable for the Chair to stop the meeting, remind all attending of our primary purpose and our need to allow God, as we understand him, to express himself through our group conscience.

There may be a need to involve the appropriate authorities to assist – e.g., Police.

6.5 Primary Purpose / Service in Prisons / Probation / Social Services / Hospitals etc.

Organisations would expect that any Member of AA attending Prisons, Hospitals, or any institution requiring security clearance to abide by the rules of the organisation and follow their safeguarding guidelines. Should groups be asked to introduce a chit-type system for specific offenders, please make sure that both safeguarding and anonymity are considered. Guidance on the chit system can be found in our *Service Handbook* section 9:3.2.

In addition to the above we suggest that each service within AA should have its own safeguarding guidance within the terms of reference.

6.6 Safeguarding Children and Juveniles

There are times when children or juveniles will attend AA open meetings or AA conventions. It is the responsibility of the Group members or Committee to agree a safeguarding policy, preferably before they are in attendance. Parental responsibility should be paramount.

Should there be a need for child-care at any of our conventions, committees should give consideration as to how this is set up.

If there are safeguarding issues involving children the Group Secretary (or any group member) should act in accordance with the GSB's current Safeguarding Policy Document and should consider whether it is necessary to report their concerns to the local Safeguarding Children Board.

6.7 Twelfth Stepping and Sponsoring of Minors

Minors are defined as children and young people under the age of 18, although this legal definition may vary from country to country.

If, however, we as a Fellowship use it as a guideline, we can better ensure the safeguarding of these younger members.

We want to help minors who believe they may have a drink problem, but we must respect the law and there will need to be compromises made by both AA members and the minors seeking our help.

When asked to help a minor we will need parental or guardian consent. This must be explained from the outset. In the law written consent is recommended.

Guidance should be sought from the group, intergroup or regional safeguarding representative.

This guidance is offered following changes in the law affecting minors and vulnerable adults and supersedes that issued by the General Service Board in March 2007. It refers to all who come into AA including minors and vulnerable adults.

- As members of self-regulating groups, AA members do not require DBS or Disclosure Scotland checks for twelfth stepping or sponsoring. This has been confirmed by the Independent Safeguarding Authority and the Scottish Government, following discussions with the General Service Board's solicitors.
- Nonetheless, the spirit of the law should be borne in mind, and AA members should acknowledge the duty of respect that is due to one another.
- Sponsors should have substantial sobriety and be aware of the duty of care towards others.
- Contact with new members (including minors and vulnerable adults) to be conducted by two members – preferably a man and a woman.
- Any meeting with a new member would be best held in a public place, and where appropriate the date, time and place reported in advance to the Group Secretary.
- Smaller groups and those in rural areas may find it useful to contact other groups in the area to pool resources for twelfth stepping.
- If members are able and willing to do so, they may inform the Group Secretary of any DBS or Police checks they hold.

Resources:

Hints and Suggestions for Twelfth Steppers
Questions and Answers on Sponsorship

Additional information:

Please refer to 6.5 for guidance on visiting schools / prisons (including Young Offenders Institutes) / hospitals, etc.

7.0 The New Member

Often when a new member joins AA, a feeling of hope and the lifting of despair can lead to thinking that every AA member has their best interests at heart. We need to make the new member aware that AA is like any other part of society; many in AA will offer us great support, but some may not.

7.1 Sponsorship

Within AA good sponsorship can be a vital for both our recovery and service. We have a pamphlet, *Sponsorship Your Questions Answered*, which can be helpful. We suggest that groups have this readily available on their literature table. It has been suggested that a man for a man, and a woman for a woman works best. Today we recognise that sexual attraction, regardless of sexuality or gender identity, can be problematic and may create a safeguarding issue.

Good sponsorship involves making the sponsee aware that sponsors are not trained counsellors. All we have is our own experience of recovery from alcoholism. A sponsor should always make the sponsee aware of the importance of personal confidentiality and trust. Concerning Step Five, all, or any part of this can be taken with whomever the sponsee feels most comfortable, and that need not be the sponsor.

As individuals we decide whether we are alcoholic, and again, we as alcoholics choose our own sponsors. Some groups offer temporary sponsorship to new members, which can be helpful in the beginning. However, shared experience has shown some instances where this has led to groups controlling their members.

7.2 AAGB Staff Members / Public / Volunteers

As a Fellowship all members should be aware that AAGB staff have the same rights and responsibilities as AA members regarding safeguarding. No AA staff member need tolerate abuse or exploitation, of any form, and none should be tolerated from AA staff members

Regarding members of the public encountering AA, be that at Public or Open AA meetings, or for any other reason, they are entitled to the same level of safeguarding as any member of AA.

8.0 About Behaviour

All forms of abuse and exploitation being acted out, including violence, sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, and offensive behaviour are negative and unacceptable. Such forms of discrimination conflict with the AA Traditions and our way of life in recovery. All such behaviour needs to be taken seriously, and sober AA members must deal with it as it arises. Whether or not the behaviour is intended to be hurtful is irrelevant, the important point is that it is offensive. AA members, within their groups, need to recognise the power of their behaviour in their relationships with other members of the Fellowship, and with potential newcomers. Members in recovery will understand that our behaviour influences others. Recognising that we can control our behaviour, we have a responsibility to set a good example.

Members have a right to expect that they will be safe at a group meeting. It is the responsibility of the group holding the meeting, through its members and leaders, to ensure that no member or visitor is subjected to, or experiences unacceptable behaviour of any kind.

8.1 Personal Conduct Matters

The final report of the General Service Conference 1979 (Committee 1, Attraction by the Individual) contained the following statement:

“The importance of the individual member in drawing the suffering alcoholic to the way of recovery was stressed. By guarding his/her own behaviour, morals, dress, ethics, tolerance, sympathy, compassion and understanding of all human beings [a member] carries the message or leaves a slur on the name of AA.”

Recommendations:

- Treat other people with respect and dignity.
- Recognise that newcomers to the Fellowship may be severely damaged victims.
- Don't travel alone with newcomers of the opposite sex.
- As a newcomer, don't travel alone with an existing member of the opposite sex.
- Don't Twelfth Step or home visit newcomers or potential newcomers on your own.
- When making home visits, leave details of where you are going with a trusted friend or relative. Make sure this person knows when to expect your return.
- Be aware of the dangers of romantic attraction in sponsorship (See Section 7.1: Sponsorship).
- Never respond to offensive behaviour in a like manner.

Should someone speak to you about your unacceptable behaviour, listen to his or her criticism, think about what they have said, and respond appropriately. At a later stage you may even wish to thank them for pointing it out to you!

Background Material

Please see Appendix 1 at end of the handbook

Conclusion

“It is an historical fact that practically all groupings of men and women tend to become more dogmatic; their beliefs and practices harden and sometimes freeze. This is a natural and almost inevitable process. All people must, of course, rally to the call of their convictions, and we of AA are no exception.

Moreover, all people should have the right to voice their convictions. This is good principle and good dogma. But dogma also has its liabilities. Simply because we have convictions that work well for us, it becomes very easy to assume that we have all the truth. Whenever this brand of arrogance develops, we are certain to become aggressive; we demand agreement with us; we play God. This isn't good dogma; it's very bad dogma. It could be especially destructive for us of AA to indulge in this sort of thing.

Newcomers are approaching AA at the rate of tens of thousands yearly. They represent almost every belief and attitude imaginable. We have atheists and agnostics. We have people of nearly every race, culture and religion. In AA we are supposed to be bound together in the kinship of a common suffering.

Consequently, the full individual liberty to practice any creed or principle or therapy whatever should be a first consideration for us all. Let us not, therefore, pressure anyone with our individual or even our

collective views. Let us instead accord each other the respect and love that is due to every human being as he tries to make his way toward the light. Let us always try to be inclusive rather than exclusive; let us remember that each alcoholic among us is a member of AA, so long as he or she so declares."

Bill W, Toronto International Convention, 1965.

Suggestions at Group Level

Your group conscience meeting may consider discussing and agreeing upon a clear statement for display, for example:

This Group does not tolerate:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Discriminatory Behaviour
- Or any other form of abuse or exploitation.

Personal Conduct Matters!

**Bad Language often
offends... But its absence
never does**

Tradition Eleven

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

This Group Adheres to GBS's AAGB Safeguarding

Guidance

Telephones

Terms of Reference for the National Telephone Sub-committee (NTSC)

To maintain the existing telephone system, to enable the suffering alcoholic access to a local contact through a single national telephone number, in a manner which is efficient, effective and economic.

To keep the use and cost of the system under constant review.

To be responsible for all changes to the system and to liaise with the system providers following consultation with Regions.

To investigate any new technology which may be beneficial to the Fellowship's telephone service.

To keep constant review of the facilities offered by other service providers.

The committee is a sub-committee of the Board and will be chaired by the Trustee with responsibility for the telephone service. Membership will normally consist of a minimum of four and a maximum of eight members drawn from participating Regions, who are suitably experienced to participate in committee functions. Where possible this will recognise geographical spread.

Membership of the Committee will be for a period of four years, allowing one year for sponsorship, thus the committee will be increased during sponsorship periods.

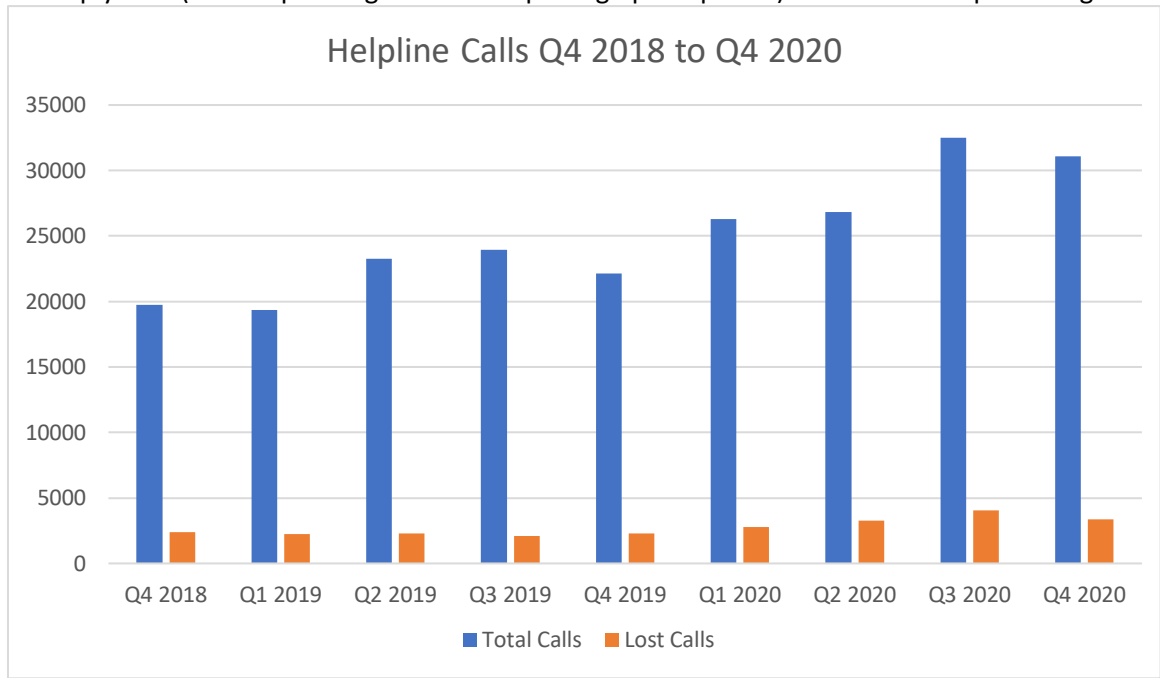
The subcommittee has continued in its work, supporting Regional Telephone Liaison Officers (RTLOs) and TLOs, especially in the time of disruption to the normal functioning of AA. Office based helplines had to stop and were replaced with home-based systems. This took longer in some areas than others but the ability to reroute 0800 calls allowed to load to be shared nationwide. Overall, the speed of adaptation was remarkable. One example was the implementation of a "virtual" 12step service set up to fulfil the gap left when face to face meeting became impossible.

In November 2019 a major restructuring of the Scottish helplines was completed, and now Scotland, (as has been true in Wales for some time) has a national service.

During the course of 2020 the NTSC has extensively explored the possibilities of transferring the 0800-helpline number to another provider. This was triggered by GSO's move from BT and our terms of reference to seek the most efficient, effective and economic provision of the national number. More than one option was developed and tested but in the end the decision was made to remain with our current provider, BT.

Telephone administrators (i.e. RTLOs) and responders can make good use of the various features of the AA website. The 'where to find' now has details of local helpline telephone numbers for every meeting. Anyone ringing will be put through to a responder in their locality.

In the final quarter of 2020, there were according to BT statistics 31,099 calls – over 2,300 a week, a 40% increase over the year before. Given the times we are living in this increase is not surprising but what is outstanding is that the multitude of Telephone responders and 12steppers have risen to the challenge. Lost calls, including Ring Tone No Reply calls (a caller phoning and no one picking up the phone) remain a small percentage of total calls.



There are no accurate figures for how many of these calls are from the still suffering alcoholic. However, looking at those areas that log different types of calls, a reasonable estimate would be 800 still suffering alcoholics are phoning the helpline each week. It is worth pointing out that the majority of the RTNR calls were under 10 seconds giving little time for the responder to pick up.

The NTSC produces a newsletter twice yearly and in August this year we have a Telephone seminar, to which all RTLOs and TLOs are invited, during this event we will be looking at what we do and how we can do it better.

The Helpline depends on the tens of RTLOs, the scores of TLOs, the hundreds of Telephone Responders, and the thousands of Twelve Steppers. The Service they all provide is essential, valuable, rewarding and is always in need of more people coming forward to be involved at all levels.

I end this report with a quote from the 1997 conference:

“AA speaks with a special voice. It is the voice of experience, understanding and compassion. It is a voice which talks to silence, to fear, to sobbing hopelessness or shouting anger - it is the first and only voice the newcomer should hear.”

Still very true today.

Jonathan P
 GSB Trustee, NTSC

Young People

I would like to start by thanking Amanda S (my fellow trustee) for sharing her experience when she was sponsoring me into this role, and for her kindness and understanding. As a sub-committee we are thrilled that she is now the GSB Chair-elect

We said goodbye to 3 sub-committee members who rotated out in March, leaving Mark D, Helen Y and Craig B and in November 2020 Anna D and Simon B joined us. The YPLO role is still relatively new but several Regions and Intergroups have YP posts filled.

Since March 2020 all our sub-committee meetings have been on Zoom and we discussed various topics, one of them being pamphlets aimed at young people. We are looking at updating them and making them more relevant to today's young people and will present our ideas to the Literature Sub-committee after this conference. We have also looked at safeguarding and our terms of reference and this is ongoing.

In 2019 we were tasked by Conference to take Roadshows round the country to encourage young people into service. Our first Roadshow was held in Winchester in November 2019. Our second Roadshow was to have been held in Glasgow in June 2020. Owing to the Corona situation this was rolled forward to November 2020, and then we hopeful for March 2021 and now - watch this space! The YPLO role is open to those who came to AA at the age of 30 or younger. Their experience of coming to AA at a young age and what they went through to get here can be invaluable when talking to schoolchildren, university students and young people in all walks of life. Young people can work with all the other liaison officers and hopefully all Intergroups and Regions, and can put their experience and enthusiasm to good use. The sub-committee was invited to a YP Workshop held by Midlands Region. Helen gave a very informative report and took part in the subsequent Q&A session with Craig.

Just after Conference 2019 new young persons posters and a video were designed and accepted by the sub-committee to be taken to Conference 2020 for their approval. As the posters and the video will be so useful in our primary purpose work the conference steering committee (the conference between conferences) felt able to approve these in November 2020. I am sure most of you will have seen the video on the GB AA website. It has been used widely, with very good feed-back, and AA New Zealand have requested permission to use it. The posters are in line with the video and can be obtained from GSO. I would like to thank the conference steering committee for allowing these to go out and be put to the use for which they were intended.

In November 2020 we held the Region YPLO workshop. As it was on Zoom it gave us the opportunity to invite Intergroup YPLOs. The workshop was well -attended and an enjoyable day. All sub-committee members had a role in the proceedings. Amanda came and talked about the YP role in the structure. The PI sub-committee joined us to discuss how they could help disseminate information about young people in AA. Nico (London Region North YPLO) shared his "YPLO welcome pack". This is full of information and ideas to help those getting started in the role. Nico was happy for this to be shared, and this document is in the filestore.

Stevie, our vice-chair and chair of the 75th anniversary sub-committee, talked about the hope that lots of young people would involved in service at that convention. I have the privilege of representing young people on the committee for that convention.

This has been an extremely challenging year for everyone in the Fellowship. Our young people have embraced the opportunities afforded by Zoom and other online platforms. Some of things they have done are:

1. Online talks to schools and universities and other organisations involved with young people.
2. Helped other LOs with presentations and talks.
3. Reached out to the Polish community.
4. Helped set up online meeting guides.
5. Created a YP meeting finder.
6. Created and shared with fellow AAs "How to do service during the Covid 19 pandemic".
7. Organised workshops on how to run meetings online and FtoF during the pandemic.
8. Organised Step, Tradition and Service workshops.
9. Lots of YP conventions have been organised, some with evening entertainment. Watching 100+ people dance in their homes in various countries is entertainment in itself!

(All these events have been totally inclusive, welcoming people of all ages.)

Sandi A
GSB Trustee, Young People

Roundabout

Introduced to my new service role as chair of AAGB's Scottish Fellowship Roundabout magazine at the annual workshop in Glasgow in March 2020 I was filled with enthusiasm. Little did I know that the Higher Power had other ideas in the form of Coronavirus. March 2020 was to be the last live meeting of the Roundabout Subcommittee of that year and this year to date. Never daunted the editorial team who make up the subcommittee did not miss a beat and with the support of the General Service Board the next issue, April 2020, was uploaded as a free PDF download on the AA Website. This allowed members to print off free copies and give a copy to those members who lacked access. Additionally free printed copies were made available to Service Liaison Officers for distribution to prisons and other institutions. The Roundabout Subcommittee met regularly by virtual meetings throughout the pandemic and held a well-attended Workshop for Roundabout Liaison Officers etc in October 2020.

A review of the Terms of Reference and the Roles and Responsibilities of the service posts within the Subcommittee identified a Link Liaison post which could engage with and provide support to Intergroup and Regional Liaison Officers. {as advertised in Roundabout and AASN}. Following on from this appointment the temporary Subcommittee Liaison Officer was invited by several Intergroups and Regions to deliver a presentation prior to their respective assemblies. The positive feedback from these presentations was encouraging.

The Subcommittee also welcomed a new Assistant Editor to the editorial team and in addition to her role in shadowing the Editor she has undertaken a thorough review of the Roundabout magazine Web pages, including implementing a regular analysis of the articles and interviews online to monitor and review Fellowship feedback.

The editorial team themed the 12 issues of the 2020 Roundabout Magazine and these twelve issues are now printed and available for members to buy in the form of the 2020 yearbook. The last yearbook to be printed was in 1994 and it is hoped that this new edition will form a reflective archive for members of the future. The feedback in favour from these themed issues encouraged the Editorial Team to continue with these themed issues throughout 2021

Roundabout magazine will have a room at the 75th Anniversary Celebrations in Leeds in June 2022 where the Roundabout 2020 Yearbook will be available to purchase by the wider Fellowship.

The 70th Anniversary issue of the first ever edition of Roundabout Magazine was printed in February 2021. This was an enormous task for the magazine editorial team who produced a very poignant and memorable issue and I am certain that whilst the comparison between the 1951 first edition and the 2021 edition may be remarkably diverse in physical appearance both editions equally fulfil the Roundabout Magazine primary purpose to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

The Roundabout Subcommittee members are constantly reminded by members of the Fellowship of the important part the magazine has made in their recovery and for many a newcomer it was the first tool in their spiritual toolkit and how in the early days of sobriety they could read and identify with a short article when a chapter was daunting.

The Fellowship in Scotland consider Roundabout Magazine to be their 'meeting in print' and it has been an important and vital part of sustaining recovery during this past difficult year. One newcomer wrote in an article "when I am having a bad day I pick up a copy of Roundabout and I just read it. I think I have a copy in every room of my house! Having the magazine on the AAGB website has been a real blessing these last few month".

Terri S
GSB Trustee, Roundabout

Share

During the pandemic our fellowship magazine has proved an invaluable aid to many in isolation. Both readers and contributors have expressed gratitude for the continued availability of Share made possible via the free internet copies as a supplement to hard copy subscriptions.

Due to the lockdown AA venues were closed and uncollected copies of Share lay on the floor of many a church hall. This problem was discussed by the Board, subcommittee and our trustee of the other fellowship magazine Roundabout. We concluded the best way forward was to make both magazines freely available on the website whilst also endeavouring to post hard copy to subscribers.

After nearly a year the subject of availability was revisited and it was decided to end free copy and have a 50p downloadable edition on the website.

We are grateful for all involved in overcoming the many challenges of the recent times to ensure the continuity of our Share magazine.

We have enjoyed some new additions to our content ie The Interview, which has proven popular and lately contributors have increased.

The lovely calendar and useful AA diary were produced on time and have sold well under the circumstances.

COVID allowing, we will hold a Share seminar in July at York and have invited Roundabout participation. We hope to welcome many intergroup and regional service reps and any others interested in serving the fellowship in any of the related positions.

As I enter my final year as trustee for Share I must express sincere gratitude for the privilege of working with such a dedicated team.

We look forward to seeing you all at the 75th Anniversary Convention 2022 where we will have a display including the history of our magazine through the decades!

Maxine W
GSB Trustee, Share

National Conventions

Northern

Sadly, both the Convention in 2020 and 2021 had to be cancelled because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The committee have met regularly over the year to keep the situation under review.

A decision has been made to defer the Convention until March 2022

Barbara O
GSB Trustee, NNCC

Southern

The Southern National Convention was cancelled last year and a few people rotated off of the committee and we are still trying to recruit from various regions.

We are still looking for a new venue for the convention to take place as the Mill Rythe will be shut for renovation.

We have a few vacancies to be filled internally, we are still in dialogue with Sandy Balls Holiday Park, New Forest regarding this venue.

In our January 2021 meeting it was discussed as to whether we could hold a viable hybrid or a full Zoom meeting, this was put on the backburner until our next meeting in March to see what happens with the vaccine rollout and the way the lockdown is still in play.

Mike P
GSB Trustee, SNCC

Scottish

The current situation in Scotland sees us short of 2 Trustees, Scotia and South West Scotland, in the Interim I have been asked to help out and represent the Board with the Scottish Convention Committee.

It would be fair to say that the Committee work very well together and require very little in the way of assistance.

January's meeting of the Committee was cancelled and the hope is that come March we will have a clearer picture as to how to proceed given the current situation.

Stevie S
GSB Trustee, SNCC

Welsh

In 2019, once again Wales and Borders Region offered a very warm welcome to all those who attended the convention. The theme was 'Sobrwydd - tiath gyffrous' 'Sobriety – an exciting journey'. The venue as usual, The Metropole Hotel, Temple Street, Llandrindod Wells, Powys which is in the beautiful heart of Wales.

We didn't have quite the same number of people attending compared with 2018 but those who did come were treated to a well organised and much appreciated convention. People came from all parts of the UK and Ireland and we welcomed old friends and new visitors alike.

The meetings were very well attended, and the speakers were, as always, lively, eloquent and entertaining, in carrying the message. A Welsh Language meeting, also well attended, was held and was well received by both Welsh and English (there was simultaneous translation) listeners. Come and Go meetings ran throughout Saturday.

A workshop on Archives run by John M. was a success and builds on the excellent work done by him and other Archivists in Wales to not only retain our history but have it so well displayed.

Sadly the 29th Convention in 2020 had to be cancelled but the theme "Sobrwydd – Cryfder gyda'n gilydd" "Sobriety – Together stronger" will be retained for the Convention this year. Everything is in place (all being well) for this year's Convention – 4th to the 6th of June 2021.

The venue is as always, the Metropole Hotel who have frozen prices and will honour all previous bookings that have not already been refunded.

Virtual Flyers have already been sent out and to Share, Service news and the website.

Bookings have already been made – don't delay book today!

Jonathan P.
GSB Trustee, WNCC

Parliamentary Events

House of Commons

For all those who do not know there is a House of Commons meeting every year this is to be my first House of Commons Meeting as we did not have one last year because of Covid 19. I am one of the two Trustees and the chair of the committee, and grateful for the experience and the privilege. This year is going to be a bit different as well as we will be doing via Zoom.

We have a MP sponsor this year which will be Caroline Ansell the MP for Eastbourne; she will introduce us. We have had a good response to our registration and we will be sending out more invites soon, the Presentation will be on May 11th.

We have speakers lined up from Public Health England and a Non-Alcoholic Trustee for our guest speakers and two people sharing their Experience, Strength and Things are now falling into place and the excellent work done by the committee has made this happen.

Mike P
GSB Trustee, Westminster HOC Committee

Scottish Parliament

In March 2020 Alcoholics Anonymous were invited to set up an information stand on the concourse leading to a prestigious Art Exhibition planned for the members area of the Scottish Parliament. This would have been a wonderful opportunity to carry the message on a one to one with MSP's and invited guests. Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus pandemic the exhibition was cancelled. However, it is hoped the Art Exhibition and Alcoholics Anonymous' s invitation will be reinstated post pandemic.

The Annual Presentation delivered each year in October was also cancelled. Negotiations are already underway to prepare for the event in October 2021. At this early stage in the process a working group will be set up with members represented from the five Scottish Regions. It is envisaged the presentation theme will complement Alcoholics Anonymous' s 75th Anniversary Celebration Convention planned for June 2022 in Leeds.

Terri S
GSB Trustee, Scottish Parliament Event

Welsh Assembly

The last event took place at the "The Pierhead", Welsh Assembly Campus Cardiff. Tuesday 12th November 2019.

It opened with the Chair of the Board, Nigel P., making a short speech followed by Caroline Jones AM for her opening remarks. Caroline had done her research and knew the history of AA which she was happy to share with all. She was then followed by the Trustee for Wales and Borders, Jonathan P. who gave a talk about what AA is and does.

The P.I. and Health videos were shown and Andrew, one of our new NAT's, gave a talk on what it is like for a non-alcoholic to be part of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We then had two AA speakers who shared their "experience, strength and hope" "Bethan W" and "Joanna W". They did a wonderful job – the honesty of their experience, the braveness of their strength and the trust in their hope. They really had the audience listening.

The presentation ended with a Q&A session that took us just past the official finish time. A buffet lunch was provided, and AA members mingled with the guests. Yet again the event was appreciated by all who took part.

Since that time the 2020 event was cancelled, and we are now waiting on the result of Senedd elections in May this year before we can arrange the next Assembly Presentation.

Jonathan P.
Trustee, Welsh Assembly