

# Board Reports

to

# Conference 2024

## AA Service News

AA Service News (AASN) has grown in size and quantity. At the last count, it was carrying the message to 4000+ alcoholics in print, and to 2000 alcoholics digitally, and will continue to do so on a quarterly basis to individuals, groups, intergroups and regions.

It helps meet AA's primary purpose by carrying the message across the whole Fellowship. It comprises your stories about the service you carry out daily across the Fellowship.

Also included are:

- Conference questions and recommendations in the winter and summer editions respectively
- Regular messages from the General Secretary
- Board meeting bullet points
- Job adverts for sub-committees
- Parliamentary events across the UK
- Regular updates on how the website project is unfolding

There are also occasional requests for your shares on particular topics for AA pamphlets, such as Mental Health, Sponsorship into Service etc. Given the increased number of applications for sub-committee vacancies, we know you are reading AASN, and we are delighted. We have tried to make it attractive to pick up and read!

Your thoughts on improvements are always welcome, along with your articles on service and of course your pictures. Remember, AASN is all about **your** service! As ever, we thank you for your excellent articles and pictures and making AASN an interesting, informative and enjoyable read.

Jo F, GSB Trustee

## Anniversary Sub Committee

### Terms of Reference for AAGB Anniversary Events

#### Background

AAGB has marked our history by holding an Anniversary event every 25 years with the last one being our 75<sup>th</sup> held in Leeds in June 2022.

At our Conference 2023 the 75<sup>th</sup> Committee were asked to produce Terms of Reference as guidance for any future events being held in 25 years, or should the Fellowship choose to hold Anniversary events every 5 or 10 years.

It would be foolish of the 75<sup>th</sup> Committee to produce definitive Terms of Reference for any future event therefore we would suggest that any future Committee use the following content how they see fit.

Our 75<sup>th</sup> Convention was organised by an elected Sub-Committee working in conjunction with the GSB (General Service Board) and GSO (General Service Office).

For clarity it is important that we all understand the status of the Anniversary Sub-Committee.

The Fellowship having made its decision via Conference asks the GSB to organise our Anniversary events.

The Anniversary Sub-Committee becomes a Sub-Committee of the GSB and will be subject to the same criteria as any GSB Sub-Committee. Our Sub-Committees are financed annually by the contributions of the Fellowship and provide projected budgets to our GSB finance Committee.

All Sub-Committees report their progress and expenditure annually to the Fellowship via Conference; thus, our Anniversary Convention is run by our Sub-Committee in the same manner.

The committee costs for the weekend of the convention are part of the event costs and reported as such within the fiscal year that the event takes place.

So, our Fellowship via Conference asked the GSB to select a committee made up of members from our Regions to organise the event.

Interviews were held and a committee of 6 members, who had all served on one of our National Convention Committees were selected (by the Nominations Committee) with each taking on various roles and responsibilities.

As a result of the interviews the committee included the following skill sets:

- Web and Graphic Design (Audio Visual content)
- Finance
- Health and Safety
- Procurement AA literature (merchandise)
- Project Management
- Administration

They were joined by the Vice-Chair and the Hon. Treasurer of the GSB.

## **Future Anniversary Conventions**

### **Purpose**

Our Anniversary Convention is an opportunity for AAGB to come together for a weekend of Unity Service and Recovery. It ought to be an event where - Who we are and What we do are our focus- both locally to where the event is taking place and nationally.

We need also consider the diverse nature of our Fellowship that is reflected by our approach of inclusivity - Our Primary Purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

The Unity achieved in planning such events is of immense value to the Fellowship. Sharing with other Alcoholics from across AAGB and beyond is of immeasurable benefit to the development of AAGB...as well as our own personal Recovery.

We believe the success of any Anniversary event is based on how well we fulfil our obligation to the still suffering Alcoholic whilst developing the friendships that help us to achieve that aim.

We have concluded this document with a list of projects that were part of our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention weekend which reflect how well we fulfilled the above aims.

### **Committee selection**

It may be that for future events the Fellowship decides to select a Sub-Committee following the method used for the 75<sup>th</sup>. Alternately a Region or Regions could put forward a proposal to run the event, or our National Conventions could rotate responsibility for running the event. We suggest that the Fellowship via Conference should make this decision.

It would be best if prospective Sub-Committee members have a minimum of 5 years continuous sobriety. All members of the 75<sup>th</sup> Committee had served on a National Convention Committee and had attended Conference. We therefore suggest that Conference and our GSB consider this when selecting Sub-Committee members.

Sub-Committee members will serve until the convention is over and review meetings have taken place post-convention.

We would suggest that Fellowship Sub-Committee members strive to have regular attendance at all Sub-Committee meetings, if a Sub-Committee member fails to attend two consecutive meetings, they will be deemed to have resigned their post – individual circumstances may be considered.

Should you be considering joining a future committee the time commitment required for members of the Sub-Committee based on our experience will be in the region of 600 to 800 hours over the course of the event.

GSB Trustee Sub-Committee members will be subject to normal board rotation and their successors may attend committee meetings as part of their sponsorship into the role – they will be non-voting until rotation is complete.

Only Sub-Committee members will have a vote.

Members of the GSB may attend Sub-Committee meetings by invitation.

All Sub-Committee members to be assigned an 'aamail.org' email address for all relevant communication.

## **The role and responsibilities of the Sub-Committee / GSB / GSO**

### **Planning Stage**

Once the method and selection of the Sub-Committee has been decided we would suggest the following as good guidance.

We would recommend that all Committee members familiarise themselves with Annex A- Check list for National Conventions on page 179 of our Structure Handbook.

The Sub-Committee will meet quarterly. We would suggest that initially these meetings can be....  
2 Face to Face meetings with 2 on-line meetings.

The frequency of the meetings will increase as the event gets closer, and we would leave the decisions around these up to the Trusted Servants that form the Sub-Committee.

It may be that the Sub-Committee need additional support to add to the 8 initial members, again this will be at the recommendation of our Sub-Committee Trusted Servants and would require Board approval.

We suggest the Sub-Committee review all financial spreadsheets from the 75<sup>th</sup> Convention which will help with key timeline decisions, along with the minutes of the 75<sup>th</sup> Committee which have been archived at GSO.

The Committee should select and agree the venue based upon:

- Projected attendance numbers
- Cost and size, with preferably 2 to 3 options being considered
- A venue that has capacity for large main meetings accommodating all members

- A venue that has a variety of meeting rooms for additional meetings/service events
- We would suggest that cities or large metropolitan areas are the preferred option
- Consider transport links
- Variety of available accommodation.
- Consideration should be given to requirements of sub-committee project works as other venues may be required – see [below](#) Projects.

Our Conference for the 75th tasked the Committee to Aim to be self-supporting. Bearing in mind that a major part of our Anniversary Convention ought to be Service as carried out by all Board Sub-Committees we take this to mean that the cost for the venue hire together with associated costs for the weekend including the Committee expenses should be the Committees consideration. Whilst the 75<sup>th</sup> fell below this aim we believe that our pre Covid projections were spot on, and we would have delivered an event that met with the aims.

## **Inclusivity**

Consideration needs to be given to our Whole fellowship when planning meetings over and above our main meetings.

For example, we had a large contingent of Polish speaking members, a large attendance of LGBTQ members and a large Persons of Colour group. Meetings were arranged for all these groups at Leeds Museum.

Having selected a suitable venue, the Sub-Committee should prepare a projected budget.

Ticket pricing matters to the Fellowship ...as we would like as many members as possible to be able to afford to attend.

Service work carried out by Sub-Committee for the 75<sup>th</sup> which could have been outsourced, Website, Registration Ticketing and Health + Safety helped in keeping the costs down.

As an additional benefit this also meant that the Fellowship were always dealing with a member of the Fellowship rather than a third party which helped protect the anonymity of those members.

The Sub-Committee will have responsibility for a website to support the event.

The website will be linked to the Board website for payments, as Conference approved.

The Sub-Committee will be responsible for Registration. Once the website is up and running the Sub-Committee may wish to communicate with the Fellowship for various aspects of the Anniversary Convention.

Our Fellowships Data is confidential, whilst registration enables us to communicate directly via text and email, we should seek permission from each individual member via an opt out box at time of Registration. Guidance on data protection (GDPR) must be adhered to and this guidance will be provided by GSO.

The Sub-Committee will decide if merchandise for a one-off Anniversary event will be made available. - in line with current Conference recommendations.

The Sub-Committee will be responsible for providing Safeguarding guidance to cover the event.

The Sub-Committee will provide quarterly reports to the GSB and will help support the Board in the preparation of the annual Conference report.

The Sub-Committee will have responsibility for the weekend Programme. Note for the 75<sup>th</sup> no expenses were paid to any Chairs/Speakers and all who attended bought their own tickets with the exception being our VIP guests. (VIP guests come from various professions, together with members of the public).

For the 75<sup>th</sup> All main stage Speakers were recommended by their Regions and meeting Chairs were the Chairs of our National Conventions.

The Sub-Committee will have responsibility for all aspects of Health and Safety.

### **GSB AND GSO**

The aim of the GSB/GSO will be to support the Sub-Committee in achieving its aims with all GSB Sub-Committees actively participating.

It will be the responsibility of GSB/GSO to work with the Sub-Committee to engage with the Region and local Intergroups who are located near the Convention venue.

It will be the responsibility for GSB/GSO to agree with the Sub-Committee the various projects that will take place both in the lead up to /and during the weekend of the Convention.

The GSB/GSO will be the one link between the Fellowship and the Sub-Committee via Conference.

### **More about Finance**

Anniversary events are financed directly by the GSB / GSO who are held accountable by the Charities Commission, with our Management Accountant open to Audit at any time. Therefore, we need to have a line of direct accountability to our GSO Management Accountant. To achieve this, we would recommend that a working group that includes our Hon. Treasurer, our Committee Treasurer and our Management Accountant are put in place.

The role of the Management Accountant on this working group will be advisory.

This working group will be accountable to the Sub-Committee and have areas of responsibility that have been agreed by the Sub-Committee, GSB and GSO.

Financial control over the weekend running of the Anniversary event should be managed by our Sub-Committee Treasurer as lead.

### **Sub-Committee Service Positions Roles**

**Note the Sub-Committee Chair, Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and Sub-Committee Treasurer form the Sub-Committee Executive.**

#### **Executive Committee**

- To put in place insurance to cover all aspects of the event
- Have responsibility for any safeguarding requirements that may arise
- Have responsibility for all Risk Assessments relating to the event
- Have responsibility for liaising with venue management regarding health and safety – this may be delegated to a Sub-Committee member
- The Executive will have authority to make decisions on behalf of the Sub-Committee should it be required

#### **Sub-Committee Chair**

It is the responsibility of the Sub-Committee Chair to set the Agenda for Committee meetings.

To assist and encourage all committee members to best fulfil their commitments.  
To work as the liaison between the Board together with the Board Sub-Committees.  
To have responsibility encouraging liaison with local Intergroups and Regions for both the Sub-Committee and the other GSB Sub-Committees.  
To liaise with local authorities, Tourist board, council, and police.

### **75<sup>th</sup> Chair experience**

The role of the Sub-Committee Chair was both a privilege and a challenging role. It required a dedication of time and a willingness to engage with the whole Fellowship across Groups, Intergroups, Regions and all Sub-Committees. Understanding that the Anniversary event was an opportunity for our Fellowship to serve with Unity whilst undertaking a variety of service projects was a large part of the role. The Committee, The GSB, GSO and many members across our Fellowship took the approach of – What can I contribute to this event, which made it a pleasure to be a - part of. Fortunately, a lot of that work had already started before I joined the Sub-Committee and therefore it was just a matter of following the good example of the previous Chairs.

### **Honorary Treasurer**

- Support Sub-Committee treasurer throughout planning stages and at the event itself
- Act as conduit between Sub-Committee treasurer and management accountant (finance working group).
- As Chair of the Finance Committee there is a responsibility that the GSB Finance Committee check that all projected expenditure relating to Anniversary events together with associated projects meet the Terms of Reference of the GSB Finance Committee.
- To report on event finances to the GSB and to Conference

### **Sub-Committee Treasurer**

- Responsible for preparing an event budget, monitoring and updating figures throughout planning stages
- Advising sub-committee on financial implications of decisions
- Will work in conjunction with Hon. Treasurer and GSO Management Accountant as part of the event Financial Working Group
- Collection of all cash points maintaining separate revenue streams for reporting and accounting purposes
- All cash movement and handling to be carried out in pairs by committee members or approved volunteers
- Please note Tradition 7 collection does not form part of the Convention revenue.
- Creation of order forms for the shops helps to keep queuing at a minimum.

Our experience showed that the hardest element to predict was accurate attendance figures. We believe this was down to Covid and the financial uncertainty that affected all in the lead-up to the 75<sup>th</sup>. Given a healthier environment we believe that an attendance of 5000 would have been achieved.

Encouraging the Fellowship to pre-register for Anniversary events is good practice.

### **Sub-Committee Secretary**

- Be responsible for minutes of executive and Sub-Committee meetings within one week of the meeting for chair to confirm prior to circulation
- Minutes also to be sent to GSO Admin for records
- Maintain a Sub-Committee contact list
- Support the chair to create meeting agendas and circulate one week prior to Sub-Committee meetings
- Circulate relevant communications with Sub-Committee members when received
- Wherever possible, attend additional meetings and note any major decisions

- Keep a separate log of all major decisions
- Keep a list of all external contacts
- Use Bcc mail for any non-AA/GSB addresses

### **Website**

Website needs to be interactive for the fellowship including but not limited to:

- Event date/time details
- Countdown to event clock
- Accommodation – Promotion of Hotel Discount Codes for the event
- Volunteering – Service Positions\*/Choir/Fun Run
- Travel information: National and Local
- Registration/Ticket Purchasing
- Data retrieval
- Service updates

This is what was provided on the 75<sup>th</sup> Convention website, however, as technology advances more options may become available that may be useful.

### **Registration**

- Maintain and report numbers of registrations
- Responsible for training volunteers using any digital systems used at the event for registering
- Responsibility for ensuring all cash is counted and handed to committee treasurer

### **Floor Managers**

- Understanding of Health and Safety requirements
- Ability to write risk assessments
- Travel to venue(s) outside of regular meetings
- Liaison with local Intergroup/Region if taking part
- Liaison with AlAnon if taking part
- Audio Visual supplier liaison
- Venue Liaison
- Event/Venue Security Liaison
- Co-ordination of Marshals
- BSL signers
- Accommodating special needs requirements
- Production of Safeguarding plan for the weekend of the event

### **Floor Manager Experience**

This role developed from the initial planning and grew as the Convention neared. The floor manager liaised closely with venue prior to and at the Convention. With a background in Health and Safety it was natural to take responsibility for risk assessments relating to our activities. It also meant that by the time of the Convention I was familiar with all areas of the venues used and key members of the venue staff.

### **AA Literature**

It is important that AA literature should be sold in a separate area from any merchandise. Our venue at Leeds had 2 shops so this was easily achieved. To mark the occasion, we produced an Anniversary cover for our Big Book.

### **Merchandise**

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| • Agree on what merchandise will be used  | 2 years before convention |
| • Agree on what quantity                  | 2 years before            |
| • Gain costs and design from manufacturer | 18 months before          |



- Agree on costs and quantities 10 months before
- Order items from manufacturer 8 months before

Our experience was the importance of establishing what we wanted to order and Fellowship input from our members can be helpful in reaching this decision. Buying locally was not the best option so we chose to buy directly from a Chinese manufacturer which proved more cost effective and still provided high quality merchandise.

One of the main factors in the selection of merchandise was the Charity Commission's financial thresholds for VAT. These can be ascertained at the time by our Management Accountant. These thresholds heavily influenced decisions on the selection of merchandise the committee chose to make available for the fellowship.

Storage and transportation of merchandise to venue must be given consideration.

### **Audio/Visual**

The visual content provided over the event weekend on main screens and throughout the venue, were informative and fun. They were designed in-house by a member of the committee and going by feedback were much appreciated. It also gave the fellowship the ability to display Archives and Public Information materials.

Audio Visual was used to enable BSL signers to be projected onto big screens.

### **Local Tourist Board Liaison**

- Establish contact with local council/tourist information at least two years before event (we were provided with support that is provided to all major event organisers)
- Creating link for tourist information on the event website to provide the Fellowship with local details

### **Sub Committee Liaison**

- A vital role for the planning of any anniversary event.
- A vision of what will assist the local Region together with how we can carry our AA message at a national level is required for this role – See projects below.
- All projects run by sub-committees of the GSB need to be overviewed by the Convention Committee to integrate with the overall event plan

### **Regional and Intergroup Liaison.**

Once the venue is selected it is important that the Sub-Committee engage with the local Region and Intergroup as a matter of courtesy. This support will help in both the run-up to the event and over the weekend. We can say that the support provided for the 75<sup>th</sup> was excellent. For example, West Riding Intergroup took responsibility for running our early bird meetings.

We were also able to have the Governor and staff from Wakefield prison attend on the Friday evening with the Governor being presented with a Big Book and giving a commitment to work with AA to re-establish AA meeting at Wakefield.

### **Raffle**

- Current guidelines for running a raffle at a Convention can be found in the Structure Handbook (2022 Page 126)
- Raffle revenue is part of the financial budget plan
- Committee should have knowledge of gambling laws in relation to raffles (ask Management Accountant)

We decided to provide voucher prizes with a financial value which were issued via GSO one week after the event to prevent members needing to carry bulky items home.

Hindsight suggest we could have made the fellowship aware of this fact more clearly.

More support from volunteers in selling tickets may have helped with our sales – we sold under 50% of available tickets

Emphasis on making the raffle stand more prominent may have helped sales.

### **Entertainment**

- Budget Plan to Include any entertainment required for the weekend
- Consider live entertainment (Space and AV requirements)
- Listen to fellowship questionnaire feedback

Our experience of providing entertainment for the 75<sup>th</sup> was recognising that whilst we had budgeted £5K to cover this our spend was nominal.

Our fellowship is blessed with having many members who are talented and more than willing to contribute. We held a late-night disco on the Friday and Saturday evenings which were provided by members who wished to do service.

We also provided the facility for our musicians who were more than happy to run a singalong on Friday and Saturday evening.

### **Ambassadors**

- Regional Ambassador is a volunteer service position required for the success of the event
- Working with the Sub-Committee and reporting progress updates on the event within their own regions
- Promotion of how to purchase tickets
- Encouraging local members within regions to volunteer for service at the event.
- It is suggested that any Volunteer should only work a maximum of 4 hours.
- Could help co-ordinate group travel arrangements

### **Volunteers**

- Without volunteers no event could happen
- Volunteer positions should be found on event website
- Database of volunteers will be required (bear in mind GDPR requirements)
- Suggest volunteers serve for a maximum of 4 hours

### **General Requirements**

- Sub-Committee should engage with all parts of the Fellowship
- Flyers should be made available to all groups at appropriate times (Basic Initial Information, Fellowship Survey, Logo/Theme Competition, Ticket/Pricing Information)

### **AlAnon/Alateen**

- Consider if AlAnon/Alateen are going to be part of the Convention at the planning stage.
- If the decision is to include AlAnon participation, understanding and identifying their needs will be necessary at the planning stage prior to choosing venue.

### **Project examples.**

Should our Fellowship via Conference decide to hold an Anniversary Convention it is imperative that that the event has the support of the GSB and the support of GSB Sub-Committees.

All Sub-Committees should look at what they can contribute working with the Local Region and Intergroup and working with the GSB when considering National projects – see examples under projects.

All Sub-Committee project that contributes to our Anniversary weekend are budgeted through each GSB Sub-Committee with consideration at the planning stage essential.

### **Projects**

We have provided an overview of the projects that were undertaken by the 75<sup>th</sup> Sub-Committee whilst working in Service with the GSB, GSB Sub-Committees, GSO, our Regions and Intergroups.

We would hope that any future Anniversary event considers these as an example of the impact that can be achieved when AAGB as a whole works in Unity to carry our message to the still suffering alcoholic.

### **Archives Sub-Committee**

Held an exhibition in Leeds Museum. The Archives Sub-Committee worked in conjunction with the West Riding Intergroup and were able to hold an event that was open to the public.

The cost for this event was a nominal donation to Leeds city council who wished to support our event as part of their own health initiative for the city.

### **Publications**

Archives, Roundabout and Share produced our new AAGB 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary historical book. This service work was carried out with the support of all AAGB Regions and became a labour of love for many ... We would recommend it for any member wishing to better their knowledge of AAGB.

### **Comms/PI/Archives**

A new video called Gratitude in Action was produced in conjunction with Archives and Comms/PI. This video is available to any area of the Fellowship who wish to use it.

Refreshing our history should always be a part of AA. It gives our newer members a better understanding of the Fellowship they have joined, and we hope it encourages a pioneering spirit that reflects the gratitude with which we all come to serve our Fellowship.

### **75<sup>th</sup> Sub-Committee / Regional Archivists**

The creation of a Historical walkway which reflected the History of all our Regions grew arms and legs during its creation... with Intergroups and National Conventions wanting to be part of the action... all done with Unity Service and Recovery... We hope that all the Banners found their rightful home at the end!

### **Prisons**

We had the attendance of the Governor of Wakefield Prison (Wakefield was the prison that held the first prison meeting of AA in GB.) It was great that we were able to re-establish contact with Wakefield and we can advise that this contact has continued.

**Media** – Consideration must be given to Television and Radio. For the 75<sup>th</sup> we had radio interviews with our Non-Alcoholic Trustees taking the lead in the months before our event and running throughout the year.

### **Television**

At GSB through contacts we were able to engage with the BBC in the making of an hour-long groundbreaking documentary – I'm an Alcoholic: Inside Recovery.

By using deep- fake tech. the viewers saw firsthand what an AA meeting is really like and were able to follow the journey of some members during their Recovery. This documentary has now been viewed in many countries around the world to great acclaim and helped many suffering alcoholics to finally get in touch and begin their own journey of recovery.....

Financially this project cost the Fellowship nothing.

### **Comms /PI**

Has a massive role to play in any Anniversary event and ought to work with the other Board Sub-Committees, local Regions and Intergroups to provide a comprehensive list of guests (VIPs) that we would like to attend our event at some time over the weekend. (VIP) Healthcare staff, Prison Staff, Police, Probation, Welfare Services, various religious representatives, and employers, together with members of the public. Setting a target figure of attendees is a good start.

### **Young People**

Our YP sub-Committee together with many of our younger members were there in force over the weekend. A YP Roadshow took place over the course of the weekend, and I'm told the Saturday morning fun-run was well attended.

### **GSO Roadshow**

Through working with GSO we were able to hold a GSO Roadshow during the weekend. This normally takes place at Regional Forums. Holding it at the Anniversary event gave a wider section of our Fellowship the chance to meet with staff and get a better understanding of the work carried out by staff.

### **Sub Committee Rooms**

Each Sub- Committee should attend our Anniversary event to advise the Fellowship of on-going Service work. The 75<sup>th</sup> benefitted greatly from this with many more members applying to join Sub-Committees.

We are sure that over time these suggestions will require updating to reflect the conscience of our Conference and any technical advancements that may make some suggestions obsolete.

As a final note should any of our members wish to join a future Anniversary Sub-Committee, we can safely guarantee that you will find the role both Challenging and Rewarding.

As with all GSB Sub-Committee Service roles see it as a privilege to serve the Fellowship - Just remember to bring along your Humility!

10<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024

Stevie S, Vice Chair GSB

### **Archives**

My name is John, I am an alcoholic and currently the General Service Boards trustee responsibility for archives. I was invited to join the Archives Subcommittee in February 2018 as an archive subcommittee member and stayed on the subcommittee as a trustee after ratification at Conference 2022. I took over responsibility for archives after Thomas B rotated out as trustee at Conference 2023.

### **Archive Subcommittee Meetings**

The Archive Subcommittee met three times during the past year the fourth meeting was rescheduled to January 2024 due to my ill health. The subcommittee have been very productive in their discussions on various issues during this time. These issues include the following the Oral Histories of AA, the Borthwick Institute cataloguing project, updating archive literature, Group histories and revising section 2 A brief history of AA in Great Britain.

At the September Archives Sub Committee three members of the Borthwick institutes were invited (Emma Hollis AA Borthwick Archivist, Laura Yeoman, Emma's line manager and Gary Brannan Keeper of Archives and Research Collections) and attended the meeting. The exchange of information and experiences between the Borthwick institute and the subcommittee was very productive. It was felt that it would be beneficial to both sides to do this on a regular basis.

### **Oral Histories**

The oral history of AA will be a set of interviews with old timers in the fellowship recorded by regional an intergroup archivist. It is hoped that these interviews can then be put on the new website on a rotating basis. The sub-committee is in the process of developing guidelines which the archivist can use.

### **Borthwick Institute Cataloguing Project**

I'm pleased to announce that the archivist Emma Hollis has been appointed by the Borthwick Institute to continue the work on the AA archives. She will be working on our archives 2 1/2 days per week. This will include cataloguing the AA digital records. Although the bulk of the physical archives have been digitally catalogued the digital records have not been catalogued yet. The AA digital records are digital records sent by GSO to the Borthwick institute and go back to the early 2000s.

The sub-committee has set up a working group to work with the Borthwick institute in developing a system where both the physical and the digital archives are catalogued using the same terminology.

### **Archive Literature**

With the relocation of the National Archives to the Borthwick Institute several new documents were created and some existing documents revised these can be found in the archive section of the document library on the AA website.

1. AA-Archives-Access-Policy
2. AA-Archive-Appeal-Policy
3. Archival-Displays-2018
4. Archives-Policy-&-Procedure-Manual
5. Guide for AA GB Intergroup and Region Archivist
6. Intergroup-Archivist-Job-Description
7. Regional-Archivist-Job-Description
8. Terms-of Reference of the-Archive-Sub-Committee
9. Why Rotation is inappropriate when applied to Archival activity.

The sub-committee has set up a working group to develop guidelines for the Fellowship regarding the catalogue and storing of digital material.

### **Group Histories**

One of the main sources of information for group histories is the pink form. GSO puts together a spreadsheet for the archives sub-committee which contains Information on group numbers and other non-personal information. It was noticed that some groups have not filled in a pink form for several years. It would help our work if groups would keep the group information up to date by letting GSO know of any changes to the group.

## **Revised section 2 A brief history of AA in Great Britain**

This section in the chapter Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain of The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain has been updated and presented to this Conference for its consideration.

### **The Archivist Network**

The archive network meeting was held on the 22nd and 23rd of September 2023.

A total of 24 members attended 14 in person and 10 online. Martin B gave a presentation on questions for old timers. Nick H gave a presentation on group histories. I gave the update on the work of the archive subcommittee. There was a sharing of experience from the different regions. The archive subcommittee was asked to investigate the possibilities of running several short online tutorials covering the different aspects of archiving within the Fellowship.

### **75<sup>th</sup> Banners**

The banners created for the 75th archive display at the Leeds City Museum have been used at AA events nationwide. They are available for use by the Fellowship. If you like to use them at an AA event, please let the Archive Subcommittee know.

This report would not be complete without expressing my sincere gratitude to this hardworking and extremely supportive subcommittee and to say goodbye to Nick H who rotated out of the subcommittee in September 2023.

John C, GSB Trustee

### **Armed Services**

I would like to start my report with a huge thank you to all the intergroups and Regions Armed Service Liaison Officers who have been carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the Armed Services, health workers and their families.

#### **Excerpt from Guidelines 2:1 - AA and The Armed Services:**

Intergroups and Regions are responsible for the appointment of an Armed Services Liaison Officer [ASLO] to work in conjunction with other intergroup and regional officers. The role of the ASLO is to establish and maintain communication between Alcoholics Anonymous and The Royal Navy, The Army and The Royal Air Force and to report back at all levels within intergroup or region.

#### **Update**

- The Armed Services Sub-committee met four times this year two online and two at GSO. The subcommittee consists of two subcommittee members and two trustees. One subcommittee member will rotate out in February 2024.
- There are several vacancies on the sub-committee which if not filled may impede the ability of the sub-committee in its role of supporting ASLO and RASLO.
- The terms of reference were reviewed.
- AS (Armed Services) 12<sup>th</sup> Steps list continues to be updated by the subcommittee. It contains approximately 72 members and is available on Google document for telephone responders.
- With the assistance of the General Secretary the subcommittee has re-established contact with Dr Ruth Rushton who is a researcher and practitioner in the field of alcohol treatment for UK military personnel. One of the subcommittee members is acting as a point of contact for her and any inquiries coming in from her defence clinician's colleagues.
- The subcommittee are updating the literature on the AS services section of the website.
- The sub-committee would like to update the existing relevant Armed Services literature and is actively seeking armed service members to contribute to this. Unfortunately, we have had no response to date.
- AS regional liaison meeting held on the 17th/ 18th February 2023. There were 9 attendees including 4 subcommittee members.

- Many points were discussed including vacant AS Liaison posts within the Fellowships and the possibility of holding an AS Seminar.
- In November 2023 according to the Confidential Directory there were five regional armed service liaison officers in post (one of the regional officers is on the subcommittee). Forty-three Intergroup Liaison officers and another seven Intergroups that have a referral from Armed Services to another service position. This means that roughly 1/3 of all Armed service positions within the Fellowship are filled. It is hoped that the upcoming Armed Services seminar may help to address this problem.
- A seminar is planned for February 2024. As of January 2024, there are 22 confirmed attendees.

This report would not be complete without expressing my sincere gratitude to this hardworking and extremely supportive subcommittee. We now have a second Trustee on the subcommittee Hamish McS who joined us in January 2024. We said goodbye to Jonathan R who rotated out in May 2023.

John C, GSB Trustee

## **Employment**

Today's Environment of Care requires Employers to have policies to safeguard the Health and Welfare of Employees.

Workplaces need specific provision of this facility. It is with enthusiasm AA can offer, free of charge, a significant contribution, which is increasingly welcomed. Alcoholic behaviour and consequences are commonly recognised, frustrating the workforce by their illogical and unpredictable nature.

We are encouraged by Employers recognising the information and help we offer, asking for continuing presentations and workshops, used in conjunction with their own endeavours.

Our Employment Subcommittee, chaired by a Board Trustee, welcomes several new experienced members this year, including a Non Alcoholic Trustee. We address enquiries for help received and passed to us by our General Service Board; we make initial introductions to organisations and national employment concerns - with a view to passing continuation of contact and care to the area, AA Region; we maintain contact with each Region offering support and learning of the primary purpose work being achieved. Where there is no serving Regional Employment Officer, we contact the Regional Chair and/or Secretary. We are grateful that most Regions are represented at our annual face-to-face Employment Workshop and Zoom Presentation.

The revision of our pamphlet "What do I do?" will be offered for approval at Conference 2024.

Opportunities have been offered for continuing interact with the Northumbria Police, where a leading police official has spoken at our Zoom Presentation of the value of AA.

The London Fire Brigade have had a further presentation by London Region South to their Mental Health First Aid Team - appreciating AA's specific value in complimenting their own health and safety programme. Posters provided for 102 Fire Stations!

Network Rail Safety/Pastoral Care received further presentations; slots being used on Station digital billboards for AA information.

A Zoom presentation given to a National Bank's "Enable Disability Network" was, by request, followed by a presentation of the "AA Group at work", "Tips on Living Sober" and a "Myth Busting " session. These events were recorded for the exclusively internal national use of the bank for those staff unable to attend the live meetings. Literature and an experienced AI-anon contact were requested and supplied. The Bank's Group Leader subsequently reported their valued experiences of AA at our Employment Presentation.

These are a few examples of the many inspiring examples of "Carrying our Message" to Employers throughout our Regions and Intergroups.

Our enthusiasm is well founded!

Charles R, GSB Trustee

## **European Service Meeting**

Jo F and Levey P attended the European Service Meeting (ESM) in York, 20-22nd October 2023. The theme was 'AA in a Changing World'. There were attendees from 20 European Countries plus 2 attendees from the General Service Office (GSO) in New York. The meeting was held in English, but we all spoke the language of the heart in discussing the challenges and opportunities in service: finding people to do service, leading by example, and the importance of unity and safeguarding.

Bob W, General Manager AA GSO US and Canada gave a talk on AA World Service (AAWS): 'Translation & Licensing Publishing'. Irene D, International Desk AAWS gave the keynote address, 'AA in a Changing World'. AAs from Eastern Europe demonstrated the pioneering spirit with how, as a structure, they had gone to any lengths to stay sober and pass on the message of recovery overcoming barriers of poverty, politics, wars and language, showing how fortunate we are in Great Britain and English-speaking Europe to have our AA structure and literature in place.

The ESM took place during the weekend of Storm Babette. One delegate from Finland took three days to get to the ESM! She arrived on the Sunday morning - it was so important for her to get there and meet other alcoholics doing service. The topic for the next ESM will be 'Unifying and Safeguarding our Fellowship.' Our thanks go to the GSO in York who put on a wonderful conference for us all.

Jo F, GSB Trustee

## **First Response Online**

The First Response Online Sub-Committee (FROSC) is responsible for the administration of our two online services – Chat Now (a live chat feature) and the Online Response Service (an email service). Both services are run through the AAGB website, and the main aim is to encourage the still-suffering alcoholic to either ring the helpline or attend a meeting. We work closely with the Telephones Sub-committee to share experience and best practice. Increasing numbers of still-suffering alcoholics are reaching out for help and Chat Now engages in approximately 1,200 live chats each month, while the Online Response Service receives an average of 1,500 emails each month. To meet the growing need, we are actively working to raise awareness of these vital services across the Fellowship, and to encourage members to become responders. We held a First Response Workshop in Glasgow in September 2023, and have also attended South Midlands Region to give a presentation. We have been in touch with all regions to offer workshops or presentations on the services and have several arranged over the coming months. The increased importance of safeguarding means that we have been establishing various measures to ensure that we fulfil our duty of care to everyone involved in Chat Now and the Online Response Service. As part of this we are in the process of introducing DBS checks for all existing and new responders, as well as continually reviewing the training and support that is given. These measures ensure that we can continue to carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic, whilst meet our safeguarding responsibilities and protecting the charity for future generations.

Holly A, GSB Trustee



## Health

Our biggest achievement this year has been the work our Non-Alcoholic Trustee, Dr Kieran Moriarty, has done in providing the evidence for the benefits of AA 12-step Facilitation Programmes to the NICE consultation on Alcohol-use disorders.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) A Quality Standards Guidance "Alcohol-use disorders: diagnosis and treatment" (QS11) published on 6th July 2023 now strongly endorses and recommends AA 12-step Facilitation Programmes. The NICE guidance provides "best practice" recommendations to national policy makers in England and Wales and as it now includes many references to the benefits of AA it is, and will be, an amazing support to the Fellowship and especially to our Health Liaison Officers.

The Health Subcommittee(HSC) updated the "AA and Healthcare in the Community" Chapter 6 in "The AA Service Handbook 2023 ". Our pamphlet (produced in 2022) "A Guide for the Health Liaison Officer" which was originally intended as an internal document, will be presented to Conference in 2024 to enable wider distribution.

The HSC continues to support the valuable work carried out by our Regional and Intergroup Liaison Officers, offering them the opportunity to share good practice at the annual Liaison event.

Barbara O, GSB Trustee

## Literature

Conference 2023 approved changes and additions to the AA handbooks.

1. Revisions for 'Location of the Conference', 'Regional Assembly', how 'GSB operates through Committees' and the chapter on 'Conventions', in the AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain.
2. Revised Chapter 6: 'AA and Healthcare in the Community' in the Service Handbook for Great Britain. The Illustrated Traditions pamphlet was withdrawn from sale and as an interim measure, replaced with the 'Experience Has Taught Us' leaflet published by AAWS.

The following are proposed for Conference 2024.

### Handbook Changes

- A new chapter in the Service Handbook: 'Publications' Chapter: Share, Roundabout and AA Service News; how the committees which deliver these publications, work
- Revisions to the Service Handbook Chapter: Probation and Criminal Justice Services
- The Structure Handbook, under point 2 in the introduction, has a revised history bringing AA Great Britain fully up-to-date, please see 'A brief history of AA in Great Britain'
- Each handbook has a new glossary of terms, hopefully making them much more accessible to the reader

### Literature Revisions:

- 'Health Liaisons Officers' leaflet, and 'Employment Officers' leaflet.
- The Little Book has been reviewed and extended to provide members with a meeting-in-a-pocket and seminal texts often referred to and read from the 'Big Book'.

### New Items of Literature:

- Pamphlet on 'Probation and Criminal Justice Services' to aid professionals in these services understand AA and help members on their release from prison.

Up and Coming Literature for Conference 2025

- A pamphlet on Mental Health comprised of Fellowship stories of mental health in sobriety is underway.

Lastly, though not least, a BIG thank you to the Literature Sub Committee for their hard work and commitment to AA's literature over the past year.

Jo F, GSB Trustee

## **Prisons**

Sadly, we had no one on the Prison subcommittee until the end of September due to four members rotating out at the same time. This hinders the work that we can do. I'm pleased to say that in September we welcomed three new members. Lenny C SW Scotland, Davy McW - Glasgow and Bruce B from CER and also Hugh D from Wales and Borders in January.

The subcommittee also work closely with our NAT Tom Fox who is an asset due to his involvement with the Scottish prison service and the new Trustee for Midlands Region Max J will also join us.

Everyone was allocated jobs and had an induction onto the Subcommittee . Lenny became our secretary. Davy is looking at which prisons within the UK hold AA meeting and Bruce will be restarting our quarterly newsletter for which any letters either from prisoners or people with prison experience would be very welcome. Hugh and Max will be allocated roles at our next meeting which will take place in March.

We are still looking for Subcommittee members and we aim to get a good geographical spread of people.

In March I attended the Scottish and National Convention where I hosted a Prison stand to give information regarding the roles of prison sponsors, IG Liaison officers and Region LO officers. In Scotland I was assisted with this by two regional LO officers, Davy and Lenny and also Tom Fox our NAT who is a great support due to his knowledge of the Scottish Prison Service. It was really good to connect with people who go into our prisons helping to facilitate AA meetings. I also attended the Northern National convention in the same capacity.

I was pleased to be invited to the Midlands forum in June and gave a presentation about what we do the roles within the prisons. There was a Q and A session after and there was the opportunity to chat with people who were interested in prison service.

In June we held our annual Regional LO meeting in York where we were enlightened as to what was happening in all areas of the UK. Similar problems seem to be reoccurring. Clearance is still a big problem and finding people to commit to going into prisons as a prison sponsor (visitor). On the 1st July together with the Probation/CJS we held Seminar at the Park Inn York with over 60 in Attendance. The morning dealt with the Prisons. The prison video was played, and we had two speakers Wendy Sinclair-Geiben HMCIP who spoke of the Scottish prison service and Sarah Hancock HMPS who is the compliance manager who deals with clearance. A good day was had by all, and it was an ideal time to chat to others who were doing the same work as you.

We have also dealt with queries one of which was the possible use of conducting meetings using a video link. We were approached by a company called Visionary with whom we had discussions but decided that it would be against our traditions to go ahead with this. Also, some prisons have approached us to fetch AA into their prisons.

I would also like to say thank you to anyone involved with prisons, your commitment and service are a valuable way to give back what was freely given to us.

It is my pleasure to be of service and if you have any questions, please contact me and either myself or subcommittee will be pleased to help you. YIF Zelma Kesans Trustee for Prisons. Mob: 07817125143 Email: [trustee.w.bregion@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:trustee.w.bregion@gsogb.org.uk)

Zelma K, GSB Trustee

## **Probation / Criminal Justice Service**

The Probation Sub Committee has had a productive and busy year. We are grateful the Board approved the expansion of the subcommittee from 4 to 7 potential members, this we hope, will support more cooperation for the fellowship with Probation and CJS agencies throughout Great Britain.

Probation / Criminal Justice Service liaison officers (LO's) have been making progress with the chit system. Figures from our website show that in December 2022, 515 Alcoholics Anonymous Groups in GB were listed as offering the 'chit' system this figure has risen to 603 at the start of December 2023. Anonymous success stories are coming through in IG reports, showing the Chit system working through Alcoholics Anonymous action.

Through co-operation with HMPPS Recovery focused Approved Premises, a mailshot took place where AA information from GSO was distributed to all 105 Approved Premises in England and Wales. Our Gratitude to our workers in the office. Following this Liaison officers and Subcommittee members took part in Recovery focused Approved Premises open days and presentations throughout the year. This has reinvigorated and enthused cooperation, in various locations.

The subcommittee has also been cooperating and making progress with other agencies including HMCTS, Alcoholics Anonymous has now been included in a new national Court Directory for England and Wales and we are actively progressing our primary purpose with HMPPS, HMCTS and Police Forces at a national level.

Within the fellowship presentations and service information stands have taken place at National Conventions and Service Forums, whilst continuing to assist RLO's and IGLO's when requested. The joint Seminar held with Prisons in July was an enormous success with enthusiastic professional and alcoholic speakers, we were delighted to have the HMPPS Director who leads on offender health present for us. Criminal justice professionals were invited and were present at both the Westminster and Holyrood parliamentary events. Glasgow Court committee continues to provide great service at the Alcohol Court and the Custody Suite service work in London Region North is making inroads, carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Probation Sub Committee, has reviewed, updated, and submitted our external facing leaflet, now titled; *Alcoholics Anonymous as a Resource for Criminal Justice Professionals* which we hope conference will approve. Probation / Criminal Justice information has been reviewed and updated on the GB website.

Hamish McS, GSB Trustee

## **PI Ecomms**

During the year we continued to take forward work relating to the relaunch of the AA website. Including the development of an improved database function for the meeting finder, the AA shop, and the scoping of further resources on the site for use by the fellowship.

There will be a presentation on the website at the Conference before further Beta testing takes place prior to the public launch of the site. Moving forward we will be looking at ways to better support the activities of the fellowship by means of electronic resources.

Further progress was made in extending the new “family look” to AA publications. Including, in conjunction with other Board colleagues, the AA Structure and service handbooks. In line with previous reports to Conference the look will be applied to all future publications and reprints of existing publications.

Members of the subcommittee attended a variety of events during the year to inform the wider fellowship of the activity of the committee. These included regional and intergroup events, well as the Scottish National Convention.

Members of the subcommittee have been working on the development of a National Advertising campaign for later this year. approval from conference will be sought for the designs for this campaign. A new electronic publication will be launched in the year to keep professionals and friends of AA up to date with our activities. We envisage this to be sent to a subscriber base free of charge via the new website.

Finally, as trustees we would like to thank all the members of the committee for their hard work dedication and enthusiasm. Not only for their work on the initiatives mentioned above but also for all the routine yet vital work they do in supporting the help desk, file store and workspace.

Tom Fox & Tim B, GSB Trustees

## **Race2Day Working Group**

What a year it's been for Race2Day!

The Race2Day Working Group has had a very busy year. Our 2nd and 3rd Conventions were held in March and September with delegates from many countries, in particular from US and Canada who showed great interest, passion and encouragement.

Workshops were also held at London and Birmingham Conventions with tremendous participation and input from ethnicities.

The pamphlet, “Nobody Looks Like Me in Alcoholics Anonymous” produced by Birmingham intergroup will go to Conference in 2024. In November in a new South Asian meeting was set up in Glasgow after outreach in the local community by the intergroup and members of Race2Day. The response of the Fellowship to the initiative has been tremendous, in recognising and helping deliver Conference 2021's recommendation to improve diversity within the Fellowship and better actualise our Third Tradition. We hope to maintain and increase the momentum with workshops booked for the Northern, London and Glasgow Conventions in 2024.

Jo F, GSB Trustee

## **Roundabout**

Two members of the Roundabout subcommittee and I attended the Scottish Convention on the weekend of 28/29/30 April 2023 in Queens Hall Dunoon. As well as promoting the Roundabout the subcommittee members had the Roundabout banner and issues of the Roundabout picked up from the Northern Service Office and taken to the convention. Members shares were recorded and written up later for the Roundabout magazine. There were also 6 interviews recorded. Those who completed interviews and shares stated that they preferred to record rather than type.

The Chairperson of the Committee of the Scottish Convention announced that the person who had initiated the Scottish Convention moving to Dunoon had been a great advocate for the Roundabout. This set the tone for the whole weekend and our two members even had the opportunity to talk about the Roundabout before one of the meetings.

I attended an online meeting on 2 March 2023 with Jo, AA Service News and Charon, Share Trustee to discuss the little book contents in the hope of changing this publication. Jo was looking for input from the Roundabout and Share sub-committees. Charon and I decided to have a joint online meeting with our sub-committees on 10 March. The outcome of this meeting was that proposed changes were sent to Jo.

There were 6 online meetings for the Roundabout subcommittee in March, June, July, August, October and December. We had 3 new members joining us in the latter part of the year. Jan, Secretary and Gordon and Margaret, Proofreaders. This leaves one Proofreader and an Assistant Editor to complete the Roundabout subcommittee.

Two new banners were purchased for the Roundabout team to use at Conventions in Scotland. The Roundabout subcommittee had decided that every Convention in Scotland should be attended by at least 2 members who would promote the Roundabout.

The Conventions attended were Dundee, Lanarkshire, Cumbernauld, Aberdeen, Monklands, Troon and Highlands and Islands.

There were 2 online meetings with myself and Jo, Trustee for Literature Subcommittee and with Charon, Trustee for Share. This was to discuss the articles for inclusion in the Service Handbook for our disciplines. The Roundabout Subcommittee met online on 9<sup>th</sup> June, 9<sup>th</sup> July and 21<sup>st</sup> August to discuss the Roundabout Article. It was felt that the Roundabout article should be separate and a document was produced and sent to Jo to be passed to the Literature Subcommittee.

An invitation was received for the Share Liaison Officers meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of September in York. Due to train strikes Moira and Dylis, Proofreaders and Ian our Link Officer of the Roundabout subcommittee and myself attended the online meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September. We would like to thank the Share subcommittee for the invite.

I was invited to attend the Scottish Parliament event on 4<sup>th</sup> October. It was a very enjoyable event with speakers sharing part of their experience, strength and hope with members of Parliament and some invited charity members. There was also a question and answer segment.

Tom and I were invited to the Highlands and Islands Annual General Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2023. This was to hopefully encourage someone from the Region to put their name forward for the Trustee position on the Board.

The December Roundabout included an article informing the Fellowship that the Roundabout would cost £2 from January 2024. This is due to increased prices for publishing and also to allow the Roundabout to be self-supporting.

A face to face meeting of the Roundabout subcommittee was scheduled for 16/17 February 2024 in The Atholl Centre, Pitlochrie. This meeting will enable the new members to have an induction to the subcommittee.

It was decided to hold the Annual Intergroup/Regional Liaison officers meeting in Renfield St Stephen's in Bath Street on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Online meetings for the Roundabout subcommittee are scheduled for 2024 as follows:-

June 7<sup>th</sup> 2024  
August 9<sup>th</sup> 2024  
October 11<sup>th</sup> 2024  
December 6<sup>th</sup> 2024

Andrina, GSB Trustee

## **Share**

Our magazine has seen some major changes in the past twelve months.

Firstly, having not had a price increase for more than twenty years, we needed to take a look at how Share might become more self-supporting. Having done the sums, we decided to increase the price to £2 per copy, taking effect from January 2024. Most fellows will agree that it's still incredible value considering all that is contained in each issue.

With Share becoming more financially stable it allowed us to start thinking about ways to make Share more accessible, and as a result we have increased the font size to bring it further in line with Accessibility Guidelines. Of course, this affects the overall look of the magazine, increasing the number of pages per issue and altering the layout, from double to single columns. For many people, reading single column pages is easier and makes the magazine more user friendly. This is a trial that we are open to adjusting, according to fellowship feedback, and it will be interesting to see how we progress over the next twelve months. We hope everyone will support us as we endeavour to make Share the best possible version of itself.

The team welcomed our new assistant editor this year who has settled in very well, leaving us with no vacancies at present.

The things we are currently working on are: new bookmarks for 2024, a presentation at the London Convention 2024 and continuing to produce a fantastic magazine worth every penny of its new price.

Charon B, GSB Trustee

## **Survey**

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain [GSB GB]) Limited have conducted a survey of the Fellowship every five years since 1972. The intention of these surveys is to learn more about the Fellowship in GB and Continental Europe so that AA's message of recovery may be disseminated more effectively to the still suffering alcoholic, thus helping us to fulfil our primary purpose.

The Survey Sub Committee was established as a separate subcommittee tasked to deliver the 2020 Survey. Previously the Survey was delivered by the PI Subcommittee.

Due to Covid and lockdown the 2020 survey was delivered online for the first time. The decision to continue the survey online has been agreed using what was learned in 2020 to improve the content and method of communication to the Fellowship and increase engagement.

The results of the 2020 survey were reported to Conference 2021 and the committee produced an infographic leaflet for the fellowship and to be used as a public information outreach tool.

The committee have put together a timeline of work for the 2025 Survey that includes four phases of the process that began in 2023. The committee are currently liaising with some of the relevant subcommittees to finalise the content of the questionnaire and considering the survey design. The survey will be launched in March of 2025 and the final results will be reported to Conference 2026.

Gretchen S, GSB Trustee

## **Telephones**

The National Telephone Sub Committee (NTSC) each week receives over 2400 calls to the National Helpline number plus an increasing number of calls to local helpline numbers that are easily accessible from the AA GB website. At the request of Conference 2021 we have provided a training document to RTLOs, TLOs, 12<sup>th</sup> Steppers and have finalized a safeguarding document.

The NTSC manages the 0800 number and currently we have a major focus on the structure of the National Helpline. The proposed restructuring, as directed by Conference 2021, involved hundreds of hours of work consulting with various service providers to see which would best fit AA as a whole through the 0800 number. I'm very grateful for the help of the subcommittee because they truly understand the need of the Fellowship and have hands on experience when it comes to the National Helpline, since most of them have been involved at various levels of phone service for many years.

The proposed restructuring has been approved by GSB and, as this report is being written, we are in the process of finalizing a contract with the service provider. We are hoping that by Conference 2024 we can report on how the trial period of the new structure is working.

One thing that I want to reiterate is that the NTSC does not want to take over running the 0800 number. We only want to implement a new platform which will allow the responders to better do their jobs, to make sure we have less missed calls from the still suffering alcoholic. Regions, Intergroups, Groups will continue to be autonomous.

Levey P, GSB Trustee

## **Young People**

Young People's service continues to be enthusiastic and engaged, with a lot of work being done across the country to help carry the message of recovery to younger people. A Young People's Roadshow was held in Cardiff in April 2023 which, like previous events, generated a lot of enthusiasm for the service with new Young People's meetings being set up, and more members engaging in service across the structure. Another roadshow is planned for May 2024 in Glasgow with a variety of interesting and inspiring speakers.

The Young People's Sub-Committee continue to hold online drop-in meetings every quarter to provide an opportunity for liaison officers and anyone interested in the role to get support and share experience.

The sub-committee have also started a podcast called 'They Stopped in Time' which is available on the usual podcast platforms. There is an established and supportive community of Young People's liaison officers across the country, who share their experience, advice and resources to help each other carry the message of recovery.

Holly A & Henry L – GSB Trustees

## **Parliamentary Events**

### **Westminster**

The Westminster Parliamentary Event Committee delivered a very well attended face to face event in the Atlee Suite in Portcullis House on 16 May 2023. The event was sponsored and hosted by Steve Brine, Conservative MP for Winchester.

The two non-alcoholic professional speakers spoke highly of what AA had to offer and the AA speakers shared their experience strength and hope as well as talking about how AA is addressing the diversity

issue and working to make the fellowship more welcoming and open to people of all different cultures and background.

After a brief summer break, the committee has reformed with new members and is well into the planning stages for the Westminster event for 2024, which will be held in Portcullis House on **Tuesday 21 May 2024**. The MP sponsor this year is Rachael Maskell, Labour MP for York Central.

The professional non-AA speakers yet to be confirmed. AA service news as well as emails have gone out to the fellowship asking for any member who may have contacts of professionals to get in touch with those contacts and urge them to invite their colleagues who would benefit from hearing more about AA. that also goes for anyone who may be in contact with professionals and practitioners that come into contact those who would benefit from the hand of AA.

This year, like every year, the emphasis is on is getting MPs and parliamentary advisors, health professionals, practitioners and people who encounter and work to help the still suffering alcoholic, **and** who don't know much about AA, to come along to hear what AA has to offer. The committee reaches out to the Fellowship to provide contacts to invite. This is **not** an event for AA members or even the people we already work with in our PI initiatives although we rely heavily on them to encourage their contacts and colleagues to attend.

Gretchen S, GSB Trustee

## **Scottish**

The Scottish Parliament event took place on 4th October 2023, following two and a half years of this event being rescheduled we were delighted it finally went ahead and was very well attended. The theme was Alcoholics Anonymous Awareness. Following An address from our Sponsoring MSP our four AA speakers gave fantastic talks, which were well received. Our professional guests heard first-hand from members how they found sobriety and experienced positive social impact in their lives and the lives of those around them. Their talks gave insight into the reality of the programme of recovery available in Scotland to all who suffer from alcoholism.' Following our speakers there was an enthusiastic question-and-answer session. Feedback forms were used, and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

The committee worked extremely hard to source professional guests. This was reflected in the turn out with 21 professionals as well as MSP's attending and 2 members of AI Anon. The Scottish Minister for Drugs and Alcohol and the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health as well as the Scottish Government lead on Alcohol and Drug policy were all present as well as several other leading professionals. The committee has benefited from a more structured approach in its operation and administration. Whilst there were some difficulties with administration it is hoped that we can build on the success of this event in 2024. The Northern service office provided administrative support, and we are grateful for our workers contribution. We would invite all members to suggest invitees through their regional committee member or directly to the committee at [scot.parl@aamail.org](mailto:scot.parl@aamail.org) for our 2024 event.

I have now rotated off GSB service for this event and would like to thank all who made this event such a great success, thank you for letting me be of service.

Hamish McS, GSB Trustee

## **Welsh**

The Senydd Assembly took place on the 14th of November 2023.

The event was hosted by Peredur Owen Griffiths MS, Plaid Cymru in the Senydd, Cardiff Bay.



The event was well attended with about 20 professionals present. The Armed Services video was played and we were lucky to have Justin, the Chairman of the Board, with us who spoke about his role. I then spoke about my role as the Wales and Borders Trustee and the activity we have in our Region. Two of our members shared their Experience, Strength and Hope. These were all well received and created the opportunity to for a Q and A session.

Once the presentations had finished, we retired for refreshments with the professionals where the conversation continued forming links and giving insight into the disease of alcoholism.

The date in November and sponsor for the 2024 presentation have yet to be finalised.

Zelma K, GSB Trustee

## **National Conventions**

### **Southern**

It was with great pleasure and excitement (and a fair dollop of relief) that the Southern National Convention Committee has secured a new venue for the 2024 Convention which will be held over the weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

The Convention Committee has an agreement with Isle of Wight Tours to hold an annual convention in September at Sand Bay Resort until 2026. This Holiday Village is just to the north of Weston Super Mare with great onsite accommodation and facilities. There are also plenty of local attractions nearby.

The agreement with IOW Tours was only finalised just before Christmas 2023 and the first opportunity to publicize the event was at the Brighton Convention in January. Since then, there has been a fantastic response from the Fellowship with registrations continuing at a steady pace after the initial surge of bookings. The Committee is confident that the Convention will be fully booked well in advance of the Convention weekend.

The theme of the 2024 Convention is “A New Beginning” and the work of the Committee is now in full swing to provide a weekend programme of AA Meetings, including the Spiritual Meeting on Sunday morning, and Al Anon participation over the weekend. The programme will also include Service Workshops, Saturday night entertainment and, of course, plenty of opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones.

The Southern National Convention AGM was held in January with representatives of the 6 Sponsoring Regions. After the tribulations of the previous year, there was fantastic buzz in the meeting along with a real sense of purpose to build momentum for the 2024 event and keep things going for the 50<sup>th</sup> Southern National now scheduled for 2025.

Tim B, GSB Trustee

### **Northern**

The Northern National Convention (NNC) was held in March 2023 at the Norbreck Castle Hotel Blackpool, with an attendance of over 950. The NNC is sponsored by three Regions, Midlands, North-East and North-West and its committee is made up of three delegates from each Region plus the executive committee. The committee meet regularly, and the AGM was held in October 2023 to enable preparations to commence for the 48<sup>th</sup> Convention to be held 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

Barbara O, GSB Trustee

## **Welsh**

The convention was held at the Metropole hotel, Llandrindnod Wells on the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> June 2023. There were 163 attendees from a wide geographical area.

On the Saturday there was a Welsh speaking meeting with a simultaneous translation into English along with other tabletop shares, a workshop and marathon meetings alongside. A room was available for Alanon, and entertainment provided.

This year's convention will be held at the same venue 31<sup>st</sup> May to 2<sup>nd</sup> June. All are welcome to join us for a warm Welsh welcome.

For fliers and more information Wales & Borders Region - Welsh National Convention ([aawalesandborders.org](http://aawalesandborders.org))

Zelma K, GSB Trustee