

Summary of questions not accepted for Conference 2024

1.

Would Conference discuss and share experience on the present method of printing and issuing the Structure and Service Handbooks.

Terms of Reference No. 12

There has been a full revamp of both Handbooks and these are available to the Fellowship.

3.

Would the Fellowship discuss and make recommendations about having a procedure for feedback from delegates at the end of Conference.

Terms of Reference No. 12

There is an existing mechanism for feedback available through GSO.

4.

Four decades clean and sober, I wish to express my grave concern in the area of Health and Public Liaison in the South. It appears we do a tremendous amount of work maximising publicity for AA and continuously run workshops and do talks, to the medical profession and charities, who profit from our disease. Be it through private or charitable (alleged) function, yet, the relapse rate is increasing, alongside deaths from alcohol and pharmaceuticals.

Once upon a time, a hospital detox would give a brief but safe withdrawal so the person could safely venture to a meeting, without concern of fitting or other life threatening issues.

Now, the theme given to patients by doctors and recovery organisations is, "cut down".

We know the first one does the damage.

Perhaps a pamphlet could be introduced giving advice based on experience to the government which will save millions of pounds, which are given out to the dangerous recovery organisations who believe CBT and cutting down is an option. Simple suggestion of having wards in hospitals with alcohol detox speciality.

The increasing crime rate, domestic violence and traffic accidents have a 90% chance of being drug and alcohol abuse as the foundation. It isn't being addressed and when it is another private contract or private hospital grabs the money and fails the sufferer ... revolving doors.

Our tradition lest money, property or prestige divert us, is well worth adhering to.

Terms of Reference No. 10

Tradition 10- We have pamphlets for medical professionals. We will never venture an opinion on medical issues. We can get the first drink message etc out there via Non-Alcoholic Trustees.

5.

Would Conference consider and make recommendations on whether the vote counting method, held on the Sunday morning, should be changed?

Terms of Reference No. 12

Deemed it was a question for the Conference Steering Committee who do recognise the need to make this easier and less time consuming and is looking at options for Conference 2024.

6.

In recent years at several AA events individuals have been allowed to sell their non-AA approved products.

Is this not a contravention of our Traditions 6, 7 & 10.

Terms of Reference No. 5

Refer to Conference 2023, Committee 4, Question 2 and the fellowship's response to the question.

7.

Please note: this is a question about digital marketing. It is not a question about social media.

Would the fellowship make recommendations to the General Service Board on the use of Google Ad Grants to carry the message to alcoholics reaching out online for help?

Terms of Reference No. 10

Google's policy for free ads is changing, although not comprehensively implemented, but through other Fellowships around the world and our own investigations their policy is now NOT to offer free advertising for Addiction Services and Mutual Aid Groups involved with addiction and alcoholism in the UK.

9.

The drinking alcoholic who arrives at a meeting having driven, leaves meeting and gets into the car. Well above the limit!

Could we either maintain closed meetings only with newcomers appropriately 12 stepped into meeting or, are we, to be maverick and disregard our moral obligation towards society and sit back and turn a blind eye to the potential carnage?

Terms of Reference No. 9

Already addressed in AA's Safeguarding Documents, particularly, Safeguarding and Personal Conduct V2 Revised, found on the AA GB website at: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Document-Library#>

11.

Would Conference discuss whether the celebratory AA in Great Britain 75th anniversary convention held at Leeds Arena met its remit of being self-supporting and consider what further information the GSB should be requested to disclose.

Terms of Reference No. 8

More information on the 75th anniversary celebration will be forthcoming from the 75th Sub Committee who are meeting in October 2023. It is anticipated that after this, a breakdown of the finances will be made available.

14.

(a) Can AA obtain the original digital artwork used for the AA posters for groups to use for advertising and store it at GSO? This would save each group having to pay extra for artwork, which has already been paid for.

(b) Would conference consider recommending certain formats to be used in advertising, so that we present one united message Nationally?

Terms of Reference No. 4 & 8

Electronic Communications Subcommittee aim for the brand guidelines to be more available as part of website improvements. This question will be passed to the PI/Ecomm Committee for consideration.

17.

Would the fellowship

- a) review the requirements for regions nominating new regional trustees to the board.**
- b) consider the benefits of reducing the number of candidates that a region must present as part of the selection process.**
- c) considering these discussions, including those originating from the background material below, make recommendations to include the following addition to the Structure handbook.**

“If a Region is unable to secure two nominations, a single candidate can be presented to the Nominations Subcommittee, recognising that there is a risk that the single candidate may not reflect the needs of the board at that time and may be rejected. In this event, a further application would be appropriate whenever the region can identify a further candidate.”

Terms of Reference No. 8

Something for the Board to consider and not Conference. This topic has been brought up recently at Board level and is being changed to reduce the number of candidates required if a Region is struggling to put forward 2 Candidates. This will help in fulfilling the number of Trustees required on the board.

19.

Would Conference discuss the increasing use by Groups of card readers to collect Tradition 7 donations? With a cashless society seeming inevitable, perhaps now would be timely for the Fellowship to share its experience around pro's and con's of card reader use and also to make recommendations as to the maintenance of individual members digital donation anonymity now and in the future.

Terms of Reference No. 5

Already asked in Committee 5 in 2023. Please see Final Committee report regarding this:

Following on from Conference 2018 and noting the recent increase in groups continuing to meet online due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, would the Fellowship please discuss, share its experience and make recommendations about Tradition 7 contributions being collected electronically and digitally by means of card readers and other digital payment technology?

Having shared experience, committee noted that groups are autonomous and need to consider their own choice at their

group conscience. Digital collection has worked well, and in some cases has increased income for groups, but where possible, provision for cash contributions should be maintained. The committee (our shared experience) found that these things have worked for groups. In the case of online and hybrid meetings, electronic payment should be encouraged, to maintain group income. Care needs to be taken to ensure visibility of monies that have been collected by digital contribution. Groups may need to have a warning card or statement indicating that there may be concern with personal anonymity, and that the name of the account may contain the name "Alcoholics Anonymous". Where possible the group treasurer should check the account settings to ensure the name 'Alcoholics Anonymous' does not appear on any payee statements. Further research is still needed. The committee would recommend that the General Service Board GB review the relevant section of the Structure Handbook (Group Money, Group Treasurer) following the Treasurers Service Forum, and that the Literature Sub Committee might include the above points in group guidelines. In accordance with Tradition 7, contributions come from within AA. VOTE: Unanimous Conference approved this recommendation with a two-thirds plus majority.

20.

Review the pamphlet "Does anyone else look like me in Alcoholics Anonymous" and discuss recommendations for its inclusion within AAGB literature approved category.

Terms of Reference No. 8

Referred to Literature Sub Committee to present at Conference 2024.

22.

Does Conference agree that GSO should now produce and circulate to the Fellowship as a whole, within 3 months of this Conference, a full set of independently verified financial accounts for the 75th Convention? These should comprise a Profit and Loss account covering the period from the initial meetings of the 75th Committee in 2016/17 until 3 months after the event, together with a Balance sheet as at 30 September 2022 and should include all the costs incurred in the planning and execution of the Convention, including travelling and accommodation expenses during the years of planning and preparation for the event, all Sub- committee costs in this connection, and merchandise costs. In this way the true financial outcome of the event will be clearly revealed and this should be taken into account when planning any future such Conventions.

Terms of Reference No. 8

More information on the 75th anniversary celebration will be forthcoming from the 75th Sub Committee who are meeting in October 2023. It is anticipated that after this, a breakdown of the finances will be made available.

23.

I have recently started volunteer work so I have just had some safeguarding training. It occurs to me that when sponsors use what is a position of power over sponsees to coerce them into disregarding their own consciences through the threat that if they don't obey they will drink, then this could be regarded as institutional abuse. Simpson Millar is a highly regarded legal firm that have a short explanation of this here: <https://www.simpsonmillar.co.uk/media/abuse-claims/what-is-institutional-abuse/> It concerns me because of knowing people who have left AA

(not necessarily to start drinking again) because of this issue. Also, I feel the reputation in the community for this sort of practice stops health professionals from suggesting AA to their patients.

Terms of Reference No. 10

The question having too much assertion. There is literature available on Sponsorship and Safeguarding which is available in AAGB.

24.

Would conference review the use of the term safeguarding and share experience of ways it is being interpreted at group, intergroup and regional level?

Terms of Reference No. 5

Similar question being answered last year on Committee 4, Question 1. There is also the safeguarding document which can be found on AAGB website which states on how safeguarding is used.

25.

The SW Region request that Conference officially minute the Open Forum, and include it in the Final Conference Report, so that the Fellowship can see what issues their Delegates raise on their behalf, and the discussion pertaining to it.

Also, we request that where appropriate, Delegates should be able to ask for, and implement, a vote on the matters raised.

Terms of Reference No. 12

The issue of openness and fairness. This also reflects Concept 3 right of decision. The Steering Committee agreed that the open forum is open and should remain that way and not become "official". If the Forum was recorded, this may deter Delegates to speak openly. The open Forum should remain Open for free discussion.

27.

Would the fellowship

- d) review the requirements for regions nominating delegates to Conference.**
- e) consider the benefits of electing the same delegate for a further term if necessary.**
- f) After considering a) and b), discuss and make recommendations i) for a minimum period that would be required between the first and second period of attendance by the same delegate, ii) any other conditions that would need to be met in order to attend for a second time or iii) leave things as they are.**

Terms of Reference No. 8

This is something for the Board to consider and not Conference. This topic has been brought up recently at Board level and is being changed to reduce the number of candidates required if a Region is struggling to put forward 2 Candidates. This will help in fulfilling the number of Trustees required on the board.

28.

Would the Fellowship discuss and make recommendations whether AAGB should update the existing “Little Book” to include more information, step prayers and popular passages from the Big Book, thereby creating an expanded “Little Book” that is much more useful to members of the fellowship.

Terms of Reference No. 8

Passed to Literature Sub Committee who are already working on this.

29.

Should the terms and conditions of the access and usage of the ‘Online Confidential Directory’ be subject to approval by Conference?

Terms of Reference No. 10

The Confidential Directory is a tool of the Fellowship but is owned by GSB. This follows Concept 6 and Concept 8. We trust that the GSB will run the day-to-day operations. They also have legal obligations with regards to confidentiality and how this is managed.

31.

Would Conference discuss if Conference Delegate and Alternate Conference Delegates, and the Conference Steering committee members should be included in the Confidential Directory of officers?

Terms of Reference No. 10

The Conference Steering Committee is contactable through the Conference Co-ordinator at GSO. The Committee members are not visible due to possible influence and the private information as they are privy to with regards to Questions for conference. The Guidance note for the CSC are as follows:

“It was the consensus of past Agenda Committee(s) that all matters concerning question(s) or subjects under discussion at Committee Meetings should be treated as confidential and not to be discussed outwith the meetings. It can create problems for the committee and yourself if it is perceived that one Region is gaining an advantage by having one of their members on the Committee.”

Information is freely available through GSO. Conference delegates pass information onto their respective Regions and up the chain to Intergroups and groups. The CSC Committee members are If the Information chain is broken, then as stated above you can freely contact GSO. This also applies to Concept 3, and the CSC are trusted servants and must be trusted to make the right decisions.

32.

Would Conference discuss clarification of the terms used by GSO and the GSB, of “Carrying the Message” and “Primary Purpose” and “Fellowship services”?

Terms of Reference No. 5

For 2 reasons. Firstly, we felt there was enough information available to describe what the Sub Committees did and what their functions are with regards to money being spent and how they carried out their primary purpose. Secondly

this was, in part discussed at Conference 2023, Committee 1, question 1:

In the interests of transparency and consistency, could Conference discuss how open GSB expenditure and investment accounts are, and whether they are presented in a way that is useful and easy to understand for the wider Fellowship, thus giving members an insight of how funds are spent?

This committee recognises the need for transparency and consistency in the financial reporting from the Board whilst acknowledging their legal responsibilities as trustees of the charity. For example, in both the annual and quarterly accounts.

This committee recommends:

- 1) Using a consistent and plain English format for quarterly reports and suggest these are distributed widely through regional treasurers to the wider fellowship.
- 2) Where possible use simple and easy to understand graphics.
- 3) More commentary and itemised detail on primary purpose work and other spending be provided on the web site to aid understanding of quarterly accounts.

The vote was unanimous.

Conference approved this recommendation with a two-thirds plus majority.

33.

Would Conference discuss and recommend how & within what time frame they would like to see progress on Conference Questions' recommendations to the GSB communicated back to the fellowship?

Terms of Reference No. 10

Committee felt that the time frame of updating the fellowship in a timely matter was already being fulfilled. Every Conference is updated with the ongoing projects and updates on most of these are also printed in AA service news. Some projects are obviously more in-depth and some are shorter but we felt as a Committee that the information flow to the fellowship was already sufficient.

34.

Would Conference discuss the suggestion that GSO staff members supporting the Conference Steering Committee for Question Selection should follow the principle of rotation.

Terms of Reference No. 10

GSO Staff who support the CSC are not subject to the "principle of rotation" so the statement they are subject to it is therefore based on an assertion or proposition. There is nothing in our Traditions or Concepts to support the question.

35.

Would Conference give the go-ahead to the GSB & PI and Literature Committees to overhaul the AA 'brand' image and message, in all our communication materials to professionals and the general public? Dedicating funds and expertise as required.

Terms of Reference No. 5

The subject of "branding" was originally raised at Conference 2019 but a Report on the recent new "branding" known as "The Family Look" by a Non-Alcoholic Trustee at Conference 2023.

36.

As a concerned member of the Fellowship, would Conference consider two related developments that have arisen within the Fellowship recently.

The first concerns the actions taken by the 2022 75th Anniversary Convention Committee (previously passed by the General Service Conference and the General Service Board), in providing 'merchandise' for sale at the event. The actions thereby contravening our Traditions 6, 7 and 9. Despite various attempts by other members to have this matter raised and thoroughly examined by our General Service Conference, the matter remains unresolved. In light of the seriousness of the actions involving our Traditions and the potential harm to the future success of the Fellowship in concentrating on our singleness of purpose as we go forward, can Conference elicit an apology, thus ensuring the Fellowship does not repeat the same mistake again.

In connection with the above there have been numerous requests of the General Service Board to publish a detailed and complete set of accounts for the event; in terms of detail this concerns all the expenditure undertaken in obtaining the 'merchandise' travel expenses, accommodation expenses and any other expenses incurred. They should also include the sources of income obtained in order to accommodate the above event and whether reserved finances were accessed as part of the financial settlement.

Terms of Reference No. 10

At Conference 2016 - when the 75th Convention was voted on and passed - that it did not contravene any of our Traditions. Therefore no apology is necessary. Also the GSB had given a full Report on the Finances of the 75th at Conference 2023. So both points were not based on fact.

37.

Our little group holds Hybrid meetings. To reduce the cost of Zoom subscription we share credentials with another group. Could Conference discuss the possibility of doing this at a National, Regional or Intergroup level?

Terms of Reference No. 9

Tradition 4 that each Group, Intergroup and Region should remain autonomous and this should be respected. Please see Conference Report for 2023, Committee 5, Question 3.

38.

In order to counteract the current trend – that alcoholism is not an illness- Will Conference endorse, in the year 2024, the validity, accuracy and authenticity of the chapter in the BB entitled "The Doctors opinion". That this chapter was, and is, the medical building block for recovery as offered by this fellowship.

Terms of Reference No. 7 & 10

Our current Literature already carried the message that Alcoholism was an illness both in our books and pamphlets. It was also agreed that the statement in the question "In

order to counteract the current trend – that alcoholism is not an illness” is based on an assertion that it believes is false. The World Health Organisation already categorises alcoholism as an illness for example.

39.

1. Would the Fellowship review the working time expected of delegates at Conference with the current agenda schedule, and make recommendations to improve conditions?

The agenda for the past few years expects all delegates to work from 9am to past midnight on the Saturday. This timing is beyond most people’s ability to function effectively. No workplace would permit this length of working day.

2. Would Conference recommend that all Committee Recommendations, finalised after the 11pm session, be given to delegates in print before they are asked to vote on them, in order to ensure that there are no misunderstandings about what changes have been made to the recommendations?

Terms of Reference No. 12

Point 1) Regarding that the working hours were too long had already been acknowledged and needed changing by the CSC before the question was sent in. It was decided to reduce the number of questions per Committee and a change to the programme to lessen the hours on Friday to make Saturday evening and Sunday morning easier.
2) This will be being discussed at the next CSC meeting in February.

42.

Would conference discuss the summary of finances for the celebratory AA in Great Britain 75th anniversary convention held at Leeds Arena, as published in the 2023 Final Conference Report, and make recommendations on what further information the GSB should disclose.

Terms of Reference No. 8

More information on the 75th anniversary celebration will be forthcoming from the 75th Sub Committee who are meeting in October 2023. It is anticipated that after this, a breakdown of the finances will be made available.

43.

Would conference discuss and make recommendations on whether income from Gift Aid claimed on Tradition 7 contributions is wholly from individual sources. Questions for discussion might include:

- Are all Gift Aid contributions genuinely from individual AA members, or are some from groups, intergroups or regions and merely passed on by an individual member?
- Should the contributions to GSO page at <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Contributions> be revised and updated to make clear that only individual AA members can gift aid?
- Has Gift Aid been claimed on legacies?

Terms of Reference No. 8

Referred to General Service Board for consideration.

45.

Should a more formal approach to documenting the Discussions after Board Presentations and Open Session be adopted, for example by taking minutes? These minutes could be incorporated into the Conference Report which would provide a record of what Delegates had raised on behalf of their Regions, and the content of any responses or discussions. Additionally, could the Discussion and Open Sessions afford Delegates the opportunity to show their views on issues raised (in the session) by taking a vote?

Terms of Reference No. 12

Issue of openness and fairness. This also reflects Concept 3 right of decision. The Steering Committee agreed that the open forum is open and should remain that way and not become "official". If the Forum was recorded, this may deter Delegates to speak openly. The open Forum should remain Open for free discussion.

46.

Would Conference implement "Meeting Guide Technology" throughout the service structure to help ensure our various meetings lists are kept up to date?

Terms of Reference No. 8 & 10

The Committee have referred this to the PI & ECOMM Sub-Committee for consideration. The system in AAGB for updating meeting information is one form online which then updates central meeting information.

47.

Would Conference approve an additional and simplified AA logo (a variation of the current logo with the following changes: filled colour triangle, the letters "AA" in white, and the words "Recovery, Unity and Service" removed - as per the image below) for use in our external communications?



Terms of Reference No. 8

Referred to the PI Sub Committee for consideration. AA Brand Guidelines are currently on page 117 of the Structure Handbook.

48.

MAY WE ENSURE THAT WE PRESERVE THE USE OF MALE AND FEMALE NOMENCLATURE IN THE LITERATURE AS IT CURRENTLY STANDS LEST ITS REMOVAL CAUSE CONFUSION OR DIVISION WITHIN THE AA FELLOWSHIP?

Terms of Reference No. 5

There was a similar question asked at Conference 2022, Committee 3, Question 1.

50.

Would the fellowship consider extending the time allowed for the General Service Conference, so that in line with Concept V, "a traditional 'Right of Appeal' may prevail, assuring ... that minority opinion is heard, and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances are carefully considered."

Terms of Reference No. 12

The Committee are already looking at ways to make Saturday evening and Sunday morning easier and will discuss this fully at their next meeting. The minority opinion as well as any appeal is heard in Committee as well as the committee's decision as read out on the Sunday. The Sunday Assembly is for hearing the committee's decision and voting, not extended debate which occurs in committee.