

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF IRELAND**



**ROLL CALL AND MINUTES
OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2021**

Online

5th – 6th March 2021

1. Opening of Conference by Chairperson

Colum P. (Chairperson) opened Conference by welcoming everybody and asked for a moments silence to consider why we were here. Conference recited the Serenity Prayer and Tradition Two was read. Colum P. read from page 71 of the General Service Handbook 'Why Do We Need a Conference?'

Conference agreed to adjourn at 9.30pm on Friday and recommence at 9.30am on Saturday.

Service Handbook for Ireland (01/2021 Article 9, Decisions of Conference, (Page 60)

The decision of Conference resulting from any vote, or any Motion or Item before Conference shall be:

1.1 All Items or Motions passed unanimously becomes Conference Policy immediately and are recommended in trust to all Groups, Area Committees, Intergroups, Conference and Board.

1.2 All Items or Motions passed by a two-thirds majority are recommended and, unless rescinded by notice of Motion, become Conference Policy after the expiry of one year.

1.3 All Items or Motions receiving only a simple majority are recommendations and shall be further debated at the next Annual General Service Conference.

Conference agreed to complete its business on Saturday at 5.30pm.

2. Roll Call

| Connaught | | Munster | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| Trustee | Rory H. | Trustee | Martin C. |
| Delegate | Joe B. | Delegate | John T |
| Delegate | Marilyn K. | Delegate | Michael McG. |
| Delegate | Hubert J. | Delegate | Nicholas R. |
| Delegate | Sean C. | Delegate | James S. |
| IG Secretary | Monica McE. | IG Secretary | Audrey McD. |
| Leinster | | Ulster | |
| Trustee | Emmet O'H. | Trustee | Brian F. |
| Delegate | Philip McG | Delegate | John Mc C. |
| Delegate | Anthony McN. | Delegate | Billy I. |
| Delegate | Barbara A. | Delegate | Brian G. |
| Delegate | Michael D. | Delegate | Kenny P. |
| IG Secretary | Maria M. | IG Secretary | James Mc K. |
| Other | | Observers | |
| Board Secretary | Tony O'C. | Barbara Counihan Gretchen S. Justin T. Mallory M. Mark C. | Operations Manager GB Observer GB Observer Observer Observer |
| WSD's | Helen H. Moira S. | | |
| Non-AA Member Director/Trustee | Liz Cullen | | |
| Non-AA Member Director/Trustee | Cindy O'Shea. | | |
| Non-AA Member Director/Trustee | Aisling Hussey. | | |
| Chairperson | Colum P. | | |

3. Adoption of 2020 Conference Agenda (Appendix 1)

Adoption of Agenda and other urgent business in accordance with Paragraph 1.5, page 58 of 01/2021 Service Handbook.

Brief discussion took place on Draft Agenda; it was proposed by Anthony Mc N. (Leinster). Seconded by Billy I. (Ulster) that the Agenda be adopted.

4. Adoption of 2020 Conference Minutes and Matters Arising

Chairperson went through the Minutes page by page. There was one minor correction on the last paragraph on March 2020 Minutes as highlighted by Billy I. (Ulster). Minutes were proposed by Emmet O'H. (Trustee) and seconded by Philip Mc G. (Leinster).

5. Introduction of new AA Trustees

Incoming Trustee Rory H. was approved by the General the General Service Conference of Ireland as AA Provincial Trustee for Connaught.

Incoming Non-AA–Member Trustee Aisling Hussey was welcomed by Conference members.

Incoming Trustee Emmet O'H. was approved by the General Service Conference of Ireland as AA Provincial Trustee for Leinster.

6. Motions to Conference (Appendix 2)

Two Motions were placed before Conference from Munster.

Motion No 1. Cork City Area propose that Online Meetings be adopted into the Structure of AA.

Blackpool Group, Carrigaline Group, Frankfield Group and The Lough Group Cork City.

Motion No 2. Cork City Area propose that no meetings shall be considered outside the Structure of AA unless they are specifically excluded by a decision of Conference.

A Vision for You Group Cork City.

Synopsis of points highlighted in relation to the above Motions.

Barbara A. (Leinster) asked if the Motions had been put forward early in the Covid-19 Pandemic, prior to the establishment of many AA Online Meetings by Groups. Barbara expressed the feeling that with all respect to the two AA Groups, her sense was that the horse had bolted in relation to the matter of Online AA Meetings. Barbara A. (Leinster) suggested that maybe we ought to maintain the status quo in relation to AA Groups holding meetings online.

Marilyn K. (Connaught) pointed out that Online AA Meetings are not agreed by the Structure in Ireland. Nicholas R. (Munster) stated that he agreed with Marilyn K. Nicholas said this was a matter for Conference to decide and not an issue for anyone else to decide.

Nicholas also felt that GSO and the General Service Board were endorsing Online AA Meetings. Groups and Areas were being denied a voice and were being talked down to by people in GSO and the Board.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) stated that the role of Conference Delegates was to represent the Groups and Areas of Ireland. Anthony queried Nicholas's Conference Delegate Reports relating to Limerick Areas and the Area's being denied a voice. Anthony Mc N. went on to state that Nicholas R. had several comments in his report about these Areas being against Online Meetings.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) quoted from Area Minutes of Limerick Area from May 19th 2020 and of June 16th, 2020.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) refuted this report and went on to point out that none of this was true. It was, Anthony said, shocking to have the facts of an Area Committee misrepresented. He further stated that he had taken the time to read the Area Minutes from the Areas that Nicholas reported on.

These Area Minutes, Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) said, quite clearly reflect a completely different picture in relation to Online AA Meetings and how the General Service Board along with GSO dealt with the issue during the Pandemic given the unprecedented situation.

Mick Mc G. (Munster) read both Motions and clarified that the Motions had come through Structure. Mick made the point that AA members were regularly seeking clarification on the question "Are Online Meetings part of AA Structure or not"? Mick Mc G. (Munster) said his role was to present the Motions on behalf of Cork City irrespective of his own personal views on them.

Mick Mc G. further went on to state that the Motions ought to be debated through constructive discussion, weather we liked online meetings or not.

Mick Mc G. stated that he had no problem with Online Meetings for people who require them, the difficulty he did have, was Online Meetings taking over from physical meetings. This he stated would damage the AA Structure. Moira S. (WSD) asked if we could please have the Motions discussed and personal feelings set aside in relation to the Agenda Item. Moira S. said, this is what the AA Groups were entitled to, and deserved. She further requested that we stick to the agenda as agreed by Conference.

Kenny P. (Ulster) stated that both Motions were similar to each other. Kenny pointed out that based on his experience as a Conference Delegate, speaking with Areas and Groups, irrespective of what Conference decides, his feeling was from AA Groups, that they have already spoken. Online Meetings are here, and they are here to stay Kenny said.

Nicholas R. (Munster) said that he did not want to be misrepresented. He said he was in favour of Online AA Meetings. He was not in favour of the way they were introduced initially. He further added that he was in favour of Motion Number 1 however, proper Structure needed to be put on such meetings.

Hubert J. (Connaught) said that he would have some concerns regarding Online Meetings. This said, Hubert has attended Online Meetings and found them to be of enormous benefit over the last number of months. However, he felt that there were legitimate concerns in relation to Finances and the Structure. The meetings are an activity of the group, and the AA Group is part of the Service Structure, he said. There is nothing, Hubert stated, in the AA Literature that he is aware of, that states AA Meetings have to be physical in their nature. Or that you must be physically present in a room for an AA Meeting to take place. It is the business of the AA Group how they conduct their meetings physically or remotely. Hubert concluded that AA Online Meetings are here and that they are here to stay, and we need to deal with this issue.

Barbara A. (Leinster) said that groups were clamouring to get this matter of Online Meetings structured and done properly, in line with AA Structure. Barbara stated that she had no personal agenda in relation to this item she just wanted common sense to prevail. Barbara A. finished by highlighting the foreword to the fourth edition of the 'Big Book' (Alcoholics Anonymous) where it is stated ***'whatever structure we find weather it's modem to modem or person to person AA speaks the language of the heart'***. Barbara A said she did not think that Online Meetings were going to overtake physical meetings.

Helen H. (WSD) said that we needed to work constructively and strive for inclusivity of all when it comes to physical and online meetings.

We should, Helen said, be exploring ways to promote inclusiveness and find a way of ensuring our Structure remains intact.

John T. (Munster) stated that AA Groups are part of the Structure, an AA Meeting being a group activity is not part of the Structure. John T. said, in reference to AA Groups that he had contact with, a number of groups, are currently holding Online Meetings. The sense was, even when the Pandemic is over, they would continue to hold online meetings alongside physical meetings, which would still be administered by the same Group Conscience. Some AA Groups, John said, particularly those who do not hold physical meetings, are looking for guidance on holding Online AA Meetings. John T. (Munster) pointed out that AA Groups have taken the autonomous authority to hold Online Meetings. It was now a matter of looking at how these virtual meetings could be incorporated into the AA Structure using appropriate guidelines.

Joe B. (Connaught) welcomed all new Conference Members. Joe went on to say that it was important to listen to the grassroots members and this item needed to be handled properly. He went on to point out that there was no doubt that Online Meetings were here to stay. This said, Joe felt it was important that proper measures be established to ensure that the AA Structure is not eroded. Joe pointed out that the grassroots members had to be listened to and the sense from them, was that they were happy with both physical and online meetings. But that Online Meetings would have to have Structure where the Seventh Tradition and other AA Guidelines ought to be adhered to.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) stated that in relation to Motion No 2., his concern was that if Conference voted on the Motion and one person voted against or abstained, the Motion would fail resulting in Online Meetings being outside AA Structure. Anthony urged caution on taking such a vote.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) stated that he had two proposals to place before the General Service Conference. The first proposal was that Conference decide that Online Meetings are either inside or outside Structure.

Anthony Mc N. said this was a proposal we did not have to decide on today. Anthony's second proposal was, that a Sub-Committee of experienced Members of Conference be assembled to explore the matter of Online AA Meetings, such a Sub-Committee would consult with Groups. The Sub-Committee could report with recommendations to a Special Meeting of Conference via Zoom later in the year.

Mick D. (Leinster) said he would like to endorse what Anthony Mc N. had pointed out. Mick D. went on to say that AA Online Meetings were here to stay and that was the views of the Groups in his Areas.

Mick D. further stated that listening around the meeting today, the consensus was the same as that of the groups. He also pointed out that rather than sowing division between online and physical meetings we should be sowing unity. Mick D. (Leinster) concluded by saying what we should be dealing with is finding solutions on how best to incorporate Online Meetings into our AA Structure. Once a group is adhering to the 6-Point Criteria as laid out in the Service Handbook of Ireland, there ought to be no distinction between an online meeting and physical AA meeting.

Audrey McD. (Munster) shared that she has attended many Online AA Meetings, not only in Ireland but across the world. Such meetings had enhanced her recovery greatly. Audrey stated that she had concerns regarding, some of our Traditions and safety issues. These Audrey said, were matters of huge concern to her along with the management of risk associated with Online Meetings.

Marilyn K. (Connaught) pointed out that it would be foolish to think that Online AA Meetings were not here to stay. Marilyn stated that she was glad that Conference was discussing this matter. She did, however, highlight her concerns in relation to the correct running of these meetings.

Tony O'C. (Board Secretary) stated that there were a substantial number of Online AA Meetings currently registered on the National AA Website. These were spread across all four Provinces of Ireland. Tony (Board Secretary) also pointed out that Online AA Meetings were being held throughout Central Europe, GB, US/Canada, Australia, and New Zealand along with Asian Countries.

The Secretary further highlighted that Online AA Meetings were mentioned in the foreword to the Fourth Edition of the Big Book as previously mentioned.

Online Meetings were also referenced in our AA Literature (page 81 - Living Sober). The World Service Meeting was recently an Online Event.

The Board Secretary concluded by saying that a proposal had already been placed before Conference to establish a Sub-Committee to explore all the issues relating to Online Meetings and bring a solid set of Guidelines / Recommendations for Conference to discuss. There are, he stated, provisions for the establishment of such Committees under our Conference Charter Article 7.

Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) stated that he would not like to see a vote taking place on this item right now. Brian felt that the matter had received a good airing at Conference. He further said that what he would rather see, was the issue being brought to Groups, Areas, and Intergroups for debate and further discussed at Conference next year.

James S. (Munster) stated that a vote needed to be taken on this matter. There is, he pointed out, Six Points that define an AA Group set out in the Guidelines. There was not much point, James said, in AA Groups taking the time to compile Motions and Proposals for discussion at Conference and sending these back without decision.

Brian G. (Ulster) stated there will be Online AA Meetings tonight and tomorrow night and into the future regardless of what has been stated today. Brian further went on to point out that Motions had been placed before Conference, the general consensus seemed to be that while most people are in favour of Online Meetings, there is also some concern about how such meetings are run. Brian suggested that the vote ought to be that Conference gives interim approval for Online Meetings pending final approval, after a Sub-Committee reports back to Conference.

The main problem is not the Online Meetings, it is guidelines for such meetings. Brian was of the view that a Sub-Committee ought to be established and revert to Conference on such guidelines for Online Meetings.

Monica Mc E. (Connaught) reiterated the views of most Members of Conference in stating that AA Online Meetings were here and were now established. Monica further pointed out that we are not a unique group of people. The whole world and organisations like ourselves have been affected by the Global Pandemic and have had to adjust accordingly. Monica also stated that she had received correspondence from members who had never attended AA pre-online meetings. These people had now come into AA, they have gotten Sponsors online and they continue to stay sober through their attendance at online meetings. Monica Mc E. (Connaught) concluded these meetings are here to stay. People's lives are being saved through these meetings; it is a matter of how we manage them properly.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) pointed out that he had put a proposal to Conference, which he believed had been seconded. Anthony believed that we should revert to the AA Groups, listen to their voices, establish a Sub-Committee of Conference to examine all aspects of online meetings, then report back with recommendations to a Special Meeting of the General Service Conference in six months and make the necessary decisions.

Anthony stated that this was his proposal.

Mick Mc G. (Munster) said that the problem was Online AA Meetings were uncontrolled. Mick further pointed to concerns relating to his Area. He referenced Hybrid Meetings, non-attendance at Group Conscience Meetings when groups are holding online meetings.

However, Mick Mc G. stated he was glad to hear a constructive discussion on this matter.

Conference Chairman asked Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) to repeat his proposal to Conference to enable a vote on the suggested proposal.

Anthony Mc N. stated his proposal was as follows:

We postpone a final decision on the Motions before us today. Conference establishes a Sub-Committee of members who have experience in relation to all aspects of online meetings with emphasis on our AA Traditions.

It would also be important to listen to the views of AA Groups, Area Committee etc., then a final and informed decision could be taken by the General Service Conference.

Anthony further proposed that Conference meets in September 2021 to consider recommendations from such a Sub-Committee. This Proposal was seconded by Moira S (WSD).

The Proposal was carried unanimously.

A Sub-Committee was established by Conference which included Emmet O'H. (Trustee), Audrey Mc D. (MIG Secretary), Sean C. (Connaught), Moira S. (WSD), John Mc C. (Ulster) and John T. (Munster).

7. Service in AA, The Solution – Encouraging Members into Service (Appendix 3)

Synopsis of points highlighted in relation to this item.

In presenting this item, Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) stated that it had been agreed by Conference that Reports would be taken as read. The Report, he said, had already been well documented. However, Anthony wished to put forward a suggestion linked to encouraging members into service and improving service in AA. Anthony Mc N. asked if Conference would consider Members of Conference visiting other Intergroups in the interests of learning from other Intergroups and exchanging views. This, Anthony pointed out, would be in the interest of building Unity, strengthening Service, and gaining an understanding of how other Intergroups function.

John T. (Munster) endorsed Anthony's suggestion adding, it was a very good idea. John T. also stated that it would also be beneficial if the Board of GSBAA could meet on a quarterly or semi-annually with Members of Conference to listen to Conference Members and exchange views. This, John pointed out, would improve communication.

On this item, Rory H. (Connaught Trustee), stated that he would like to endorse Anthony Mc N's suggestion. Rory H. also wished to highlight the importance of sponsorship into service.

Kenny P. (Ulster) believed that there was the issue of apathy towards certain areas of Service. This, Kenny said, also needed to be tackled.

James S. (Munster) pointed out that we need to get rid of the 'them and us' attitude in AA. We should not be operating in an atmosphere of mistrust. James S. concluded by saying that we, as Conference Members, needed to conduct ourselves in an appropriate manner otherwise, we would not encourage new people into service.

Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) felt that Anthony Mc N's suggestion was very good idea and should be pursued.

In summation on this item, Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) thanked all for their contributions on the matter. He confirmed that Leinster Intergroup will issue invitations to Intergroups to attend one of their meetings before the Annual General Service Conference next year, he requested other Intergroups to extend the same courtesy.

7a. Discussion items arising from GB Conference in York (GB) 2019 (Appendix 4)

Synopsis of points highlighted in relation to this item.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) presented this item, in doing so, he gave a brief history as to its origins. Anthony Mc N. read three questions from the report. Anthony's Proposal was that three Sub-Committees of Conference be established to research the three questions.

On this item, Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) said that he did not have a problem with setting up Committees to examine the first two questions. However, in relation to the question of Literature and Pricing etc., Brian pointed to the fact that the Board of AA had a Literature Committee who was responsible for all aspects of AA Literature.

Barbara A. (Leinster) felt the suggestions put forward by Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) and Kenny P. (Ulster) regarding Sub-Committees to look at these matters was a good idea. Barbara felt at times, that while important items get discussed and debated and conclusions are reached, these items can then end up on the back burner and do not always get implemented.

Billy I. (Ulster) pointed out that in relation to a document presented by Leinster, it was stated that the spirit of Rotation in Service keeps the fellowship alive. This statement, Billy I. stated, was important. Billy I. further said that the question of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous needed to be defined as he was yet to establish what defined a Young Person in AA. Was it a person who is the age of thirty, or thirty-five? Does it mean a person who is six months or twelve months sober? Or has it anything to do with a person's age.

John T. (Munster) wished to address a few points in the document. John reported that Kerry Area Committee had decided recently to designate five pieces of AA Literature to GSR'S coming into service, to enable the GSR'S to familiarise themselves.

John also felt that it would be important to look at the Brief that would relate to a Young Persons Liaison Officer.

John concluded that if Conference decided to have a YPLO, it would be important that they would be given clear instruction and empowered to carry out their Brief.

Rory H. (Connaught Trustee) asked Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) if both Kenny and Anthony were asked to participate on the Committees while attending the GB Conference.

Nicholas R. (Munster) stated that without the young person coming into AA meetings, we would die. Nicholas went onto to point out that in his opinion he considered himself young and we should not be ageist. He did not think setting up Committees to explore these matters was helpful.

Nicholas R. (Munster) said that we needed to go back to the groups to discuss all these matters.

Marilyn K. (Connaught) stated that she would not be in favour of setting up Sub-Committees to research or explore these matters. She felt such items could be discussed here at Conference.

Moira S. (WSD) said that in her experience, some of the most painful conflict she had seen at Conference over the years, related to young people. Moira S. further pointed out that service positions in GB differed somewhat to Ireland.

Moira went on to state that right now we had two GB Observers present at Conference who could, if Conference requested, share their experiences on this topic. Moira concluded she would love to hear the GB Observers views.

Hubert J. (Connaught) spoke and said he would have difficulty with all three items raised in relation to this item.

Hubert said that there was nothing wrong with people who would have served at all levels of Structure returning as Observers.

Hubert J. had reservations on a Young Persons Liaison Officer, and he would like to see more concrete Proposals. Hubert (Connaught) further clarified that he would not like to see a situation where young people would be excluded from Service. On the matter of some low-cost Literature, he queried why we would sell Literature at 1 cent, asking why not give it away.

Sean C. (Connaught) complimented Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) and Kenny P. (Ulster) for their work on this item. Sean went on to add that as a first-time attendee, it was his sense from all the discussions so far, that there was a certain amount of fear. This is something we ought to be able to manage he said. Sean concluded that he believed that all three questions were well worth researching at Committee level. Sean also agreed that he too would welcome contributions from the GB Observers present.

Mick Mc G. (Munster) pointed out that he would have a concern in relation to Rotation. He cited the importance of Service Sponsors. He also said that there were two types of alcoholics, men, and women.

Philip Mc G. (Leinster) felt that the investigative work carried out by Anthony Mc N. and Kenny P. warranted further exploration.

At this juncture, the Chairman of Conference invited the GB Observers for their contributions on the item being discussed.

Gretchen (GB Observer) gave a brief history of how a Young Persons Liaison Officer came about. She also gave an overview of the position and how it came about in GB.

Justin (GB Observer) explained how retiring Delegates at Conference in GB would have served three years. Trustees are, he said, slightly different. Young persons are used in GB are used for School Talks.

James S. (Munster) felt that a Young Persons Liaison Officer was a very positive idea, his sense was that young people overall had a lot to offer in Alcoholics Anonymous. James concluded by pointing out that the issue should be explored.

James Mc K. (Ulster) supported the Proposal of investigative Sub-Committees to examine the three questions posed. James stated we always talk about making informed decisions. Are we not better to ensure that we have all the facts by allowing people to carry out investigative research and report back in September and have informed discussion?

Kenny P. (Ulster) made the point that this matter was raised at Conference in 2019. It was pointed out that the word Youth was never mentioned in the discussion today.

Kenny said many young people did not feel included in AA. He went on to point out that we needed to stop burying our heads in the sand, nobody wants to come into AA and dictate how we run our business. Kenny concluded that our attitude needed to alter in relation to include young people.

Emmet O'H. (Leinster Trustee) wished to return to the original Proposal as presented by Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) and Kenny P. (Ulster).

Emmet O'H. stated that the Proposal was to establish Sub-Committees, to look at the relevant questions and report back to a Special Meeting of Conference with recommendations which could be either accepted or rejected. This would allow a period of six months for the Sub-Committees to carry out their work and also allow time for consultations with the AA Groups, Intergroups, and Areas for feedback.

Joe B. (Connaught) queried GB Observer Gretchen on how the Young Persons Liaison Officer worked at group level.

Cindy O'Shea (Non-AA Member/Trustee) stated that there was a lot of excellent discussion. Cindy particularly wanted to highlight the matter of young people in AA and a Young Persons Liaison Officer. She felt that there was a need to engage with young people and listen to their views.

Moira S. (WSD) wished to clarify what the proposal was for a Young Persons Liaison Officer in Alcoholics Anonymous at Group/Local level. This proposal had no links or ties in any way to any other entity that may be using the AA name.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) reiterated his Proposal that three Sub-Committees be set up to research and explore the three questions. This was seconded by Philip Mc G. (Leinster).

A vote was taken, and the Proposal was carried.

22 voted in favour of the Proposal.

2 voted against.

The three Sub-Committees will report back to Conference in September 2021.

8. All Ireland Convention 2021 Update (Appendix 5)

Marilyn K. (Connaught) introduced this Agenda item as Chairperson of the All Ireland 2021 Convention with a brief overview, before handing over to Sean C. (Connaught) who presented a Proposal on hosting the All-Ireland event online due Public Health restrictions arising from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Sean C. presented a PowerPoint Presentation on all aspects of the upcoming event scheduled for April 23rd-25th 2021.

The Conference Chairman thanked Sean C. (Connaught) for a well compiled presentation.

Nicholas R. (Munster) complimented Connaught on their All-Ireland Convention 2021 Presentation.

Mick Mc G. (Munster) also paid tribute to the All-Ireland Convention Committee for their PowerPoint Presentation.

Mick Mc G. (Munster) queried finance and expenses. Sean C. (Connaught) did confirm that there would be €5 registration for the event, this would be collected electronically.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) also complimented Connaught on well-presented Proposal and wished them success. Anthony did have questions relative to the Proposal regarding the accommodation for the Convention Committee and Entertainment. Sean C. (Connaught) responded to these queries.

John Mc C. (Ulster) had questions regarding the IT for the event.

Audrey Mc D. (Munster) wished to congratulate the Committee on the Proposal and stated she would be fully supporting the Proposal.

Martin C. (Munster Trustee) wished to compliment the All-Ireland Convention Committee on their proposal.

Barbara A. (Leinster) thanked Sean C. and the Committee for their excellent presentation and stated that the Proposal as placed before Conference appeared very attractive. Barbara concluded by saying that this would be a wonderful 'first' for the event and wished the Committee every success.

John T. (Munster) congratulated Connaught on their presentation and queried breakout rooms etc.

Moira S. (WSD) thanked the All-Ireland Convention Committee for their work on the Proposal and would be fully supporting the initiative.

There was some discussion on Committee costs in relation to accommodation with contributions from Rory H. (Connaught Trustee) Marilyn K. (Connaught) Hubert J. (Connaught) and Joe B. (Connaught).

Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) stated that this was a very good presentation, and his hope was that the event would be as successful as the presentation.

Monica Mc E. requested that guidance be given to the All-Ireland Convention Committee regarding costs for accommodation etc.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) pointed out that Conventions ought to be fully self-supporting in line with our AA Traditions. Anthony further went on to say that he would like the intention to see the event at the very least break even financially.

Sean C. (Connaught) assured Conference that that the intention was that the event would break even. Sean further stated that the cost involved in running an All-Ireland Convention was far less than holding a physical event.

Michael McG. (Munster) quoted from the General Service Handbook on guidelines for running Conventions.

Cindy O'Shea (Non-AA Member/Trustee) asked the Convention Committee if they would have enough support Committee-wise.

Emmet O'H. (Leinster Trustee) posed the questions regarding registration.

Sean stated that attendees would not be registering through Zoom.

Emmet noted that the Presentation referred to registration via the AA Website and asked Sean C. for clarification on this.

Sean clarified that that the Proposal was to possibly use a code embedded on the Website linked to payment of registration.

It was further clarified that all monies would be going into the Convention account.

The General Service Conference voted unanimously to approve Proposal of hosting the 2021 All-Ireland Convention online.

Martin C. (Munster Trustee) asked Connaught All-Ireland Convention Committee, if they would ensure that the attendees at the All-Ireland Convention are made aware that next year's All-Ireland Convention - 2022 will be held either as a physical or online event in Munster.

9. Ulster Intergroup Submission – General Service Handbook (Appendix 6)

Brian G. (Ulster) presented this item by stating that this item had been drawn up in May 2020. Brian went on to point that page 50 of the 2021 updated Service Handbook covered most of what needed to be said. Brian G. (Ulster) also referenced the Action Committee that had been set up by Ulster IG in the midst of the Coronavirus Pandemic in an effort to ensure that accurate information was transmitted to the AA Groups of Ulster.

Brian G. stated that Ulster were proposing minor changes to the Service Handbook as outlined in their submission.

John Mc C. (Ulster) raised a query in relation to Provincial Intergroup web pages on the National AA Website.

Hubert J. (Connaught) stated that he had a recollection of a decision been taken by Conference previously, that GSBAA would provide this facility for Intergroups.

The Board Secretary was requested to follow up on this matter, to establish what, if any, information was available in relation to this topic.

The Board Secretary sought clarification on the submissions for the General Service Handbook from Ulster Intergroup.

After some discussion and debate it was confirmed that the submissions received by Ulster Intergroup could now be withdrawn, as the suggestions received from Ulster were adequately covered in the Handbook.

Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) wished it noted that a Motion had been placed before Conference in 2020, from Ulster Intergroup, regarding Inventories for Areas and Intergroups.

Brian pointed out that the Motion had received a simple majority, which meant that unless rescinded in 2021, would become Conference Policy immediately.

The Secretary confirmed that the Motion referred to Area/Intergroup Inventory Checklist would be inserted as an Appendix in the next printing of the General Service Handbook.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) highlighted a few omissions, and typographical errors in the Handbook.

Anthony wished to have it noted that a Submission was made on behalf of Leinster, which needed to be included as part of Thirteen Points previously brought to the attention of Conference for inclusion in the Service Handbook.

One, in particular, referred to **Alternate Delegates to Conference (page 47)**.

It was agreed by Conference, that the following be inserted in the Service Handbook in relation to this *'upon receipt of notification directly from a sitting Delegate, an Alternate Delegate may replace them at Conference'*.

Appointment of Trustees (page 52) *'and they should reach a consensus on a successor before he/she is presented to the Board for ratification. A unanimous consensus would be preferable, but not essential'*.

It was clarified and accepted by Conference that the above insertions ought to be included in the next printing of the Service Handbook.

10. World Service Delegate Report (Appendix 7)

The WSD report was taken as read, in line with decision of General Service Conference.

Helen H. (WSD) and Moira S. (WSD) wished to highlight aspects of report and draw Conference's attention to points contained in the report.

These points, Helen H. (WSD) stated, included Young People in AA, Online AA Meetings, AA Literature, Service etc., all of which are being discussed globally in AA.

Liz Cullen (Non-AA Trustee) paid tribute to Helen H. and Moira S. (WSD's) on producing an excellent report.

Brian G. (Ulster) wished to highlight the drop in Literature sales worldwide as contained in the document.

Brian G. went on to point out that we were perhaps too reliant on literature sales. He further referenced, that literature sales in Ireland had fallen by 50% in the past year - people do not read in the same fashion as they used to, Brian concluded.

Moira S. (WSD) highlighted that many people are now using PDF formats of the Big Book and Twelve Steps/Traditions. These, Moira pointed out are available on the AA American/Canada Website.

Moira S. suggested that this is something we needed to investigate here in Ireland in an effort to make PDFs available.

Moira S. (WSD) sought the permission of Conference, to post the full World Service Meeting Report link in the Chat option of Zoom.

11. Conference Delegates Reports (Appendix 8)

Conference Delegates Reports were taken as read in line with Conference Decision.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) asked for clarification regarding permission on use of the AA Logo.

Board Secretary said that it was his understanding, that an application was made to the IG Secretary for permission. This, in turn, is passed to the Provincial Trustee to grant permission for its use.

The correct AA Logo is printed in the current edition General Service Handbook (01/2021).

John T. (Munster) raised a question in relation to the next printing of the National AA Directory. He was raising the matter in the hope that it might encourage Groups to update their Group Information.

The Board Secretary confirmed that the last printing of the Directory was in 2019. As a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic, all AA Groups closed.

Some AA Groups have since reopened Physical Meetings and despite repeated requests to Groups to advise GSO of their meeting status, we still do not have updated information from many AA Groups.

The Secretary appealed to Conference Members, who are aware of groups operating physical meetings, to encourage them to complete Group Information Sheets (GIS) and return them directly to GSO to enable the updating of the database.

The current Meeting information on the AA Website is the only verifiable information available.

Secretary concluded that GSO were desperate for Group Contacts and information, to ensure 12 Step calls and accurate Meeting information were passed on to those who required help.

To date we are only aware of 117 physical AA Meetings being held. This information currently is available on the website.

Joe B. (Connaught) highlighted the increase in Rents etc. in relation to some properties being used by AA in Connaught.

12. Invitation to AAGB to attend General Service Conference Ireland 2022

Conference unanimously agreed to invite GB Observers to the General Service Conference in 2022.

13. Election of Observers to GB Conference April 2021

Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) proposed John Mc C. (Ulster).
This was seconded by Rory H. (Connaught Trustee).

Emmet O'H. (Leinster Trustee) proposed Barbara A. (Leinster).
This was seconded by Moira S. (WSD).

Rory O'H. queried if Non-AA Trustees were eligible to attend GB Conference as Observers.

Board Secretary stated this is a query that would need to be checked with GSO GB.

GB Observers Gretchen and Justin were invited by Chair of Conference (Colum) to address the General Service Conference.

Gretchen thanked Conference for their welcome, she expressed how nice it was to meet everyone albeit it virtually. She went on to say it was a different experience compared to GB Conference.

Justin expressed his gratitude to Conference for the warm welcome and stated that GB would be very much looking forward to welcoming Barbara and John when they attend GB Conference in April.

Justin added that it was very interesting to see that though we have slightly different Structures, we have so many issues in common particularly in the wake of the Pandemic. He said it was reassuring to see that AA continues to be kept in safe hands. This, Justin concluded, was a tribute to this Conference and the AA Structure.

John T. (Munster) said he wished to point out before Conference concluded, that he would like it noted, that over the last eleven months he had dealt with GSO staff and found their tolerance and professionalism outstanding.

John wished to express his appreciation and thanks for their hard work during what was a difficult period.

Rory H. (Connaught) stated that he too would like to express his thanks to the three members of staff in GSO including the Operations Manager and the Board Secretary.

14. Election of Conference Chairperson 2022.

Conference agreed unanimously that the Chairperson of the 2022 General Service Conference would be Mick D. (Leinster).

It was further agreed that Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) would be Alternate Chairperson.

The Chair of Conference (Colum), in conclusion, stated that it had been a privilege to Chair Conference.

He thanked all Members that had taken the time to attend online. Colum also expressed his gratitude to the Operations Manager, the GSO Staff, and all Board Members. Colum further thanked all four Observers for their attendance.

It was announced that a Special Meeting of Conference would be scheduled for September 2021, to debate recommendations by Sub-Committees as previously discussed during this Conference.

Conference concluded with the Serenity Prayer.

Appendices

- (Appendix 1) Adoption of 2020 Conference Agenda.
Adoption of Agenda and other urgent business in accordance with Paragraph 1.5, page 58 of 01/2021 Service Handbook.
- (Appendix 2) Motions to Conference
- (Appendix 3) Service in AA - The Solution – Encouraging Members into Service
- (Appendix 4) Discussion items arising from GB Conference in York (GB) 2019
- (Appendix 5) All Ireland Convention 2021 Update
- (Appendix 6) Ulster Intergroup Submission – General Service Handbook
- (Appendix 7) World Service Delegate Report
- (Appendix 8) Conference Delegates Reports



DRAFT AGENDA

Meeting Type: General Service Conference of AA in Ireland
Date: Friday 5th March at 8.30pm and will resume on Saturday 6th March 2021 at 9.45am to 5.00pm
Venue: Via Online

1. Opening of Conference by Chairperson
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda and other urgent business in accordance with Article 7, page 58 of 01/2021 Service Handbook
4. Adoption of 2020 Conference Minutes and Matters Arising
5. Introduction of new Trustees
6. Motions to Conference
7. Service in AA 'The Solution' - Encouraging Members into Service
7a. Discussion items arising from GB Conference in York 2019
8. All Ireland Convention 2021 Update
9. Ulster Intergroup Submission re Service Handbook Update
10. World Service Delegate's Report – Virtual WSM 28th-30th November 2020
11. Conference Delegates' Reports
12. Invitation to AAGB to attend General Service Conference Ireland 2022
13. Election of Observers to GB Conference April 2021
14. Election of 2022 Conference Chairperson



**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF IRELAND
Friday 5th March at 8.30pm to 21.45pm and
Saturday 6th March 2021 at 9.45am to 5.00pm**

MOTIONS TO CONFERENCE

• **Munster Intergroup**

1. Blackpool Group, Carrigaline Group, Frankfield Group and The Lough Group, Cork City.
2. A Vision for You Group, Cork City.

• **Leinster Intergroup**

N/A

• **Connaught Intergroup**

N/A

• **Ulster Intergroup**

N/A

MUNSTER

**1. Blackpool Group, Carrigaline Group, Frankfield Group and
The Lough Group, Cork City.**

Motion:

Cork City Area propose that Online Meetings be adopted into the Structure of AA.

2. A Vision for You Group, Cork City.

Motion:

Cork City Area propose that no meetings shall be considered outside the Structure of AA unless they are specifically excluded by a decision of Conference.

DRAFT

Service in AA 'The Solution' - Encouraging Members into Service

Leinster Report

19th January 2021

This report is an updated report of the one which was submitted for Conference 2020.

At Conference in 2018, there was a long discussion about the problems in Service throughout the Country, particularly attracting new members into Service. It was agreed that each Intergroup Committee would look into Service to see if any solutions could be found to the age-old problem of attracting members into Service. Each Intergroup was to report back to Conference 2019, to discuss our findings with a view to collating them, in the hope that we might find some solutions.

In Leinster, a tremendous effort was made into finding solutions. At every Area Meeting and at every Intergroup Meeting, the topic of Service was put on the Agenda. Numerous suggestions came forward, which are being successfully implemented. These suggestions were included in Leinster's Report to Conference 2019, for discussion.

The discussion went ahead at Conference, where recommendations were made, which were sent out to all of the groups. It was again agreed by Conference that Service be put on the Agenda for Conference 2020, and we report back with the results of the implementation of these suggestions. Again, Leinster Intergroup has spent some considerable time at this since. We both hope and expect that maybe we can all benefit from ideas and initiatives introduced by other Intergroup Committees, throughout their Areas. This discussion was then postponed to Conference 2021.

Following on from 2018's report, where we stressed the importance of the role of the Conference Delegates, we have found this to be even more important than previously stated. Without going into any great detail, there was quite a lot of disharmony between the Leinster Conference Members over some of the last year. Without apportioning blame for this, this disharmony greatly affected our ability to operate as a cohesive unit, which trickled down into the Intergroup Committee and various other Committees throughout Leinster. It has been a very important learning experience for us, in that it has shown us that if the Conference Members are not able to work together as a strong cohesive team, then we feel that the rest of the Fellowship in the Intergroup will suffer as a result.

Appendix 3

On a similar note, we would like to mention the relationship between our outgoing Trustee, Pat K., and our other Members of Conference. While we would view Pat as being our leader, he is very much a team player, and he leads by example rather than by instruction. Practically all decisions are made by discussion and consensus. While many topics are debated at length, all of our team usually end up "on the same page". Pat is very inclusive and encouraging, and it must be stated that he has been a pleasure to work with. We have no doubt that this 'teamwork' will continue with our Incoming Trustee.

Given our experience in Leinster in 2019, where we have learned that disharmony between the Conference Members can have a hugely negative effect on the whole Province, we would be very interested to know what sort of relationship exists between the Conference Members in other Intergroups. This would include Trustees, Delegates, and Intergroup Secretaries. Is there the same team ethos and the same feeling of inclusion and encouragement which exists in Leinster? Have other Intergroups experienced problems similar to those faced by Leinster in the past and how did they deal with them? Do other Intergroups feel that they may have a more effective approach to this topic than the one used by Leinster?

Leinster Intergroup have continued the work which they started 2 years ago. While progress is slow, it is happening. It is important that this process is led by the Delegates, and others in Service are encouraged by the example shown by the Delegates. We continue to offer encouragement at all times. One of the most important things we do is to encourage Intergroup and Area Members to bring someone with them to the next meeting, as an Observer. This has proven to be very successful.

Other suggestions which have come forward which are also proving to be helpful are:

1. Holding meetings dedicated to Service. This has happened in many groups throughout Leinster, in various formats. The most common being that the group would ask a member with a lot of experience in Service, to do a Chair at a regular meeting, outlining their involvement in Service and the benefits that Service has brought to many areas of their lives.
2. Asking members currently involved in Service, when they are sharing at meetings, to spend a minute or two, sharing about the benefits of Service to their lives. As this is a programme of attraction rather than promotion, it's important that this sharing is mindful of that.

Appendix 3

3. A number of groups who have had trouble attracting Secretaries for a 3-month period, have now introduced a system of a rotating Secretary, where the Secretary changes from week to week. This has proven to be very successful, particularly with lunchtime meetings.
4. It's important to stress the fact that we are inclusive, that the views and opinions of all members of a group are equally important. In a number of groups throughout Leinster, there were often one or two members, due to their many years of sobriety, who felt that they 'owned' the group, that they were entitled to make decisions rather than the Group Conscience. Some of these groups have sought guidance and advice from Areas and Intergroup.
5. One of the biggest helps to Service over the last few years has been the publication of the 'Suggested Guidelines for Personal Conduct'. There has been an overwhelming positive response to this across Leinster. While there have been a small number of dissenting voices, the vast majority of members are in favour of it. It has given guidance to new Secretaries as to what is acceptable and what is not, as well as offering suggestions as to how to deal with unacceptable behaviours. Prior to this, some members were reluctant to get involved in Service, due to fear of not knowing what to do if faced with a difficult situation.

While other measures are also being implemented, these are a synopsis of the most successful to date. We look forward to hearing other suggestions from the other Intergroup Committees as to how we can further improve Service in our Intergroup.

Anthony McN.
On behalf of the Leinster members of Conference.

Discussion Items arising from GB Conference in York 2019

General Service Conference March 2021

In 2019, Anthony Mc N. and Kenny P. attended the GB Conference in York. We felt the following topics were worthy of discussion at our Conference. These questions have been deferred from Conference 2020.

Questions:

- a) In GB, retiring Delegates and Trustees are encouraged to stay involved in Service at Intergroup/Regional levels. Is this something we should look at in Ireland? Maybe there is some way we can harness and use this experience, which is currently being lost.
- b) AA in GB have a Young People's Liaison Officers, GB Conference recognised that younger members had different 'needs' and needed supports. These YPLOs have proven to be hugely successful. Is this something that we as a Conference in Ireland should explore?
- c) A lot of Literature particularly pamphlets, in GB are sold to groups for a nominal fee (1 penny). This is done for a number of reasons, primarily to encourage Groups and Members to purchase and read this material. Are there any items of Literature that we could consider adopting a similar policy with, in Ireland?

Anthony Mc N. and Kenny P.

All Ireland Convention 2021 Update PowerPoint Presentation

All Ireland Online Convention Proposal



Connacht Intergroup on behalf of AA in Ireland would like to present our proposal to hold this years All Ireland AA Convention in an Online format.

In the following presentation we would like to demonstrate how this Online event will not just be a series of webinars and meetings but will incorporate all the elements of previous physical All Ireland conventions, we will also demonstrate that the committee has the expertise with regards to the technology and security required to deliver an event like this bearing in mind the traditions of AA, our service handbook.



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Introduction



Connaught intergroup would like to make a proposal for this year, that we hold the All Ireland AA convention online. The All Ireland AA convention is a very popular AA event for many members, including many international members who visit Ireland to attend yearly.

This online convention will offer many, an opportunity to reconnect with friends and each other, all-be-it online but in a safe and reasonably familiar format.

AA has been forced into change by this serious and deadly pandemic but has demonstrated its resilience and resourcefulness by utilizing the Zoom platform to our benefit, offering hope and support to members, where they can continue to practice our programme and also carry the message of AA to the still suffering alcoholic.



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Introduction



We also have a new group of members who “got sober” online over the past year, with no experience of face to face meetings.

The All Ireland committee believe that we have a workable programme of meetings and workshops that can take place online for those members who would like to attend.

We considered a number of questions regarding the holding of our All Ireland online.



Security and Platform



The first was the question of security and platform choice.



The Zoom platform offers full encryption end to end, meaning once a member enters the virtual meeting room, their attendance and details and all material are protected by the most advanced and sophisticated encryption available.

We must always keep in mind the protection of member anonymity and member details. We are very grateful to have on our committee, a select group of members, who have extensive experience of holding large AA meetings and conventions, such as the Galway Area Convention and the Lanzarote Convention both held last January.



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Security and Platform



One of these members wrote the Zoom security protocol that has been accepted by New York Intergroup, one of the largest online directories within the USA Alcoholics Anonymous structure.

We have full confidence that members will be protected completely during the convention, if approved.



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Ease of use



The second question we considered was ease of use for all or members to attend the convention and its programme of meetings and workshops.

Zoom is one of the most Popular platforms for holding meetings, conventions and AA events online, including very successful PI Open Public Meetings.

Zoom is the preferred platform for 50% of education classes here in Ireland, because of its ease of use for all students, teachers, attendees who can participate by computer, phone and tablet.

It is also very popular among companies and business people where confidential meetings are held.

Zoom is likened to a landlord who rents us a room for our meetings or a hotel who rents of space in order to hold a convention or Public Open Meeting.



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Social Aspect



It will be impossible to replace the face to face hand shake, and smile normally made between friends and new acquaintances at past conventions.

However, there are ways of interacting socially online and we have a number possibilities. These social events will be timetabled events where members can attend if they wish.

We understand that some members may see issues in these events and we mention them here honestly and genuinely and, as a committee, we will respect any decision made by Conference regarding the holding of any of these separate events.



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Social Aspect



There will be a Chat facility open for 10 minutes between each marathon meeting where members can direct personal message to each other. This is the same as a phone text message. If you have lost someone's phone number and you see them at the meeting, you can reconnect through the Chat privately.

There will also be open "mic" for 10 minutes between meetings by individuals who are in the zoom room. This can be a hectic interaction. some members see this as "fellowship" and enjoy the "banter" while others take the opportunity to mute the room and make a cup of tea.

The committee also feel that an opportunity to provide live entertainment (singing and comedy acts) on Friday and Saturday night in a separate dedicated room will enhance the convention experience for members.



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Social Aspect



Attendance

We anticipate a flexible attendance over the weekend of 600 to 900 attendees. We have no data to demonstrate the percentage of registrants to attendees of virtual meetings or conventions.

Break Out Rooms

We will also have break out rooms, where new members can be directed to speak with committee members to answer any questions they may have. These are especially useful at Public Open Meeting where attendees want to talk privately to learn more about our fellowship.



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Location



Location

The Online event would be head quartered at the Clayton Hotel in Sligo. The hotel has provided written confirmation of up to 1000mb of dedicated internet connection with full conference facilities to the team of over 15 members that will be based there for the full weekend.

We also plan to have a satellite location in Galway with a similar number of members based there for the weekend with 300-500mb internet connection speed.



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Registration

We will be offering members a registration of €5 to register for the convention. This payment would be collected via an easy to use payment button located on the AA website and on other online platforms that would advertise this event.

Each registrant would receive an electronic badge, similar to "hard copy" badges which will help remind them of their attendance at the 2021 All Ireland.



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Marathon Meetings

The committee propose a full schedule of marathon meetings every hour , on the hour with 8 meetings on Friday, 15 meetings on Saturday and 2 on Sunday.

A full digital brochure of each meeting time and theme will be produced by the committee and each meeting will be opened by a Secretary and Chair from groups around Connacht, All of Ireland and some from around the World. Each meeting will also have a back up Secretary and Chair.

Each meeting will be fully monitored by AA members with vast Zoom security protocol experience.



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Other Events



Meditation

The Committee intend to offer a dedicated room to meditation, this room will have a schedule of guided meditations and will provide a space for members relax during the convention weekend.

Open Public Meeting and Meet the Board

The Committee intend to offer a dedicated room to facilitate the Open Public Meeting on the Opening Night and facilitate the Closing meeting of the convention. This room will also facilitate the Meet the Board meeting during Saturday.



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Other Events



AA History

The Committee intend to offer a dedicated room to allow videos and presentations (subject to conference approval) of talks and offerings that are suited to exhibiting online.

Workshops

The Committee intend to run a full suite of workshops including A Service workshop, Writing for the road back workshop, Public Information workshop, Learnings from Covid19 workshop etc.



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Public Information Plan



If approved by Conference , an updated FLYER with Online details will be submitted to GSO so website can be promptly updated , also to be included in the newssheet if timing allows.

All International Service offices will be also contacted once again to update them that event will be hosted Online.

Contact will be made with the Professional Community to extend an invite to our open public meetings .

Contact will be made with the Regional Intergroups and Areas to share with them the updated Flyer and for them to share in their groups and on their shared platforms.



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Public Information Plan



The National Fellowship will also be notified of the Event going online by utilising the now well established network of Zoom Meetings, it now being possible now to attend meetings anywhere Nationally or internationally.

Approved Press Releases to notify the public of the Open Public Meetings which will held at the National AA Convention , these will be sent to National news outlets such as main stream newspapers.

National Tv Stations to be included if possible In their public service announcements section. Prominent Regional News outlets will also be contacted to share and extend an invite to the public.



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Meeting Rooms

| All Ireland AA Convention | All Ireland AA Convention | All Ireland AA Convention | All Ireland AA Convention |
|--|--|--|--|
| Benbulbin Room | Lough Gill Room | Glencar Room | Knocknarea Room |
| Marathon Meetings | Workshops | Meditation | AA History |
| Zoom Meeting ID 860 3173 5234 Password ALLIRELAND | Zoom Meeting ID 840 2337 5234 Password ALLIRELAND | Zoom Meeting ID 812 6598 4352 Password ALLIRELAND | Zoom Meeting ID 813 3713 3573 Password ALLIRELAND |

Thank You



We appreciate you taking the time to listen to our proposal and we welcome any suggestions and feedback.

We sincerely hope that the All Ireland AA Convention will go ahead this year, all-be-it in an online format as we are all aware of the enormous help that online meetings has provided to all Current, New and Potential AA members in Ireland and worldwide since March 2020.



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Ulster Intergroup Submission re Service Handbook Update

General Service Conference March 2021

In attendance: Tom, Kenny, Brian.

Apologies: Colum.

Invitations were sent to Trustee and IG Secretary.

At the above meeting it was agreed that the following should be presented to July IG.

Consideration is given by IG To the formation of a Crisis Committee comprising 4 Conference Delegates and 3 IG Officers with the following remit in accordance with tradition 9. The Committee will take considered action/s in the best interests of IG in the event of a second Covid 19 lockdown.

The following should be added to the Service Handbook for AA in Ireland:

1. **Conference Delegates** should be available and capable of Service at the following levels.
 - A. **Area** – Delegates should be capable of providing guidance and direction on the Service Structure in Ireland when needed. Delegates should not vote nor nominate at Area Committee but should be available to attend Sub-Committees such as Mini Conventions and Days of Gratitude. Each Delegate should be available to visit any Area within their IG if required. They should also be capable of chairing Inventory Meetings at Group and Area.
 - B. **Provincial IG** – Delegates should be capable of providing guidance/direction on the Service Structure in Ireland and giving thorough and accurate reports on Conference business/decisions. They should also be capable of providing written reports to Conference and to addressing same verbally. A Delegate should not influence IG Structure by nominating/proposing people for service roles in IG. Delegates do however have voting rights.
 - C. **Sub-Committees** – Delegates should be available to serve on Sub-Committees such as All-Ireland Convention Committee and UPICC.

Appendix 6

D. **Conference of AA in Ireland and its Sub-Committees** –

At Conference, the Delegate should be able to present a Motion, be able to actively listen, evaluate and input to discussions voting accordingly as per Concept 3 and Tradition 9 whereby they remain accountable to those they serve. In Conference Sub-Committees they are directly accountable to Conference and ultimately to the Fellowship in Ireland. Delegates should have a sound working knowledge of AAs 12 Steps, Traditions and Concepts. They should also have a sound knowledge of the Service Handbook for Ireland gained through Service at Group, Area, and IG.

2. **Role of Trustee at IG** – The Trustee should be available to provide guidance/direction on Structure of AA in Ireland within AA 12 Steps, Traditions and Concepts. Trustee will have participating rights and provide a Board Report and answer questions if asked. They will chair the All- Ireland Convention Committee. The Trustee should not propose/nominate people for service positions within IG.

ALL THE ABOVE WERE RATIFIED UNANIMOUSLY AT - JULY IG 2020.

Virtual World Service Meeting 2020 held via Video Conference. November 28th – 30th 2020

Theme: The Purpose of our Service: Sobriety within Everyone's Reach

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, Delegates representing Alcoholics Anonymous from around the world gathered via Video Conference from November 28th - 30th for the 26th World Service Meeting, hosted by the Trustees of the General Service Board of AA in the U.S and Canada. This was the first time the event was held virtually, and it was attended by 69 Delegates from 44 Countries.

The meeting was chaired by Michele G., Chair of the U.S and Canada General Service Board and the Vice-Chairperson was Greg T., General Manager, GSO, U.S and Canada.

As is customary at the World Service Meeting, it opened on Saturday morning with a Red Ball AA Meeting where Delegates had an opportunity to introduce themselves and to meet the other First and Second term Delegates. Following this, the meeting proper was opened with Roll Call and Orientation.

LICENSING AND TRANSLATIONS | THE INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE FUND

The first of many presentations was by David R., Publishing Director on Licensing and Translations, who gave some highlights of recent activity in translation of literature as follows.

"How It Works" from the start of Chapter 5 in the Big Book has been translated for the first time in the Nicaraguan language of Miskito, in the Sub-Saharan language of Shona, which AA in Zimbabwe completed; as well as in the Quechua language (in its Peru dialect), and all have been approved for use in local AA meetings.

The new re-translation of the Ukrainian Big Book has been printed locally in Ukraine for the first time and the first-ever Tatar translation of the Big Book has just been approved and licensed to print and distribute. The Lesotho language Big Book translation has been approved and the first-ever Oriya language Big Book has been approved and licensed to be printed and distributed in India. India is also moving forward translations in several other of the many languages read and spoken there, Khasi, and Konkani, among them.

Appendix 7

He also reported on some other innovations in the areas of formats and distribution with Audiobook formats of the most popular Pamphlets and Short Videos and Podcasts also in the process of being developed. In addition, there has been a make-over of several new and revised Conference-approved Pamphlets so that their cover images are inviting and attractive and the texts inside reflect the widest range of experience that is shared by a diversity of AA members.

PRESENTATIONS

Over the course of the weekend there were also Presentations on the following topics:

- Importance of the Group Conscious Process
- Encouraging Women into General Service
- Young People in AA
- Anonymity
- Safety in AA
- International Literature Fund

COMMITTEES

Members separated out into the various Committees and the final reports with their recommendations were presented. There follows a summary of these Committees.

Agenda Committee

The Agenda Committee recommended "Carrying the Message of AA in the Digital Age" as the Theme for the 27th World Service Meeting, this was accepted.

Literature and Publishing Committee

Many countries reported that the Pandemic Lockdowns adversely affected the availability of print literature. The need to provide downloadable literature was discussed as well as the need for digital literature to be available for purchase. The Committee suggested that AA World Service gather shared experience on creating eBooks and making literature available online with proper Copyright protections in place. It was suggested that it would be helpful to develop a Service Document that would make this shared experience available to members.

Many countries also reported a drop in literature sales, and this led to a wider discussion on the Tradition of self-support and the reliance on literature sales.

Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee

The Committee reviewed the current Composition, Scope and Procedure and made no changes. Requests from Bulgaria, El Salvador, Greece, and Guatemala to participate at the 26th World Service Meeting were approved. It was agreed that China and Moldova did not currently meet the qualifications based on the information received. It was noted that greater participation at Zonal Meetings for emerging Structures would be beneficial.

Qualifications for Countries participating in the WSM were reviewed and it was recognised that there was a need to establish a deadline for countries applying for admission to the WSM. It was requested that the WSM Coordinator bring back a draft deadline policy for the Committee to consider at its meeting in 2022.

Qualifications for World Service Meeting Delegates were reviewed and after thoughtful discussion regarding the importance of rotation, no changes were made. World Service Meeting finances and Delegates' fees were also reviewed, and it was confirmed that the \$1,500/USD Delegate fee would be restored for the 27th World Service Meeting.

The Committee recommended that the 27th World Service Meeting be held October 1-6, 2022.

Working with Others Committee

The Committee was asked to report on how countries have been able to carry the message during the Pandemic. Nearly every country found itself, sometime in March 2020, moving abruptly from face-to-face meetings to online meetings. For several countries, the shift to online meetings was led by the Board or General Service Office, others observed that the local groups were ahead of the Structure when it came to adapting to the new reality and moving meetings online.

Some Delegates reported a digital divide in their countries. Countries addressed this in a variety of ways – some increased the availability of Hotlines and expanded their hours to 24/7 coverage, and several reported a large increase in phone calls. Some countries created guidelines to help members learn to navigate Video-Conferencing Platforms, address anonymity concerns and deal with “zoom bombers”. Newcomers were offered help by enlisting volunteers to accompany them to their first online meeting or offering break-out rooms for one-to-one contact. Some started more “hybrid” meetings and found that this encouraged unity. Unfortunately, there are still populations that are not able to access online AA.

Appendix 7

Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community during the Pandemic was also discussed. Several Delegates shared about the cooperation between AA and their Country's Department of Health, especially in the area of information-sharing.

At the beginning of the Pandemic, many Service Committees reported less contact and cooperation with Hospitals and Treatment Centres. Also, perhaps due to the Global Health Crisis, professionals seemed less focused on alcoholism as an issue. However, several countries reported increasing contact with Treatment Centres and their patients, including requests for online meetings. There have also been several articles published about AA recently as well as recordings shared on WhatsApp and other Platforms.

The one area where there was not much success to report was in reaching members in prison. Many prisons are now in lockdown and not allowing meetings or even visitors. One structure was able to send in issues of the Magazine they publish, while another reported success with a Prison Correspondence Program. However, how to keep in touch with AA Members and Groups inside prisons is still an outstanding question.

WORKSHOPS

Workshops were held on the topics of:

- Communication – A Key to Unity
- The Use and Value of our AA Literature in Sponsorship
- The Importance of our Non-Alcoholic Friends in Our Structure

Due to time constraints, the final Workshop Reports were not presented to the meeting but will be included in the Final Report which will be uploaded to the AA.org Website at the end of February.

GENERAL SHARING SESSIONS ON THE PANDEMIC

The general sharing sessions offered an opportunity for Delegates to discuss the current situation and the effect the Pandemic has had in terms of member's ability to meet face-to-face as well as the ability of newcomers to find and connect with AA. A key theme that ran through the sharing from all of the countries was on how communication is the key to unity. Further general sharing included:

Essential Service

As has been the case in Ireland, in many countries the General Service Boards encouraged their respective Governmental Departments to consider AA as an Essential Service for the purpose of physical meetings during the Pandemic. In some countries this was a given from the outset of the Pandemic.

Virtual meetings

There were many heartening stories about how countries keep AA going under the extreme conditions of a Global Pandemic. While most countries have embraced the online meetings, this hasn't been possible for some countries due to a lack of consistent internet connectivity.

In South America, members crossed borders to get internet service. Teleconferencing has been adopted for Prison Meetings and Zoom Meetings are used to maintain the Service *Cooperating with the Professional Community*. Maintaining a strong presence in media through this time has been vital.

An International Service Structure for Virtual Groups

One topic that received much discussion was the setting up of an International Service Structure for Virtual Groups, it was suggested that this would not be based on geography but on service. It was stated that how AA carries the message and how we are using technology to connect will be one of the most important issues discussed across AA Worldwide.

It was noted that online meetings have been a global reality in AA for many years. For instance, in China and Russia, due to their broad geographic spread, virtual platforms such as Skype, Zoom or indeed Teleconferencing are the norm. The Central European Region Intergroup (part of the UK Structure) has been providing English daily speaking online meetings for some years.

Decline in Contributions.

From initial confusion and pain came quick positive responses everywhere to ensure we continued to provide a lifeline of AA. There has been a widespread increase in newcomers globally with these online meetings. General Service Offices have maintained a constant service but sadly the universal experience is that contributions are significantly down. This is going to be one of the themes for discussion at the next WSM.

Appendix 7

WORLD SERVICE MEETING CLOSING

The meeting ended on Sunday afternoon with all Delegates saying the Serenity Prayer in their own languages. Everyone expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the meeting Coordinator, Mary C., along with the technical support staff who dealt with the many logistical and technical challenges to ensure that the meeting ran smoothly. It was particularly appreciated that their diligent and thoughtful work created a genuine sense of fellowship across many Time Zones and Continents. Many thanks also to Barbara and all the staff at GSO for liaising with GSO New York to make our attendance at the World Service Meeting possible.

The 27th World Service Meeting "*Carrying the Message of AA in the Digital Age*" will be held October 1-6, 2022 in Japan.

In fellowship

Moira S, 1st Term Delegate
Helen H, 2nd Term Delegate



**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF IRELAND
Friday 5th March and Saturday 6th March 2021**

**CONFERENCE DELEGATES
REPORTS TO CONFERENCE**

| | | | |
|------------------------|--|-------------------------|---|
| <p>ULSTER</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Armagh, Antrim, Belfast, Derry and Down Areas 2. Tyrone, Armagh, Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh Areas 3. Ulster Intergroup Report 4. Ulster PICC Report | <p>MUNSTER</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Cork City Area 6. West Cork Area 7. Limerick City Area, Limerick County Area and Clare Area 8. North and East Cork Area and Kerry Area Report |
| <p>LEINSTER</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Leinster Areas Report 10. Leinster PI Report | <p>CONNAUGHT</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Mayo Area 12. Roscommon/South Leitrim/Athlone Areas |

ULSTER

1. Armagh, Antrim, Belfast, Derry, and Down Areas Report

In the past year I have attended meetings in Armagh, Antrim, Belfast, Derry, and Down Areas. I have found that in general that the meetings were well run, and that the Officers and GSR's in attendance made positive contributions. However, on average only 35% to 40% of groups in some Areas attended meetings. There appears to be a feeling in some groups, that while they will say that service is necessary within AA., that it is left to someone else to carry it out.

With the advent of the Pandemic in March 2020, a number of Group and Area Meetings made the switch to the 'Zoom Platform', and a new method of communication was established. Perhaps Alcoholics Anonymous did not respond as quickly as it could have done, but gradually it was realised that it was not the platform of presentation, but the message itself that is important. They also realised that 'Zoom' is an alternative presentation method to ensure the Structure of Alcoholics Anonymous is maintained when it is not possible to hold physical meetings.

It is always easy to criticise, but I believe the function of a GSCD is to recognise the situation as it is in the 'Present Moment', and to suggest solutions when they are asked for, to ensure that our message is carried, and that our Structure is maintained. Judgement of others plays no part in the message to be carried.

From the 30th September 2020, I was a member of the Ulster Intergroup Action Committee, which I found very beneficial, because the tasks carried out were done in an atmosphere of genuine cooperation, and a need to do the best we could, to give clarity of the current 'Meetings' situation to our fellow members. It was also very beneficial that one member of our Committee had the necessary 'IT' skills to set up a website which was used to communicate with Members, Groups, and Areas. Without this very little would have been achieved. Thank you, Intergroup Secretary.

I also attended Conference on 6th March 2020 at Tullamore, Co Offaly, and the Reconvened Conference on the 'Zoom Platform' on 21st November 2020. Both were constructive meetings, but the one held on 'Zoom' (I believe) was more effective in getting the business of the day done. This was because the Chairperson had better control over the method in which the attendees spoke (they were unable to interrupt or speak over the top of each other).

Appendix 8

From a selfish point of view, I also saved a day in travel time, which I considered to be better for me and my family.

It has been a good but unusual year, and I would like to thank the Office Manager, the officers of intergroup, the other GSCD's and the Trustee for their help and support at various times throughout the period.

Brian G. Delegate

2. Tyrone, Armagh, Cavan, Monaghan, and Fermanagh Areas

This has been one of the most difficult years in Alcoholics Anonymous; from March 2020, I have been involved with the following Areas: Tyrone, Armagh, Cavan, Monaghan, and Fermanagh. The three Areas I was involved with most, were Fermanagh, Cavan, and Monaghan. The business conducted was mainly the essential business that an Area would do, e.g., Treasurers Report and ensuring monies was passed through the Structure, taking care of Newspapers at County level so the Public are aware that Alcoholics Anonymous was available and the hand of AA was there when required.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic in March, Monaghan is the only Area of the three that has met. Even with all the effort made by Secretaries and Chairpersons in Cavan and Monaghan there seems to be little interest from Groups and Members to maintain the AA Structure. Zoom has been a very useful platform to maintain the Structure however Monaghan is the only Area of the three to avail of it.

Over the past year I have been involved with UPICC and have seen full advantage taken of many means to keep the public aware.

The introduction of the Action Committee has been very beneficial to keeping our Membership up to date with developments in dealing with action required to maintain the safety of our Groups and Members during the Covid crisis.

In concluding this report, I would invite anyone who reads it to ask themselves; AM I WORKING FOR THE GOOD OF AA AS A WHOLE, AM I ENCOURAGING NEW MEMBERS INTO SERVICE, DO I MENTION THE SERVICE HANDBOOK AND WHAT IT IS????? Again, I ask Groups to look at what they really belong to and be of Service to the Fellowship which has been of great service to you.

Kenny P. Delegate

3. Ulster Intergroup Report

This report covers the period November 2020 to March 2021 with reflection on major issues prior to this and possible future trends.

Groups

As well as the General Population Groups, the foundation of our Fellowship has been severely impacted by the Coronavirus. Groups have responded differently to the regulations laid down by two different Governments. Some groups were able to adhere to regulations of Masks, Social Distancing, no Tea or Coffee etc., and continue with physical meetings. Other groups had to adapt to Zoom Meetings.

Younger members, more competent in the technological aspects, were able to get involved and assist with the setting up of Workshops to improve members competence in this area. Generally, groups have responded in a meaningful way, dealing with changing regulations.

In Ulster, the setting up of the Crisis Committee (later renamed Action Committee) by Tom D. with 3 GSCDs, Intergroup Secretary, Treasurer and Trustee, was able to respond more quickly to a rapidly changing situation. The IG Secretary John Mc. who works in the technology field, was able to set up a Webpage to inform members of changes in regulations. The Committee can meet at very short notice on Zoom to deal with any changes to COVID regulations. Nothing can be posted on Webpage unless it has unanimous agreement. The Webpage has also enabled communication to members on issues such as the 60% drop in income, GIS Forms, and availability of Literature. John Mc. has been elected as GSCD in November so his invaluable skills will still hopefully be available to Ulster Intergroup.

Getting members into Service at all levels is becoming more difficult for various reasons. Some groups have a small core of 6 or 7 members. We need to continue to encourage and sponsor younger members into Service.

Hospitals and Prisons

Hospitals and Prisons have been particularly hard hit by the Pandemic. Little has taken place in Prison visits and the attempt to set up Zoom Meetings in Hospitals was just getting going when they were shut down.

CSO Management Committee consists of three IG Officers and Trustee. The Line Manager of Office Administrator has now changed back to the Treasurer of IG. A new telephone system for dealing with queries and 12th Step calls has been in operation since December.

Appendix 8

There have been minor teething problems with the system, but it has great potential. A step-by-step guidance for the use of the new system is being prepared by John Mc., GSCD.

New Handbook

It is good to see the hard work and commitment culminate in the production of the new Handbook and I commend all those involved in its production.

Inventory

Ulster Intergroup was able to have an Inventory which had to be cancelled when the last WSD failed to turn up to fulfil his role as Chairperson. Tony OC., Secretary to the Board agreed to act as Chairperson. The Inventory took place on 28th June 2020 by Zoom. The normal protocol was observed, an Agenda was agreed, and there was a reasonable attendance.

One apology Brian D. (Down).
15 out of possible 40 Intergroup Representatives.
4 out of 4 GSCDs.
3 put of 3 Intergroup Officers.
Trustee was not in attendance.
One Observer.
The Inventory lasted from 14.00 to 17.00.

An overview of Chairpersons service and experience was given before discussion on the 12 Inventory Guidelines.

To highlight some of the main points:
Communication needs to be improved.
Definition of Intergroup roles.
Action points to focus on what needs to be done.
Induction of Members into Service.
Role of Trustee.
Role of GSCDs.
Importance of Service Handbook.
Use of Mailboxes.

Ulster Intergroup are indebted to Tony O'C. for acting as Chairperson.

Appendix 8

Positive outcomes have emerged from the Inventory. The format that was used by the Board Secretary at Ulster Intergroup was brought forward to Conference for discussion. Statements regarding the role of Officers such as GSCDs and the Trustee were also brought to Conference.

It is not easy to predict where we are going in 2021. Trying to anticipate trends is difficult in the period of this Pandemic. I think we can only improve but, in my opinion, we will emerge as a different Fellowship. We need to embrace these changes and to adapt to completely different circumstances. Younger members with their grasp and familiarity of technological aspects need to be brought into the equation ensuring they are given the right induction along with having the correct requirements as per the Service Handbook. Things like the Action Committee and a proactive Intergroup along with the Officers, in my opinion, can help support and enhance these changes. It is up to us as a Fellowship to be proactive under these conditions and try to lead in a positive and loving way for the sake of those who have yet to come.

Billy I. Ulster GSCD, 15th January 2021

4. Ulster Intergroup Report

The UPICC Committee is a Subcommittee of Ulster Intergroup and is responsible for the coordinating of PI within Ulster Intergroup. The Committee is responsible to Ulster Intergroup and currently holds a monthly meeting. It forwards clear, transparent Minutes to UIG for inclusion in the UIG Minutes, of its work and progress.

- The Committee is responsible for implementing the Structure of PI in Ulster in conjunction with the Conference Approved Guidelines for PI Information Folder and strives to work within its parameters.
- PI Chair visited the 10 Area Meetings in Ulster at least twice over the year and gave a PI Presentation and updates of UPICC activities. Gave support to the Areas PI Chairperson.
- The Committee met monthly during the year and reverted to the Zoom platform from March. Thanks to Antrim Area for allowing the Committee the use of their platform.
- 9 out of the 10 Areas in ulster had a sitting Area PI Chairperson during the year.
- 5 NEW Area Chairpersons were appointed by their Areas in the current term (Cavan being the exception).

Appendix 8

- PI & You, services of Mini-Workshops were implemented and 5 out of the 18 planned Workshops were completed up to March. 5 Workshops which were planned had to be cancelled due to Lockdown.
- Chair and Committee engaged with the other Intergroups in relation to PI and had visitors from the other Intergroups at UPICC Meetings for idea sharing and Fellowship.
- UPICC Chair and Non-Alcoholic Trustee visited the Royal College of Psychiatrists and agreed to put INFORMATION about AA in their Medical Journal and to educate Junior, upcoming Doctors and Psychiatrists in the benefits of AA as a resource and to signpost. Also agreed they would signpost patients with problems with alcohol to our Website.
- UPICC made new friends in the Media this year as a method of communication including Irish News, Belfast Telegraph, UTV, Cool FM, Downtown Radio and Ardmore Media Productions to name but a few.
- UPICC had planned a meeting with the Samaritans and the Royal College of Physicians, but these were shelved due to Covid-19. It is hoped the Committee can reschedule these later next year.
- Area Chairs were briefed in the importance of appropriate Speakers for PI Events, rotation, and acceptable guidelines for sharing at Open/PI Events.
- UPICC made a commitment at the start of Covid-10 and the lockdown of its Physical Meetings and PI apparatus, on how best we can still carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic and Our Primary Purpose during unprecedented times.
- 4 main projects were undertaken by the Committee.
- A Press Release that captured the story of AA and how to contact us during this difficult time, including Online Meetings. That there is help still out there including our National Website. There were 10 publications of this over the 10 Areas.
- The use of Television in the form of an advertisement by UTB which had an audience of over 900,000 views. This was done with a very generous discount given by the Broadcaster. 1 Minute to Change your life was designed to plant the seed and was put out for a long term and not short-term response. Feedback was excellent.
- UPICC did sound bites and pieces for Cool FM and Downtime Radio which had a reach of over 400,000 listeners and again to get the message out on how to contact us.

Appendix 8

- Committee looked at ways to use social media safely, whilst protecting Anonymity and our Traditions. An online stand-alone Information Page was investigated to share AA Contact Information, Preamble and PI Events only. Some members, experienced in this field, looked at this for us and it was decided to shelve this as there were some technical issues which needed revisiting. Consequently, the Board are now looking into this venture themselves and hopefully this will come to fruition.
- UPICC Chair met with the GSCDs to discuss PI and how they can post the PI Envelope at their attendance at Area Meetings and to encourage each Area on carrying out their Primary Purpose.
- UPICC Online Public Information Meetings...There were 2 of these organised by Committee which were well organised and attended and proved successful as we had Newcomers at both Events in July and November. Big thank you to all those involved.
- Group Online Public Information Meetings...These have been encouraged to be held by all Areas and 2 Groups have already arranged these.
- Committee has raised with the Board through the Board Secretary, about looking into Search Engine Optimization for Northern Ireland.
- Pre-Christmas and Post-Christmas activity...
- Area AGM Reports...to be given at next UPICC Meeting to start the New Year and also UPICC plan to have an Inventory Meeting early in the New Year.
- UPICC looking forward to hearing and supporting the PI Strategy proposed by the Board and adopted by Conference.
- PI Chair rotating out at AGM and 2 names from the Committee to go forward to be ratified by UIG AGM.

MUNSTER

5. Cork City Area Report

Hospital Committee:

First 3 months went well in all Hospitals, but all bar one is closed for the last 9 months due to Covid-19.

Prison Service:

First 3 months went ok but reduced for the last 9 months due to Covid-19.

PI Service:

First 3 months went ok but reduced for the next 9 months due to Covid-19.

Open meeting:

Not functioning due to Covid-19 and no venue available.

The Service Workshop was held on Saturday November 16th in the South Parish Community Centre. It was attended by approximately 50 people. Good section of the groups was represented. The meeting was chaired by Mick B. (Crosshaven), and there were two Speakers Lousie I. (Munster Intergroup) and Noel O'M. (Mayfield). Each of the speakers shared their experience, strength and hope with particular emphasis on how service had helped their sobriety. This was followed by a short description from each of the other services in Cork City Area as to what their positions entailed. The meeting concluded with tea and coffee. There was positive feedback from the attendees and the only negative comment was that many of the attendees are already engaged in service at Cork City Area so there was an element of "preaching to the converted". It has been proposed that this will become an annual event. Since the Service Workshop, several key service positions have been filled, so it would appear to have been a success.

The UCC Wellness Officer made contact and Brian manned a desk for a Wellness Open Day in the College. He said that there wasn't a lot of interest shown by the students, but he felt that it was a valuable contact that could be useful in the future.

Conference:

Mick McG. (Conference Delegate) gave a short report on topics to be discussed at the next Conference Meeting which was scheduled for March 6th - 8th 2020.

There is a draft "Strategic Plan" being circulated and will be put forward for approval at Conference.

Appendix 8

Mick reminded all groups to be mindful of the premises where their meetings are held and to be conscious of the changing needs for security and privacy in public buildings. It is generally not appropriate to have AA posters or other information permanently visible.

Convention:

The Convention which was held in Blarney Park Hotel was a great success and well attended. Closed Meetings were held in 2 separate rooms every hour over the 3 days. Service Workshop was also held and was well attended. The Logo was applied for at MIG and was granted for 2021 Convention. A surplus of €118 was forwarded to MIG.

Telephone Service:

The mobile telephone was passed between groups for a period of 1 month for each group. The service worked well as 12th step calls were all followed up on and resulted in newcomers coming to closed meetings.

MIG Intergroup Representatives:

Four Representatives attended all MIG Meetings and visited most of the 45 groups over the year.

MIG Conference Delegate:

Attended all Area Meetings and MIG Meetings.

Group Insurance:

27 Groups availed of the Group Insurance Scheme and Mallory accepted to co-ordinate payments as the single contact to the insurance people. It was estimated that a saving of €150 per group was achieved, resulting in a saving of €4,050 to the Area.

After March, all Area Meetings were held on Zoom.

General Discussion:

Funeral Notice: Catherine (Curraheen) said that one of the Members of their group had died and because of the restrictions, they were unable to attend the funeral. She asked if it would be appropriate for their group to put a notice in the paper to pay their respects. Mick McG. (Conference Delegate) said that it was important from the point of view of Anonymity and the Twelfth Tradition that AA would not be mentioned in such a notice. He highlighted that it might be violating the deceased persons anonymity as they would have had every right to not share their AA Membership with family, friends, or other acquaintances. It was suggested that a notice that used some general term such as "from your friends in Curraheen" would be perfectly appropriate.

Appendix 8

Literature Bank:

Area moved from Rutland Street to Lough Community premises, and it does not look like it will be possible to have storage for the Literature Bank in The Lough Community Centre, so a solution for storage and supply of literature is needed. In the meantime, Ted can take literature orders by phone and bring the materials to the next meeting of Cork City Area.

General Discussion:

Betty, Open Meeting Secretary asked whether the complaint from the HSE that was circulated by GSO should put the reopening of the Open Meeting on hold as this seems to imply that AA Group Meetings are to be subjected to the 6 Person – 3 Household limit. There was an exceptionally long discussion on this topic which was understandable given the immense confusion caused by GSO forwarding the unsubstantiated complaint from the HSE which, were it to be taken at face value, seems to mandate the closure of all AA Meetings. Mick McG. (Conference Delegate) read a letter from Cathal Crowe TD, which claims that it was never the intention of the Minister for Health to apply the 6 Person - 3 Household limit to AA Meetings. Pat O'B. (Carrigaline) said that the Carrigaline Group continues to run and is following all HSE Guidelines and that there is no question in their mind that the 6 Person - 3 Household limit does not apply to AA Meetings.

General Discussion:

Cork City Delegates requested use of the Logo for an "Online ZOOM Mini-Convention" at the October MIG Meeting. The Trustee Martin C. requested some time to review this request and said he would consult with the Board. Later in October the Trustee rang an MIG Representative to confirm the Logo could be used for a Cork City 'Online Mini-Convention' and that the Logo had already been approved to North Cork Area for an "Online Zoom Convention."

When Conference Delegate spoke to Trustee about this, the Trustee said that the Logo had been granted to North Cork Area for an "Online Zoom Convention" and that it was his decision to grant the Logo to Cork City Area. Conference Delegate pointed out that it was a One-Day Service Workshop by a Group in North Cork that he was referring to, and no Logo was granted to North Cork for an "Online Zoom Convention". Also, the privilege of granting the Logo has always been the in the hands of MIG. It never was the decision of any one person including the Trustee.

Finance:

Area has forwarded monies to MIG in October and have monies in the bank which will be forwarded to GSO.

Yours in Fellowship, Mick McG.

6. West Cork Area Report

West Cork Area had a challenging year due to COVID - 19.

There are 13 Groups in the Area and had very good attendance at Area Meetings.

Six Meetings in January, February, July, August, October, and December were held.

Unfortunately, due to restrictions, Area had to cancel some meetings.

Most Groups in West Cork closed their Meetings during the first Lockdown but managed to stay open since July with some meetings moving to bigger venues to ensure Social Distancing.

Area did its best to keep members informed of Guidelines, but it was emphasised that every Group was autonomous.

Area has 3 Intergroup Delegates and new GSRs which is good.

Some GSRs were not able to attend Area Meetings due to health issues.

Financial Report:

Finances are doing well, with all groups contributing.

PI Report:

There has been less activity on Public Information this year due to the Covid Virus.

There was one Presentation given to a School. PI people visited Colaiste Phobail, Bantry on 12th March.

The Transition Year Students were very attentive, and an interesting Question and Answer session took place. The Teacher was very appreciative of our visit.

Posters have been placed and replaced around the Area. Attempts to put Posters on recycling bins was unsuccessful, mainly due to inclement weather.

Mobile Phone Report:

The Mobile Phone was terribly busy with people looking for help and meeting information.

The phone has been passed around Area during the year.

Macroom Group looked after the mobile phone for the first lockdown.

MIG Report:

There are 3 Intergroup Delegates who attended the Munster Intergroup Meetings throughout the year. There were not a lot of Group visits due to restrictions.

Conference Delegate: Attended all Area and MIG Meetings.

AOB

2020 was a difficult year but West Cork Area did the best to keep in touch with members, keeping them informed attending meetings and continuing to carry the AA message.

Yours in Fellowship, Mick McG

7. Limerick City Area, Limerick County and Clare Area Report

Limerick City Area Report:

Limerick City Area is very well organised with all positions filled.

Fantastic work was done to ensure members had meetings to attend.

Where venues had to close down, other venues were found.

Outdoor Meetings were held, and people were available for Twelve Step work and everything possible done to ensure there was a Fellowship for people who wanted and needed it, especially in these uncertain times where Covid-19 exists.

PI is working well getting the message out through ads in local media and the Phone Service is going well.

Limerick City has its own Literature Secretary who keeps a good supply in store for groups. Some services, such as Jail and Hospital visits had to be suspended due to Covid-19.

Limerick City and County have postponed plans for a Convention in 2021 until further notice.

Limerick City Area is most disappointed with the response from GSO and the Board in relation to the Pandemic. Why GSO decided to write to Groups and give directives to close meetings which were essential was terrible.

Breaking our Tradition's and operate outside the Structure and also endorse Online and Zoom Meetings which were not passed by Conference. There are also serious issues with the changing of wording in the Green Service Handbook. Limerick city would like to know:

- Why it was left to Conferences Delegates to do the job of the Board and get the information from the Minister for Health that we are indeed an Essential Service and were able to reopen our meetings which didn't need to close. A motion of no confidence in GSO and the Board was brought to the January meeting of Limerick Area and a decision taken not to send money to Intergroup until these issues and others are dealt with.
- Questions were asked at on why an Alternate Conference Delegate received a phone call during the lunch break at the Reconvened Conference on Zoom (he forgot to mute himself). It was evident he was being canvassed for his vote by a member of GSO for the next Chairperson of Conference, he was also heard to use disgusting language towards some fellow Conference Delegates. This is a most serious and appalling development. The Board need to respond.

Appendix 8

- The Conference Delegate for Limerick and Clare Areas did not get a link until nearly 11am on the morning of Conference and then through his private email and his phone number given to a third party which is a breach of privacy. Following lunch, despite many attempts he was not let back into the meeting by the host. The Board need to respond to this as Limerick Area were denied a voice.
- Limerick Area are concerned that GSO are by-passing the Structure and sending directives to Area Secretaries and using the Website to get across their own agenda. This is very concerning.
- The feeling is the Company is more important than the Fellowship, maybe it is time to get rid of the problematic Company which is funded by members contributions and return to a spiritual fellowship.

Limerick County Area Report:

Limerick County Area had built itself up and had a reasonable attendance but a decline in numbers in recent times due to Covid-19 leaving Area again down in numbers. Despite this, PI is going well and is receiving a lot of calls from people looking for help, these calls are being responded to.

Limerick County may struggle to fill positions when the current people rotate out from their positions. The Area Delegates have visited a lot of Groups before the Pandemic and the good work done has been undone as Groups are losing trust in our current Structure. GSO asking people to send money direct to GSO and use their own bank details at a time when Groups were struggling to stay open left a very bad taste as members have said it seems all they are interested in is money not the fellowship.

Clare Area Report:

Clare Area is going very well and everyone in Area responded really well to the Pandemic. Where meetings closed again, members responded and ensured other meeting places were found. Some groups kept their meetings going despite the incorrect and confusing directives from GSO which were for the General Public and not for essential AA Meetings.

Clare Area has a good number of Meetings running at the moment throughout the County, all working within the guidelines provided by the Minister for Health.

PI is somewhat curtailed at the moment, but the Phone Service is going well.

The Convention was cancelled for 2020 and no plans as yet for 2021.

Clare Area feel it needs answers to the same questions as Limerick City regarding the running of GSO and the Board and feel the Structure has been bypassed and have decided not to send any money for the moment until this is dealt with.

8. North and East Cork Area and Kerry Area Report

North and East Cork Area (NaEC):

NaEC consists of 23 Groups that cover one of the most geographically dispersed areas of the AA Structure. Meetings in Youghal on the Cork Waterford border are approximately 125 km from meetings in Ballydesmond on the outskirts of Killarney.

Area meets 10 times per year in two venues, between Mallow in the centre of the county and Castlemartyr in the South East of the County.

Covid-19:

The advance of the Global Pandemic and its implications for the AA Fellowship meant that Groups decided to close or curtail in-room meetings and turn to virtual meetings, mostly using the Zoom platform to facilitate online gatherings. Groups in our area held Group Conscience Meetings to discuss the suitability of Online Meetings and the implications for the Traditions. It was decided by most groups that the benefits outweighed any perceived danger to the Traditions and groups quickly got online by opening Zoom accounts and getting details of access numbers and meeting times to the Fellowship.

Contributions:

In Carrigtwohill, Group Conscience concern was expressed about the ability of the Fellowship to provide services if there was a falloff in Tabletop Contributions. To help rectify this the group decided to contact GSO and ask if some facility could be made available to members or groups to forward Contributions.

WhatsApp:

Soon after the beginning of the first lock-in, Members began to use the WhatsApp application to publish information and now list over 600 Members who receive daily updates that allow users to click directly into meeting. Most are Password or Waiting Room protected. Lists of meetings in the county are published along with information on meetings in the rest of Ireland, the UK and beyond.

Members, including many long-time members, have remarked that these new opportunities have given them a renewed interest in the Fellowship and in Service. We have many stories of the success of Online Meetings in carrying our message to the still suffering alcoholic and at time of writing we have numerous new members who have not as yet been to an in-room meeting.

Appendix 8

There were initial teething troubles with the new technology and a steep learning curve for those volunteering to host meetings. Members with technical know-how banded together and worked to secure the meetings and to assist everyone attending online meetings with the necessary knowledge to attend safely.

Initial problems like the use of full names and the requirements of groups regarding security settings were ironed out and meetings have progressed for almost a year now without any significant issues for groups. Area and Groups have at all times tried to fulfil their obligations around their Primary Purpose and to comply with the Law of the Land, while ensuring that members remained safe and the Fellowship did not suffer any negative publicity as a result of our actions.

Public Information:

Area were concerned about newcomers and those being discharged from Treatment Centres, and our PI Committee came up with one simple idea that bypassed the movement restrictions during lockdown.

We asked GSR's, and/or Representatives of Groups, to forward a PDF of the AA Poster containing the North & East Cork Area Phone Number, to as many Garda Stations, Doctors, Clergy, or other helping organisations, such as local Community Councils or St. Vincent de Paul, Treatment Centres etc., as they could in THEIR LOCAL AREA. It involved a phone call to each, to get an email address, and then a follow up email.

Therefore, all groups were contacted regarding forwarding the Area mobile phone number and/or the Poster attached, to as many Doctors, Clergy and other Community Organisations as possible.

Zoomvention:

The Annual Cork County Convention is usually held in May but in late 2019, members asked if it would be possible to move this to later in the year. Area were happy to have the same venue but the May date was in the middle of Communion/Confirmation season and a later date would make for a more comfortable Convention. As events unfolded in early 2020, the Convention plans as such were abandoned as unworkable given the uncertainty around Covid-19.

Groups discussed holding some sort of replacement event, but Area declined to commit to any Online Event.

Appendix 8

This decision was taken due to the lack of clarity around using the AA name for any Online Event and the possibility that the holding any such AA Event might go against our Traditions.

Acting independently of Area, some Groups pooled resources and staged a two-day Event with six Speaker Meetings per day over the weekend of the 6th and 7th of June in line with Founders Day. A Webpage was created, and the Event was hosted on Zoom. This International Zoomvention was a success and received great feedback from a lot of the nearly 2000 participants. The Speakers were recorded (with their permission) and the recordings are available online at the webpage <https://sites.google.com/gsuitescript.com/zoomvention/home>.

The Event had expenses of approximately €135 and this was covered by individual members. Any attendees who asked if they could contribute, were directed to the AA Ireland website.

Minutes of Meetings:

In the Directory of AA Groups in Ireland, NaEC have 23 Groups listed, and the Area Secretary has contact details for all of these. These details are complete for 23 postal, but incomplete for email, addresses as some groups have not engaged with their Group Email facility provided by GSO. Covid-19 highlighted several problems for communicating Minutes of Area Meetings to Groups and Fellowship information in general. Postal addresses were no longer of use because groups were not able to access the premises that housed their meeting rooms and distribution by email was incomplete as some groups could not or would not access their group email accounts. Of the 23 groups listed in the Directory, 11 have no phone or email contact for Minutes or 12 Step work (only 7 of the 32 Groups in Kerry have no contact details).

Area Meetings:

Because of concerns for the health of members, Area decided to convene online, and the first Online Meeting was held on the 7th of April 2020.

A recurring comment in MIG Reports (both in NaEC and Kerry) was on the dysfunctional image of Munster Intergroup. MI representatives spoke about their disappointment at the way the January Intergroup Meeting turned out.

It was felt that the behaviour of certain members was not in keeping with the spirit of AA.

Helen (Carrigtwohill) proposed that North & East Cork Area make the suggestion of a Group Inventory for Munster Intergroup.

Appendix 8

This was forwarded to Munster Intergroup, and agreement was reached for a date in 2021.

Area has passed on to all members, by post and email, the document compiled by GSO to assist with Group Mailboxes. We set a date for an Online Workshop on this.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR AA MEMBERS, HOW TO SET UP AND ACCESS AA MAILBOXES AND THE AA WEBSITE MEMBERS AREA.

Area are working on a GSR Workshop to be held online or in person in 2021, depending on Covid-19 restrictions. The Workshop would cover some of the following topics:

| | |
|---|--|
| Structure of the Conference | |
| What does a GSR do? | |
| Suggestions for GSR at Home Group Meetings | |
| Suggestions for GSR at Area Meetings | |
| The Informed Group Conscience | |
| Suggested Steps to Achieving an Informed Group Conscience | |
| Speaking at Area Meetings | |
| The Minority Opinion | |
| Glossary of Terms | |
| The AA Group | |
| Why is a meeting not a Group? | |
| The Home Group - | |
| The Spirit of Rotation | |
| AA Group Inventory | |
| Service Leadership | |
| Service Sponsorship | |
| Commitment to Service | |
| Why Do We Need A Conference? | |
| A Quick Guide to AA Conference Procedure | |
| GSR Report Form | |
| Third Legacy Procedure | |
| Where to Get Help | |

We hope to offer this to all Groups in the NaEC and Kerry Areas.

Appendix 8

Area continues to issue a "Pack" for Incoming GSR's to assist them in fulfilling their Service Commitment, this is to initially include the following literature:

- AA General Service Conference "Green" Service Handbook 2021.
- Alcoholics Anonymous; The AA Group.
- Suggested Guidelines For Personal Conduct and Appropriate Behaviour for A.A. Members.
- Copies of the most up to date Meetings list.
- Contact details for Area Officers and GSO.
- An overview of the web site services.
- An Invitation to join the NaEC Area private WhatsApp Group.

Our Intergroup Representatives, June E. (Carrigtwohill) and Jim L. (Midleton Hospital Group), Margaret McD. (Carrigtwohill), all from the south east of Area and we are still actively looking for members from the north west of the county to join us in service at MI.

Phone Service:

The Phone Service continues to operate well.

Open Public Meetings:

There have been no Open Public Meetings since January 2020.

Motions:

There are no Motions for Congress from the North and East Cork Area.

Kerry Area:

Kerry Area consists of 32 Groups and are dispersed throughout the County. From Kenmare in the south of the county to Tarbert in the north. The Area Group meets 11 times per year in Tralee and Kenmare.

Meetings are well attended but Area notes that there are some groups that are infrequent attendees at meetings. In order to reach out to these groups and to encourage them to participate in the direction of AA, Area has rotated monthly meetings to Kenmare.

In 2020, Munster Intergroup representatives visited a large number of groups in the county to ask for their continued support in the running of AA and its effort to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

Appendix 8

Area Committee report that the business of AA is going well. There were five Area Meetings in 2020 and these were held mostly in the Rose Hotel as the Brandon Hotel became unavailable.

In the six months to February 2020, there was a total of 7 Open Public Meetings held in various parts of the county and more were planned for rest of 2020 but did not take place because of restrictions.

The Kerry Area Mini Convention for November 2020 was abandoned because of restrictions. I would like to thank members of the Convention Committee for their hard work and sympathise with the Kerry Area because of the last-minute cancellation of the Convention.

The proposed dates for 2021 Kerry Mini Convention are November 12th, 13th and 14th and permission has been given to use the AA Logo for the event.

Kerry Area encourages all Groups to contact GSO to update them on changes to meetings, both in room and online.

Hospital Meetings:

No Hospital Meetings in the second half of 2020

Phone Service:

The Phone Service continues to operate well.

Election of Officers:

Caroline, Ardfert, was elected new Area Secretary. Maureen, Ballybunion, was elected new Treasurer.

Open Public Meetings:

There have been no Open Public Meetings since February 2020, however PI attended a talk at Kerry College in Tralee for Wellness Week. They were well received. Stuart is the new Chairperson for PI. Area commented that member groups were interested in holding a PI Event similar to the one held online in Ulster in July 2020.

Motions:

There are no Motions for Congress from the Kerry Area.

Future Aspirations:

I issued the following letter to my Areas to get a sense of how the Areas felt about these important issues:

Hi All,

This item has been put back for discussion until the National Conference in March 2021.

We would appreciate feedback from all groups on how the members feel about these issues. We welcome all comments as they provide us with a clearer picture of how we should instruct our Intergroup representatives and conference delegate to vote on these issues.

Item 14 A.

Questions.

- a) *In GB, retiring Delegates and Trustees are encouraged to stay involved in Service at Intergroup/Regional levels. Is this something we should look at in Ireland? Maybe there is some way we can harness and use this experience, which is currently being lost.*
- b) *AA in GB have a Young People's Liaison Officers, GB Conference recognised that younger members had different 'needs' and needed supports. These YPLOs have proven to be hugely successful. Is this something that we as a Conference in Ireland should explore?*
- c) *A lot of Literature particularly pamphlets, in GB are sold to groups for a nominal fee (1 penny). This is done for a number of reasons, primarily to encourage Groups and Members to purchase and read this material. Are there any items of Literature that we could consider adopting a similar policy in Ireland?*

This is a request for comments and as yet no decisions have been taken on any of these issues. There have been motions presented and discussed at Munster Intergroup level regarding online meetings and these have been forwarded to conference for discussion. This is likely to be a subject of interest to many in the fellowship as it will no doubt cover a range of issues, for example.

- The Spiritual foundation of anonymity and implications for online meetings
- How anonymity and privacy is guarded in closed meetings, if at all.
- Concerns over Privacy of online meetings in the absence of any guarantees of privacy.
- Status of online meetings (Closed meeting, open meeting, public meeting etc.)

Appendix 8

- Groups holding online meetings not connected to a physical location.
- Representation at Area by G.S.R's from online groups.
- Discussion of Listing and Delisting Groups not attending Area.
- Recognition of online groups by A.A. World Services outside of the A.A. Ireland Structure.
- Recognition and Regulation of Online Groups by the Charities regulator

We are in service to assist in our Primary Purpose, we may have difficulties in attracting members into service. We are trying to overcome negative and sometimes entrenched opinions and attitudes towards service at Area and Provincial level. We realise that mistakes were made in the past and that there will be mistakes in the future, however as A.A. takes instruction from the groups, it is the groups responsibility to direct and guide the structure, we are but trusted servants.

General Service Representative May be the most important job in A.A.

"The strength of our whole AA service structure starts with the group and with the general service representative (G.S.R.) the group elects. I cannot emphasize too strongly the G.S.R.'s importance."

-Bill W. on General Service and the GSR.

John T.
Conference Delegate Kerry Area and North and East Cork Area

LEINSTER

9. Leinster Areas Report

Leinster Intergroup consists of 13 Areas representing a total of approximately 403 Groups.

Prior to March 2020, most meetings reported good attendance and no real issues with regard to service positions being filled.

The Areas between them share the 6 Afterhours Telephones, save for Area 11.

The Government Restrictions introduced, as a result of Covid-19, shut all Group and Area Meetings from mid-March up to June 2nd.

With the lifting of restrictions in June, some Groups recommenced live meetings however issues with access from Landlords prevented a significant amount from opening with a number of Groups across the Province forced to seek alternative accommodation particularly if they had availed of School or HSE venues.

Kildare, Offaly, and Laois were subjected to additional local lockdowns in August.

With the announcement from the Department of Health of a dispensation to AA to carry out certain functions, including Meetings and the clarification of the Regulations regarding those Meetings, a number of Areas seen Groups reopen whilst continuing with Online Meetings, catering for Members who were reluctant/restricted in visiting the rooms. This operated well for the intervening months. Individual Groups had put protocols in place to cover eventualities like facilitating the newcomer when meetings were full, ensuring adherence to all relevant Guidelines etc.

Many Areas resorted to Zoom for their Monthly Meetings which facilitated GSRs to report and obtain information to bring back to their Groups. Whilst some have adapted well and flourished with this technology, others have experienced seriously low attendance and are barely operating due to the complete lack of Service positions, regrettably some with no Officer positions occupied at all.

The late December Lockdown and the surge in Covid-19 cases in early 2021 have prompted a significant number of Groups in Leinster to reassess staying open and through their Group Conscience, many have decided to suspend meetings until the incidence numbers show significant decreases.

10. Leinster PI Report

LEINSTER PI REPORT TO CONFERENCE on MAY 6th, 2021

The year November 2019 to 2020 began with Dave D. in the role of Leinster PI Convenor. Unfortunately, Dave was gravely ill – he subsequently passed away and our thoughts are with his family and friends.

Dave was present at the 26th of January 2020 Intergroup Meeting, where he announced his need to step away from the role due to his health condition. In the absence of anyone keen to take on the position, Barbara A. agreed to act as Leinster PI, in a caretaking role, until someone more permanent was appointed. Barbara eventually handed the role over to Charlie F. who was elected as Leinster PI at the AGM on 15th November 2020.

For almost the entire year of 2020, Leinster was adversely affected by the restrictions of Covid-19. This had a negative effect on normal PI activities, as we were unable to gather in groups, and it was ill-advised to suggest any such gatherings.

There was only a total of 8 School Talks booked – the schools were operating out of their normal routines and were not particularly focused on outside issues other than Covid related. Two of the Talks have still not yet taken place due to continued postponements. Five of these Talks were carried out very successfully on Zoom, which proved to be a very adequate medium to hold the talks, for both members and schools. The Schools, whether visited in person or via Zoom, were very grateful for the continued support of AA in their social curriculum.

As the Covid crisis hit, the media became aware of AA and the possible effects of the restrictions on our individual Members and our Fellowship. We were contacted by various media including RTE and Newspapers. These “comments” were handled by a National PI response. There were a small number of requests for comments by local Organisations, which were handled by Leinster PI.

As AA Meetings began to go online via Zoom, or other Platforms, Groups were encouraged to include the possibility of Open Meetings, including AI Anon Speakers. A number of these groups are now holding regular, monthly online Open Meetings. Apart from encouraging newcomers, these Open Meetings are an opportunity for so-called “Zoom Babies” (members who have only ever attended AA online) to invite a family member or friend to see how it all works.

Since November 2020, the incoming PI Convenor, Charlie F., has taken on the role with enthusiasm.

Appendix 8

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, the Covid crisis is worse than ever. Schools are closed and AA Meetings, where open, are only going ahead with very limited numbers. Charlie has made contact with the PIs in each of the Leinster Areas, and they had their first Virtual LIG PI Committee Meeting on January 12th, 2021.

We can only hope that PI activities will resume, as this crisis passes – we will endeavour to do our very best for the good of the Fellowship in Leinster.

Charlie F – Incoming PI Convenor Leinster Intergroup
Barbara A – Outgoing PI Convenor Leinster Intergroup (caretaker)
13th January 2021

DRAFT

CONNAUGHT

11. Mayo Area Report

Like all other Areas in the Country, Mayo Area was greatly affected in 2020 by the Covid-19 Pandemic and its Restrictions and Lockdowns. The routine of holding Mayo Area Meetings on a 6-weekly basis was disrupted and PI work was limited.

Mayo Area held 7 Meetings, 6 "live" and 1 online. "Live" Meetings were brought around to different locations around the county and this was successful in attracting more members to the meeting.

Overall, and considering the times that we were in, attendance at Area Meetings was very good. 20 Members attended a Meeting in Belmullet, and other Meetings averaged 10-15 in attendance.

Officer positions of Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer became vacant and were filled.

A new PI Convenor was elected, 3 IG posts were vacant.

During the first lockdown in March, meetings had to close and some never reopened again. This was mainly due to the Landlord of the building placing restrictions on it.

8 Groups had to relocate to new venues.

21 Groups reopened again with a total of 41 meetings being held weekly.

All Groups that reopened, conducted the meetings in accordance with HSE/Gov.ie Guidelines.

5 Groups held meetings online with 2 Groups holding "live" and online meetings at the same time.

19 meetings were held online weekly.

All Groups that reopened were encouraged to register their meeting on the AA Website as "live" Meeting or Online.

Mayo Area Secretary printed out a list of the reopened meetings and kept this regularly updated. It was also posted on the Mayo Area WhatsApp Group on a regular basis.

An OPM was held online in June with an attendance of 70. It was well received.

A DOG planned for May had to be cancelled as was the Mayo Area Convention in November.

Appendix 8

15 Members took part in the Connaught Phone Service as Phone Responders a week at a time.

Mayo Area designed and printed its own Posters and distributed them to some venues that were open.

Preliminary plans were put in place with Mayo Co. Council as regards stickers with an AA message being placed on all Bottle Banks around the County.

There was 1 School Talk to TY Students in St. Gerald's College, Castlebar.

The Western Region Drug/Alcohol Task Force was contacted and a meeting to take place in the New Year.

2 Members, Marilyn K. GSCD and John G. CIG Treasurer are on the All-Ireland Convention 2021 Committee.

All relevant information from Conference and CIG Meetings was relayed to members at Mayo Area Meetings.

Mayo Area contributed €12,000 Euros to CIG in 2020.

The members of Mayo Area worked well together and were enthusiastic in getting any business done that was possible in the difficult year that 2020 was. They communicated well as a Group and the WhatsApp Group was very beneficial as means of communication when face to face wasn't possible.

Marilyn K., GSCD Connaught

12. Roscommon/South Leitrim/Athlone Areas Report

Synopsis Report:

The Area consists of 15 Groups, our Area Meetings had to relocate to Hannon's Hotel during Covid. We had 3 or 4 Meetings at this location. We now have a new venue at Castle Street, Roscommon.

All Groups were severely affected during the early Lockdown, we now know they could have stayed open. There was a lot of unclear direction from GSB and a lot of Members were quite annoyed throughout the Area. While at the same time knowing we came under essential services. Then AA took direction from Politicians eventually.

At that stage all local Groups had to change venues at a lot more cost, e.g., one Group were paying €5 per meeting but change to another venue cost €25 to €35 per meeting and then some Groups had to change where they had to sign a Lease and at the moment still have to pay and close again because of the extreme transmission of the different variance of Covid and because of the possibility of some person giving Covid to another person.

Our Area was invited to submit a proposal to hold the 2021 All-Ireland AA Convention, as decided at the Intergroup, which was done. The only available suitable Hotel was in Carrick-on-Shannon, but the better option was chosen in Sligo for the 2021 All-Ireland AA Convention. It was also agreed and to be discussed at our next area Meeting to rotate to North Roscommon Area (possibly Boyle) to hold our next meeting. This might help attendance at Area Meetings.

It has been discussed at Group and Area Meetings the frustration of getting back up on the Website. Some Groups have lost their Passwords and Email Addresses. We were then told that the option was to go through Intergroup, then one could go through Area, all this delay to eventually be told that a person from the Group who have been selected by Group Conscience can now call GSO and register the Group on the Website. All this, while been concerned if a new member wanted to get a meeting and now how many meetings, are actually up on the Website in Connaught.

It has been mooted at the Area and Intergroup to have a Corporate Zoom Account for Connaught Intergroup, so Groups in Connaught could donate, so that it could be going through the Structure.

At our last meeting on the 14/12/2020 we thanked Brian for all his services down through the years as his term of office is completed. Also, Seamus was approved as Intergroup Delegate for Roscommon/South Leitrim & Athlone Area.

Appendix 8

Joe B. was approved as Conference Delegate, having been proposed and seconded by the Summerhill Group. (Proposed by Mary O. and seconded by Noel C on the 06/12/20).

PI: Ballaghaderreen School had requested, because of the success of the previous year, Speakers for their school. This was organised by Brian, but the school had to cancel because of Covid.

Also, Intergroup has agreed to place advertising in some of the local Papers, to be selected possibly at our next meeting.

Brian has had the Connaught Phone and details are recorded of the different types of calls. This has been a great success generally in Connaught.

Healing Centres, Colleges and Al-Anon have been discussed in the overall context in conjunction with Alcoholics Anonymous. We want to follow up on this when the Covid restrictions are lifted.

Last but not least, received donations through the Structure for the year amounted to €7.800.