

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF IRELAND**



**ROLL CALL AND MINUTES  
OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GENERAL & RECONVENED MEETING  
OF CONFERENCE 2019**

**TULLAMORE COURT HOTEL**

**1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**and**

**10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019 (Reconvened)**

## **Opening of Conference by Chairperson**

Martin C. (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. Martin C. read from page 71 of the General Service Handbook 'Why Do We Need a Conference?'

## **Approval of Provincial Trustee**

Outgoing Trustee Liam O' B. thanked the Board and Conference for their support during his term as a member of the Board.

Richard O'M. was proposed by Liam O'B. and seconded by Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) as the incoming Connaught Trustee. Patsy O'K. (Munster Trustee) thanked Liam O'B. for his exemplary service to the Board and Conference.

Patsy O'K. (Munster Trustee) said that Liam was an excellent servant to the Fellowship.

Richard O'M. thanked the outgoing Trustee for the nomination and stated that he very much looked forward to serving the Fellowship and working alongside fellow Board Members.

Non-AA–Member Directors Diarmuid McKeown, Carmen Bryce and Liz Cullen were welcomed by Conference members.

## **Service Handbook for Ireland (2014/01 Article 14, voting at meeting, Page 66)**

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- 1.2 All items or motions passed by a two-thirds majority are recommended and unless rescinded by notice of motion, become Conference policy after the expiry of one year.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.

## 1. Roll Call

<b>Connaught</b>		<b>Munster</b>	
Trustee	Liam O'B.	Trustee	Patsy O'K.
(Alt) Delegate	Breege G.	Delegate	John D.
Delegate	Harry MacG.	Delegate	Michael McG.
Delegate	James O'S.	Delegate	Nicholas R.
Delegate	Marilyn K.	Delegate	Eddie H. (Apologies)
IG Secretary	Maura K.	IG Secretary	Michael D.
<b>Leinster</b>		<b>Ulster</b>	
Trustee	Pat K.	Trustee	Brian F.
Delegate	Emmet O'H.	Delegate	Tom D.
Delegate	Anthony McN.	Delegate	Colum P.
Delegate	John S.	Delegate	Brian J.
Delegate	Michael D.	Delegate	Kenny P.
IG Secretary	Teresa S.	IG Secretary	John McC.
<b>Other</b>		<b>Observers</b>	
Board Secretary	Tony O'C.	Richard O'M. Barbara Counihan Clive K. Norman B.	Incoming CIG Trustee Operations Manager GB Observer GB Observer
WSD's	Pat D. and Helen H.		
Non-AA Member Director	Diarmuid Mc Keown		
Non-AA Member Director	Carmen Bryce		
Non-AA Member Director	Liz Cullen		
Chairperson	Martin C.		

## 2. Adoption of 2019 Conference Agenda (Appendix 1)

**Adoption of Agenda and other urgent business in accordance with Paragraph 12.3, page 66 of 2014/1 Service Handbook.**

Brief discussion took place on Draft Agenda; it was proposed by Teresa S. (Leinster) Seconded by John D that the Agenda be adopted.

## 3. Adoption of 2018 Conference Minutes and Matters Arising

Chairperson went through the minutes page by page. The Board Secretary stated that there were a small number of corrections to be made, his attention was drawn to these by Leinster and these errors would be rectified. Emmet O'H. (Leinster) proposed the adoption of the minutes this was seconded by John D. (Munster)

#### **4. Election of GB Observers April 2019**

Kenny P. (Ulster) was proposed by Brian F (Ulster) Seconded by Colum P (Ulster)

Anthony McN. (Leinster) was Proposed by Pat K. (Leinster) Seconded by John S. (Leinster)

#### **5. Motions to Conference. (Appendix 2)**

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) requested that all Delegates presenting motions to Conference confirm that each motion had come through the structure from Group, to Area and on through Intergroup for inclusion at Conference.

**Ulster Intergroup – Dungannon Motion 1. Third Legacy Group. Title: The new Alcoholic Trustees be elected, being proposed and seconded through the Service Structure of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland.**

The motion was presented by Kenny P. (Ulster) who confirmed that the motion had come through Structure.

##### Synopsis of points highlighted in relation to the motion

Mick McG. (Munster) stated he could not support the motion as he had every confidence in the current process of selecting Trustees. John S. (Leinster) said he would not be vehemently opposed to the motion, however in his view the current system of selecting Trustees works and therefore he would not be supporting this motion.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) stated that he would have difficulty supporting the motion as he felt it would open the proposed process up to covert canvassing. Pat further outlined that the process for selecting Provincial Trustees was that the outgoing Alcoholic Trustee was given a list of possible suitable candidates, who would have served previously as Conference Delegates. The outgoing Trustee would then examine that list for suitability and experience in consultation with the board and a shortlist of four suitable persons would be discussed.

Pat D. (WSD) stated that he could not support the motion and requested that the process for selecting Trustees be clearly outlined.

Patsy O'K. (Munster Trustee) took conference through the current process of selecting Alcoholic Trustees he pointed to the fact that incoming Trustees to the Fellowship were also Directors of the company along with being Charity Trustees. Patsy outlined the selection process and how the directors arrived at their decisions regarding the appointments. Patsy said that as outgoing Trustee, twelve months from now, he needed to be mindful of the skillsets and the needs of the Board when he was submitting nominations to present to the Board of Directors/Trustees, This would then be followed by consultation with Conference members of his intergroup.

Anthony McN. (Leinster) pointed to the fact that there were checks and balances in place regarding the appointment of Trustees. The system has worked for a number of years and we should not seek to change what is working well.

Kenny P. (Ulster) in conclusion thanked Conference for the very informative debate.

After further discussions on this motion a vote was taken.

*The motion was not passed.*

### **Leinster Intergroup - Motion 2. Live and Let Live AA Group. Athy Co. Kildare Title: Our Service Structure from Area to Conference.**

Emmett O'H. (Leinster) presented the motion and confirmed that the motion had come through all levels of structure.

#### Synopsis of points highlighted in relation to the motion

Michael McG. (Munster) raised a number of concerns on sections of the motion. He felt the structure was working well. He stated that sub-committees cost money. Michael McG. objected strongly to the motion, therefore he would not be voting in favour of it.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) spoke on behalf of the Office Committee which consists of Leinster Trustee, Board/Company Secretary, and Operations Manager (GSO) and gave a detailed report on specific projects and activities the committee have been involved in over the last year at Company and Fellowship level. This included Company Governance Compliance along with projects aimed at improving the work of the fellowship and its structure.

Board/Company Secretary highlighted as per the suggestion in the proposed motion of a Service Structure committee meeting with GSO staff. The Secretary stated this could be problematic and would be in conflict with the Board/Company organisational structure and might also cause HR difficulties as there were no provisions in employee contracts to facilitate such a proposal. He stated, the staff of the General Service Office are employees of the General Service Board and take their direction from the Board through a line management procedure currently in place; this did not include employees being accountable to sub-committees of Conference.

Pat D. (WSD) said that 50% the AA Groups are not involved in Service. We ought to take a look at this and ask why. Pat felt that such a sub-committee would be a basic inventory of our structure.

Maura K. (Connaught) stated more needs to be done to educate people on service.

Nicholas R. (Munster) stated he did not see the need for such a sub-committee.

Tom D. (Ulster) sub-committees are expensive. He further stated that motions ought to be properly debated at Group, Area, and Intergroup prior to being forwarded to Conference. Tom stated that he would not be in favour of this motion.

John S. (Leinster) pointed out that we did not need this change right now. I would always be in favour of considering change; however, on this occasion I feel we are not ready for the formation of a Service Structure Committee.

Anthony McN. (Leinster) said that there was not any great enthusiasm for this motion at area level. Anthony felt everything at Office Committee appears to be running very well.

Patsy O'K. (Munster Trustee) pointed to the evidence that change is taking place; a lot of work has and is being done by the Office Committee.

Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) said in relation to this and all motions, they should be debated at all levels of structure before they arrive on the floor for discussion at Conference.

In conclusion to the debate Emmett O'H. (Leinster) thanked Conference for hearing and discussing the motion at length and that he was glad of the clarity given on how motions are presented. The Motion was put to a vote.

*The motion was not passed*

### **Leinster Intergroup – Motion 3. The Booterstown Group, Dublin Title: Special Interest Meetings.**

John S. (Leinster) presented the motion and confirmed that it had come through the AA Structure. John commended the group for the manner in which they had researched and presented the proposal along with the discussions and extensive background that had taken place regarding this motion.

#### Synopsis of points highlighted in relation to the motion.

Marilyn K. (Connaught) stated that she would have reservations about this motion.

Tom D. (Ulster) stated that we would be in contravention of our preamble if we passed this motion.

Richard O'M. (Connaught Trustee) pointed to our AA Logo and our legacy of unity. Richard stated that the mention of specialist or special interest meetings is and can be divisive; therefore, we should keep it simple and not create any division.

Michael D. (Leinster) felt that the proposed motion was divisive, and he would be against the motion as it could affect unity. Where do we draw the line? If this motion passes.

James S. (Connaught) felt he could not support the motion, James pointed out it would interfere with Tradition Five. James stated that the motion would lead to the fragmentation of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Helen H. (WSD) Are we reflective of the reality that's out there. Helen stated that maybe we ought to be more inclusive.

Emmett O'H. (Leinster) this is not about specialist meetings, it is about special interest meetings,

Patsy O'K. (Munster Trustee) would not support the motion. Patsy pointed out that we are a fellowship of men and women as per our preamble.

Teresa S. (Leinster) We have a singleness of purpose and should be all inclusive. I just want to go to an AA meeting.

Anthony McN. (Leinster) made a point of clarification. There's a huge difference between special interest meetings, and specialist meetings. This motion was not about allowing specialist meetings; it is aimed at allowing special interest meetings.

Harry MacG. (Connaught) asked if our GB Observers could be invited to make a contribution to this particular part of the discussion.

Nicholas R. (Munster) Unity is all inclusive and about reaching out to everyone. There should be no divisions in groups for these reasons he would not be supporting the motion.

Brian J. (Ulster) AA should always be all inclusive.

Michael D. (Munster) we have to make ourselves accessible and welcoming to all. We want the hand of friendship to be there for all.

John S. (Leinster) in conclusion of the debate on the motion thanked Conference for their views and the time given to the motion. John stated that we should consider ourselves to be open to the suggestion and that there was no proposal of exclusivity in this motion, that it was about inclusivity.

A vote was taken on the motion.

*The motion was not passed.*

#### **Leinster Intergroup - Motion No 4. Parish Hall (L247) Group Wexford. Title: Leinster Prison Service.**

Emmett O'H. (Leinster) presented the motion; he confirmed that this motion had come through the proper channels of Structure.

#### Synopsis of points highlighted in relation to the motion.

John D. (Munster) stated that he would be in favour of the motion as there was no guidance in the Service Handbook for Ireland in relation to this aspect of service.

Patsy O'K. (Munster) felt that Conference could not make a decision on this matter that the issue was a matter for the relevant area and intergroup.

Tom D. (Ulster) said that he believed it stated in our Service Handbook that nobody should be denied the privilege of doing service in AA because of financial constraints.

Kenny P. (Ulster) suggested that this motion ought to go back to all Intergroups for further discussion.

Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) felt that this was a discussion for the relevant Intergroup and not for Conference.

There were a number of views and sharing of experiences expressed on this motion.

Anthony McN. (Leinster) suggested that maybe it was a matter for the Intergroup.

In Conclusion Emmett O'H. (Leinster) thanked Conference for their views.

*The Motion was not passed*

**Munster Intergroup - Motion No 5. Carrigtwohill AA Group. Title: Name of the Area change from North Cork to North and East Cork.**

John D. (Munster) presented this motion requesting that Area name change as the Area meetings now alternate between North and East of the county. John confirmed that all groups had agreed to the motion and that it had come through the structure.

Synopsis of points highlighted in relation to the motion

Board Secretary pointed out that this was not a motion and it was not necessary to bring this as a motion to Conference.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) His understanding is that the Area Committee passes a resolution to change the name and then proceeds to pass that information on through the structure to GSO.

Board Secretary asked for clarity on whether this was a motion or a simple matter of administration of a name change to an area.

Anthony McN. (Leinster) on a point of order. If this is not a legitimate motion Conference ought not to vote on the motion.

Nicholas R. (Munster) suggested that the name change come from the Area to Munster Intergroup and that the General Service Office be advised of this.

*This motion was withdrawn.*

**Munster Intergroup – Motion 6. Carrigtwohill AA Group. Title: Group Information Sheets.**

John D. presented the motion and confirmed the motion had come through the Structure.

Synopsis of points highlighted in relation to the motion

Board Secretary confirmed that all Group Information Sheets are currently coming through the structure. He further stated that in relation to GDPR Group Information Sheets that were issued in May 2018, the information that was available at that time was that this information needed to be updated quickly in line with new EU Data Protection Regulation.

The Board Secretary posed the question to Conference, is there any benefit or merit to a suggestion of sending properly completed GIS directly to the General Service Office.

Kenny P. (Ulster) Stated that his view in relation to GIS coming through the structure was that each AA group be responsible for the ratification of the Group Information Sheet and that the group should be responsible for sending the GIS to the General Service Office.

Emmett O'H. (Leinster) said it was his understanding that currently all GIS were going through structure and therefore given this current position was this motion necessary.

Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) felt we should pass the motion to ensure all GIS come through structure.

John S. (Leinster) felt the motion ought not to be passed as there was an established practice in place in relation to Group Information Sheets going through structure.



John stated that we needed to reinforce the structure of AA. There were various other contributions from Delegates relative to this debate.

*The motion was passed and will become Conference policy in one years' time unless rescinded by notice of motion.*

### **Munster Intergroup – Motion 7. Askeaton AA Group, Title: Contributions through Structure.**

Nicholas R. (Munster) confirmed that the motion had come through the structure.

Nicholas R. presented this motion and stated that the group was requesting that all monies from all AA groups ought to come through the AA Structure.

#### Synopsis of points highlighted in relation to the motion

Michael McG. (Munster) said we could not police groups.

It was confirmed that any monies coming directly from AA groups to GSO is accounted for and receipted.

Pat D. (WSD) pointed out that if we passed this motion, the staff at the General Service Office cannot accept the contributions that go directly to the General Service Office.

Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) The Provincial Trustees are aware of the groups that are sending monies directly to GSO and they are informed of this on request of the information. Brian went on to point out that all we can do is offer advice on how groups should send their contributions and that is clearly outlined in our Service Handbook for Ireland.

Anthony McN. (Leinster) it would be preferable if groups did send their contributions through structure, however we should endeavour to continue to still accept monies going directly to GSO.

John S. (Leinster) said he was opposed to the motion saying that we would be shooting ourselves in the foot by refusing to accept contributions directly from groups. AA Groups sending monies directly to GSO is not dismantling the structure. John pointed out that we are not enforcers, we can only encourage.

Richard O'M. (Connaught Trustee) indicated that he would not be supporting the motion as there is currently a guideline in place regarding the matter.

Pat D. (WSD) read from pages 17 & 18 Finance or AA Money General Service Handbook. Pat stated that this section in the Service Handbook was a guideline and therefore was an existing guideline; hence there should be no need for a vote on this motion.

In conclusion Nicholas R. (Munster) stated that there was a guideline in our Service Handbook regarding how monies ought to be transferred through structure.

*This Motion was withdrawn.*

**Munster Intergroup – Motion 8. Cathedral AA Group, Clare. Title: Groups Operating Outside Structure.**

Nicholas R. (Munster) confirmed that the motion had come through Structure.

Nicholas in presenting the motion said that motion was more of a question than an actual motion to Conference.

*This motion was withdrawn*

**Munster Intergroup – Motion 9. Passage West AA Group. Title: Decision to remove the Group addresses and meeting times from the Directory.**

Michael McG. (Munster) confirmed that the motion had come through structure.

In presenting the motion Michael confirmed that the motion was withdrawn by the AA Group.

*This motion was withdrawn.*

**6. World Service Delegates – WSM 2018 Report. (Appendix 3)**

Helen H. and Pat D. (WSD'S) presented reports on the World Service Meeting Committees.

Helen said she hoped that people would find the reports from the different committees interesting.

Pat D. said that as this was his last Conference, he would like to extend his thanks to Helen current (WSD) and Seamus B. (Ex WSD) whom he had served alongside during his service. Pat went on to thank Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) for his guidance during his service. Pat also paid tribute to Anthony McN. (Leinster) for his support. He extended a special word of thanks to Barbara at the General Service Office.

Pat D. (WSD) requested that the General Service Board being editors of the Road Back and News Sheet consider publishing extracts from the Committee Reports in either publication.

Nominations are being sought for a World Service Delegate. *(See pages 63 & 64 Service Handbook for Ireland for qualifications).*

**7. Conference Delegates Reports. (Appendix 4)**

**Ulster**

Tom D. who represents Areas Antrim, Armagh, Belfast, Derry and Tyrone Areas stated that attendance at Areas was falling off. He said his reports were lengthy, but he was pointing out, in his honest opinion, the difficulties he could see in Ulster. He mentioned communication gaps between the Board and the Conference Delegates hence there were communication gaps in Areas and Intergroups and felt that this communication gap needed to be addressed.

Colum P. (Ulster) read report on Down, Belfast and Tyrone.

Colum said he found Conference very informative. Colum thanked the outgoing Conference Delegates, Michael L. and Charlie D. He also thanked incoming Ulster Trustee Brian F. for his support.

Colum P. (Ulster) read report on behalf of outgoing Conference Delegate Charlie D. for Derry, Donegal and Tyrone.

### **Connaught**

Breege G. (Connaught) read report from Sligo/North Leitrim.

Harry MacG. (Connaught) read report from South Leitrim.

James O'S. (Connaught) read report from Galway East.

Marilyn K. (Connaught) read report from Mayo Area.

Galway West Report was not available to Conference, therefore could not be read.

It was agreed by Conference to take Connaught Intergroup Inventory Report as read and included in the minutes.

### **Leinster**

Anthony McN. (Leinster) read reports from Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Emmett O'H. (Leinster) read report from Area 5.

Michael D. (Leinster) read reports from Areas 6 and 7.

Emmett O'H. (Leinster) read report from Area 8.

Teresa S. (Leinster) read report from Area 9.

Michael D. (Leinster) read report from Area 10.

Emmett O'H. (Leinster) read report from Area 11.

Anthony McN. (Leinster) read report from Area 12.

Teresa S. (Leinster) read reports from Areas 13 and 14.

### **Munster**

Michael McG. (Munster) read reports on behalf of Nicholas R. (Munster) for Limerick City, Clare and Limerick County Areas.

John D. (Munster) read reports from Kerry and North/East Cork Areas.

Michael McG (Munster) reported from Cork City and West Cork Areas.

John D. (Munster) read reports from Waterford and Tipperary Areas on behalf of Edward H.

There was extensive discussion and a very valuable exchange of information, views, and observations on Conference Delegates reports from all members of Conference.

At this point the Chairperson called on the GB observers to address Conference.

GB Observer Clive K. addressed Conference said after listening and observing at Conference his feelings were that AA in Ireland were doing a wonderful job. Clive offered his sincere thanks to Conference for the welcome and the hospitality.

GB Observer Norman B., Trustee Great Britain, thanked AA in Ireland for the invitation and kindness. Norman stated it was enlightening to listen to the debates.

## **9. Public Information Report on the Official AA Website (Appendix 5)**

Board Secretary highlighted the need for members of Conference to submit separate PI reports when submitting their Conference Delegates reports.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) presented an update on the new AA website. Pat reported that GSO continues to monitor and update information as required. He highlighted that the new website had received 45,000 hits in the first month of the website launch and stated that there were many new features on the website including an online shop and a dedicated member's area. Pat K. also informed Conference that new AA National Directories were now available for purchase from GSO.

Conference was informed that every AA Group that had received login details for the member's area of the website would now receive a copy of the News Sheet delivered electronically. This would be downloadable for printing if desired.

All AA Groups that have completed and returned a GDPR Group Information Sheet have, or will have, in the very near future, their own email address with login details and passwords so they can communicate internally within the AA Structure.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) informed Conference that as and from March 30<sup>th</sup> all queries and information received, via email, from all areas of Structure to GSO will only be responded to via the new AA email addresses issued to Groups, Areas and Intergroups. Pat requested that all areas of service structure refrain from using personal email addresses going forward in line with GDPR compliance.

There were a number of questions raised on the report along with clarity being sought on Group Information Sheets and the processes of same.

Conference concluded with the Serenity Prayer.

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GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF IRELAND**



**ROLL CALL AND MINUTES  
OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
RECONVENED MEETING OF CONFERENCE 2019**

**TULLAMORE COURT HOTEL**

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

**10. Opening of Reconvened Conference by Chairperson**

Martin C. opened Reconvened Conference by welcoming everybody and asked for a moments silence to consider why we were here. Conference recited the Serenity Prayer and Tradition Two, Page 71 'Why Do We Need a Conference was read?'.

The Board/Company Secretary drew Conference member's attention to an oversight on his part regarding the suggestion of a contribution to the International Literature Fund (ILF) and European Service Fund (ESF) which should have been dealt with at March Conference. Tony O'C. stated, there was a suggestion that Conference may consider a €3k contribution to the ILF along with €2k to the ESF.

This was proposed by John S. (Leinster) Seconded by Tom D. (Ulster).

## 11. Roll Call

<b>Connaught</b>		<b>Munster</b>	
Trustee	Richard O'M.	Trustee	Patsy O'K.
Delegate	Harry MacG.	Delegate	John D.
Delegate	James O S	Delegate	Michael McG.
(Alt) Delegate	Breege G.	Delegate	Nicholas R.
(Alt) IG Secretary	Marilyn K.	IG Secretary	Michael D. (Apologies)
<b>Leinster</b>		<b>Ulster</b>	
Trustee	Pat K.	Trustee	Brian F.
Delegate	Michael D.	Delegate	Tom D.
Delegate	Anthony McN.	Delegate	Colum P.(Apologies)
Delegate	John S.	Delegate	Kenny P.
Delegate	Emmet O'H.	Delegate	Brian J.
IG Secretary	Teresa S. (Apologies)	IG Secretary	John McC.
<b>Others</b>			
Board Secretary	Tony O'C.	<b>Observers</b>	
WSDs	Pat D. Helen H.	Clive K. Barbara Counihan	GB Observer Operations Manager
Non-AA Member Director	Liz Cullen		
Non-AA Member Directors (Apologies)	Diarmuid McKeown Carmen Bryce		
Chairperson	Martin C.		

## 12. Public Information Reports 2019. (Appendix 4)

### Munster

Michael McG. (Munster) read reports on Public Information for Cork City and West Cork.

## 13. Service Handbook Update. (Appendix 6)

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) presented an update on the Service Handbook for Ireland.

Anthony McN. (Leinster) asked if there would be a code of conduct included in the updated Service Handbook. A lengthy discussion ensued on this question.

### Synopsis of Points highlighted in discussion

Anthony McN. (Leinster) felt that the Board should explore some kind of guidance for groups on behaviour and conduct for AA Groups; there have been a number of queries from groups on how to deal inappropriate conduct. Anthony asked if there was a legal requirement to have some guidelines in place given AA's charitable status.

It was confirmed that GB had issued a pamphlet on this topic recently.

Pat K (Leinster Trustee) pointed out that a number of correspondences were being received at GSO citing various complaints regarding behaviour that was not acceptable. Pat went on to say that he was neither a legal expert nor a legal advisor to the Board, but it was his understanding that some kind of code of conduct was required legally by us as a charity.

Anthony McN. (Leinster) asked if this was a matter that should be passed to the Board as trusted servants to design some sort of statement for AA Groups.

John D. (Munster) cautioned against introducing any documents to Conference referring to the GB pamphlet on the item being discussed.

Nicholas R. (Munster) stated that he felt we needed some kind of statement to protect vulnerable people coming into AA. We need to act as leaders and show leadership. Nicholas acknowledged the work being done on the Board.

Michael McG. (Munster) said that this was a highly sensitive area, Michael went on to state that it should be left up to each group on how they should deal with incidents that were classed as inappropriate. Michael pointed to Tradition Four of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Maura K. (Connaught) felt that any statement ought to not be included in the Service Handbook. A separate pamphlet would be more beneficial to access.

The Board/Company Secretary confirmed that in the past twelve months a number of queries/complaints were received at GSO regarding conduct at meetings. He stated that the board were very conscious of this situation. He went on to state that the Board could design a leaflet / pamphlet for groups, However the General Service Board could not compel AA Groups to use such a leaflet. This said, at least it would be policy and guidelines for groups.

Emmett O'H. (Leinster) stated that he had read the pamphlet produced by GB and found it very useful and agreed with the sentiments expressed by Maura K. (Connaught) and the Board Secretary.

Tom D. (Ulster) pointed out that no new documents were being introduced at Conference. He felt it was proper that this matter be raised at Conference.

Pat D. (WSD) highlighted that personal conduct cards were available in other countries and we should not be afraid to learn from other countries. Pat said that we need to obey the laws of the land. Pat felt we should not be waiting until something happens or for another twelve months to introduce a conduct card/pamphlet, we have a possible solution here.

Patsy O'K. (Munster Trustee) believed we needed some kind of document. Conference is the group conscience of Ireland and we need to remember this. Do we as a collective group conscience of Ireland take make a decision on this matter this evening, or do we go back through structure with this suggestion?

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) proposed that we take the document published by GB and reword same to suit the fellowship in Ireland, that we would issue a pamphlet immediately and await feedback from the Fellowship.

Breege G. (Connaught) believed that we have twelve traditions that protect us along with good members to support us.

Michael McG. (Munster) pointed out that he could not judge fellow alcoholics; Michael objected strongly to the any such pamphlet/leaflet stating that he did not believe we need this set of guidelines. Michael McG. Counter proposed that if such a document was to be introduced that it first goes to the AA Groups for discussion, if the group wishes to introduce it then that ought to be the group's prerogative. This counter proposal was seconded by James O'S. (Connaught)

Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) felt that this was a very good debate and that his understanding was that the GSBAA could introduce literature.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) suggested that the counter proposal by Michael McG. Could be incorporated into Pat K's proposal in that if instructed by Conference the General Service Board prepare a set of guidelines which we send out to all the groups for discussion and feedback can come through the structure next year with any amendments.

Maura K. (Connaught) said the Fellowship has changed and behaviour was taking place in the west of Ireland that was not acceptable and was causing fear.

Patsy O'K. (Munster Trustee) stated that there was one fundamental aspect to this discussion which was we must obey the law of the land.

Anthony McN. (Leinster) There are a lot of groups that do not know how to deal with incidents that are not acceptable practice, and these groups are looking for guidance.

James O'S. (Connaught) pointed out that a piece of paper was not going to stop anyone, for example, bullying in an AA room. James's view was that in the case of bullying incidents needed to be dealt with on the spur of the moment.

Richard O'M. (Connaught Trustee) the feeling was that there is a need for safety and that this was not about enforcing laws, it was about guidelines for people who do not have the experience on how to deal with such situations.

Michael D. (Leinster) agreed with Leinster Trustee's revised proposal. Michael confirmed that this issue had come up for discussions in his Areas and they were speaking about the problems that do exist in groups.

Helen H. (WSD) said that this matter of having guidelines and that we had guidelines on sponsorship and anonymity. Helen stated that this issue had been raised many times at the World Service Meeting.

The Chairperson Martin C. pointed out that he did not wish to end the debate, but time was moving on and there were still a number of agenda items to be dealt with and there was a proposal and a counter proposal on the floor that also needed to be dealt with.

There was a proposal by Pat D. (WSD) seconded by Harry MacG. (Connaught) that Conference proceedings be extended to 11.00pm this evening to continue the discussion.

There was a counter proposal by Michael McG. (Munster) seconded by John S. (Leinster) that we end Conference proceedings at 10.00pm as per schedule.



The Counter proposal was voted on and was carried.

Kenny P. (Ulster). The proposed pamphlet would be given to groups as a guideline to protect Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland.

John S. (Leinster) said he felt strongly in relation to this matter and that we should have such a guideline which would help to inform. John stated that he would wholeheartedly support the proposal that the Board should draft a document and put it out there for feedback.

Pat D. (WSD) we have nothing to fear by producing such a document to protect, it is not a law. Pat said the right decision is in the proposal put forward by the Leinster Trustee as a guideline.

Proposal by Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) that we design a document similar to the GB Pamphlet for AA Groups. The pamphlet would be discussed at all levels of structure and would come back for feedback and debate. This proposal is seconded by Nicholas R. (Munster)

Counter Proposal by Michael McG. (Munster) any decision regarding a pamphlet be first placed before the AA Groups. This counter proposal was withdrawn by Michael.

#### **14. All Ireland Convention 2018 Report. (Appendix 7)**

Patsy O'K. (Munster Trustee) presented the report.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) congratulated the Convention Committee on a successful Convention.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) confirmed that rooms were being held for the 2020 All Ireland Convention at Bloomfield House Mullingar.

#### **15. Invitation of GB Observers 2019**

An invitation is extended to invite two GB observers in 2020. Anthony McN. (Leinster) raised a question regarding GB observers participating in our Annual General Service Conference going forward, as opposed to being observers with no voice at Conference.

A discussion took place on this item where Conference members shared their experience of attending GB Conference and outlined the inclusivity of their participation.

After further discussion on this item Anthony McN. (Leinster) proposed Emmett O'H. (Leinster) seconded that going forward that our GB invitees are allowed to participate at the discretion of Conference not having voting rights but sharing their experiences as they relate to a particular topic on the agenda when requested to do so.

It was decided by Conference that the Chairperson of Conference along with the Board/Company Secretary meet with the GB invitees prior to the commencement of Conference to outline this protocol.

Harry MacG. (Connaught) suggested observers from other countries be also invited to our Annual General Service Conference at their own expense.

Pat D. (WSD) agreed with Harry MacG. Suggestion but thought we should sponsor such observers from other European Countries and that we ought to consider this for next year.

Patsy O'K. (Munster Trustee) stated that if Conference gave the Board permission to explore the suggestions put forward by Harry MacG. And Pat D. it could be done, and the Board could report back to Conference in 2020. Patsy said that we would need time to investigate the logistics and finance before reaching a decision on this issue.

Kenny P. (Ulster) agreed with Patsy O'K. that next year, we examine the possibility of inviting members of another country and then make a decision for 2021.

Brian J. (Ulster) also agreed with the sentiments expressed by the Munster Trustee Patsy O'K. Brian went on to say that we could not forget the surplus stock of literature that would have to be written off next year. Brian made the point that we needed to be mindful of looking after our financial affairs at home.

Emmett O'H. (Leinster) proposed that Board investigate the feasibility as suggested by Patsy O'K. This was seconded By Brian J (Ulster)

## **16. GB Conference April 2017 Observers Report. (Appendix 8)**

Michael D. (Leinster) and Harry MacG. (Connaught) presented the report.

Clive K GB Observer was invited to address Conference and said it was an absolute honour and privilege to have attended. Clive said he found the discussion moving and inspirational and found that both GB and Ireland shared the same difficulties in many areas including difficulties with service. He thanked Conference for their kindness and friendship and looked forward to meeting us in the future.

## **17. Election of 2020 Chairperson**

As there were only two outgoing Delegates placed before Conference Pat D. (WSD) and Emmett O'H. (Leinster). Third Legacy procedure was used Emmett O'H. received a clear two thirds majority as Chairperson of the Annual General Service Conference on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 with Pat D. (WSD) as Alternate Chairperson.

## **18. Encouraging Members into Service. (Appendix 9)**

This item consisted of Conference breaking up into four round table discussions with one question posed for each table. The basis for the discussion was a document submitted by Leinster intergroup titled Encouraging Members into Service

Table 1 Question – How can we improve Service?

Table 2 Question – How can Conference members lead by example?

Table 3 Question – What action can we as Conference take to encourage Service?

Table 4 Question – How can we implement changes and in what timeline?

The findings of the discussions from each table were presented to a main plenary session of Conference at 2.00pm.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) proposed that the findings of the discussions be sent to all Conference members separately from Conference minutes.

This proposal was seconded by Patsy O'K. (Munster Trustee)

Conference agreed that an evaluation of 'Encouraging Members into Service' would be an agenda item for the General Service Conference 2020.

Martin C. (Chairperson) thanked all members of Conference for their cooperation and support.

Conference concluded with the Serenity Prayer.

# Appendices

- (Appendix 1) Adoption of 2019 Conference Agenda
- (Appendix 2) Motions
- (Appendix 3) WSM Committee Reports
- (Appendix 4) Conference Delegates' Reports
- (Appendix 5) Public Information Report on Official AA Website
- (Appendix 6) Service Handbook Update
- (Appendix 7) All Ireland Convention 2018 Report
- (Appendix 8) GB Observers Report
- (Appendix 9) Encouraging Members into Service



## **AGENDA**

**Meeting Type: General Service Conference of AA in Ireland**

**Date: Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March to Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**Venue: Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, Co. Offaly**

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1. Opening of Conference by Chairperson
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda and other urgent business in accordance with Article 12.3, page 66 of 2014/1 Service Handbook
4. Adoption of 2018 Conference Minutes and Matters Arising
5. Election of GB Observers April 2019
6. Motions to Conference
7. World Service Delegates – WSM 2018 Report
8. Conference Delegates Reports
9. Public Information Reports
10. Service Handbook update
11. All Ireland Convention 2018 Report
12. Invitation to GB Observer 2020
13. GB Conference 13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> April 2018 Observer's Report
14. Service in AA – The Solution
  - a) Leinster
  - b) Munster
  - c) Connaught
  - d) Ulster
15. Election of 2020 Chairperson

**Ulster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2019  
Dungannon Third Legacy AA Group**

Dungannon Group Conscience 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 ask that a Motion be put to Conference.

The new Alcoholic Trustees be elected, being proposed and seconded through the Service Structure of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland from Group to Area and then Intergroup.

Dungannon Third Legacy  
Unit 8  
Castleview Buildings  
Dungannon  
2<sup>nd</sup> November 2018

**Leinster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2019  
The Live and Let Live Group, Athy, County Kildare**

**Motion Title: Our Service Structure from Area to Conference**

We propose that Conference set up a committee to have an overall and in depth look at our present Structure, with the view of presenting to the 2020 Conference, its findings of how our Fellowship can improve its ability to continue carrying our Message of Recovery to the 'Still Suffering Alcoholic' given the change in membership, number of groups and advanced communication systems since our current Structure was impacted.

Committee:

1. The Committee to consist of 1 Conference Delegate from each Intergroup.
2. The Committee to be chaired by one of the Non-Alcoholic Trustees.
3. The Committee to have the right as Trusted Servants, if they deem it necessary, to co-opt additional Members onto the Committee, if they feel that the experience of such additional Members would be of benefit to the work of the Committee.

How the Committee would function:

1. Each Area and Intergroup would hold a meeting at which the sole subject would be our Structure, and how it could be improved.
2. The Committee, should they wish, would have the right to sit in on any and all such meetings.
3. The Committee would also meet with the GSO staff, with the view of understanding the day to day running of our Fellowship.

Observation:

1. Our present Structure is in operation for close on 4 decades.
2. Our Membership and Group numbers have grown substantially during that period.
3. Communication systems have evolved dramatically since the enacting of our present Structure.
4. By setting up this Committee in the format suggested, our entire Fellowship will have the opportunity to express their views on our present Structure and how it may be improved.
5. In conclusion, we feel that our Fellowship has nothing to fear from such a review – on the contrary, it is our view that it will be extremely beneficial.

Signed  
Group Conscience Secretary  
Live and let Live Group.

1/10/2018

**Leinster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2019  
The Booterstown Group, Dublin**

**Motion Title: Special Interest Meetings**

The Booterstown Group, Dublin, proposes the following motion for adoption by Conference:

**PROPOSAL**

To add the following new paragraph into the General Service Handbook for Ireland in the section “What is an AA Group?” –

Some meetings aim to cater in particular for Members with specific interests e.g. Beginners, Women, LGBT, Non-Native languages. Where this is the case, the special interest is usually mentioned in the Directory. These meetings may be of special interest and support for certain Members but attendance at the meetings is, of course, open to all AA Members.

And to delete from the Handbook the sentence –

This Directory does not list Specialist Meetings which exclude or might appear to exclude any individual who has the desire to stop drinking.

**COMMENT**

Special interest meetings are a well-established feature of AA activities in other countries (e.g. the USA and Great Britain) and are clearly listed in Directories in those countries. The Booterstown Group considers that there is a valid and appropriate role in Ireland for AA meetings which aim to attract and support Members with particular interests. These meetings can be doubly attractive, and provide double identification, for the relevant persons. They can serve as a powerful means of attracting and facilitating entry into the Fellowship of new Members with those interests. They can provide valuable, added support and reassurance for Members, especially in the days of early recovery when sensitivities and vulnerabilities may be high.

## **Appendix 2**

The Booterstown Group strongly supports the mention of special interest meetings in the Directory. This would serve as a clear signal that the hand of AA extends in welcome of persons of minority groups or those with special interests. The Booterstown Group wholeheartedly supports the basic AA Principle that the only requirement for Membership of AA is a desire to stop drinking. Accordingly, it should be made clear that attendance at a special interest meeting is open to all AA Members, in accordance with Tradition 3. The proposed Motion for Conference aims to achieve these objectives. The Booterstown Group urges Conference to adopt this Motion.

Many thanks,  
In Gratitude and Fellowship,  
AA Booterstown

4<sup>th</sup> November 2018

### **Leinster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2019 Leinster Prison Service Parish Hall Group (L247), Wexford**

#### **Motion to Conference from Parish Hall AA (L247) Group Wexford**

##### **Introduction/Background:**

A Member of the Parish Hall AA Group, Wexford, had been doing a Prison Service commitment, which he had to discontinue, about 2 years ago, due to the additional personal financial strain which traveling to and from prisons had resulted in.

As a consequence, Members from Wexford have been discouraged from taking up a Prison Service commitment since, even though a number of Members would be ideally suited to this type of service commitment that would benefit greatly their Primary Purpose of staying sober and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

##### **Motion Request:**

Given the circumstances outlined, the Parish Hall AA Group, Wexford, Area 14, request conference to consider the matter that, no Member carrying out Prison Service should be prevented from doing so because of financial constraints.

Andy S.  
General Secretary  
Parish Hall AA

10<sup>th</sup> August 2018



**Munster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2019  
Carrigtwohill AA Group**

1. Carrigtwohill A.A. would like to propose that the name of our Area be changed from North Cork to North and East Cork.

**Munster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2019  
Carrigtwohill AA Group**

1. Carrigtwohill Group would like to propose that A.A. Group Information Sheets must go through the Structure of A.A. (i.e. through Group Conscience Secretary, Area Secretary, Intergroup Secretary and G.S.O.

**Munster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2019  
Askeaton AA Group**

We would like to bring a Motion to Intergroup that all monies be brought to Area at every County and not direct to GSO as this is what we feel should happen.

Askeaton Group

**Munster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2019  
Cathedral AA Group, Clare**

Groups that are operating outside of the Structure; should they continue to be supported by the A.A. Structure?

Cathedral Group, Clare

**Munster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2019  
Passage West AA Group**

**Motion: Decision to remove the Groups addresses and meeting times from the Directory.**

This action was not done through the Structure of AA. This was not a directive from an AA Group and therefore should be undone.

**Report from WSM: 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> October 2018  
for Conference 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**Appendix 3**

**Agenda Committee**

Twenty-Fifth World Service Meeting  
Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani Hotel  
Durban, South Africa  
Monday, October 8, 2018, 10.45a.m. – 12.45p.m.  
Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 10.45a.m. – 12.45p.m.

Chairperson: Scott H.

Secretary: Eva S. and acting Secretary Doug G.

The committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure and made no changes.

A. Review suggestions for the Theme of the Twenty-Sixth World Service Meeting (2020)  
The meeting **recommended** the following Theme for the Twenty-Sixth World Service Meeting: “The purpose of Our Service: Sobriety within Everyone’s Reach”.

B. Review presentation/discussion topics for the Twenty-Sixth World Service Meeting (2020):

The Committee **recommended** that the following presentation/discussion topics be included in the Agenda for the Twenty-Sixth World Service Meeting:

1. Importance of the Group Conscience Process
  - a) Reaching an informed Group Conscience
  - b) Sharing the group conscience throughout the A.A. Structure: A two-way process
2. Encouraging Women into General Service
  - a) Sponsorship in the Service Structure
  - b) Overcoming barriers that prevent women from participating in Service
  - c) Sharing the joy and benefits of general Service
3. Young People in A.A.
  - a) What are we doing to attract young people in A.A.?
  - b) Helping young people stay involved in A.A. through their Home Group, Sponsorship and Service?
  - c) How can we improve digital communications between newcomers and old-timers?
4. Anonymity
  - a) Personal Anonymity
  - b) Anonymity in the Home Group
  - c) Anonymity and the Internet
5. Safety in A.A.
  - a) What are Groups doing to maintain a welcoming and safe meeting environment?
  - b) The role of Sponsorship and our Literature in regards to safety
  - c) Safety for the newcomer – our personal responsibility
6. International Literature Fund
  - a) Raising awareness of the importance of the International Fund
  - b) Sharing experience on how countries support the international Literature Fund
  - c) Encouraging Country participation

### C. Review Workshop topics for the Twenty-Sixth World Service Meeting (2020)

The Committee **recommended** that the following Workshop topics be included on the Agenda for the Twenty-Sixth World Service Meeting

1. Communication – A Key to Unity
2. The Use of, and Value of, our A.A. Literature in Sponsorship
3. The Importance of our Non-Alcoholic Friends in our Structure

The Committee elected Ewa B. of Sweden as Chairperson and Jorge T. of Mexico as Alternate Chairperson.

**Literature/Publishing Committee**  
Twenty-Fifth World Service Meeting  
Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani Hotel  
Durban, South Africa

Monday, October 8, 2018, 10.45a.m. – 12.45p.m.

Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 10.45a.m. – 12.45p.m.

Chairperson: Miquey C.

Secretary: Sandra W.

#### A. Review Composition, Scope and Procedure

The Committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure and made no changes.

#### B. Review A.A.W.S. Report on International Literature Fund (ILF)

The Committee accepted the A.A.W.S. Report on the International Literature Fund regarding the fund and the disbursement of funds.

Committee members shared on current challenges in providing A.A. Literature reflecting the cultural experience of the Membership in their respective Country while ensuring the integrity of the A.A. Message. The Committee also discussed the importance of maintaining Literature that is current and attractive to the younger alcoholic.

#### C. Discuss “Country-to-Country Sponsorship” Service piece.

The Committee reviewed with appreciation the “Country-to-Country Sponsorship” Service piece.

Committee Members discussed the development of guidelines (like the various Guidelines published by the U.S./Canada General Service Office) that might be useful to Countries in “carrying the A.A. Message worldwide”. It was determined that the development of a codified document may be difficult since no one experience would fit all situations. Instead, Committee Members discussed that some Countries have already developed Guidelines useful within their Structure: and that one-to-one discussions between Delegates may also be helpful in providing shared experience.

The Committee addressed the following topics relating to A.A. literature:

## Appendix 3

1. The need for modernizing the language in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* considering younger members whose vernacular is different from the language used when the Big Book was written.

After a lively discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee that the essence of the Big Book – the principles and philosophy as reflected in the first 164 pages – remain timeless and should remain as it was written. However, one Member felt that the current text was off-putting to women; and another member suggested that the text should be changed to a more “gender-neutral” language (i.e. the chapter “To Wives” can be retitled “To Partners”). One Member suggested that the addition of footnotes to explain that the language reflects the zeitgeist of when the Big Book was written. Another Member suggested that the story selection should be updated to reflect the current population of the Fellowship. Committee Members agreed that there should be an ongoing process to ensure that A.A.’s other Books and Pamphlets reflect present-day A.A.

2. Who sets the literature prices in your country? What procedures are used?

A few Committee Members indicated that the Literature prices are set by their respective Service Structures via Committee system (i.e., Finance Committee).

Most Committee Members shared the challenges in providing Literature at an affordable price against the backdrop of decreasing Group contributions wherein the profit margin percentage is crucial to funding the vital services needed to carry the message.

One Member shared that Books are priced at cost and the shortfall is made up with non-A.A. sales (i.e. selling Literature at Treatment Facilities)

Another Member shared that while Literature prices fluctuate with the rate of inflation, 10 copies of the Big Book are provided free to new Groups.

3. What is your Country’s experience regarding pricing (if at all) A.A. Leaflets and Brochures?

Most Committee Members shared that A.A. Pamphlets are provided at no cost to Members.

4. When a Member requests to purchase Literature (published and distributed by the Members’ Country) from another General Service Office, the Member should be referred to the G.S.O. in their respective Country.

One Committee Member shared that A.A. Members visit the U.S./Canada General Service Office where they (as all visitors) are allowed to purchase Literature. These Members then sell the purchased Literature to the Groups in their Country.

### International Literature Fund

The Literature/Publishing Committee **recommended** that A.A. World Service consider the use of the International Literature Fund to offset administrative costs associated with translation review and copyright registration of A.A. Grapevine, Inc. books.

### Impact of Electronic Versions of Literature

The Literature/Publishing Committee had a wide-ranging discussion regarding the benefits, pitfalls and development of policy regarding on-line Literature including, but not limited to:

- The potential of downloadable Literature cannibalizing print literature sales: one Country noted that while their Literature is available electronically, it is not downloadable.

## Appendix 3

- The benefits of eBooks and Audiobooks as means of providing the A.A. Message in a more accessible format, including those Members who may have learning challenges.

The Committee agreed to forward this topic for further discussion by the Literature/Publishing Committee at the 26<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting in 2020.

The Committee elected Fatma N Z. of Turkey as Chairperson and Newton P. of U.S./Canada as Alternate Chairperson.

### **Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee**

Twenty-Fifth World Service Meeting  
Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani Hotel  
Durban, South Africa  
Monday, October 8, 2018, 10.45a.m. – 12.45p.m.  
Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 10.45a.m. – 12.45p.m.  
Chairperson: Roger S.  
Secretary: Mary C.

#### A. Review Composition, Scope and Procedure

The Committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedure and made no changes.

#### B. Review requests for participation at the 25<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting

##### Bolivia:

The Committee approved Bolivia's request to participate at the 25<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting.

##### Turkey:

The Committee approved Turkey's request for participation at the 25<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting.

#### C. Review qualifications for Countries participating in the World Service Meetings.

The Committee reviewed the qualification for Countries participating in the World Service Meeting and made no changes.

#### D. Review qualification for World Service Meeting Delegates.

The Committee reviewed the qualification for World Service Meeting Delegates and made no changes.

#### E. Review World Service Meeting Finances and Delegates' fees.

The Committee reviewed World Service Meeting Finances and Delegates' fees and had an in-depth thoughtful discussion of the Spiritual and Practical aspects of the Seventh Tradition principle of self-support.

The Committee discussed a proposal to form a Sub-Committee to perform a cost analysis of the World Service Meeting and provide suggestions that would allow the Delegate fee to remain at the current level and reduce the overall cost per Delegate and took no action. The sense of the Committee was that this was not needed at this time.

#### F. Confirm dates for the 26<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting.

The Committee **recommended** that the 26<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting be held October 25-29, 2020.

### G. World Service Meeting Delegate online communication platform.

The Committee reviewed a Memo from the World Service Meeting Co-Ordinator which reported the progress made in exploring an online communication vehicle for World Service Meeting Delegate sharing between Meetings and the implementation of that communication platform within the next six months.

Most Committee Members found the World Service Meeting Dashboard helpful; however, one Member indicated a preference for receiving documents via postal mail, noting that some Delegates may have limited computer access.

### H. Correspondence from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

The Committee reviewed correspondence from El Salvador and Honduras, notifying the World Service Meeting of their withdrawal from the Central American Northern Zone and sharing their intention of participating in the World Service Meeting as individual Countries starting in 2020. The Committee also reviewed correspondence from Guatemala sharing their intention of participating in the World Service Meeting as an individual Country starting in 2020.

The Committee recommended that Countries that have participated in the World Service Meeting as Members of a zone and want to begin participating as an individual Country will need to reapply for admission as an individual Country.

### I. World Service Meeting financial assistance procedures.

The Committee discussed current World Service Meeting financial assistance procedures and agreed to establish a World Service Meeting Fund as a way for Countries to contribute funds to provide financial assistance to Countries that request funding and to support the World Service Meeting. The World Service Meeting Fund will be maintained and administered by A.A. World Services under the purview of the World Service Meeting Policy/Admissions/Finance Committee.

### J. World Service Meeting Delegate listings in the International A.A. Directory and the World Service Meeting *Final Report*.

The Committee agreed that World Service Meeting Delegate listings in the International A.A. Directory and the World Service Meeting *Final Report* may include the Delegates full Name, Telephone Number and Email Address but exclude their home address.

The Committee elected Agust A. of Iceland as Chairperson and Alberto C. of Argentina as Alternate Chairperson.

**Working With Others Committee**  
Twenty-Fifth World Service Meeting  
Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani Hotel  
Durban, South Africa

Monday, October 8, 2018, 10.45a.m. – 12.45p.m.

Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 10.45a.m. – 12.45p.m.

Chairperson: Maria de FO.

Secretary: Lola I.

A. Review Composition, Scope and Procedures:

The Committee reviewed the Composition, Scope and Procedures and made no changes.

B. Sharing on the following Topics:

1. Public Information:

Committee Members shared their experience on how best to communicate the A.A. Message and enhance Unity using current Media and outreach.

A number of Countries reported the use of social media to increase participation and outreach. For most, it had proved to be a valuable tool in communicating with Professionals, Young People and remote Communities. Some, however, cited privacy concerns and the waning popularity of Facebook and other social media outlets as a reason to rely instead on a strong web presence with G.S.O. approved content to disseminate information about local A.A.

Some Committee Members noted the use of Television and Radio spots, the written Press, Documentary Films and Apps to drive awareness and participation. Additionally, some Members noted the use of Skype and Zoom to facilitate virtual Meetings in contexts that are not conducive to physical meetings.

Most regarded technology as an enabler, not a substitute, for in-person meetings and noted the A.A. Message is still best communicated person-to-person.

One Country reported difficulty communicating due to very restricted internet access, Government control, and limited resources.

It was shared that direct outreach to Medical Professionals, Mental Health Practitioners and Corrections Personnel – as well as engagement with Non-Governmental Organisations – has been an effective method for engaging the Professional Community.

Many Countries cited the significance of Class A Trustees in sharing the message of A.A. through direct access and interaction with the Public. Similarly, some Countries noted the absence of Class A Trustees has hindered their outreach efforts.

While most Countries felt Technology facilitates interaction, some Committee Members noted the importance of safeguarding Anonymity as Groups venture into social media and other tech outlets.

## Appendix 3

### 2. How do local A.A. Groups collaborate with A.A. Groups across National Borders and what is the role of Online Meetings?

While some Countries noted they do not hold Online Meetings, others cited the use of email lists and Online Forums for sharing questions, comments and support. Most Countries that reported the use of online platforms cited geographic isolation as the most primary impetus.

One Member discussed online interaction as an entry point for face-to-face meetings. It was noted that regardless of format, adherence to the Traditions, Principles and Teachings of A.A. is paramount.

A number of Countries shared that interaction between local Groups across borders is common as neighboring Countries are often connected through shared language and physical proximity.

One Country noted that Service Meetings encourage increased co-operation and collaboration within and between Groups.

Reacting to the word “local” one Member shared that interaction among Members often transcends National boundaries when Groups meet virtually, or in person, to discuss their shared concerns and the common Traditions of A.A.

One Country reported that, due to the absence of internet connectivity, human contact is the primary method of communication. As a result, Group Members often take long journeys to reach and engage with new participants.

### 3. Strategies to keep Members active in Service.

One Country shared that newcomers in their Groups are particularly encouraged to serve. Some Countries also noted the importance of engaging newcomers through sharing, rotation, and Service Workshops. Another Country noted that Sponsorship is a useful way to pass on experience and engender a deeper understanding of practice and Principles.

Several Countries reported a decreased appetite for Service, often affecting trust and confidence within the Groups. It was noted that Literature can be a critical tool to reflect and encourage the Principle of Service. Also noted was the importance of leading by personal example, modelling behavior and fostering a safe, judgment-free environment. One Member shared the importance of encouraging Members to see Service as a small cost for their continued sobriety.

One Country noted it maintains a database of all Members in Service as not to lost contact upon rotation. Another Country discussed the use of Service Sponsors to train and mentor those who are new to the role.

### 4. Accessibility of the A.A. Message to underserved Communities.

One Country noted it employs simplicity of language and message to made A.A. more accessible to underserved Communities. Another Country shared that increased, diverse representation on Boards is a means to achieving accessibility. A Committee Member noted the word “underserved” can refer to gender, ability, health, social status and numerous other factors.

Some Countries shared they make use of technology to reach underserved Communities such as the elderly or disabled. Following a conversation on how best to serve those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, one Country noted its Website offers guidelines for Deaf Members of the A.A. Community. She invited Committee Members to access and 32pprox. that information.



Several Countries cited insufficient experience on the topic.

5. Are all Alcoholics safe in A.A.?

Most countries shared that safety in A.A. is a serious concern and that there are frequent reports of sexual harassment. One Country also noted challenges with racial discrimination. A few Countries shared that safety has not been a concern in their local Groups.

One Country noted strong, effective sponsorship helps initiate new Members and properly set expectations regarding conduct. A suggestion was made to develop Safety Cards and Committee Members were invited to review the card currently used in the United States/Canada.

One Committee Member added that in her Country Groups become safer as more women enter into Service. Another Member suggested that same-gender Sponsorship is an effective strategy to avoid incidents.

A Member commented that the concept of safety also extends to Minority Groups, adding Groups must be tolerant and welcoming of all people, but intolerant of any form of discrimination or alienation.

- C. Co-operation with the Professional Community.

1. Co-operation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) as a resource for Alcoholics through public and private Companies in the Occupational Health Care business.

Some Countries reported working with Private Sector Companies and Events to present and discuss the benefits of the A.A. Program. To accomplish this, they secured commercial booths to distribute Literature and Pamphlets.

2. How A.A. co-operates with Professionals.

One Country shared it frequently engages Physicians in educating Medical Students about A.A. Another Country shared that, upon recovery, formerly hospitalised Alcoholics play a critical role in impressing upon the Medical Community the benefits of A.A.

One Committee Member shared that alcohol is forbidden in his Country. In the absence of a regulating body to ensure the safety of alcoholic beverages, many who drink are harmed, often fatally, from alcohol consumption. Additionally, he noted the challenge of A.A. being unrecognized as a legal entity due to the Country's rejection of all Non-Governmental Organisations. While Meetings are permitted, Members are unable to engage with Institutions in an official capacity.

3. Maintaining A.A.'s Primary Purpose in Treatment Settings.

One Country discussed the function of A.A. Groups in the Health Sector and noted it is important that Groups remain autonomous. Another Member stressed the importance of developing strong relationships with Healthcare Staff while being conscious of the program's independence from the Institution.

Some Countries noted the challenge of changing the perception of alcoholism – that it is a disease and distinct from other forms of addiction. They remarked on the cultural trivialisation of alcoholism and the frequently perpetuated myth that it is a curable condition.

### D. Carrying the A.A. Message into Institutions.

#### 1. A.A. as a resource for Alcoholics in the Judicial System and for Legal Professionals.

One Country reported working with the Judicial System, Magistrates and various legal bodies to increase understanding of A.A. To achieve this, Members attend Legal Conferences, Conventions and other Events to distribute A.A. Literature and heighten awareness.

#### 2. What are we doing to carry the Message into Correctional Facilities?

Some Committee Members shared that A.A. Groups are not permitted within Correctional Facilities in their Countries. They discussed ongoing efforts to negotiate with local Governments, NGOs and Medical Professionals to secure a place for A.A. within the Prison and Legal System.

One Country discussed the positive impact of engaging recently released Inmates in Service.

#### 3. Maintaining A.A.'s Primary Purpose in Correctional Facilities.

Some Countries reported their local A.A.'s provide Workshops and trainings to educate Mental Health Practitioners and solidify the Program's reputation as a vital and successful treatment method.

Citing considerable success within the Prison System, one Country reported weekly Meetings for alcoholic Inmates and annual gatherings for Practitioners.

The Committee elected Lotus A. of French-Speaking Europe as Chairperson and Rajeev S. of South Africa as Alternate Chairperson.

## **25<sup>TH</sup> WORLD SERVICE MEETING**

### **WORKSHOP 1**

Monday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### **How to use the Internet Wisely**

1. What examples demonstrate effective use of the Internet and A.A. Websites to help carry the A.A. message? Discuss Service Structure, Group and individual A.A. efforts to carry the message online.

The Internet helps to carry the Message to areas where there is no presence of A.A. A.A. Literature and Books can be read online in many languages.

The use of the Internet by Service Structures is almost universal with most Countries maintaining a National Website. The use of National Websites to provide information about A.A., list Meetings, Events and other A.A. relevant information helps to carry the message and to inform the Public about A.A. The ability to accept contributions online has resulted in increased participation in the Seventh Tradition in some Countries.

The sites must be user friendly and easily accessible as well as must being continually developed. Working with professional Website Development Companies is important. Websites can provide useful statistics that can aid in evaluating the effectiveness of a site. Website content is typically reviewed and approved by Trusted Servants.

## Appendix 3

One Country reported that ten Members provide help eighteen hours a day via their website; another country developed a chatbot, “The Anonymous Friend” to share A.A. experience and information. Many websites include a Web Shop for the purchase of Literature and Magazines, a variety of Meeting Finder approaches, some of which integrate mapping software. Information for Members including Board, Regional and Office News along with Conference Reports are available on some Countries sites.

Service Structures around the world are using a variety of online platforms such as Skype, WebEX and Zoom to conduct Meetings of all kinds from Trustees’ Meetings to a Literature Committee working on a revision/translation of the Big Book. Some Structures also use social media platforms including WhatsApp and Facebook, citing the use of Private Messaging features that allow Newcomers to ask for help; however, there is concern that maintaining anonymity on social media platforms can be challenging. There are varying opinions as to the actual level of anonymity afforded by “closed” and “private” groups on social media platforms.

Countries are using Mobile Apps for Member contributions and Meeting Finders. One Country’s website provides a place to subscribe to a Podcast Meeting on radio each month. Some Countries have YouTube channels. Use of email has significantly reduced postal mail costs.

Opportunities exist to coordinate more with class “A” Non-Alcoholic Trustees to carry the message online and to utilize password protected webinars for Workshops and Presentations.

In some Countries, websites and web access is controlled by the Government and has resulted in limited or no access to online platforms. Email is a useful tool for many Structures.

Use of the internet at the Group and Individual level has both positive and negative aspects. Online Meetings and Groups allow Members who cannot attend face-to-face meetings to attend A.A. Meetings, Carry the Message and be of Service.

At the same time, it is important not to lose the value of face-to-face A.A. Meetings and interaction with other Members outside of meetings. Many Members stay in contact with each other on a variety of internet platforms.

Anyone can find information about A.A. on their Mobile Phones; Pamphlets can be downloaded, there are Podcasts to listen to, there is a YouTube Channel, Websites can be accessed. It was noted that sharing the Daily Reflection or excerpts from other A.A. Literature via social media may be violating copyright and decreasing sales.

Some feel that use of the internet is for sharing “information not the message”. Many expressed the concern that social media platforms conflict with Traditions Three, Six and Nine. While it is clear that the internet is a vital conduit to share information about A.A. and that many, if not most, people today look for information about A.A. online, anonymity breaks especially at the individual level are problematic. While anonymity breaks on social media platforms are a particular concern, it is also important to be careful not to be too anonymous so no one can find you.

### 2. After reflecting on Traditions Eleven and Twelve:

#### a. How do we practice attraction not promotion on the internet?

We lovingly share our Experience, Strength and Hope, by relating our own life experiences to those seeking help, this will surely be attractive. Others feel that while social media does attract people to A.A., the internet is not appropriate for personal stories. Newsletters for Professionals have been useful and are not promoting but providing information. One Country suggested that “Attraction means I give; promotion means I’m selling”.

Some Countries question; how do Google ads fit with attraction rather than promotion? Where is the line between attraction and promotion on websites? Others are clear that we should share A.A. information like the Twelve Steps, not information about dances.

Some General Service Offices or General Service Conferences provide recommendations for using social media but note that it is up to Members what they do.

b. How do we maintain personal anonymity in this public medium?

There were numerous suggestions for how to maintain personal anonymity in this public medium:

- By adopting internet safety guidelines, Countries should consider developing their own guidelines, using Great Britain's guidelines or review guidelines available from various Countries and adapt to suit their own requirements and needs.
- WE must exercise great care when using social media as many anonymity breaks are happening, we need to be serious about our Traditions and use these platforms wisely, placing Principles before Personalities.
- Use only first names.
- Use Group names rather than individual's names.
- A blurred image on social media may conceal identity but other indicators may reveal identity.
- Questions like "Are you coming to meeting tomorrow" can violate anonymity.
- The future is here, communication on the internet is normal for many, so it is important that newcomers learn about anonymity.
- It is important to learn and know how to use the technological features of each social media platform in order to insure the Traditions are upheld in that particular environment. Each platform is different.
- Add the anonymity statement to meeting formats.
- Sponsors can guide Newcomers/Sponsees on how to use the internet while maintaining the Traditions.
- Our actions online as individuals can negatively affect A.A. as a whole.

**25<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting**  
**Workshop II**  
**Tuesday October 9, 2018**  
**Country-to-Country Sponsorship**

Workshop discussions were informed by the following questions:

1. *A.A.'s history of one Country helping another Country is extraordinary – share what the benefits have been on the receiving end and on the giving side. Currently, what are some of the ways that your Country sponsors other Countries?*

While it may be difficult to codify the Country-to-Country process, a few initial factors may be considered. For example, sponsoring Countries where language is shared can be helpful; cultural relationships can also be useful.

## Appendix 3

Some Countries have found that Sponsorship works best if there is a procedure in place wherein Countries seeking Sponsorship can formally request help. One Country developed guidelines reflecting shared experience. Another Country with a long history of extending the hand of A.A. to several Countries sees the Responsibility Statement as the core of its work. Some shared that it may be best if a Country – new to sponsoring another Country – were “Sponsored into Sponsorship”.

There are many ways to sponsor Countries – from providing shared experiences to helping developing structures in their infancy, to supporting women form Groups where cultural morals dictate segregation of the sexes, to providing financial assistance enabling a Country to send a Delegate to the World Service Meeting. Some Countries have difficulty in obtaining/translating Literature and financial support – either directly or through the International Literature Fund – is another form of Sponsorship. Sponsorship can even take place simply by Members attending Conventions in an emerging Area, to help support both financially by their presence and paying for their ticket and providing Literature when they arrive having brought it from their Home Groups.

Sometimes an amalgamation of Countries can be possible, where a larger Country can provide facilities to a smaller Country and allow them to function as a region of that Country.

Engaging Non-Alcoholics from the Professional and/or Religious Community may prove beneficial. For example, one Country cooperated with Nuns working in the Sponsee Country who, while not Alcoholics themselves, were able to carry the message to the suffering Alcoholic.

### *2. Fostering Self-Support – How much help is too much help?*

Members shared that in situations where there is a great disparity in resources, caution should be taken that financial aid is not provided at the expense of “spiritual” sponsorship. It was shared that “too much” support is reflected when the gift stunts the growth of the Country at the receiving end. Sponsorship should not infantilize the Country on the receiving end. It is also critical to ensure that a Structure is in place which will allow the Fellowship to continue to grow before ending support.

In one example, a Country rented rooms for Starter Groups to hold meetings and would stop the support as soon as the Group was self-supporting.

### *3. Challenges and solutions in Country-to-Country Sponsorship*

- a. Encouraging local Twelfth-Step efforts*
- b. Sharing all Three Legacies*

Without a Service Structure, a Country is ill-informed. Sponsorship can provide understanding of A.A.’s Three Legacies and how they work within the Fellowship. Ideally, through Sponsorship, a Country will understand what it means to be part of a united Fellowship and can carry the message to the sick and suffering alcoholic.

Another major challenge seems to be communicating in terms of Language/Cultural barriers. It is important to be sensitive and to understand that what may work in one Country may not work in another. Conversely, one Country shared a successful experience with working together with a sponsored Country on Literature translation because the two Countries shared basically the same language.

Another Country with successful Sponsorship experience shared a process wherein the sponsored Countries were first invited as Observers at Zonal Meetings; these Countries are now full Members.

Many Countries shared that inviting sponsored Countries to General Service Conferences is also a valuable tool for passing on information and shared experience.

From Countries with extensive sponsorship experience to those with little to no sponsorship experience, all shared the importance of imparting A.A.'s Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service and that while it may take on different characteristics from Country to Country, it all comes down to the simple action of one alcoholic reaching out the loving hand of hope.

**25<sup>th</sup> WORLD SERVICE MEETING**  
**Workshop III**  
**Wednesday, October 10, 2018**  
**Leadership in A.A.**

Workshop discussions were informed by the following questions:

1. *In your Country, how is the concept of "A.A. Leaders" defined? How are leadership capabilities developed among Trusted Servants?*

It is important to choose Trusted Servants wisely. The role of Trusted Servants is not to govern or instruct but to enable. Key qualifications for Service are consistency and accountability, a willingness to accept constructive criticism, the ability to lead by example and the strength to always put Group Conscience before personal opinion.

Leadership is developed through a deep understanding of the A.A. Structure – The Twelve Steps, The Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts. Service assignments provide practical learning but are best supported by the experience and wisdom of a Service Sponsor.

Countries with a robust and well-developed Service Structure tend to be slightly ahead of those with Service Structures that are still in their infancy.

In some cultural contexts, the word "Leader" can be problematic. Leaders are often met with criticism and resistance. The concept of leadership without governance also comes with its challenges. The dynamics of power, status and ego are common challenges across all Countries.

Adherence to the Traditions and Concepts is an answer to this problem. The leadership of a Trusted Servant is such that it does not govern, dictate or coerce. Humility is key and the Trusted Servant must always remain part of the Group rather than above it. In fact, humble participation is a must for A.A. Service.

2. *Serving vs. Governing*

- a. *Respecting the Group Conscience*

A Trusted Servant serves the Fellowship with integrity and attention to Group Conscience. He or she will desire no personal gain, power, or status but will seek only the common welfare of the Group.

Every A.A. Member must be heard because all Members have something of value to contribute. Hearing and truly understanding the minority opinion is key. As Servants, not Governors, we must have the ability to change our own opinions when necessary.

### *b. Balancing vision with accountability*

Accountability is built into the A.A. Structure as a result of Rotation and Group Conscience. An individual Member should not carry out or pursue a vision that is independent from the Group Conscience. He or she should seek authority from the Group, District or Area. As such, we balance our vision with a sense of accountability to the whole.

### *3. The Spirit of Rotation*

#### *a. Why is the Spirit of Rotation important in A.A. Leadership?*

The Spirit of Rotation inspires others to serve and find opportunities for growth. It ensures that all are equal and engenders a sense of humility by countering ego. The input, knowledge and experience of other Members provide fertile ground for deeper learning and understanding.

Servants must never become “bleeding deacons”. They must rotate gracefully and be aware of the Three Legacies.

Rotation can be challenging in some Countries already experiencing a shortage of Servants. However, with thoughtful Sponsorship and support, new voices can emerge and be welcomed into Service.

#### *b. How do we encourage putting Principles before Personalities?*

This starts at the Group level – first by agreeing to accept difference of opinion and by understanding that such difference is inevitable. It also begins by setting the tone for newcomers early in and encouraging them to serve. Simply by virtue of being new, they exhibit less ego and more willingness.

As a Group, we must respect Principles before Personalities. Additionally, Members must follow the guidelines of Service with regard to the election of Trusted Servants and rotation, we all have the welfare of A.A. at heart and the Higher Power is always at work within the Group Conscience.

In the words of Bill W., “Thank God that Alcoholics Anonymous is blessed with so much leadership in each and all of its great affairs”.

## **Old Values for a Modern A.A. Is Anonymity Still Relevant Today?**

**Patrick D. Ireland**

My name is Pat D., I am an alcoholic from Ireland, and it’s an honor for me to share with you today on the relevance of anonymity in my life. My occupation is as an Electrician. I’m not a Journalist, nor do I work in the News Media in any capacity. My reason for sharing that with is simple; all I have to offer is my experience of how anonymity has affected, and continues to affect, my daily life.

With the assistance of my Sponsor and by reading A.A. Literature, I truly appreciate the difference between *Anonymous* and *Anonymity*. Let me explain in simple terms my understanding of that difference and its relevance to me today. Being Anonymous means staying out of the limelight, remaining in the background. These two traits are in direct conflict with how I lived my life as an active alcoholic.

## Appendix 3

A.A. is not Anonymous – in fact, it is our responsibility to ensure that the public is informed of our existence by every means available to us. This is where our Structure comes into play. Public Information contact with the Medical Profession and other Agencies, hopefully with the single purpose of informing the “still-suffering alcoholic” that we have a solution to their dilemma, is our responsibility.

In Ireland, our Structures are working well, constantly evolving to meet the changing face of modern communications. Our Public Information comes under the umbrella of our National P.I. Committee, which is representative of our Fellowship nationwide. The Board has the responsibility to ensure that correct oversight is maintained. The work of our Non-Alcoholic Trustees cannot be overstated in this regard.

My family, friends, work colleagues and my medical team are all aware that I am a Member of A.A. It was my responsibility to inform them of the fact that my Membership of A.A. was the sole reason that I have achieved and maintained sobriety. It is a Program of attraction rather than promotion. Note that I stated that my Membership in A.A. was responsible, thereby making them aware of its existence and the benefits that I have gained from being a Member.

To me, *Anonymity* means giving of myself unconditionally, and not taking credit, to benefit others. It means staying out of conflict both inside and outside of the Fellowship. It also means not seeking recognition or plaudits for any perceived good deeds that I may perform. Our Traditions and Concepts are self-explanatory in relation to the necessity to remain within the confines of anonymity. Bill Wilson makes reference to it in his writings, particularly in *As Bill Sees It*.

When I entered A.A., the telephone was the sole means of communication with another person, other than face-to-face. Today, social media in all its forms has brought communication to a level that could quite easily infringe on my ability to retain my anonymity. I will give you a simple example of this happening to me:

About a year ago, as I scrolled through the Internet, I came across a Site that caught my attention. It was a “sobriety site”. After reading through it and then revisiting it over a period of a few weeks, I found myself forming opinions of other people’s perception of our Fellowship and, in particular, some of the views about what needed to be changed in our Fellowship. And yes, the inevitable happened, I started to comment. I found myself defending A.A. and boasting about my length of sobriety, among other things: the list continued. Without my taking a drink, my Character Defects quickly returned. I became egotistical, arrogant, and an expert on what was best for others and for A.A. as a whole.

God, my Higher Power, was being replaced by the Great Me, the same Great Me who had been dying in the mire of alcoholism prior to being rescued by A.A. Thankfully I spoke to a dear friend in the Fellowship, explained what had happened and carried out his suggestions about the action I needed to take.

I removed myself from the sobriety site, went to a meeting and shared by experience. The feedback was helpful, and I discovered that I was not alone in my behavior. I had learned an important lesson – it is vital that I adhere to the Traditions and continue to practice anonymity. My life quickly returned to the calm, relaxed state that it had been in prior to getting involved in something which, had I continued, could have endangered my sobriety.

If I choose to buy a meal for a hungry new member, but then decide to announce the event on social media, my ego is the only thing that I am trying to feed. The same thinking must be applied to everything I do in A.A. as well as in my daily life outside of the Fellowship. I cannot take any of the Steps, Traditions or Concepts in isolation. My dependence on a Higher Power is the thread that links the entire Program and Structure together and it is my experience – as I have tried to outline earlier – my anonymity and my continued practice of same that is essential to maintaining my sobriety and the continued survival and growth of Alcoholics Anonymous.





GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
IRELAND

1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019

**2019 Reports to Conference**

- Leinster Intergroup
- Munster Intergroup
- Ulster Intergroup
- Connaught Intergroup

**Leinster (Area 1) Report for Conference  
1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**Area 1**

Area 1 consists of County Louth. The Area 1 Committee meets at 8.30 pm on the second Tuesday of each month in St. Brigid's Hospital, Ardee, and is functioning well.

Meetings are harmonious and constructive with good participation in discussions.

There are 14 groups in Area 1. While attendance at Area Meetings is not currently very high, with only 5 or 6 Groups attending, the Area Committee are a very enthusiastic, dedicated and hardworking team. All areas of Service in the Area are covered. The Committee are currently working hard at attracting more Groups and Members to attend the Area Meetings. The Area regularly sends Intergroup Reps to the Intergroup Meetings and it also contributes financially to Leinster Intergroup.

Most of the Groups in Area 1 avail of the combined AA Group Insurance Scheme co-ordinated through the Area Committee.

Area 1 has 14 listed Groups with 38 Meetings per week, including 4 Step Meetings.

Area 1 is functioning quite well. There is room for improvement, particularly in attracting members to Area, which the Committee are working on.

Delegate: Anthony McN.

**Leinster (Area 2) Report for Conference  
1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**Area 2**

Area 2 consists of County Meath. The Area 2 Committee meets at 7.30 pm on the first Tuesday of each month in the Unity Centre, Navan, and is functioning well.

Meetings are harmonious and constructive with good participation in discussions.

There are 25 Groups in Area 2. 10 or 11 Groups attend Area on a regular basis and the Area is working hard to attract other Members and Groups to the Area meeting. All areas of Service in the Area are covered. The Area regularly sends Intergroup Reps to the Intergroup Meetings and it also contributes financially to Leinster Intergroup. All of the Groups in Area 2 avail of the combined AA Group Insurance Scheme co-ordinated through the Area Committee.

Area 2 has 25 listed groups with 44 meetings per week, including 6 Step Meetings, 1 Open Meeting and a weekly meeting in a Treatment Centre.

Area 2 is functioning quite well. The Area Committee are a dedicated, enthusiastic group who are working well.

Delegate: Anthony McN.

**Leinster (Area 3&4) Report for Conference  
1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**Area 3&4**

Area 3&4 is situated in the Midlands, taking in Counties Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. The Area 3&4 Committee meets at 8.30 pm on the first Wednesday of each month in the Siptu Office, Tullamore, and is functioning very well. Meetings are usually very well attended with an average of about 20 Members attending each Meeting. Meetings are harmonious and constructive with good participation in discussions.

There are 40 Groups in Area 3&4. The Area Committee are very enthusiastic and dedicated. All areas of Service in the Area are covered. The Committee are currently trying to attract more Groups and members to attend the Area Meetings. The Area regularly sends Intergroup Reps to the Intergroup Meetings and it also contributes financially to Leinster Intergroup.

Some of the groups in Area 3&4 avail of the combined AA Group Insurance Scheme co-ordinated through the Area Committee.

Area 3&4 has 40 listed Groups with 74 Meetings per week, including 10 Step Meetings and 2 Big Book Meetings.

Area 3&4 is functioning very well and is still working to improve further.

Delegate: Anthony McN.

**Leinster (Area 5) Report for Conference  
1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**Area 5**

Area 5 covers the Kildare Area with approx. 20 Groups.

The Area is well attended by approx. 9 Groups and is working hard to encourage Groups that are not attending Area to attend. The Area has been trying to fill the Area Secretary position for several months. They will continue to ask Members to embrace Service. Members that attend are very enthusiastic.

The Hospital Convener, Phone Service, PI etc. positions are all filled and regularly report at Area Meetings.

Emmet O'H.

**Leinster (Area 6) Report for Conference  
1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019****Area 6**

The Area 6 Meeting takes place on the last Tuesday of every month in the St. Helena's Resource Centre, Finglas North, Dublin 11 at 8pm. Meetings can often be heated with frank differences of opinions exchanged but they are always held in a cordial and respectful fashion. There are 26 listed AA Groups in Area 6, with roughly about 30% of those attending Area Meetings on a regular basis. It should be noted that those Groups and Individuals who do attend Area 6 Meetings regularly appear to have the best interests of AA at heart and serve the Fellowship with great commitment.

Attendance at the monthly Area Meeting is mainly provided by the bigger Groups in the Area. Very few of the smaller Groups, (i.e. one meeting a week groups) seem to attend Area Meetings. Of those Groups attending Area 6, surplus monies are routinely passed onto Leinster Intergroup through the Structure. Not all Groups in Area 6 avail of the combined Insurance Scheme that operates in the Fellowship with some Groups preferring instead to obtain their own individual Group Insurance citing Group autonomy as the main reason for this. All Areas positions are currently filled. Area in 6 and the Area always send at least two Representatives to Leinster Intergroup Meetings. Area 6 is eager to find out from different Areas about ways and tips on how to encourage and attract more Members into Service. Mick D.

**Leinster (Area 7) Report for Conference  
1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019****Area 7**

The Area 7 Meeting takes place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month in the Oratory in Artane, Dublin 5 at 8.30pm. While there can be lively discussions at Area 7 Meetings, they are always conducted in a healthy and respectful fashion. There are 33 listed AA Groups in Area 7. Group attendance at Area is generally poor. Sometimes there can be a spike in attendance at Area 7 with some Groups coming for short intermittent periods. In the past few months, a new Committee has commenced their two-year service and part of their remit is to find ways that might not only encourage more Groups to come to Area Meetings, but also to stay.

Through their Area Minutes, Area 7 are actively encouraging all Groups within the Area to send a Representative or an Observer to Area Meetings. Groups who do attend the Area 7 Meeting are very generous with group contributions and surplus monies are regularly passed onto GSO through the Structure to help carry the AA message. Most of the Groups in Area avail of the collective Insurance Scheme with one or two exceptions that cite Group Autonomy as the reason for obtaining their own individual Group Insurance. While most Area positions are filled, Area 7 is currently looking for a P.I. Convenor and for more members to put their name forward for Prison Service. Area 7 send at least one Area Representative to each Leinster Intergroup Meeting.

The Central Mental Hospital, Dundrum, currently located in Area 10, will be moving to Area 7 late 2019 and Area 10 is actively looking to Members with the required sobriety to join a panel of Speakers to help carry out this very important service. Garda vetting is required for any Members who wish to get involved in this service. Mick D.

### **Leinster (Area 8) Report for Conference 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

#### **Area 8**

This Area covers South West Dublin – Inchicore/Tallaght/Lucan/Rathcoole (14 Groups).

The Area is running well with the Members from Groups that do attend – an average of 4 Groups represented.

The Area is trying to attract more participation from Groups. There are Service positions that have been open for several months.

The Area held its AGM last month.

Emmet O'H.

### **Leinster (Area 9, Dublin South City) Report for Conference 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

#### **Area 9**

LEINSTER AREA 9 (Dublin South City)

The Area 9 Committee meets at 7.00 pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month at the Freemasons Hall, 17 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2, D02 HK50, and is working well. The meetings are conducted in a harmonious and business-like manner. There are 21 listed Groups in Area 9 and usually about 6 Groups are represented at Area Meetings. Typical attendance at Area 9 Meetings is 10 persons.

Attendance has been increasing in recent months. Area 9 is continuing its efforts to encourage greater participation by groups.

The key filled positions include Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, PI Convenor, Phone Convenor and Intergroup Representatives. Positions vacant include Prisons Convenor and Hospital Convenor.

Representatives of Area 9 attend Leinster Intergroup. Area 9 receives financial contributions from 8 Groups and makes financial contributions to Intergroup regularly. Area 9 participates in the combined Insurance policy for groups.

A total of 66 meetings per week are held in Area 9 and include 8 Step Meetings, 5 Big Book Meetings and 4 Open Meetings. Polish is spoken at 2 meetings and Lithuanian at one meeting.

A Sign-Language service is available at one meeting. The Molesworth Group is a major centre which hosts 27 meetings per week.

Area 9 hosted a Gratitude Day in November 2018.

DELEGATE: John S.

**Leinster (Area 10) Report for Conference**  
**1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**Area 10**

The Area 10 Meeting takes on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of every month in St. Michael's House, Templeogue, South Co. Dublin 6 at 8pm. Meeting are always a pleasure to attend in Area 10 where the common welfare of the Fellowships is paramount. There 21 listed AA Groups in Area 10 with over 50% of these groups attending Area Meetings on a regular basis. Of those Groups attending Area, surplus monies are routinely passed on to G.S.O. through the Structure. Area 10 readily avails of the combined Insurance Scheme to ensure that all are indeed insured.

One reason for this unusually high attendance at Area Meetings appears to be a strong emphasis on Sponsorship within Area 10 which includes informing "newcomers" about the *Traditions* and *Principles* of AA and how *Service* is not only critical to the well-being of the Fellowship but how it also enhances the sobriety of individuals who gets involved in *Service*.

Because of this inclusive and encouraging approach, Area 10 continues to get good support from Groups in the Area. Area 10 also provides an important service to the Rutland Centre and, the Central Mental Hospital.

At present Area 10 is in need of a Prison Convenor and a PI Convenor, but they have started the process to fill these important posts. Area 10 demonstrate great diligence in respect to their responsibilities and duties to the Fellowship and always have prominent representation at Leinster Intergroup Meeting.

Area 10 held a very successful Gratitude Day last November.

**Leinster (Area 11) Report for Conference**  
**1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**Area 11**

Dublin Outer/South East - Dalkey/Dun Laoghaire/Dundrum/Foxrock/Monkstown/ Stillorgan (26 Groups).

In the past year, the Area has had a lot of rotation, with some changes to Officers positions.

A Group Inventory was also held to help the Area.

The Area has begun making extra efforts to encourage more Groups into Service/Area.

Last January it held an Information Day.

The Area is still looking to fill some Service Positions.

Emmet O'H.

**Leinster (Area 12) Report for Conference  
1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**Area 12**

Area 12 consists of most of County Wicklow. The Area 12 Committee meets at 8.30pm on the second Wednesday of each month in the Holy Rosary School, Wicklow Town and is functioning well.

Meetings are harmonious and constructive with good participation in discussions. There are 17 Groups in Area 12. While attendance at Area Meetings is not currently very high, with only 4 or 5 Groups attending, the Area Committee are a very enthusiastic, dedicated and hardworking team. All areas of Service in the Area are covered. The Committee are currently working hard at attracting more Groups and Members to attend the Area Meetings. Particularly over the last few months, a huge effort has been put into this. The Area regularly sends Intergroup Reps to the Intergroup Meetings and it also contributes financially to Leinster Intergroup.

All of the Groups in Area 12 avail of the combined AA Group Insurance Scheme co-ordinated through the Area Committee.

Area 12 has 17 listed Groups with 31 Meetings per week, including 3 Step/Tradition Meetings and 2 Big Book Meetings

Area 12 is functioning quite well. There is room for improvement, particularly in attracting Members to Area, which the Committee are working on.

Delegate: Anthony McN.

**Leinster (Area 13) Report for Conference  
1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**Area 13**

**LEINSTER AREA 13 (Carlow, Kilkenny, West Wicklow and West Wexford)**

The Area 13 Committee meets at 8pm on the second Monday of each month in the Askea Parish Community Centre, Brownhill Road, Askea, Carlow and is working well. The meetings are conducted in a harmonious and business-like manner. There are 16 Groups in Area 13 based in Carlow (5), Kilkenny (7), West Wexford (1) and West Wicklow (3). Typically, about 5 Groups (mainly from Carlow and Wicklow) are represented at Area Meetings. The Area is striving to encourage participation by a wider range of groups. Attendance at Area Meetings is usually about 10 to 15 persons.

A new Secretary and a new Treasurer were recently appointed. Other key positions which are filled are Public Information Convenor, Telephone Convenor and Hospital Convenor. Members from Area 13 participate in the Prison Service e.g. in Portlaoise. Area 13 shares the Phone Service with Area 14.

Representatives of Area 13, usually two or three persons, regularly attend Leinster Intergroup. Area 13 regularly makes financial contributions to Intergroup. At present, 14 groups avail of the combined Insurance Scheme. All the 16 Groups in Area 13 are expected to renew their Insurance in 2019 through the combined Insurance Scheme.

A total of 32 Closed Meetings per week are held in Area 13 in Carlow (11), Kilkenny (15), Wexford (2) and Wicklow (4). These meetings include 3 Step Meetings, 2 Tradition Meetings and 2 Big Book Meetings. An Open Hospital Meeting is held weekly in St Dymphna's Hospital in Carlow hosted by a local group. The Hospital Convenor, with support of local groups, arranges meetings also in two Treatment Centres in Area 13 - Francis Farm and Aislinn.

One Group in Carlow (New Oak) recently closed down and two Groups in Wexford (New Ross) have recently transferred from Area 13 to Area 14. Delegate: John S.

### **Leinster (Area 14, Wexford) Report for Conference 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

#### **Area 14**

##### **LEINSTER AREA 14 (Wexford)**

The Area 14 Committee meets at 11 am on the second Sunday of each month in the Parish Hall, Dun Mhuire Theatre, South Main Street, Wexford and is working well. The meetings are conducted in a harmonious and business-like manner. There are 23 listed Groups in Area 14, all of which are in Wexford. Participation improved significantly during 2018. Typically, about 10 Groups are represented at Area Meetings. Attendance at Area Meetings is usually about 10 to 15 persons. The Area is continuing to encourage GSRs to bring Observers with them.

All key positions are filled. The Area shares the Phone Service with Area 13. A number of Members from Area 13 participate in the Prison Service. School Talks are carried out as requested and good feedback has been received from the Schools. A Poster renewal campaign was carried out at the end of 2018.

Representatives of Area 14, usually three or four persons, regularly attend Leinster Intergroup. The Area receives financial contributions from almost all Groups and the Area itself regularly makes financial contributions to Intergroup. All the Groups in the Area participate in the combined Insurance policy for Groups.

A total of 58 Closed Meetings per week are held in Area 14. They include 4 Step Meetings and 1 Big Book Meeting. One group is based in the Aiseiri Treatment Centre in Wexford and holds two meetings there per week.

Area 14 is keen to promote good personal behaviour by Members at meetings and good practice by Groups e.g. regular Group Conscience Meetings. The Area has concerns in this regard in relation to certain meetings.

Area 14 is hosting a Wexford Convention on 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and is aiming to involve all Groups in the Meetings and Events at the Convention. Delegate: John S.



**Website and App update  
Report to Conference 2019**

The website went live in August 2018 and has been working extremely well since then.

There were one or two teething problems at the start, which is normal. These were dealt with and no further issues of any consequence have arisen. GSO continues to monitor the site and make changes and updates as required. I'm sure you all, as Delegates, have taken time from your busy lives to visit the website and sample the updated and new features. As you are all no doubt aware, there are many additions to the website which were not available previously.

Most prominent among the additional features is the Members Area, which is for the use of all AA members in Ireland where they can view what's happening throughout Fellowship and the Structure. In this area there is the facility for Members and Groups, Areas and Intergroups to access Minutes and to complete the new Group Information Sheet (GIS).

Groups should continue to return the GDPR approved GISs, as it is not possible to provide contact information for Groups, either online or in the Directory, without explicit permission from individuals concerned. Explicit permission is given when the individual Member signs the GIS, thus allowing his/her name and phone number to be used for contact purposes.

Also new to the website is the short, animated video called "One Minute to change your life." This is a valuable addition and can be used in places, such as ERs, Medical waiting rooms, Credit Union public areas and other locations that use screens to inform the public. It will need action from our Delegates to encourage their Intergroups and Areas and PI Committees to adopt this proactive approach to carrying the message.

At the bottom of the Homepage is found all the statutory information as required by the Charities Regulator (CRA) and the Companies Office (CRO). The Company Information section contains the Company Constitution, Financial Statements, list of Directors, Annual Reports etc. Not only is this information in line with legal requirements, but also ensures that AAGSB and the Fellowship is open and transparent.

The Archives Area is still in preparation and will be coming online in the near future. The Archivist is hard at work preparing material for this. There is a wealth of material to choose from and we look forward to this coming on stream.

There has been quite some work done on preparing a new App for mobile phones, for use by those seeking meeting information. While we did get an App working on Android phones, some discussion took place with Apple, who are unwilling to permit our information to upload on the App Store, Apple's digital platform, as it is too similar to what we already have available on the AA website. It is still possible to design a new App from scratch, with new lines of code etc. which would be expensive to produce and would still only provide information already available.

There is a simple solution available to anyone who would like to have meeting information on their phone at the tap of an icon. This is to put a "Bookmark" on their phone, which would bring them immediately to the Meeting section on the website, which contains all the information needed. To do this, simply go online on your phone, go to Alcoholics Anonymous website, tap on the three dots on top right-hand side and tap "add to Homepage." The AA icon will now be on the homepage on your phone, available for use as required.

Thank you.

### **Munster (Cork City) Report For Conference 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

#### **Cork City Area**

##### **Cork City Annual report 2018**

Cork City Area Committee decided in January 2018 not to proceed with the Annual Convention due to spiralling costs and, due to an oversight, failure to acquire permission to use the AA Logo, which would mean the event would be outside of the Structure of the Fellowship. Having received permission from Munster Intergroup in April for use of the Logo for 2019, a new Committee was formed and began planning new Convention for next March. A new venue, the Blarney Woollen Mills Hotel, was secured which adequately met the needs of the Fellowship at a fraction of the cost of City Centre locations previously considered.

#### **Area Telephone**

The phone is manned by Groups on a monthly rotation. Approximately 15 Groups are involved in the Service responding to on average 30 to 40 calls and texts each month.

#### **Hospital Committee**

The Area are currently organising meetings at St. Michael's Psychiatric Unit, Mercy University Hospital, twice weekly, also by group rotation. There are currently 9 Groups active, but more Groups are being asked to get involved to share the load. In addition, we also have a weekly Hospital Meeting in Tabor Lodge Treatment Centre. This is manned by individual Members on a voluntary basis, although it is getting increasingly difficult to find people willing to come forward.

#### **Prison Committee**

We are currently running one meeting every week in Cork Prison. The meetings take place thanks to a small team of dedicated Members, they are often prevented from entering the Prison due to internal security issues within the Prison itself and totally outside of our control. We are reaching out to other Areas to encourage Members to volunteer to help us carry the AA message to the Inmates, who generally come from the Greater Munster Area.

#### **Public Information Committee**

**P.I.C. activities severely restricted throughout the year as up until recently only one Member was left on Committee. However, some new Members have got involved and the outlook is looking promising for 2019.**

#### **Open Meeting**

We have operated a weekly Open Meeting at a City Centre location many years. It is getting increasingly difficult to get Members to come forward to organise these meetings. For over 12 months, GSR's attending Area have been keeping the meeting open and if the situation doesn't change, we may have to drop the service.

Yours in Fellowship, Mick McG.

**Munster (West Cork) Report  
For Conference 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019****West Cork Area****West Cork Report 2018**

West Cork Area held nine Meetings during 2018. There are 14 Groups in West Cork Area. On average 9 to 10 Groups are represented at Area Meetings. This year 2 Groups were back in Area with 1 GSR'S representing them in Area. Not all Groups have 2 GSR'S and at times some Group Representatives are overlapping by acting as GSR for their Group and serving on a Committee. This is necessary at times as it is so difficult to get Members to be active in AA.

This year saw the change of Conference Delegate and Chairperson of Area. New Conference Delegate Mick is now in place. Unfortunately, we are working without a Chair at present. Chair filled from the floor and the business of Area is still being done.

Meetings are now being held in group rooms throughout Area. We have visited 8 different Groups and this format seems to be working well with interest being shown in the ordinary running of a group. Financially, Area is doing well with considerable sums being sent to Intergroup. Unfortunately, there are some Groups in West Cork that don't contribute to Area. Some of the reasons for this are that Groups are small and rooms so expensive to rent. Other Groups, we have no feedback from.

**Literature Committee**

Was closed in part due to the rotating of Meetings. When Area was held solely in Bantry, the Literature was stored in a House. Carrying literature from room to room and finding storage for it in Committee home became a problem. Groups felt that by purchasing direct from GSO they were able to receive literature earlier than waiting 6 to 7 weeks for an Area Meeting.

**P.I. Committee**

**Going well, with all Schools in Area contacted and visited when asked. AA details left in Doctors Surgeries and other suitable places. Unfortunately, after a lot of effort, the Committee were unable to get the AA contact details put on the bins in waste service sites in West Cork. PI gave assistance to Open Meeting and to AI Anon Open Meeting. This Committee is working well with an open mind to finding new ways to get the message of AA to the public.**

**Mobile Phone**

Service is working well, with a lot of co-operation between Area and Groups. We now have a system of groups taking the phone rather than one individual Member. Area leaves it to the Groups to organise their own Members suitable to man the Mobile.

**MIG**

At present we have 2 Intergroup Delegates. We are allowed 4 Delegates and we are hoping to fill these positions. Meetings are attended and Area kept up to date with information on Munster Groups. Groups in West Cork visited by Delegates, but some Groups have not yet been visited. Mick McG. new Conference Delegate.

Aholies Committee is working well. This year we contacted the Treatment Centre to get feedback about our Service. Good report back, very happy with Service with 1 request going forward, to try and have some young members or members who got sober young giving the talks.

The 2019 Convention is being held in West Cork this year. Preparation for this Convention is well underway. The Committee is short a Chairperson and experience in running a Convention. Donna, our former Chair got the process started and with the election of the new Conference Delegate (who has experience of Conventions) the Committee should work well.

**AOB**

Overall Area is coping well. A lot of Service positions need to be filled in 2019.

Yours in fellowship, Mick McG.

**Report on update of Service Handbook  
for Conference 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

The updating of the Service Handbook for Ireland was raised at 2017 and 2018 Conference. It was decided to begin this project and work is well under way to get this important job completed. When complete, the Service Handbook will contain the decisions of Conference that were made since the last update, with references to the year decisions were made.

The format and layout will change to reflect more modern settings and to make it easier to read, both in hard copy and online. It is hoped that the new format will be more adaptable to the addition of ongoing updates, keeping the Handbook in line with the wishes of Conference.

At present, this task is about halfway through. It is hoped to have a draft of completed work available in the near future, where Conference can discuss progress and suggest improvements. If this happens, the complete Handbook should be ready for Conference 2020, to be ratified and prepared for distribution to the fellowship.

Thank you.

# ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



**61<sup>st</sup> ALL-IRELAND CONVENTION REPORT 2018**

**For Conference 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

**Clonmel Park Hotel**

**Clonmel**

**Co. Tipperary**

**20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2018**

## Appendix 7

My name is Patsy and I am an Alcoholic, it was my privilege to serve as the Chairperson of the 61<sup>st</sup> All Ireland Convention Committee which was hosted by Munster Intergroup on behalf of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland, held at the Clonmel Park Hotel, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary on April 20<sup>th</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018. The Theme for the 61<sup>st</sup> All Ireland Convention was AA Singleness of Purpose.

Munster Intergroup had two Applications to host the Convention, one from Cork and the other from Tipperary. The Convention Committee was formed by Munster Intergroup and it comprised of the Trustee, four Conference Delegates and the sitting Officers of Intergroup at time made up the Committee.

The Duties and Responsibilities of the Committee were delegated to each Member after they were voted in by the Committee at the first meeting. While each Committee Member had specific tasks and Responsibilities it was agreed that all decisions would be made by the Convention Committee as whole. It was also agreed that each Member would give a full commitment to producing a good Convention. All the Committee Meetings were held in Clonmel Park Hotel. The Committee got tremendous support from the Management and Staff of the Hotel prior to, and during the weekend of the Convention. It was decided by the Committee that the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer would liaise with the Hotel. This worked very well over the weekend.

Members of Tipperary Area helped over the weekend and this helped with the smooth running of the Convention.

The Committee met with Al Anon and co-operation was had over the weekend. On my behalf, I would like to thank the Committee for their hard work, commitment and acceptance of Group Conscience. My job was made easy and it was a privilege to serve with them. I would also like to thank the fellowship for their support.

Patsy O'K.  
Chairperson  
61<sup>st</sup> All Ireland Convention

**Main Meetings:** All Main Meetings over the weekend were well attended. A wide range of Speakers shared their Experience, Strength and Hope. They carried a strong and sober message which was well received by all in attendance. The attendance at the opening meeting on Friday night was 410.

A Service Workshop was held at 12.00 on Saturday and 29 attended. Feedback from this was very good and was very well presented by the lads that spoke from the Top Table.

An "International Forum" meeting was held on Saturday and 55 attended.

A "Tradition Workshop" was held Saturday and 70 people attended. Feedback from this was also very good.

"Meet the Board" Meeting was held at 5pm Saturday. The Board outlined the activities that took place during the year and a lively discussion took place afterwards. 65 people attended.

"Young in AA" Meeting was held at 8.30 and 80 attended.

Closing Meeting was held Sunday morning and 190 attended.

**Marathon Meetings:** An "Early Bird" meeting on Thursday attracted 105 people. From Thursday afternoon to Sunday at lunchtime, Marathon Meetings were held on an hourly basis in 2 separate rooms from early morning until 24.00 every day. This meant that there were 2 Meetings on all the time to help the suffering alcoholic. One room had Step and Tradition Meetings. Meeting were very well attended with an average of 25 at each Meeting.

**Road Back:** The Road Back stand was set up near the entrance to the Ballroom and was manned by Members at all times. Consequently, sales of €235 were recorded. The most of the money was for Subscriptions and there was a good bit of interest from both the Irish Members and the Overseas Visitors.

**Literature Bank:** The Literature Stand was manned by members of the GSO staff at all times. Sales of €1,855 were recorded.

**P.R.O.:** Posters were sent to all Groups in Ireland and to GSOs abroad in 2017. The Irish Groups were also circulated again in 2018. Information and Convention details were sent to English language Magazines in the UK, Australia, USA, and Members took Posters to many Conventions both at home and abroad. A Press Release was sent out 2 weeks before the Convention. Both National and Local Media were also circulated. Some National and Local Papers carried articles on the Convention. Two Radio Stations also requested Speakers which the Convention Committee provided.

**Entertainment:** A Dance was held on Friday night and the band named "Wise Guys". They were very good and got all up dancing. The Band that played Saturday night was called "The Unusual Suspects" and were also very good. A Disco was held after the band finished.

## Appendix 7

**Venue:** The Venue proved a great success with many complimentary comments from guests of the Hotel. The Hotel Staff and Management could not have been more helpful, during the months when we held our Committee Meetings there, and all through the Convention.

**General Purpose Committee:** This was the Committee that ensured that the Convention ran smoothly. They put up all the relevant signage and posters, manned the hospitality desk, and helped out at the dances. They helped re-arrange the main Ballroom for meetings and dances and cleaned up afterwards. They basically carried out all the important tasks to make a success of the Convention. Members from Clonmel and the other Groups in Tipperary were the lads involved and a sincere thanks to you all for your great help.

**Finance:** It was agreed at the first Meeting of the Convention Committee that a loan of €3,000.00 would be drawn down from GSO to pay deposits on the Hotel and the Bands, a second account was opened up in BOI South Mall Cork for this. Expenses for the Committee were paid out of this account as well. Budgets were strictly controlled all the time as costs came in. As can be seen from the following financial report a small surplus of €1,892 was generated which will be forwarded to GSO. As well as paying back the €3,000 loan to GSO.

### Final Account for 2018 All-Ireland Convention at Clonmel Park Hotel

<u>Expenditure</u>		<u>Income</u>	
Hotel costs	€2,700.00	Registration 560@€15	€8,400.00
Printing costs	€2,235.00		
Friday band	€350.00	Friday dance 131@€5	€655.00
Saturday band	€1,000.00	Saturday dance 154@€10	€1,540.00
Disco	€200.00		
GSO Loan	€3,000.00	GSO Loan	€3,000.00
Travel expenses for meetings.	€2,143.00		
Erection of banner	€75.00		
Total expenditure	€11,703.00	Total income	€13,595.00
		Surplus	€1,892.00
		No2 Account bank balance	€1,892.00



Prepared by Treasurer *Anne Cahillane* Anne Cahillane

Secretary *Michael McGrath* Michael McGrath

Chairman *Patsy O Keefe* Patsy O Keefe

Date 13-01-2019

**Report from GB Conference: 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> April 2018  
For Conference 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GB  
Fifty Third General Service Conference  
Park Inn Hotel, York  
The Henley Suite  
Fellowship, Love, Commitment  
13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> April 2018  
Irish Overseas Observers  
Harry MacG. - Connacht  
Michael D. - Leinster

**Report to General Services Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous**

March 2019

At the General Service Conference in March 2018, Harry MacG., Connaught Delegate and Mick D., Leinster Delegate, were elected to attend the 2018 GSC GB in York. We both travelled over to York together via Dublin and Leeds Bradford on the Thursday evening, arriving at the Park Inn Hotel at approximately 11pm. Following lunch on Friday we both registered in the main concourse of the hotel. From 1.00-1.30pm, we both attended an Overseas Observers session prior to opening of Conference at 2.45pm. There were 10 Overseas Observers at this session, Andrei & Aliaksei from Belarus, Tobias from Denmark, Michal from Poland, Jose from Portugal, Elena from Romania, Nedim From Turkey, Yury from Ukraine and of course our two selves. The briefing was chaired by Roger & Amanda from the GB General Service Board. We were then allocated to our Committees for the forthcoming sessions. Mick D. was allocated to Committee 2 and Harry MacG. to Committee 5. As Observers, we were to find that the Committees are a central part of the GB Conference Structure.

The task of the Committees was to discuss and find answers to questions which had been submitted the previous year to Conference from Members, Groups, Intergroups & Regions. There were 6 Committees in total, who dealt with 2 questions each. Examples of questions ranged from: *"Would Conference please discuss and share its experience about Tradition 7 monies being collected electronically"*, to *"Would Conference share experience and knowledge of the problems surrounding attracting Members into Service at their Group and how to encourage Service at Intergroup, especially in rural areas"*. These questions were discussed at length often in an animated but always in a respectful fashion before the Committees came up with responses which reflected the conscience of the GB Fellowship, through the voice of Conference. The make-up of each Committee included representatives from the 16 Regions, as well as General Service Board Members. The Committees also included a Chairperson, a Trustee and Overseas Observers. As Observers we were not entitled to vote on any of the matters arising but were encouraged to take part in the discussions and offer any observations we may have had. The Committees worked hard during Conference debating two questions over four sessions and tended to finish late Saturday night. Preliminary reports were presented to the floor of Conference on the Sunday morning, where they were discussed and considered before a vote was taken to whether Conference should adopt them or not.

## Appendix 8

The 2018 GB Conference comprised of 94 Delegates from 16 Regions, 24 Members of GSB, Sid D., Conference Chair, the General Secretary, 6 Office Staff and 10 Overseas Observers. Conference opened on Friday at 2.45pm. The Conference Chairperson Sid D., then read the Preamble and Declaration of Unity which was followed by an address from General Secretary Roger B. Following a tea-break at 4pm, everybody went to their allocated Committee to begin further discussion on the questions submitted to Conference. Dinner was at 6.15pm - 7.30pm. At 8pm the Nominations of Chair of Conference for 2019 began. Each candidate nominated (five in total), were given approximately 3 minutes to put forward their credentials and service experience. It was then on to the business of GS Board Reports. There were a vast number of these Reports which commenced on the Friday night and continued into Saturday. These Reports included presentations on Finance, Electronic Communications, Public Information, Literature, Public Information, Prisons and Probation Services to name but a few. There were also updates on the GB Archives and worked being done in unison with the Armed Forces in Britain. It must be said that these Reports and presentations were very comprehensive and had an almost "professional" quality to them. One striking presentation came from the Non-Alcoholic Trustee, a Clinical Psychologist, who works in the addiction field, who informed us all that prior to his involvement with the Fellowship, he had held a very negative view of Alcoholic Anonymous but this view had now been completely reversed to the point where he now holds the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in only the highest esteem.

On Saturday, we returned to our Committees to continue to work on the questions submitted to Conference. As previously mentioned, these Committee sessions were often animated but always respectfully conducted. After lunch, the Committees resumed their discussions to prepare their Reports to Conference, which had to be handed in the secretarial staff by no later than 5pm. After dinner at approximately 8pm, there was an Open Forum, which afforded all Delegates in attendance the chance to ask Board Members anything they wanted to in relation to the Fellowship in GB. Much like the work conducted in the Committees, the Open Forum was often animated but again respectfully observed. At 10pm All of the Committee Reports were distributed to the 16 Regions, who were given time to discuss them individually.

After breakfast on Sunday morning, Conference restarted with the 6 Committees putting forward their Preliminary Reports for Conference to discuss before voting whether to adopt them or not. At around 12pm, the election took of the Candidates who had been nominated for Chairperson of Conference 2019, with Matt S. elected to this position. New Board Members were also confirmed during this time. At approximately 12.15pm, Conference was closed by the outgoing Chairperson Sid D., who thanked everyone for their attendance and support. Conference was concluded with the Serenity Prayer and after exchanging goodbyes with new found friends we both began our trip back home.

The Theme of the GB Conference 2018 was *Fellowship, Love, Commitment* and this was certainly evident throughout the entire weekend. An air of inclusivity permeated Conference with all of us Overseas Observers made feel very much a part of the GB Conference. Despite the relaxed and inclusive nature of the weekend, the disciplined nature shown by all concerned to ensure the work of Conference was conducted in accordance with the outlined schedule also deserves special mention.

## **Appendix 8**

Gratitude, appreciation and thanks must go to all those involved with organizing such a wonderful event. Special thanks is extended to Roger, Sid, Amanda, Sophie, Geoff and others too many to mention. Special mention must also be given to Barbara, the Office Manager at G.S. O., for all the help and assistance she provided in coordinating our travels to and stay in York.



GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
IRELAND

1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019

**Reports on Service in AA – The Solution**

- Leinster:  
Encouraging Members into Service
- Munster:  
N/A
- Ulster  
N/A
- Connaught  
N/A

## **Leinster Report on Encouraging Members into Service for Conference 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019**

10<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Following the discussion at Conference 2018, and the agreement reached that we report back to Conference 2019 with our results for discussion, the Leinster Members of Conference gave high priority to seeing what measures we could implement to try to encourage Members into Service. The Leinster Team consists of the Leinster Trustee, the 4 Conference Delegates and the Intergroup Secretary. The following is the Leinster Team's report to Conference:

The first thing we did was to bring the information back to the Intergroup Committee and to the various Areas in Leinster. We asked that Service be put onto the Agenda for every Meeting. We asked that it be discussed at every Meeting and that ideas and suggestions be brought forward. We were trying to learn from the experiences of all of the Areas. We wanted to know what approaches worked and which ones didn't. Are some Areas more successful than others at attracting Members into Service? And if so, why? What are they doing differently? We also wanted to know what didn't seem to work. Are there any obvious difficulties that we could identify and help with? What are we doing well? What can we improve on?

### **Role of the Delegates:**

We feel that our role as Delegates is hugely important in encouraging Members to get involved in Service. While there are no bosses in the Fellowship, there certainly are leaders. We have been entrusted with these positions, so that we can lead. And in Leinster, we try to lead by example. Firstly, we always turn up. There are 13 Areas in Leinster, with each having an Area Meeting every month (with a few exceptions over the Summer and at Christmas). Apart from a small handful of unavoidable occasions, we attend all Area Meetings. If one Delegate can't go to one of their Meetings, for whatever reason, another Delegate will usually stand in for them. We also attend all Intergroup Meetings, again with rare exceptions.

We operate as a strong, cohesive team. We support each other, we help each other, and we know that we can rely on each other. On the morning of each Intergroup Meeting, we meet for about an hour and a half before the Meeting. As well as this, we met on 6 other occasions last year, with an open Agenda to discuss all relevant issues. These Meetings typically lasted for 2 - 4 hours. They are always productive. While we give the impression that we work as a team, we also make it very clear to the Intergroup and all of the Areas that we are there to serve them, to help and support them in every way possible. We don't offer advice unless asked for it.

The way that we behave as Delegates is important. We try to be part of a team in each Area that we attend, rather than the Team Instructor. While we offer encouragement, we don't issue orders and we don't criticise. It's very important that we maintain humility in the Areas that we visit.

We found that it has also been beneficial that our 4 Delegates have a calm approach. We come across as being very easygoing and we don't lose our cool. While there have been many disagreements at many Meetings, arguments at Area Meetings are rare and they are virtually non-existent at Intergroup Meetings. We have plenty of healthy, passionate discussions on many issues, but they are always conducted in a respectful manner. Just like the Delegates, the Leinster Intergroup Committee works together as a strong, cohesive team. It's always a pleasure to attend one of our Intergroup Meetings. There's always a feeling in the room that we are all working towards the same goal, even when we disagree with each other. In accordance with our Service Handbook, we seldom vote on issues, instead we try to reach agreement by consensus.

### **A very brief description of the Areas of Service in Leinster:**

- Public Information
- Prison Service
- Phone Service
- Hospitals and Institutions

In each of these areas of Service, the Delegates try to offer their support. Various problems arose throughout the year. When this happens, we try not to dwell on the problems, instead focusing our attention on finding a solution. Again, we do this as a team. We work together. We have identified a number of issues which may hinder Members entering Service in a few of the above areas. For example, concerns have been raised by Members regarding Garda Vetting for School Talks and the delay in getting vetting for Prison Meetings. We are working on finding solutions for these concerns.

### **Suggestions:**

We have found that one of the most productive suggestions, which came forward from all of our discussions on Service, was the personal approach. We have asked everyone attending the Intergroup Meetings to try to bring someone with them to the next Meeting as an Observer, with the hope of these 'Observers' getting involved in Service in the future. This has led to a big increase in the numbers attending our Intergroup Meetings. At the August 2018 Intergroup Meeting, we had 37 people in attendance. This was a 50% increase on the August meetings of 2016 and 2017. At the following meeting in November 2018, 41 people attended, which is probably our largest attendance for many years. Some of those who came as Observers in August, returned as Intergroup Reps in November, some representing Areas who have not had Intergroup Reps for a few years. We have also tried the same approach at all of the Area Meetings. We continually ask the Intergroup Reps from each Area to visit the Groups in their Areas on a regular basis, especially those Groups not attending the Area Meetings. Again, this is where the example of Delegates comes into play. We try to suggest to the Intergroup Reps that they adopt a similar approach when visiting Groups as the Delegates do when visiting Area Meetings. i.e. a humble, gentle, encouraging approach. At some of these, there has been a marked increase in the numbers attending, while in other Areas, we continue to ask the Members to try to encourage others to come as Observers.

Another constructive suggestion which has repeatedly come forward is to suggest to Members currently involved in Service that whenever they are asked to do a Chair at a Meeting, that they spend a few minutes speaking about the benefits of Service to their sobriety and to their lives.

### **Conclusion:**

In general, a lot of Groups are still finding it difficult to attract Members into Service. Very few Members ever step forward and volunteer for Service. In Leinster, we have tried to attract more Members to Intergroup by example, gentle persuasion and encouragement. This has led to a very strong Intergroup Committee. That has given us a base from which we are trying to repeat this with each Area Committee. From there, the idea is to hopefully send this same message to all of the Groups. This is not an overnight solution, but so far, the signs are promising.

**Anthony McN.**

**G.S.C.D.**

**On behalf of the Leinster Members of Conference**



## Encouraging Members into Service

### Reconvened General Service Conference

11<sup>th</sup> May 2019  
9.00am to 11.00am

#### Table 1

Pat D.	(WSD)
John McC.	(UIG)
James O'S.	(CIG)
Mick McG.	(MIG)
Mick D.	(LIG)
Brian F.	(UIG Trustee)

#### How can we improve Service?

##### 1. Group

- a) Each group should hold regular, in-depth Inventory meetings, to be chaired by an outside member.
- b) Area Minutes to be read at all Group Conscience meetings.
- c) Area vacancies to be highlighted at Group Conscience meetings.
- d) Rotation of roles to be paramount.
- e) Intergroup and Conference Minutes to be available to all.

##### 2. Area and Intergroup

- a) Power points for new G.S.R.'s be available.
- b) Obvious misunderstanding of the roles of G.S.R.s, Intergroup Representatives and Conference Delegates.
- c) Suitability for all roles of responsibilities be highlighted.

##### 3. Conclusion

We recommend round table discussion at all levels of Service.

#### Table 2

Helen H.	(WSD)
John S.	(LIG)
Harry McG.	(CIG)
Kenny P.	(UIG)
John D.	(MIG)
Patsy O'K.	(MIG Trustee)

### How can Conference Members lead by example?

1. Be guided by the attributes of the Conference Delegates as set out in the Service Handbook:
  - Tolerance
  - Humility
  - Patience
  - Forbearance
  - Availability
  - Effectiveness
2. Attractive behaviour is the best example.

Act in accordance with the above attributes by:

- Speaking calmly and respectfully and listen respectfully.
- Fulfil commitments and follow up on promises.
- Remember that we are Trusted Servants, we do not govern.

Table 2 would encourage workshops at all levels of service.

### Table 3

Breege G.	(CIG)
Emmet O'H.	(LIG)
Nicholas R.	(MIG)
Maura K.	(CIG)
Brian J.	(UIG)
Pat K.	(LIG Trustee)

### What action can we as a Conference take to encourage Service?

1. Encourage understanding of the Traditions at group level through monthly Tradition meetings.
2. A video clip at the end of meetings with slides explaining Service.
3. Having Area agendas to include "discussion topic" each month.
4. Embracing new technology and social media, not pretending they don't exist.
5. Conference needs to improve communication to show how service keeps the doors open.
6. Awareness of the spirit of rotation.

**Table 4**

Clive K.	(GB)
Anthony McN.	(LIG)
Tom D.	(UIG)
Marilyn K.	(CIG)
Richard O'M	(CIG Trustee)
Liz Cullen	(NAT)

**How can we implement changes and in what time?**

1. "How can we help you?"  
"What do you need?"  
Gentle encouragement.
2. Unity of purpose of delegates.
3. Article on AA website about benefits of service. Positive focus.
4. Article in "Road Back" regularly on benefits of service. Positive focus.
5. Inventories – Area/Intergroup.
6. Improve image of Service.

**Timeline:** Evaluate things and report back at next Conference.  
See what has worked well and change if needed.