



**ROLL CALL AND MINUTES
OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2023**

General Service Conference of Ireland

10th – 12th March 2023

Tullamore Court Hotel



AGENDA

General Service Conference of AA in Ireland 2023

10th March to 12th March 2023

FRIDAY 10th MARCH 2023 8.30PM – 10.00PM

1	Opening of Conference by Chairperson	8.00pm – 8.15pm
2	Roll Call	8.15pm – 8.25pm
3	Adoption of Agenda and other urgent business in accordance with Article 7, page 57 of 2022 Edition Service Handbook	8.25pm – 8.30pm
4	Adoption of 2022 Conference Minutes and matters arising	8.30pm – 8.45pm
5	Introduction of new Trustees	8.45pm – 8.50pm
6	Motions to Conference	8.50pm – 10.00pm

SATURDAY 11th MARCH 2023 9.30AM – 5.00PM

6.	Motions to Conference Continued	9.30am – 11.00am
	Tea/Coffee Break	11.00am – 11.15am
6.	Motions to Conference Continued	11.15am – 1.00pm
	Lunch	1.00pm – 2.00pm
7.	Subcommittee Reports to Conference 1. Code of Conduct 2. YPLO 3. World Service	2.00pm – 3.00pm
	Tea/Coffee Break	3.00pm – 3.15pm
8.	Conference Delegates' Report – (report taken as read)	3.15pm – 3.30pm
9.	World Service Delegates' Report (reports taken as read)	3.30pm – 3.45pm
10.	GB Conference 2022 Observers Report (Report taken as read)	3.45pm – 4.00pm
11.	All Ireland Convention 2022 Report (Report taken as read)	4.00pm – 4.15pm
12.	All Ireland 2024 Update	4.15pm – 4.30pm
13.	Invitation to AAGB to attend General Service Conference	4.30pm – 4.40pm
14.	Election of Observers to GB Conference April 2023	4.40pm – 4.50pm
15.	Election of Chairperson to Conference 2024	4.50pm – 5.00pm

1. Opening of Conference by Chairperson

Introduction

Kenny P. (Chairperson) opened Conference by welcoming everybody and asked for a moments silence to consider why we were here. Conference recited the Serenity Prayer and Tradition Two was read. Kenny P. read from page 49 of the General Service Handbook 'Why Do We Need a Conference?'

Service Handbook for Ireland (2022 edition) Article 9, Decisions of Conference (Page 58)

Decisions of Conference The decision of Conference resulting from any vote or any motion or item before Conference shall have the following effects: All items or motions passed unanimously become Conference policy immediately and are recommended in trust to all Groups, Area Committees, Intergroups, Conference and Board. All items or motions passed by a two-thirds majority are recommended and unless rescinded by notice of motion, become Conference policy after the expiry of one year. All items or motions receiving only a simple majority are recommendations and shall be further debated at the next General Meeting of Conference

2. Roll Call

Connaught		Munster	
Trustee	James O'S	Trustee	Martin C
Delegate	John G	Delegate	John T
Delegate	Sean C	Delegate	Michael D
Delegate	Joe B	Delegate	Thomas K
Delegate	Hubert J		
I/G Secretary	Gretta B	I/G Secretary	Benny G
Leinster		Ulster	
Trustee	Emmet O'H	Trustee	Seamus B
Delegate	Deirdre S	Delegate	Billy I
Delegate	Robbie McM	Delegate	John McC
Delegate	Philip McG	Delegate	Brian D
Delegate	Barbara A	Delegate	James McK
I/G Secretary (Alternate)	Anya S	I/G Secretary	Ciaran McN
Other		Observers	
Board Secretary	Anthony McN	Zelma K	GB Observer
		Mallory M	Observer
WSD	Moirra S		
WSD	Tom D		
Non AA Member Director/Trustee	Diarmuid McKeown		

Chairperson	Kenny P		
Apologies			
Non AA Member Director/Trustee	Cindy O'Shea		
AA GB Observer	John C		
Observer	Martine M		

3. Adoption of Agenda and other urgent business in accordance with Article 7 of the Conference Charter, page 57, 2022 edition Service Handbook.

The Agenda was proposed by Emmet O'H, seconded by Deirdre S.

Following this, there were a number of objections to the agenda, specifically in relation to the motions. A long and sometimes heated discussion into this followed, and the Chairperson had to call the meeting to order on a number of occasions. Among the questions asked were;

Why are the motions being discussed by subcommittees rather than all of Conference?

Who made that decision?

Would all Delegates get a final say on the motions?

Would the Delegates who were bringing the motions to Conference on behalf of a group be allowed to present the motion?

The Board Secretary clarified that because of the unusually high number of motions being presented to Conference for decision this year, the Board (as Secretary to Conference) felt that using subcommittees might be a more appropriate system to use this year. It has been used by Conference in the past, quite successfully. It is also successfully used at the GB Conference, as well as in other countries all over the world. He added that ultimately, while this was the proposed agenda, Conference could decide to reject it and revert to the format used in previous years, where the full meeting of Conference would discuss, debate and vote on each individual motion. Although, that would take some considerable time and we would be unlikely to finish the business of Conference over the weekend. He said that it was up to Conference to decide what format was used, who presented the motions, how they were voted on.

Following further discussions Emmet O'H proposed that the agenda had been proposed and seconded and that we should proceed to the breakout tables A, B, C and D.. Philip McG seconded this.

Joe B made a counterproposal that we revert to the previous method of discussing motions. Hubert J seconded this counterproposal.

The counterproposal was voted on first.

10 voted in favour of returning to the previous system of dealing with motions.

15 voted against

2 members abstained.

Following this, Tom K objected to a report from the WSD subcommittee being on the agenda as no such subcommittee had been ratified by Conference. This was clarified by both Moira S and Emmet O'H, that this subcommittee had been ratified by Conference in 2022.

Emmet O'H again proposed that we adopt the agenda. This was seconded by Moira S.

The agenda was adopted.

4. Adoption of 2022 Conference Minutes and Matters Arising

Mick D. raised a query about why the previous year's minutes had not been distributed in a timely manner.

The Board Secretary answered that the matter had been raised at the recent Company AGM. It had been answered and dealt with. The reasons given at the time were accepted at that meeting. As Board Secretary, Anthony took full responsibility for this and had apologised at the time. He wasn't willing to apologise again.

The minutes were proposed by Emmet O'H

Seconded by Philip McG

Following this, Hubert J once again objected to the way that Conference was intending to deal with motions this year.

The Chair reiterated that that matter had been discussed, dealt with and voted on. He was not willing to allow the topic to be discussed again. Hubert continued to object. The Chair refused to allow him to take over the meeting in such a manner, that he was not entitled to do so.

Hubert stated that he felt that this was undemocratic and he left the Conference meeting. He did not return for the remainder of Conference.

At this point, Benny G proposed that we should adjourn the meeting for the night as it had become heated. It might give people an opportunity to calm down. Robbie McM seconded this proposal.

Moira S made a counterproposal – we are here for the weekend to conduct AA business, we should continue to do that. Philip McG seconded this counterproposal, which was voted on first.

18 members voted in favour of continuing the business of Conference.

6 voted against

2 members abstained.

The meeting continued.

5. Introduction of new AA Trustees

Diarmuid McKeown was welcomed as a returning Non-Alcoholic Trustee

James O'S was welcomed as the new Connaught Trustee.

Anthony McN was welcomed as the new Board Secretary

On behalf of the General Service Conference, the Board Secretary thanked Elizabeth Cullen (Non-Alcoholic Trustee), Aisling Hussey (NAT), Rory H (Connaught Trustee) and Tony O'C (Board Secretary) for their service, now that all have rotated out.

At this point of the meeting, the Conference members broke out into the subcommittee tables to discuss their allotted motions.

6. Motions to Conference

Table A

James O'S.	(Connaught Trustee)
Joe B.	(Connaught Delegate)
Billy I.	(Ulster Delegate)
John T.	(Munster Delegate)
Philip McG.	(Leinster Delegate)
Benny G.	(Munster Intergroup Secretary)
John C.	(GB Observer)

Motion No. 1

Motion from the Shannon Group M248 Group

That motions to conference should come from a group conscience of a group listed as a group. Not an Area or Inter group.

Explanation

Tradition two. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving god as he may express himself in our Group Conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants - they do not govern. If an Area or Intergroup has something that they think is a good idea, it should go back to the groups before going to Conference. Experience has shown us that actions taken in haste seldom have good outcomes.

Subcommittee Recommendation:

The recommendations of the subcommittee were presented by John T. The table felt that this was already the practice in place and that no action needed to be taken. A number of questions were asked of John and answered.

It was the consensus of the meeting that no action needed to be taken – the proposed motion was already in place.

Motion No. 2

Motion from Kinsale Red Cross Group

That our book “Alcoholics Anonymous” (The Big Book) be translated into Irish.

Subcommittee Recommendation:

The recommendations of the subcommittee were presented by John T. The subcommittee recommended that a cost analysis need to be carried out to see if this could be done. We need to be prudent with the Fellowship’s money. If it doesn’t prove to be cost prohibitive, then it should probably be undertaken. He also asked Conference to be mindful that there were a number of different dialects in Irish. A decision would also need to be taken as to which dialect should be used.

Emmet (Leinster Trustee) said that the Board had looked into this before Conference and had received estimates in the region of €35 - €45 per copy, based on a print run of 500 books.

Joe B (Connaught) questioned if it was possible to sell that many Big Books in Irish.

A vote was taken.

19 members voted in favour of the recommendations of the subcommittee

3 members voted against

4 members abstained.

The General Service Board will carry out a comprehensive cost analysis of this.

Motion No. 3

Motion from Portrush Group to Conference 2023

Change to the Constitution of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland- reference “Ireland”.

This motion relates to the operating area of AA in Ireland. We ask that Conference revise the wording of the Constitution to include all AA Groups throughout the island of Ireland.

Current wording under ‘Articles of Association’ page 8:

“Ireland” means the territory of the Republic of Ireland.

Proposed wording:

“Ireland” means the territories of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The subcommittee recommendation was presented by John T. The subcommittee felt that this matter should be dealt with by the Board, that the Board should amend the text to reflect these proposed changes. The Articles of Association cannot be changed by Conference, they can only be changed by the Company (GSBAA clg)

Benny said that our current Articles of Association arise from when the Fellowship in Ireland was part of the Fellowship in GB. AA Ireland and AA GB were part of the same Conference until 1970's.

The Conference meeting called for an EGM of the Company to be called to deal with this matter. This was supported unanimously by the meeting.

Motion No. 4

Motion from C19 Renmore (Sunday Morning) Group

Duties of GSBAA

That conference reasserts that, the duties of the GSBAA are confined to those outlined in the General Service Handbook and other duties assigned to them from time to time by General Service Conference to ensure AA remains compliant with any legal requirements.

The subcommittee recommendation was presented by John T. The subcommittee felt that this matter should be referred to the Board. The subcommittee felt that the Fellowship should be striving to achieve 'best practice' in everything we do, rather than simply meeting the minimum legal requirements, as this motion seems to suggest. He recommended that these matters should be left to the Board to deal with.

A vote was taken.

22 members voted in favour of the recommendations of the subcommittee

0 members voted against

4 members abstained.

Motion was rejected. These matters are to be continued to be dealt with by the Board.

Table B

Emmet O'H.	(Leinster Trustee)
John G.	(Connaught Delegate)
Brian D.	(Ulster Delegate)
Tom K.	(Munster Delegate)
Barbara A.	(Leinster Delegate)
Ciaran McN.	(Ulster Intergroup Secretary)
Diarmuid McKeown	(NAT)

Motion No. 5

Motion From DUNGANNON THIRD LEGACY Group

Change to Green Handbook – reference conference.

This motion is in relation to ARTICLE 6 (special meeting of conference) this motion to ask to look at the conclusion of this article which currently states:

All decisions of special meetings shall only be binding on conference until the following annual general meeting, when they will be further debated and ratified or rescinded.

It is the conscience of Dungannon third legacy that the conclusion to article 6 should read:

All decisions of special meetings of conference that has the consensus of conference should be effective immediately.

When a consensus is not reached the issue should be further debated at the following March conference.

The subcommittee recommendation was presented by Brian D. Brian said that the motion was self-explanatory. The subcommittee was recommending that decisions of special meetings of Conference should become effective immediately.

A vote was taken.

24 members voted in favour of the recommendations of the subcommittee

1 member voted against

1 member abstained.

In accordance with Article 9 of the Conference Charter, this will automatically become Conference policy after the expiry of one year, unless rescinded by notice of a further motion.

Motion No. 6

Motion from St. Patrick's Group AA Waterford

That in relation to Telephone Service, the wording on page 35 of the Service Handbook for Ireland be amended as follows:

The wording "Members responding to AA calls should have up to date AA meeting information to hand as well as a list of other helping organisations such as Al-Anon, Samaritans, Aware, Rape Crisis Centre etc." be deleted and replaced with the wording "Members responding to AA calls should have up to date AA Meeting information and members' numbers, to hand."

Reason for Motion:

Current wording conflicts with Tradition 6.

The subcommittee recommendation was presented by Brian D. Brian said that this does not conflict with Tradition 6. However, we would be in conflict with our legal responsibilities if we passed this motion. As we operate a phone helpline, we are obliged under legislation to provide help to anyone who seeks help. We need to be able to point these people in the right direction. The subcommittee recommended that Conference reject this motion.

A vote was taken.

24 members voted in favour of the recommendations of the subcommittee

0 members voted against

2 members abstained.

The motion was rejected.

Motion No. 7

Motion from The Mallow Mercy Group

To reverse the 1979 decision to incorporate our Board into "Company Law" and to reorganise under "Charity Law" and

To replace the "Company Constitution" with the "Conference Constitution" as our "Governing Document" (the Primary Object of both being the same)

REASON FOR MOTION:

To keep it simple and to provide a structure based on our traditions only and to improve unity within our structure.

Additional Information:

Protection under the Companies Act is not now required since the introduction of the 2009 Charities Act in 2017.

Because our "Charity Trustees" are also Company Directors they have two separate and conflicting sets of duties, this is a very real 'conflict of interest'.

Presently under "Company Law" our Board is not fulfilling its "Primary Object" as it is Prohibiting and Inhibiting communication within our conference structure and this in turn prevents the conference structure from achieving its "Primary Object" as outlined in Article 2 of the Conference Constitution (Third Legacy)

UNITY --- SERVICE --- RECOVERY

Prohibiting Communication by not publishing and circulating to all A.A. groups a copy of the Audited Accounts as per "Article 5" of the conference constitution and

Inhibiting Communication by not circulating draft copies of the Conference meetings within six weeks of the conclusion of said Conference meetings as per "Article 12" of the Conference Constitution.

Inhibiting Communication by not updating and publishing the list of Conference decisions.

Conflict of Interest:

FACTS:

(a) As Trustees they are members of Conference and must abide by the "Decisions" of Conference including the holding "In Trust" a reserve fund for Conference (article 13 of conference constitution) and

(b) As company directors they can Veto Conference decisions and act as they see fit outside of conference. This is the main source of disunity in our conference structure.

The danger is that the Quorum for a Company Board meeting is only 2 directors (section 160(b) of the Act)

So now we see how just two members could make decisions for AA as a whole contrary to the conference constitution.

Conflict of Interest:

Fact

(a) It is the duty of the Board of Trustees to publish and circulate to all the groups in Ireland a copy of the Annual Statements of Audited Accounts (article 5 of the Conference Charters)

(b) It is the duty of the Directors to circulate the Annual Returns to Members of the Company only, (Company Law).

We no longer get a copy of the Annual Returns because Company Law has overridden the Conference Constitution excluding conference from its own "Mission" - it being an Integral Part of the Governance of AA the Charity (conference ratifies the charity's Trustees).

Conference is the Guardian of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and Under TRADITION 7 it is the duty of Conference to make sure that the Company never becomes Financially Independent of Conference and that under Tradition 7 the Principle of "Corporate Poverty" remains firmly embedded in A.A. Tradition.

As a footnote to the Additional Information, we would ask

DO WE NEED TO BE A COMPANY WHEN

- (a) We are a Not-for-Profit organization.**
- (b) We are not in a Business.**
- (c) We are, self-supporting (we do not collect)**
- (d) We do not Trade.**
- (e) We own no Property.**

And

Our Constitution prevents any members (including Trustees) from being punished for their mistakes.

SO WHY DO WE NEED TO BE A COMPANY

The subcommittee recommendation was presented by Brian D. Brian said that this was a complicated motion. There was a lot of debate on this motion by the subcommittee. The consensus of the subcommittee was that more information was needed. He recommended that a subcommittee of Conference should be set up to further look into this. Legal advice may be needed.

Billy I questioned why the motion states "Unity – Service – Recovery". Why are these not in the correct order?

Emmet O'H said that the document presented is not very clear, that the proposed subcommittee (if approved) should put together a report on the Structure, explaining how the Structure operates in Ireland, and has done since the 1970's. This report should then be circulated to the groups across Ireland, to get their views. He added that this should be a fact finding subcommittee, not a decision making one. He added that his table didn't feel legally qualified to produce answers to the questions being asked.

Mick D. expressed difficulties with the proposed subcommittee.

Benny said that we need a non-legal information pack, explaining the Structure to the Fellowship.

The subcommittee was recommending rejection of the motion.

A vote was taken.

26 members voted in favour of the recommendations of the subcommittee

0 members voted against

0 members abstained.

The motion was rejected.

The consensus of the meeting was that a subcommittee should be established to look at the points raised in the motion and return to Conference with recommendations.

Motion No. 8

Motion from C19 Renmore (Sunday Morning) Group

Email communications within the Fellowship

That conference asserts that there are no restrictions on email communications directly between conference members. Such electronic communication will operate without interception, interference, or censorship from any Board Member(s). Email content is strictly confined to AA related business.

The subcommittee recommendation was presented by Brian D. There are currently no restrictions in place in relation to emails. The subcommittee was recommending rejecting this motion, but that there should be guidance issued as to what constituted acceptable use of the AA email addresses.

Robbie McM asked if this motion was in relation to AA emails or private emails.

James O'S sought clarification as to whether AA emails could be intercepted, or read, by others.

Brian said that there was no evidence to suggest that AA emails could be read by anybody other than those they were intended for. Emmet O'H confirmed that this was the case. He also confirmed that passwords were confidential.

A vote was taken.

25 members voted in favour of the recommendations of the subcommittee

0 members voted against

1 member abstained

The motion was rejected.

Table C

Martin C.	(Munster Trustee)
Hubert J.	(Connaught Delegate)
John McC.	(Ulster Delegate)
Moirá S.	(World Service Delegate)
Deirdre S.	(Leinster Delegate)
Anya S.	(Leinster Alternate Intergroup Secretary)
Zelma K	(GB Observer)

Motion No. 9

Motion from Shannon Group M248 Group

That all letters to the fellow ship be attributed to whoever sends them i.e., the board, the secretary or whoever they originate from.

Explanation

Letters to the fellowship from GSO are creating confusion as the very dedicated and hardworking staff in the office do not send messages to the groups only on instruction from members of the board or office management committee etc. The staff in the office have enough work without having to deal with irate members.

Moirá S presented the subcommittee recommendations. The subcommittee was represented by all 4 Intergroup committees. It was felt to be an unnecessary motion. The Board Secretary always signs all correspondence that he distributes, which is always distributed on behalf of the Board. All emails signed "GSO" have been authorised by the Office Management Committee.

The subcommittee recommended rejecting the motion.

A vote was taken.

24 members voted in favour of the recommendations of the subcommittee.

0 members voted against

2 members abstained.

The motion was rejected.

Motion No. 10

Motion from Summerhill Group L227, Athlone

Submission to Area regarding World Service Delegate Selection.

Group Conscience puts forward the motion that the World Service Delegate positions should be rotated across the four Intergroups as far as practicable.

This could commence with:

1st Delegate - (a) Connaught (b) Ulster (c) Munster (d) Leinster.

2nd Delegate – (d) Leinster (c) Munster (b) Ulster (a) Connaught

In the event that a province does not have an eligible candidate the position ought to be offered to the next province in the rotation sequence.

Reasons:

It is recommended throughout the fellowship that due regard be paid to rotation. Thus, each province will have their turn.

We wish that this submission be passed on to Conference, to be read out and discussed.

The Recommendations of the subcommittee were presented by Moira S. The subcommittee were recommending that this motion be rejected. They felt that the best person available should always be put forward for this position, regardless of their location. As well as that, the way that the motion is worded, there could end up being 2 WSDs from the same province at the same time, which goes against the spirit of the motion being put forward.

Billy I said that the spirit of rotation refers to people, not locations.

Barbara A :- a very similar motion was rejected by Conference in the very recent past. Why are we discussing this again?

Sean C :- If an Intergroup doesn't have a candidate, there wouldn't be a collapse of the proposed new system.

Moira S :- This motion is too rigid, it should be rejected. Conference should always pick the most suitable candidate.

Joe B :- This was discussed last year. An extra paragraph was added to last year's motion to try to alleviate concerns raised last year.

The subcommittee recommended rejecting the motion.

A vote was taken.

20 members voted in favour of the recommendations of the subcommittee

4 members voted against

2 members abstained.

The motion was rejected.

Motion No. 11

Motion from Foxrock Tuesday 1pm Group

Proposal 1A:

That a descriptor can be added to the currently GSO listed Foxrock Tuesday 1PM meeting (online and physical) as follows: Non-restrictive; focused theme of women's recovery.

Proposal 1B:

That the Foxrock Friday 1PM online meeting be included in GSO listings and with the same descriptor: Non-restrictive, focused theme of women's recovery.

Proposed by:

Foxrock Group L434 Area 11. Proposal agreed at Foxrock Group Conscience on 5 August 2022.

Proposal Planned Submission:

To be presented to Area 11 on 12 September 2022 and to Intergroup on 20 November 2022.

To be submitted to Conference March 2023.

An explanation of what is meant by 'focused theme of women's recovery'

This may be a physical, online or hybrid meeting that is primarily focused on the topic of women's recovery from alcoholism. It will usually include sensitive topics primarily relevant to females recovering from alcoholism. Women may therefore feel more comfortable attending such a meeting, and while there may be a predominantly female attendance, no one will be excluded from taking part. The meeting is open to all AA members.

Why meetings with a focused theme of women's recovery are needed

A meeting with a focused theme of women's recovery can be a gateway into recovery for women who would otherwise be shy to try AA. Their inability to find these meetings (not registered as such on the AA website) hinders their chances of attending and finding recovery.

Our experience has shown that sharing in such meetings can often be deeper and more healing, specifically around female issues that have contributed to alcoholism.

Many attendees have years of sobriety. They share that they have only been able to express deep past traumas that contributed to their alcoholism in the intimate space of meetings focused on womens' recovery.

The ability to register our meetings as "focused on womens' recovery" can only be of benefit to AA in widening its reach to alcoholics with specific needs. This is borne out by Foxrock Group's online and physical growth during the pandemic, reaching an active 127 membership to date who continue to attend even post-pandemic restrictions.

How this proposal is in line with the AA constitution and Equality Acts

Page 20 of the Service Handbook states:

Our Fourth Tradition says that every AA Group is autonomous "except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole", so a group can hold practically any kind of meeting they choose.

Page 22 Service Handbook states:

The General Service Conference of Ireland does not approve of Specialist Meetings which might exclude or might appear to exclude any individual who has a desire to stop drinking.

This proposal does not, and does not intend to, exclude anyone who has a desire to stop drinking; and the request to state 'non-restrictive' makes that clear.

Page 56 of the Service Handbook Article 2 Primary Object states:

There is no authority in AA except that which expresses itself in the Group Conscience, which is then communicated by the group to AA as a whole. This is where the whole idea of structure begins.

This proposal was approved by the Foxrock Group Conscience on 5 August 2022.

The inclusion of the descriptor '*non-restrictive; focused theme of women's recovery*' would bring AA Ireland more in line with most other AA organisations worldwide, where women's recovery and other themed meetings are accepted and have contributed to the strength of the AA organisations internationally.

This proposal does not contravene the regulations as set out in the Equality Acts 1998 – 2015.

Firstly, the Foxrock proposal is not discriminating against men

Secondly, the Act establishes several circumstances when being treated differently due to gender is lawful.

Moirá S presented the recommendations of the subcommittee. Moirá applauded the Foxrock group's motion. However she felt that Conference could not make a special exemption for women's meetings and simply ignore all other entities, such as men, LGBT+, etc. Moirá said that we can't change the rules for women and ignore everybody else. That would be wrong. She added that Conference can't change the wording of the motion to include other entities.

The Table were recommending that the previous motion from 1989 in regard to this be rescinded. John McC read out the 1989 motion. This is an almost 35 year old motion which is out of touch with the rest of the world. These meetings exist all over the world. Every group should have the autonomy to have their meeting listed as they see fit. Russia is the only other country in the world where you can't have women's meetings. The Board Secretary clarified that the 1989 motion can only be rescinded by a motion to Conference, specifically asking for that – the Conference meeting could not simply rescind it without such a motion.

A long discussion followed, where numerous Delegates gave their views and spoke about their personal experiences.

There was unanimous consensus that change was needed - it's way overdue. But Conference couldn't pass the motion in its current wording. It was unanimously agreed

that the motion be rejected, because it cannot be adopted using its current wording. And it was recommended that the group submit a fresh motion asking for the 1989 motion to be rescinded.

Motion No. 12

Motion from C19 Renmore (Sunday Morning) Group

On-Line Conferences

In the event that Service Conferences being held online that 'muting' and 'unmuting' of attendees will be authorised by the chairperson only.

that all members attending will have access to the chairperson at all times during proceedings via 'Chat' or other suitable communications channel.

Moira S presented the subcommittee recommendations. The subcommittee felt that the motion should be rejected for the following reasons;

- a. Online platforms are an evolving process. It would not be appropriate for Conference to interfere in this.
- b. Each online Conference meeting should be autonomous and free to hold the meeting as they saw fit.
- c. There was previously a subcommittee established to look into guidelines for online meetings, as had been requested by multiple groups around the country. We shouldn't now interfere with those guidelines, as had been approved by Conference.

Moira also added that it should be stated in the agenda who had the ability to mute people in a meeting.

Benny :- all this motion would do is create problems for solutions already in place. The online process worked very well at the recent AGM

Anthony McN clarified that the Chairperson may not have the technical ability to mute people at a meeting and may require assistance.

Billy I :- Agreed that not all members are technically proficient. He suggested an information session for Conference members.

The subcommittee recommended rejecting the motion.

A vote was taken.

24 members voted in favour of the recommendations of the subcommittee

0 members voted against

2 members abstained.

The motion was rejected.

Table D

Seamus B.	(Ulster Trustee)
Sean C	(Connaught Delegate)
James McK.	(Ulster Delegate)
Mick D.	(Munster Delegate)
Robbie McM.	(Leinster Delegate)
Gretta B.	(Connaught Intergroup Secretary)
Tom D.	(World Service Delegate)

Motion No. 13

Motion from Summerhill Group L227, Athlone

Submission to Area regarding - Conference Delegates/Company Members

Group Conscience puts forward the motion that General Service Conference Delegates (GSCD) should not be obliged to be members of the Company and still have full participation in all aspects of the conference of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Reason:

Being a company member dilutes the spiritual message of Alcoholics Anonymous. It does not help to attract people into service when – “one freely joins Alcoholics Anonymous”.

Conference Delegates were not company members a few years ago.

The Board of Alcoholics Anonymous who are members of the Company are quite capable of representing Alcoholics Anonymous and the Company.

The Group Conscience wish that this submission to Conference, to be read out and discussed.

The recommendations of the subcommittee were presented by James McK.

The general consensus of the subcommittee was that Conference members should not be obliged to be company members. But there was no clear consensus on what should be done.

Benny G :- we are a registered charity, certain requirements have to be met.

James O'S :- company membership should be optional.

Tom K. :- someone who is unqualified to be a company member should not be making company decisions, we should have 'horses for courses'.

A number of other members asked questions about the legalities of Conference making a decision on this.

James O'S confirmed that we would need to change the company constitution to reflect any changes we may wish to make.

John T. proposed that we add this motion to the topics raised in motion no. 7, and that the same subcommittee examine this and return to Conference with recommendations. This was seconded by Brian D and unanimously agreed.

Motion No. 14

Motion from Shannon Group M248 Group

Strongly suggested that the maximum length of service of any member at conference including Board level should be 10 years.

Explanation

There are only 30 members of the General Service Conference of Ireland. There are several thousand members of AA in Ireland. As many as possible should be given the privilege of doing service to the fellowship and if a few people are doing the service for too long that denies them the opportunity.

Two years Inter group secretary. Four years conference delegate and four years Trustee, secretary or world delegate etc. should be enough.

Remembering it is not too long ago we had someone on the board for 30 years. The members of conference and the board have vast experience in service which can be shared through the group conscience of their home group with the fellowship as a whole.

Also, in the spirit of the fellowship they should only do service in their home group when finished at conference.

The recommendations of the subcommittee were presented by James McK.

James said that it is no longer possible for a Trustee to serve on the Board for 30 years – a NAT may serve a maximum of 8 years, while an AA Trustee may serve for 4 years. The subcommittee felt that this motion might hinder younger people getting involved in Service at Conference level. They were recommending that the motion be rejected.

A vote was taken.

24 members voted in favour of the recommendations of the subcommittee

1 member voted against

1 member abstained.

The motion was rejected.

The subcommittee also stated that their consensus was that a former Trustee should not return to serve as World Service Delegate.

Motion No. 15

Motion from Cork First Group

That it be made known who decided to cancel the previous format of the Road Back Magazine.

That the Road Back Magazine is made available in print to every member as per the previous format.

The recommendations of the subcommittee were presented by James McK.

The subcommittee are aware that the Road Back magazine is already available in print, to every member who requests a copy. And it is provided free of charge. There is a mailing list in GSO for this purpose. Currently, 52 members who have requested a copy receive one when a new publication is issued. There is no need for this motion.

Mick D. withdrew the motion.

Motion No. 16

Motion from C19 Renmore (Sunday Morning) Group

Role of GSBAA

That in accordance with our Twelve Traditions, Concepts and Legacies this conference asserts the GSBAA has no role in disciplinary procedures or any punitive action against individual members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The recommendations of the subcommittee were presented by James McK.

The subcommittee felt that there should be no punitive actions in AA. However, as has been discussed at recent Conference meetings, the Board should have access to disciplinary procedures, if that proves necessary. He recommended that the motion be rejected. This was unanimously agreed.

The motion was rejected.

Motion No. 17

Motion from C19 Renmore (Sunday Morning) Group

Minutes of GSBAA

That minutes of all General Service Board AA meetings will be made available to all conference members in a timely manner.

The recommendations of the subcommittee were presented by James McK.

James said that this motion was dealt with very quickly. Board meetings of GSBAA are legally required to be confidential. They cannot be made available to Conference members. He proposed that the motion be rejected for legal reasons..

A vote was taken.

25 members voted in favour of the recommendations of the subcommittee

0 members voted against

1 member abstained

The motion was rejected.

7. Subcommittee Reports to Conference

(i) Code Of Conduct

The recommendation was presented by Moira S. The subcommittee were recommending that the following paragraph be added to the already approved text. This was the remit given to the subcommittee by a previous Conference meeting. (Report included at Appendix A)

Members Conduct & Resolution :

- *I accept that as a member of Conference, I am also a member of the company AA Ireland and as such strive to follow the above Suggested Guidelines. Therefore, should any member express concern that my behaviour is not consistent with these Guidelines (such concerns to be communicated to the Board Secretary), I accept that I will be expected to meet with representatives delegated by Conference to discuss my commitment to the role for which I have been elected. The Conference representatives shall consist of 2 AA member Trustees and 1 non alcoholic Trustee, approved by Conference for the purposes of mediation and/or resolution.*
- *I understand that these representatives may conclude that my behaviour constitutes a substantial breach and/or consistent breaches of these guidelines that may result in my being invited to reconsider my role.*
- *Should I decide to resign from Conference, I will inform the Board Secretary in advance, in writing, stating my reasons for resigning.*

Moira added that this section would necessitate a slight change in the fourth line of the first paragraph of the previously agreed document, because the consensus of Conference during a previous discussion was there should be no requirement for Delegates to sign this document, that it should be included in the Service Handbook.

Mick D. disagreed with what was stated in the minutes of that meeting. He was advised by Moira that those minutes had already been ratified – he should have raised his objections before they were ratified.

Benny G felt that the document was poorly written, but added that he hadn't been a member of conference when it was originally compiled.

Joe B questioned the need for such a document.

Sean C agreed with Joe.

John G said that it was wrong to discipline members.

Tom K wished to rediscuss matters already agreed by Conference but was prevented from doing so by the Chair.

A vote was taken.

20 Delegates voted in favour of adopting this document.

3 voted against

1 abstained

(The final document is included at Appendix B)

(ii) YPLO

James McK gave the YPLO report. He welcomed Mallory M (Munster YPLO) as an observer.

Tom D questioned the role of the YPLO – what did it involve?

James McK clarified that it was to help attract younger members into Service.

James O'S asked if there was any reporting mechanism for YPLOs to report directly to Intergroups and/or Conference.

Moira applauded the YPLOs and the work that they were doing. They were very visible.

This sentiment was echoed by a number of other Delegates.

The report was accepted by consensus.

(Report is included at Appendix C)

Martin C then asked if a YPLO could possibly be a Conference Delegate in the future.

John T proposed that YPLO observers should be allowed to have meals with Conference members at Conference.

Emmet suggested that YPLO should have a representative at Conference.

Diarmuid proposed that all four YPLO's be invited to attend Conference as observers. Benny seconded this proposal.

A vote was taken.

19 voted in favour of Diarmuid's proposal.

3 voted against the proposal.

2 abstained.

The proposal was carried.

Joe B seconded John T's proposal.

A vote was taken.

17 voted in favour of Diarmuid's proposal.

0 voted against the proposal.

7 abstained

The proposal was carried.

(iii) World Service

The recommendations of the subcommittee were presented by Moira.

A number of questions and clarifications were sought, all of which were answered by Moira. In the event that a WSD cannot attend a World Service meeting or European Service meeting, then the Board would choose a Trustee to take their place.

The main change proposed in the report was that a WSD's term would end at Conference rather than on 31st December as has previously been the case.

The recommendations of the subcommittee were proposed by Anya and seconded by Benny. This was carried unanimously.

(Subcommittee report is attached at Appendix D)

8. Conference Delegates Reports (Taken as read)

Emmet said that a number of Delegates had used surnames in their reports. The Board Secretary is to remove these before the minutes are distributed.

Emmet also said that the Delegates' reports should be about what is happening in the areas that the Delegates are attending and should not be used to voice personal opinions. The Board Secretary is to put together guidelines for what should/should not go into future Delegates' reports.

John T. asked about the GSR pack which was previously agreed by Conference, when could we expect to see it. Emmet explained that it was being worked on, there had been a few issues to sort through with licences as well as the office being short staffed last year, but it is being worked on.

(Conference Delegates' reports attached at Appendix E)

9. World Service Delegates' Report (Taken as read)

Moira and Tom presented this report. Moira asked that all members of Conference should read the report. There are amazing things happening all over the world in the Fellowship. The World Service Meeting in Japan was held online.

Diarmuid commended both WSDs for an excellent report.

Billy I questioned why the Serenity prayer in the report had "me" rather than "us".

John T asked a number of questions regarding the format of various online meetings in other countries.

(World Service Delegate's Report attached at Appendix F)

10. GB Conference 2022 Observers Report (Taken as read)

Moira presented this report. She went to the Conference in York with Hubert. It was a hybrid meeting. She feels that the Irish Conference should use the example of AA GB Conference to move forward. This has come up in the past. A number of previous Irish observers at the GB Conference felt that the question system used over there is a far better way of getting things done than the motions that we use. A few people at the meeting agreed, including Tom D., Barbara A and Anthony McN, who have all previously attended the GB Conference as observers.

Emmet proposed that a subcommittee of Conference should examine this and report back to Conference. Tom D seconded this proposal. There was unanimous agreement.

It was further agreed that Table C which formed a subcommittee earlier at Conference, to discuss motions should form the basis of that subcommittee, as a number of Delegates on that table had previously attended the GB Conference.

James commended Moira on an excellent report. He noted that there seemed to be a much better gender balance at the GB Conference. Moira agreed and said that they had more young people present in York as well.

(Report attached at Appendix G)

11. All Ireland Convention 2022 Report (Taken as read)

Benny G presented a detailed report on behalf of Munster Intergroup. The consensus of the meeting was that the Convention was very well run and was a great success.

(Report attached at Appendix H)

12. All Ireland 2024 Update

Emmet O'H gave an update on progress for the 2024 All Ireland Convention, which will be held in Leinster. Everything was moving ahead nicely. Conference approved the Convention by consensus.

13. Invitation to AAGB to attend General Service Conference

It was agreed by the meeting that an invitation for observers from AA in Great Britain to attend our Conference in 2024 should be extended.

At this point, Zelma K. (GB observer) was asked if she would like to say a few words.

Zelma thanked Conference for their hospitality over the weekend. She apologised on behalf of her colleague, John C, who was also due to attend Conference as a GB observer, but unfortunately had been snowed in and his flight was cancelled.

Zelma said that it was a great experience to watch how another country runs their Conference. There are quite a lot of similarities, but also many differences.

Zelma added that the GB system of questions to Conference worked very well. Any group can send a question to Conference. A subcommittee will go through all of the questions submitted and find those that seem to be coming up the most. Or sometimes it can be a question that only one group has asked. But it works very well and has done for a long time.

14. Election of Observers to GB Conference April 2023

Brian D. (Ulster) was proposed by James McK and seconded by Philip McG

Deirdre S. was proposed by Emmet O'H and seconded by Seamus B

15. Election of Chairperson to Conference 2024

The Chairperson, Kenny P., asked that those eligible (Delegates rotating out of Service before the next Conference AGM) to please stand up.

John T. from Munster and Philip McG from Leinster were the two candidates present who were eligible.

Philip McG wished to withdraw his name from consideration for the role but was willing to be the alternate Chairperson.

John T. was appointed to the role of Chairperson of Conference 2024.

Following this Benny G proposed that Conference should hold an Inventory meeting. This was seconded by Martin C. The meeting agreed and this will be organised by the Board.

Having concluded the business of Conference, the Chairperson thanked everybody for all of their tremendous efforts over the weekend and closed the meeting. Those present then finished with the Serenity Prayer, said in unison.

DRAFT

APPENDIX A

Conference Subcommittee to agree wording on the final section of the proposed Code of Conduct for Conference members

Recommended Text :

Members Conduct & Resolution :

- I accept that as a member of Conference, I am also a member of the company AA Ireland and as such strive to follow the above Suggested Guidelines. Therefore, should any member express concern that my behaviour is not consistent with these Guidelines (such concerns to be communicated to the Board Secretary), I accept that I will be expected to meet with representatives delegated by Conference to discuss my commitment to the role for which I have been elected. The Conference representatives shall consist of 2 AA member Trustees and 1 non alcoholic Trustee, approved by Conference for the purposes of mediation and/or resolution.
- I understand that these representatives may conclude that my behaviour constitutes a substantial breach and/or consistent breaches of these guidelines that may result in my being invited to reconsider my role.
- Should I decide to resign from Conference, I will inform the Board Secretary in advance, in writing, stating my reasons for resigning.

Suggested Guidelines for Personal Conduct and Appropriate Behaviour for members of the General Service Conference

Purpose

The purpose of this code is to set out for members of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous (Ireland) the conduct that is expected of them as nominated/appointed/elected members of Conference. Incoming members are required to acknowledge their obligations on being nominated/appointed/elected and all members are encouraged to read the Code from time to time to remind themselves of the commitments they have made.

Preamble

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from Alcoholism.

General Conduct

- I understand my role and duties as a Member of Conference as set out in the Service Handbook.
- I understand that the primary objective of Conference is Third Legacy Service and the operation in principle of the Twelve Traditions.
- I will uphold the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions which are central to the mission of Alcoholics Anonymous and to helping our fellow alcoholics to recover.
- I will ensure to the best of my ability that as a member of conference that I will strive at all times to act with integrity with all stakeholders.
- I will act in what I consider to be the best interests of Alcoholics Anonymous at all times.
- I will act honestly and with integrity and trustworthiness when dealing with colleagues within Alcoholics Anonymous and equally when dealing with individuals and organisations outside it.
- I will strive to uphold the reputation of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Independence, Confidentiality and Judgement

- I will declare any conflict of interest or any circumstance that might be perceived as such by others as soon as it arises, and I will exclude myself from any discussion on any matter where a conflict of interest may arise.
- I will respect the confidentiality of my fellow conference members in discussions that take place at Conference while retaining the freedom to report back to my Intergroup.
- I will submit claims, if any, for legitimate out-of-pocket expenses only in accordance with agreed procedures, nor will I seek to gain benefits for any persons

connected to me such as my family, friends, or any organisation that I own, manage, or work for.

Attendance, Participation and Development

- I will dedicate adequate time and commitment to fulfil my role as a Member of Conference, prepare adequately for meetings and participate in committees and special events when required. I will study the agenda and other information sent to me prior to the meeting and be prepared to engage in debate, and if necessary, vote, on agenda items during the meeting.
- I will strive to attend all Conference meetings (and other relevant meetings) punctually giving apologies ahead of time to the Board Secretary if unable to attend. I note that the paragraph "Retiring Delegates" on page 49/50 (Service Handbook for Ireland 2022) states that "Any Delegate who is absent from two consecutive Annual Meetings of Conference renders him or herself ineligible and automatically retires from Conference."
- I will respect the authority of the Chairperson.
- I will accept a majority Conference vote on an issue as decisive at that time. As per Concept 5, we acknowledge the right of the minority to be heard.
- I will strive to establish open, respectful, supportive and courteous relationships with all those with whom I come into contact in my role as a member of Conference and to cultivate a positive atmosphere at meetings.
- I will strive to bring a fair and open-minded view to all discussions, maintain a respectful balance between speaking and listening, treating different views and experiences with respect, and ensuring that all decisions are made in the best interests of Alcoholics Anonymous. I will strive to act with tolerance, humility, patience, and forbearance in my dealings with colleagues throughout the Fellowship
- I will participate in induction, training, and development activities for Conference members and in processes to evaluate and improve the performance of Conference as a support to the Fellowship.
- I will attend Area and Intergroup meetings in my area in order to become familiar with the issues and problems experienced by those Groups and to offer support and encouragement to find solutions within AA Traditions where required.

Relationship with Employees, Members & Volunteers

- I strive to support employees in carrying out their duties and serve as an example of how everyone associated with Alcoholics Anonymous should conduct themselves.
- I strive to work considerately and fairly with everyone in a way that respects individuals, different roles and boundaries and avoids giving offence.
- I strive to recognise and respect the difference in roles between the Conference, the General Services Board, and employees, respecting the process of administrative duties of employees, members & volunteers, and not interfering with the performance by employees of their duties.

Legal Requirements and Policies

- I strive to uphold the law in all aspects of my role as a member of the General Services Conference.
- I strive to act in accordance with the guidelines of the Alcoholics Anonymous Service Handbook

Members Conduct & Resolution :

- I accept that as a member of Conference, I am also a member of the company AA Ireland and as such strive to follow the above Suggested Guidelines. Therefore, should any member express concern that my behaviour is not consistent with these Guidelines (such concerns to be communicated to the Board Secretary), I accept that I will be expected to meet with representatives delegated by Conference to discuss my commitment to the role for which I have been elected. The Conference representatives shall consist of 2 AA member Trustees and 1 non alcoholic Trustee, approved by Conference for the purposes of mediation and/or resolution.
- I understand that these representatives may conclude that my behaviour constitutes a substantial breach and/or consistent breaches of these guidelines that may result in my being invited to reconsider my role.
- Should I decide to resign from Conference, I will inform the Board Secretary in advance, in writing, stating my reasons for resigning.

YPLO Report to Conference

YPLO Activity

We now have a YPLO in every province, available to attend Area meetings by request. There has already been a lot of excitement at Area meetings in some Provinces we have attended, and a welcoming of the newly created role.

The YPLO's are keen to liaise with their local Area committees that they can link with the Public Information Committee, establish contact with younger members through the GSRs, and start a dialogue between the YPLO and Groups as to how we can bring younger members into AA and support them into service.

The YPLOs have been represented at several conventions, and will have a presence at the All-Ireland in Monaghan.

Subcommittee

The YPLOs have expressed a desire for Conference to allow the subcommittee to be kept on for an additional 12 months to maintain support as the role continues to develop, with a review at the end of that 12-month period. The YPLOs have found the subcommittee to be helpful in the following ways:

- found suitable candidates for each province
- set up committee meetings to facilitate introductions and provide information & support to the YPLOs
- help to communicate with the Area's and representatives what the YPLO role is, and outreach events the YPLOs are involved in
- help to provide support to their local YPLOs where needed, i.e., at Intergroup meetings to facilitate smooth integration into the Intergroup committee

World Service Subcommittee Report

Original Handbook Text

World Service Delegate (WSD)

A WSD is a member of Conference who represents the Fellowship at World Service Meetings and European Service Meetings.

The position of World Service Delegate (WSD) is for a term of four years from date of election. Only retired GSCDs who have served their full term are eligible to be elected as WSD. WSDs are chosen from nominations received from the Provincial Intergroups, having come through the structure in the usual manner. WSD is elected at March Conference and takes up office the following January (Conference 2016)

Qualifications

Nominees should be acquainted with all aspects of AA in Ireland. He/she should have completed a four-year term as GSCD. Retired Trustee/Directors are eligible for this role. A minimum of ten years continuous, current sobriety is preferred, and nominees should be active members of AA.

WSDs should become familiar with Groups throughout the country and should Attend at least one Intergroup meeting in each Province on an annual basis.

A World Service Delegate should be available to fulfil the duties of the role and be capable of preparing and presenting a written report on AA in Ireland. WSDs must be available to travel overseas to World and European Service meetings.

He she must provide a written report to Conference on the World/European Service meetings.

A WSD report to the World Service Meeting or the European Service Meeting should be given to the Board Secretary no later than four months prior to such meetings.

The Board Secretary may then place the WSD report before the General Service Board for editing before it may be presented at World or European Service meetings.

WSD Alternate Delegate

In the event of a WSD not being able to attend a meeting, a member of the Board, nominated by the Board, shall act as Alternate for such meeting.

Proposed changes to Handbook Text

World Service Delegates (WSD)

A WSD is a member of Conference who represents the Fellowship at World Service Meetings and European Service Meetings.

The position of World Service Delegate (WSD) is for a term of four years from the date of election. Only retired GSCDs who have served their full term are eligible to be elected as a WSD. WSDs are chosen from nominations received from the Provincial Intergroups, having come through the structure in the usual manner.

WSDs are elected at the March Conference and takes up office immediately. the following January (Conference 2016)

Qualifications

Nominees should be acquainted with all aspects of AA in Ireland. Only retired GSCDs who have served their full term are eligible to be elected as a WSD. He/she should have completed a four-year term as GSCD. Retired Trustee/Directors are eligible for this role. A minimum of ten years continuous, current sobriety is preferred, and nominees should be active members of AA.

WSDs should become familiar with Groups throughout the country and should attend at least one Intergroup meeting in each Province on an annual basis.

A World Service Delegate should be available to fulfil the duties of the role and be capable of preparing and presenting a written report on AA in Ireland. WSDs must be available to travel overseas to World and European Service meetings and participate in the committees and workshops of both meetings.

He/she must provide a written report to Conference on the World/European Service meetings. In advance of Conference, a synopsis can be presented when visiting Intergroups to keep them informed of what is happening within the fellowship on an international level.

A WSD report to the World Service Meeting or the European Service Meeting should be given to the Board Secretary no later than four months prior to such meetings.

The Board Secretary may then place the WSD report before the General Service Board for editing before it may be presented at World or European Service meetings.

WSD Alternate Delegate

In the event of a WSD not being able to attend a meeting, a member of the Board, nominated by the Board, shall act as Alternate for such meeting

Conference Delegate's Reports

Clare Area Conference Report

Clare Area meets on the last Thursday of each month in Ennis with only approx. 25% of groups being represented.

This is a disappointment as the Area took the decision to ensure all groups within the Area, to avail of the Group Insurance Scheme, and this assistance towards the groups is not being reciprocated.

The members and officers that do attend are a dedicated group and the meeting continues in its efforts to assist the Clare Area fellowship.

All officer positions are filled, albeit the Secretary position only on a meeting-by-meeting voluntary basis at the moment.

Telephone service continues to be supported and the Area have recently changed its number (new number is on the AA website).

The extra requirements of telephone service have caused a certain amount of confusion and upset as no set structure was communicated and the telephone service was left to fend for itself in general and particularly regarding the word "ETC" in the Green Service Handbook.

The communication regarding this service has for a number of years become haphazard where the appearance of just "dotting the T's and crossing the I's" is seen as abandonment towards telephone responders.

In a service such as the telephone response where a life could be in danger, direction not directive is needed.

There is no one person dedicated to the position of P.I. at the moment but the Area formed a subcommittee as the carrying of the message is seen as a very important part of the recovering alcoholics responsibilities.

To that end, whilst Clare Area was unable to have a Convention in 2022 for a number of reasons, it did hold a Day of Gratitude event in Ennis and it was a great success and was fully self-supporting due to the attendees practising the seventh tradition rather than a set registration fee.

This in turn brought some groups briefly back to Area and the work in is ongoing to include all the voices of the Clare Area fellowship.

The P.I. subcommittee also held an Open Public meeting in January which was well attended and helped in no small part by the publicity of the event in various ways and means.

Clare Area currently has only one Intergroup Representative, but this will hopefully increase very soon.

Clare Area continues to forward all donations through the structure when possible but concerns that GSO are not adhering to the same guidelines are increasing and would like clarity on this matter.

Limerick City Area Report

Limerick City Area is currently held on the 3rd Monday of each month and has over a number of months grown to over 75% attendance of the groups in Limerick City. Those attending are not only well informed but also inquisitive as to all matters either brought before them or those that have been researched by the groups and GSRs.

All officers' positions are currently filled with a new P.I. officer having recently taken up the position.

Limerick City has for the first time in a number of years a full complement of Intergroup Representatives who keep the Area aware of the business of Intergroup, whilst attending groups to assist in G.I.S. and AA mailbox setup and how to use them.

Limerick City in conjunction with Limerick County will have already held their convention by the time conference begins, but to date all committee meetings have been well attended and progress has great.

Limerick City Area has concerns regarding the new obligations in respect of telephone service and feel that the communication of such were scarce and directed at them as opposed to a reasoning explanation, and left without any assistance from either GSO, the Board or Trustees.

The proposed "code of conduct" is something they would like to know the origins of as there appears to be conflicting information from meeting to meeting.

Limerick City Area continues to forward all surplus monies through the structure as set out in the Green Service Handbook, and their members have been generous with their donations in 2022, but are extremely disappointed that the said structure is not being upheld by GSO who continue to accept group donations from groups directly. Whilst they understand that this wasn't a problem of the current conference's making, it nevertheless feels that it should be addressed immediately.

The Munster YPLO attended Limerick City Area in January and spoke as to what the role will entail, how this could be achieved and the willingness to assist the Area in the role's primary objective.

The YPLO also gave some ideas to the Area on the night which were welcomed and those that attended were delighted with the YPLO's fresh perspective and look forward to a productive relationship.

Limerick County Area Report

Limerick County Area takes place in Rathkeale on the 2nd Monday of each month but is sparsely attended, with only approx. 20% of the groups attending.

All officers' positions are filled as well as telephone service and P.I.

Unfortunately, despite numerous attempts the fellowship of Limerick County does not appear to want any involvement in helping the running of Area.

This is a disappointment as the people that do attend have spent countless months going to groups to inform them of the necessity of a well-functioning Area but to no avail.

The Area Treasurer got all groups in the Area covered with group insurance and the groups reimbursed the Area for the monies spent.

It appears that only a cheaper insurance quote and cover brought a short sharp increase in the Area attendance and in a lot of cases dissipated literally a minute after receiving it in hard copy.

The practice of an Area Treasurer insuring all groups within the Area, and those groups only attending Area to reimburse the Treasurer and collect the insurance documentation is something that appears to be a more widespread that just Limerick County Area.

Maybe attendance at a given percentage of Area meetings be required before entry into the Group Insurance Scheme is allowable.

This may increase the attendance at the Area and allow it to more fully function.

The Third Tradition only requires that the members have a desire to stop drinking, but the Seventh Tradition requires that we be self-supporting, and this is not being adhered to by the groups themselves in denying the groups members a voice outside the group.

Maybe it's time that the fellowship stops enabling groups such as these , who have shown no interest or intention in the functioning of Area, because the well-meaning of insuring all groups is being taken advantage of.

Nevertheless, the members that do attend Area are an optimistic group and hope that by keeping Area running that groups will return to Area to assist them and not expect everything to be done for them whilst doing absolutely nothing to carry the message.....and a well-functioning Area is part of that.

Limerick County Area continues to forward all surplus monies, when available, through the structure and looks forward to the Limerick convention in February, of which its's playing its part in running.

Tom K Conference Delegate

North and East Cork Area (NaEC) Overview

NaEC consists of 22 groups that cover meetings ranging from Youghal on the Cork Waterford border to meetings in Ballydesmond on the Cork Kerry border not far from Killarney.

Area traditionally meets 10 times per year in two venues. Mallow in the centre of the county and Youghal in the Southeast of the County. This arrangement of using two venues was introduced in 2018 and proved to be successful in attracting more participation and service by G.S.R.s. Members cited convenience and inclusion as motivating factors in the increase in service commitment.

Physical meetings were suspended in 2020 in response to Covid concerns and Area meetings were moved online. Discussions were held in November/December of 2021 and arrangements were made, that when the decision was made to return to in room meetings, the Youghal group would facilitate Area meetings. Physical in-room meetings recommenced in Spring of 2022.

Unfortunately we still notice that there is a high level of absenteeism among groups, especially in the North-western part of the county.

Service at Area and Intergroup

Our Chairperson is John B (Mallow Mercy), Treasurer Willie O R (Mallow Mercy) and Secretary Aidan H (Midleton)

We discussed the need to fill vacant service positions at Area and in line with the Green service handbook; page 43 (composition of Intergroup committee) we took a group conscience decision to ask the Area officers to attend the quarterly Intergroup meetings as representatives of our Area.

We still highlight to area groups the need for members to come forward to fill these service positions.

Public Information

A service group came together to volunteer in the P.I. committee to carry our message of hope via digital media and to avail of the power of social media technology. This group consists of a range of experienced and newer members.

NaEC members have also been in contact with the West Cork Area to offer any assistance in organising and running the upcoming Cork County Convention to be held in Macroom in May of 2023.

Group Insurance

NaEC has operated a group insurance scheme and last year 21 of 22 groups availed of this opt-in scheme at a cost of €50. The scheme is considered to be good value by groups. Previous to the introduction of the scheme groups were reporting policy prices of €200 plus per year.

Motions

The Mallow Mercy group has submitted a motion for Conference. This has been discussed and passed by Munster Intergroup. (Only hard copy available)

Kerry Area

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

Area meetings took place in person in the Brandon Hotel.

Chairperson is John (Keel) Secretary is Chris (Killarney into Action) and Treasurer is Jimmy Throughout the year Area has filled all vacancies for service positions both for service at Area and Munster Intergroup and as part of the mini convention committee. Kerry Area regrets the delay in printing a reference booklet for new G.S.R.'s. This is seen as an upgrade to the welcome pack that Kerry Area has issued to all new G.S.R.'s over the past few years.

Area committee report that the business of A.A. is going well and that there is an active membership engaged in public Information, open public meetings, and Hospital meeting service.

Mini Convention

Kerry area held a successful mini convention in November 2022 at the Brandon Hotel in Tralee. The convention was well attended with a wide range of groups represented from all over Ireland, the U.K. and both Europe and North America

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Kerry Area Mini Convention Committee on the running of a very successful convention in November. Hard worked paid off and the turnout was another record.

Public Information

Kerry P.I. committee meets monthly in the Brandon Hotel one hour before the main meeting of the Area group.

Kerry Area members have also applied for the use of the A'A' logo to organise the upcoming Cork County Convention to be held in Tralee in November of 2023.

John T

Conference Delegate

Cork City Area Report for Conference 2023

In-person physical area meetings resumed in early 2022. Great strides have been made to get our services back to the same level as they were at before the pandemic.

Groups were encouraged to hold inventory meetings and Open Public meetings. Many groups experienced a big increase in the numbers attending their meetings as we began to return to normal life.

Despite major difficulties, many advances have been made to the provision of services by Cork City Area.

A chairperson, secretary and treasurer are in place

We have a full complement (4) of Intergroup delegates

More groups are represented at Area than previously

The service committees in Cork are all operating, though the prison and hospital services are experiencing difficulties not seen before. Great work is being done in the background on these issues and we hope these will be resolved soon.

Many groups went online during Covid-19 and a few of these meetings are still up and running. New online groups have opened and some of these are represented at Cork City Area.

I began my term of service in January 2023 and would like to thank our trusted servants who guided the fellowship in Cork City Area during an unprecedented difficult period.

Public Information

Coming out of the Covid-19 restrictions the PI Committee is up and running. A new energetic committee is making great strides in carrying the AA message.

A strong emphasis is being placed on getting the CPC presentation back on track and huge progress has been made in this area

Doctors' surgeries are visited and AA literature is left in the waiting rooms
The Cork Simon Community and various housing agencies have been approached and told of the service we provide, literature was left with these bodies.

The Student Welfare Officer in UCC was contacted and posters, literature, etc were provided.

Open Meetings are being held in the schools

Hospital

There is one residential Treatment Centre in Cork City Area and they have re-opened their facility to AA for weekly Open Hospital Meetings (physical).

There are 2 hospitals which hosted AA hospital meetings pre-pandemic which are still not willing to have meetings on their premises. Every effort is being made to get these meetings open again.

Prison

AA is not permitted to hold meetings in Cork Prison at the moment. We believe we are very close to rectifying this situation. Meanwhile, a new committee is being formed and members are obtaining clearance certs to ensure we are ready to go as soon as permission is granted.

Open Meeting

Cork City Area host an open meeting on the first Tuesday of every month in the Lough Community Centre. Despite numerous efforts to improve attendance and the work of a dedicated secretary this service is struggling.

Phone

This service is rotated between many groups in the area (more are welcome to join). The phone rotates on a monthly basis and a log is kept of each call and response. The number of queries regarding availability of meetings increased during the pandemic. In general, this service is running well and is coordinated by a designated secretary.

Literature Bank

Cork City Area run a literature bank to assist groups in acquiring AA literature. It operates on the night of our Area Meeting and provides a valuable resource to the groups in keeping their literature stocks refreshed.

WEST CORK AREA REPORT 2022

The West Cork Area is doing well this year. The Area meeting takes place every 6/7 weeks with all meetings very well attended.

There are 14 groups in the area, at least 12 groups attending every area meeting.

Area meetings continue to move around from group to group where facilities are available.

All groups in the area are now open following the closure of some groups during the Pandemic.

A new group was formed representing the Online meetings (West Cork Fellowship).

The Area receives financial contributions from almost all groups and the area regularly makes financial contributions to Intergroup.

All groups in the area avail of the AA Combined Insurance scheme coordinated by the Area committee.

Public Information

PI has been relatively quiet during the past year.

AA posters are placed in Medical Centers, Garda stations, GP surgeries, Hospitals throughout the area

The area is finding it difficult for nominations to come forward from groups to form a committee since the stepping down of the previous committee.

West Cork Area reprinted and updated the Directory of Area Meeting cards and have been distributed to all groups in the area.

An Open Public meeting was arranged by Macroom group and held in November 2022 at Pitch & Putt House Town Park Macroom.

Mobile phone

The mobile phone service is going well.

The mobile phone is being rotated at each Area meeting between all groups attending the area.

Area have asked all groups to volunteer and arrange dates that they would be willing to take over the service thus ensuring the smooth running of this valuable service.

The mobile phone helpline is now placed in a few West Cork magazines (The Opinion, The Grapevine, Lee Valley Herald and Southern Star), therefore helping to reach out to more people in the area.

The phone service is receiving a lot of calls from the public seeking help and times of meetings.

Intergroup report

At present the Area is represented by 3 delegates at Intergroup out of 4 delegates allowed.

The meetings are attended and the area is kept up to date with all correspondence and reports from MIG meetings.

The Area receives financial contributions from almost all groups and the Area regularly makes financial contributions to Munster Intergroup.

This year saw the change of the Conference Delegate, the new Conference Delegate, Mick D is now in place replacing Mick McG.

Convention Report

The area is organising a Convention for 2023 with the assistance of North Cork area. Preparation for this convention has started and is in progress.

Approval for use of the Logo was requested and approved.

The Convention is scheduled for May 26th to May 28th 2023 inclusive.

The convention committee has been set up to help with the organisation and running the convention.

Motion to Conference

Motion Title: Telephone Conveners

The following motion was put forward from Bantry No 2 Group and passed unanimously at West Cork area meeting dated 19/2/2022 and brought to the Intergroup meeting dated 3rd April 2022:

"Conference objects to telephone conveners being appointed by GSO that are not local to persons calling the GSO Helpline number."

"Conference objects to the idea that a person phoning for help may be asked to speak to someone from another region, county or area. Every area has dedicated helplines and members providing cover to assist with calls. Groups were not consulted by GSO on the new telephoning convening or appointment of persons to these roles. It removes our ability to help people locally and to ensure it is helping alcoholics in our catchment area."

"Conference believes the solution is that GSO provide the caller with the area number they require or call the number and pass on the details for members to follow up. This ensures local knowledge of a person in crisis is addressed quickly and the person is brought to their nearest meeting. Asking members from out of area to deal with calls does not make sense when areas are spending time and money providing helplines."

Mick, Conference Delegate.

GSCD Ulster John

Good afternoon everyone, my name is John, and I am an Alcoholic.

I have the privilege of being one of four general service conference delegates in the province of Ulster. I have just completed my second year as GSCD, and again what a year it has been. A year in which we had many trials and tribulations. A year, which saw us starting to return to a new and different normal following the outbreak of Covid-19 virus. An unfortunate thing with which we have had to cope with and still are within our day to day lives.

For Alcoholics Anonymous it was a year that saw an amount of uncertainty especially for a number of our much-loved groups, some of whom have not been able to open for reasons such as being located in Health Trust premises, government buildings and even landlords not wanting them back for one reason or another. We also have groups hit with large rent increases allegedly due to the global economic crisis unfortunately we have had groups close or relocate to cheaper rental premises as a result of this. At

times like these the members have all rallied together to help one and other, which I believe is a great example of Alcoholics Anonymous at work.

Over the past year I have had the occasion to attend 17 area meetings at different times. I have attended most areas at least once with the exceptions of Cavan and Donegal. As we all know Cavan has no area at present and I do believe that there is a Cavan group wanting to join another area. It would be nice to see them trying to restart their own area.

In attending the Areas, I was always well received, and the business of area was conducted in an efficient manner.

A common theme with all areas was the lack of support from the groups in the area. Many areas are functioning with less than 50% of the groups in attendance at area meetings. The officers of the areas are doing their best in trying to encourage absentee groups to attend area meetings. For this I would like to congratulate them as communications is so important.

Some points that I have raised and drew areas attention to were as follows:

Group Information Sheets\Area Officer Forms completion

Mailboxes

Group\Areas should be forwarding surplus through structure quickly.

New Service Handbook

Conference\Motions to Conference

Upcoming 66th All-Ireland to be held in Ulster 28-30 April 2023.

(Hillgrove Hotel and Spa Monaghan)

Telephone Duty

The Office and the future of same.

and I will also be mentioning them to the new officers when I visit their areas.

I have attended a couple of areas AGM and in most cases the officer posts were filled. Telephone Duty, throughout the year I have worked with most areas on this very important service. I would like to extend my thanks to all the people from the different areas that helped and participated in service throughout the year. Also, our Office Administrator who would set the users up on the Horizon Telephone system and get them the telephone packs ready for each of them.

There have been a few problems over the year nothing major which were resolved. For the people answering the calls the main issue is with entering the long password. I would once again remind members that when they are not doing Telephone Duty to uninstall the app or put on the "Do Not Disturb".

From the OA's point of view the obtaining of names and required details is the most problematic issue. Therefore, in going forward we are going to ask areas to provide the names at the intergroup meeting. We do realise that these can change for many reasons. The reason for going back to this is the option that has worked best in the past. It is my intention to hand this over after this year so that a delegate, who is not rotating out, can become familiar with the technical side of the service. All in All, Telephone Duty is working well but (and it is a big BUT) the information that is in the

contact directory is badly in need of being updated through the GIS sheets. I would ask all Areas to try and get their groups to complete a new Group Information Sheet as soon as possible and get it through to CSO. Having the correct information could ultimately save someone's life. That is how important this information is.

As a footnote I only found out two weeks ago that the GB Service uses the same system as us.

In relation to the office as we all know it was proposed that it be reviewed by a professional company that deals with such matters with discussion planned for in the January Intergroup. So, I am not going to say anything on it. What I will say is that some of the speculations that I have heard around the fellowship are ridiculous and unnecessary. Therefore, if you do not know for definite do not say anything as this can lead to discord within the fellowship.

Through the year I attended Conference both in person and online. I would encourage everyone to get and read all minutes so that they are well informed. The next meeting of conference is planned for the 8th December 2022 to further discuss the "Suggested Guidelines for Personal Conduct and Appropriate Behaviour for members of the General Service Conference".

To our outgoing delegates Brian and Kenny, I would like to thank you for all the help you both have given to areas and intergroup over the past 4 years. It has been a pleasure to work with both of you over the last two years and thanks for the help you both have given me.

Folks, that is it.

Thank You

Report to Conference 2023 Billy I GSCD Ulster

Inappropriate Conduct

This statement was read out by me at a GSCD meeting with Trustee on 19th January 2023.

An elected delegate of Ulster Intergroup has gone against the ethical behavioural code as detailed in the Service Handbook (p 69) and page 1 of the Code of Conduct which Special Conference has spent so much time successfully debating over the past few months. This action happened 3 times in quick succession at Group, Area and Intergroup level indicating a vindictive and sustained personal attack on a fellow member thereby setting a poor example to others involved in Service and deterring members from getting involved in Service.

This individual needs to consider resigning for the good of the Fellowship.

An individual capable of such actions in collusion with others is surely unfit to be a member of the General Service Conference and a member of the Company of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The last year has seen AA in Ulster coming out of Covid. Unfortunately we have not seen a return to our previous status in spite of the efforts of officers and many members. As GSCD I have visited all Areas in Ulster. Officers in post are doing their best in spite of shortfall in attendance by GSRs. Many GSRs do their very best to carry the message. Areas have held DOG, PI meetings, and Donegal Area resurrected their Convention after a 3 year break due to Covid restrictions. I had pleasure of serving as GSCD at Convention but unfortunately I could not attend Special Conference on Code of Conduct.

A major area that arose was the ramifications from the CSO and the positions Officers were placed in. Ulster Intergroup decided to employ legal experts to assess our position and give advice on our present circumstances. This is an ongoing situation at time of writing this report.

Groups and Meetings

When we look at the number of Groups in operating in Ulster there is a decline in the number of Groups operating and in the number of meetings held. The following is the range I have come across:

2019

205 Groups: Total Meetings 470

2022

147 Groups: 327 meetings & 52 online: Total Meetings 379.

The data base in CSO shows only 138 Groups available for 12th Step calls.

Groups /meetings in Find a Meeting App.

Number of Groups.	98.	Number of Meetings	283
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The problem how are we going to rectify this in order to fulfil our primary purpose "to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic "

Prisons

A new Ulster Prison Convenor is now in place and she has shared plans which she hopes to implement. Progress was delayed by her having to cover for lack of a Belfast Prison Convenor but having resolved this, plans are being put in place to develop a database, a WhatsApp group, the visiting of Individual Areas and improving contacts within the 4 facilities and to hold P.I. meetings for staff in these facilities. Derry has a new Prison Convenor in place.

Hospitals

Things are improving since Covid and there has been more contact with patients.

GSCD for Ulster Brian D.

I started my new role 2 months ago as GSCD for Ulster.

I have visited 2 Areas since then, namely Armagh and Tyrone.

Armagh Area have new officers in place with all posts filled and New Area officers information sheets have been completed. Their meeting was well organized and structured.

Meeting was well attended and 18 out of the 19 groups in the Area are up on the website. Area has appointed a new PI Convenor and he has the PI Folder and is looking forward to his new role. He was offered guidance and direction in this. The Area is doing an Area Inventory meeting in the next few months. The Area passes all AA money through the structure promptly leaving them with their prudent reserve of £100. The Area minutes are well presented and concise.

I pointed out the importance of the Area Inventory and suggested that the PI Convenor form an Area Committee.

Tyrone Area has 3 new Officers in place and Information sheets have been updated. Area had a D.O.G which was well attended and separate financial report submitted. Area also agreed a Motion to Conference which read well and allowed to proceed to UIG. The Area meeting was well organized, structured with all positions filled. They have a new PI Committee which is proactive within the Area. Area is looking at an Area Inventory in due course and is looking at fulfilling its primary purpose with plenty of activity. Financially the Area is well run with good governance in place and sends anything above their prudent reserve through the structure. They were helping the Derry Area with the prison work as Derry's Prison Convenor had stepped down and were put in contact with the UIG Prison Convenor for guidance and direction.

I am currently the All-Ireland Convention Treasurer and am currently involved in the committee process which is going according to plan.

I have attended Conference twice as an Alternate Delegate, once physical and the other on zoom and enjoyed the experience and debate.

Brian D.

GSCD Ulster James McK

I was privileged to be appointed as a GSCD in November 22 and served 2 years previously as the Ulster Intergroup Secretary.

Attendance in recent months at all Area's has been up on figures recorded pre–Area AGM's Nov 22. All areas are carrying out good work in pursuit of our fifth tradition, though perhaps on the back of new GSR's coming into service there has been some confusion around the remits and responsibilities of those service roles. Most Areas in Ulster would benefit from an inventory.

Worryingly the handling of AA funds and the need to protect individuals, Groups and Areas seems to be just one of the responsibilities that confusion sits around. New and sometimes experienced members in service do not seem aware that the funds are AA's the moment they hit the plate and that after expenses have been paid, everything else above the prudent reserve must be sent ASAP through structure without need for debate.

The Cavan Area collapsed last year though a couple of the Cavan based Groups have become involved in the Fermanagh Area, which hopefully can ensure the Groups are well informed until the Area finds the strength to reform. Attendance at Ulster Intergroup has improved at the last couple of meetings with representation from most Areas attending, which is encouraging.

A couple of Areas in Ulster provide Prison Service but there is further opportunity with the servicing of prisoners outside members own Areas by potential prison sponsors whose time constraints don't suit prison meeting times in their own Area, These Area's would benefit from contact and perhaps a visit from the UIG Prison Coordinator who was appointed a year ago to avail of that willingness.

Ulster has been without a PI Co-Ordinator for the last couple of years, though two or three Area's are active with PI work the loss of a Co-Ordinator has saw a large drop from the momentum that was in place 3 or 4 years ago. PI activity is still sporadically visible at Group level across the Ulster with some Groups extending their coverage to make up for lack of activity at Area level. Sometimes however a lack of clarity in the role can mean that the role is limited to contacting Schools and taking responsibility for running a regular Open Meeting on the group's behalf often with limited advertising outside of AA.

I have continued to be part of the Conference appointed subcommittee for YPLO's. Work is continuing in the background with the 4 Provincial YPLO's now in place. It is slow progress given that no guidelines were previously in place and Conference has entrusted the remit to the committee to help build those inside Structure, Traditions and Concepts. Some physical visibility of our YPLO's will be at this years all Ireland Convention in Monaghan and the Limerick Convention amongst other events. The 4 YPLO's are very enthusiastic and looking at how they can effectively bring their service to the fellowship across Ireland and will be asking support of all Conference members.

Ulster Intergroup is currently working through solutions to alleviate the governance and liability challenges to the Board and some of its own members, caused by the historical running of an office in Belfast and employment of an office administrator. A

legal brief has been prepared by a law firm with charity sector experience and the Intergroup is taking action to find a swift resolution over the next few months.

I attended the physical Conference last year and the conclusion meeting on Zoom. The breakout groups proved to be very successful in getting agreement on a large subject matter and I would like to see their use again. It was disappointing that when we reconvened on Zoom that some of the groups did not address the matter in hand and it took a third meeting to conclude.

Leinster PI Report to Conference 2023

The lifting of Covid 19 restrictions in mid-2022 presented some optimism for a return to PI activity across the board, particularly with school and Youth reach talks. Unfortunately this has been particularly slow with only a small number of requests in the term 2022/23. It is envisaged that it will be the school term 2023/24 before this can be fully evaluated.

Some Groups and Areas have re commenced service days ,open public meetings etc. with varying levels of support reported.

Convenor meetings also suffered during the period and it is hoped that a return to regular Leinster Group PI meetings can happen, whether on Zoom or live as lack of regular contact has proved counterproductive with group PI positions proving difficult to fill on incumbents rotating out of service.

Indeed the Role of Leinster Intergroup PI Convenor has remained unfilled since November 2022.

LEINSTER REPORT ON AREA'S TO CONFERENCE MARCH 2023

Leinster Intergroup consists of 14 areas (areas 3 & 4 are merged).

The 4 Leinster Delegates attend Area's every month to support & assist the Areas & to carry information between Area's, groups & Intergroup. The 4 Delegates rotate annually.

There are an increased number of AA meetings now open after covid & lockdown. The majority of AA meetings are now physical, with a small number of online meetings still continuing.

There are a number of well-established groups which have lost the availability of premises due to covid restrictions e.g., Hospitals & community premises.

It is unlikely that these premises will become available in the near future.

In order to facilitate the loss of some premises, other local groups have increased the numbers of regular AA meetings in their premises.

Physical Meetings are generally well attended, with reduced numbers attending online meetings.

There is an urgent need for all groups to have completed up to date Group information sheets, to be forwarded to GSO in order that the information can be included on the AA website. A number of Area's/Groups have succeeded in encouraging the forwarding of GIS to GSO, but further efforts need to be made to have these necessary forms completed.

Reports to Area's are that most Groups have bank accounts in place & use online banking. Since the opening up of physical meetings after covid lockdown, there has been a considerable improvement in contributions. Efforts continue to be made by Delegates to encourage Groups to support the structure through contributions.

It is accepted that we had a very difficult period during covid, but the financial situation appears to be improving.

Some groups have encountered rent increases due to landlords having to deal with increased energy charges.

Service positions such as meeting secretaries & Area roles e.g. Treasurer and secretary are being filled. However there is ongoing work to be done in encouraging members into Area PI positions.

The majority of Area's report that their on-line Area Meetings have been very successful, with Area business being carried out, Officers being elected and rotated, and better-than-normal attendance from GSRs. Many Areas have also implemented "WhatsApp" Groups to assist with the flow of information between Area Secretary and other Officers and GSRs, in conjunction with using Group Secretary emails.

Not all physical Area meetings are well attended.

Telephone service

Twelve of the Areas between them share the 6 Afterhours Telephones (with the exception of Area 11). The phones are reported to be busy. Members who handle the after-hours phone service, state the importance of all Groups registering their meeting times and venues immediately with GSO, so that an updated Directory is available to them when answering enquiries.

Prison service

The Leinster subcommittee are happy to announce the return of the in person AA meetings after an absence of nearly two years.

During the first wave of the pandemic they tried to host meetings on zoom but were unsuccessful.

Out of the 13 meetings running in Dublin, three of them are in Mountjoy with another 8 up and running well.

At these meetings they have a core group attending on a weekly basis.

An open aa meeting once a month via zoom is being considered.

The Prison subcommittee hosts information evening for those who wish to get involved.

There are currently approx. 40 active members doing service.

Galway Area Report to Conference 2023

Meetings

Galway Area meetings are held every six weeks except summer holiday period. Attendance is varying, with many groups not being represented. In June 2022 there were eighty-four physical and 36 online known group meetings. Attendance ranged from six to twelve people, which is disappointing considering the size and population of Galway City and County and the number of active groups therein. Area meetings are hybrid with an Online platform provided for members who cannot attend in person. As the year progressed there was an increasing migration from online to physical presence. However, attendance does not seem to have recovered fully since Covid restrictions were lifted. There is also anecdotal evidence that attendance at physical group meetings has also remained depleted.

Public Information

Several meetings of the PI committee were held during the year to discuss and organise methods to create awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous in the general public and particularly the suffering alcoholic who is seeking help. The traditional method of putting an Advertisement in the local paper continues. This is done in the *Galway Advertiser* weekly.

All the evidence is younger people use the print media sparingly to obtain information on news, products or services. Instead, social media and online platforms is their preferred choice. Therefore, Galway PI Committee felt it was crucial to have an on-line presence to reach this group, using Facebook and Instagram. There are a number of younger Social Media savvy members serving on the PI committee, providing attractive and appropriate content. See [Alcoholics Anonymous Galway | Facebook](#).

The committee continues to look at new and innovative ways to create awareness such as the Mayo Area poster campaign.

Communications

475 subscribers are receiving notifications by email, on meeting changes, updates, local events such as open public meetings and conventions and other relevant AA information.

There is an ongoing campaign by Area to encourage groups to fill the GIS. This information is crucial at local and national level. Response on this is sluggish to say the least. It would seem to require direct contact with a prominent member in each group to affect action on this.

Group Insurance

Galway Area continues to provide a service to the rest of Connacht regarding Group Insurance. The current costs to each group is €50 per annum which is paid to Galway Area. Area in turn pays a bulk premium to the insurance company.

Phone Service

Galway Area continues to provide a localised phone service via a mobile phone **085 753 7100** which is publicised by PI committee. This is manned from 12 noon to 10pm 7 days a week. The **Phone Convenor** redirects all calls to the next responder for the coming week every Sunday. Persons wishing to do phone service are required to view a twenty-minute video plus a twenty-minute Power Point Presentation briefing on the 'Dos', 'Don'ts' and guidelines for safe and ethical phone service, before they are placed on the panel of responders. Responders are strongly advised to remove their personal or business identification from their personal mobile greeting (that would identify them or break their anonymity) before having the published number forwarded to their phone.

There are an average of seven calls per week, with queries which can roughly be categorised as help for friend/family member, help for oneself, meeting information 50%. The high percentage of calls seeking meeting information underscores the need for up-to-date information on group meetings. There is a marked increase in meeting information enquiries during the summer holiday period.

Positions – As of January 2023 Galway Area is seeking four Connaught IG delegates. Area continues to seek members for service on Phone and PI Committees.

Convention

The Galway Area Convention was held early January 2023 with large attendance in the Galway Bay Hotel. There were public meetings, marathon meetings, workshops, literature and entertainment provided with large participation in all areas. A full report on attendance, finances, difficulties and successes will be reported to next Area meeting in early March 2023 by the Conference Committee.

MAYO AREA REPORT 2022

Mayo Area held their Mayo Area meetings on a six weekly basis usually and they were all held face to face. As happened in 2021, the meetings were held at different venues around the county with a view to attracting more members to attend. Unfortunately, there was no big increase in the attendance at meetings throughout the year but some

new members did attend when they could and this was seen to be beneficial as they got an insight in to what went on at Area and what was discussed. One member came back into service and took on the role as Hope House Convenor which was a great asset. Though numbers attending Area were small a lot of work was done for the year. The Hope House OPMs were re-instated Mayo Area finally got permission to post stickers on bottle banks with the AA helpline no. The process to achieve this was long and arduous, but with the perseverance of members it happened and stickers are presently being put on bottle banks throughout the county. There were two radio campaigns, one on MWR, the other on CRC, where the AA helpline no. was given out. One school requested a school talk in Ballyhaunis and this was facilitated and feedback was positive. A DOG was held in November instead of the Mayo Area Convention and hopefully in 2023 there will be more members in Mayo Area to help run the Convention and it will return. The DOG was a big success and. feedback was very positive.

The Mayo Area secretary rotated out of her post and was not replaced until late 2022, taking up position in the New Year. No minutes of meetings were taken officially and therefore no minutes posted out to groups. Mayo Area does not presently have a PI Officer but despite this the members attending Mayo Area looked after PI business. Groups were encouraged to reinstate their meeting on the AA website and one new group opened up in Castlebar. Mayo Area meeting lists were printed and made available at meetings. There are currently 26 groups holding face to face meetings in Mayo with 25 listed on the AA website and 2 online meetings listed. It appears that some members have not returned to face to face meetings or not returned to meetings at all since Covid and numbers attending some meetings has been reduced. This in turn is leading to a difficulty in getting secretaries for meetings and for meetings to be self-supporting. There is one Mayo Area IG delegate and they will be rotating to another post in 2023 so there won't be any. So, with the lack of IG delegates, certain aspects of service are not being fulfilled. However, as stated before, much work is being done. All relevant information from Conference /CIG meetings was communicated to members at Mayo Area. Mayo Area have no motions to Conference to submit for Conference 2023. There is no PI Officer in Mayo Area and there are IGDs vacancies. Mayo Area donated 4,000 euro to CIG, which would be down compared to 2021.

So, to conclude, in 2023, Mayo Area are facing into another difficult year, but will continue to Carry the Message as best they can.

Marilyn K GSCD Connaught

ROSCOMMON, SOUTH LETRIM, ATHLONE AREA REPORT

There are about 6 groups attending area out of 15 groups, plus 2 new groups have started up. One in Athleague (on Friday night) and one in Boyle.

We are beginning to see a few more members attending from other groups recently. One of the problems appears since the Covid + Zoom getting people to do service at group level.

This is now beginning to happen where the group has a structure and as a result people who volunteer to do service will automatically come to area and then to Intergroup.

Roscommon, South Leitrim, and Athlone proposed and was unanimously carried, not to change our preamble, to keep it the same was reinforced not for changing and to keep the phrase "Men and Women".

We may have an open day next year as there was not enough interest this year, which requires more people to attend area.

Our area requires a Secretary, we are working on this as it is a vital position. Area has a laptop which was purchased by our area which will help going forward.

Joe M and others are going to other meeting in the area to let people know what is happening in our area and this will help going forward to attract people to area, carrying the message from group – area – intergroup and vice versa.

"In order to keep this present, we have to give it away".

"Think about service + Join us".

N.B.

It has been communicated in our area that attending Connaught Intergroup is not conducive at the moment, to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous – so people do not attend Intergroup and want to stay out of anything that would affect their sobriety. They just want to be involved in carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholics ----- This is what Alcoholics Anonymous is about.

Also, it has been agreed to spend money in the area on promoting the phone numbers through the media.

Joe B Conference Delegate

Connacht Conference Delegate Report 2022-2023 Sligo/North Leitrim

This is my second report as Conference delegate and I am privileged to serve in this position. 2022 at last saw the return to a more normal state of affairs regarding the meetings in AA. While some groups continued to hold their meetings online, others used online and face to face and a number returned fully with face to face meetings.

The strength of the fellowship however has not dwindled either during or after the pandemic. There is no doubt that the pandemic was challenging for many AA members, we did however come through this crisis well, mainly because we are blessed with a programme and a one day at a time attitude which really helped.

The areas and Intergroup continued to forward surplus monies through the structure. As mentioned in my report last year, and a big concern during this year again was the numbers of members attending area, many groups were consistently not represented and concern was also voiced at many area meetings about some long time members that were giving negative commentary about area and intergroup service which we thought is against the spirit of AA and is damaging to AA as a whole and is not acceptable and contrary to Tradition 1.

The area is committed to continue to look at ways of encouraging all groups to send at least one member to area. The concern at area is that attendance is low and that current members are in their positions longer than the suggested period.

The prison meetings returned in Loughan House, which Sligo North Leitrim area services through its members and convenor Martin O B. The meetings are attended by 2-3 regular inmates and a big thank you to Martin for his service and all members from the area that attend the meetings there on Thursday evenings. The area is also privileged to have area representative Monica H serving out her final year as Intergroup secretary and we thank her for her great work.

I am also privileged to serve on the YPLO Sub Committee with a number of other conference delegates from Ulster, Leinster and Munster. It is a pleasure to report that there is 4 YPLO officers in place, one in each of the four provinces. These young members are a pleasure to work with and are working hard to encourage young people into service in the fellowship and carry the message to the still suffering alcoholics, young and not so young. We can look forward to hearing how this exciting group of people will grow and help our fellowship in the coming years.

PI is a concern in this area as well. Sligo/North Leitrim is still looking for members to serve in this area. Despite this there was a lot of PI work going on in the area during the past year including the hosting of an open meeting at IT Sligo for the addiction studies students which receives great feedback each year.

This past year, 2022 saw the resignation of Connacht Trustee, Rory H. We thank Rory for his service and wish him well. The search for a replacement Trustee is currently underway at time of writing this report. Connacht conference delegates went through a lengthy process to find a replacement and settled on two very worthy candidates. One of the candidates, who initially expressed interest in the position and was proposed and seconded at Intergroup, has since withdrew. It is now hoped that the second candidate, who was also subsequently proposed and seconded at Intergroup and has the unanimous consensus of Connacht Intergroup will be ratified by the board and be in place in time for conference.

During 2022 it was also good to be involved with conference in discussing a very controversial document, "Code of conduct for general service conference delegates". This document, which initially was very stern and disciplinary in content and tone was, after a one day workshop in Tullamore in October and two subsequent online meetings, much more in keeping with the AA programme and traditions and will

instead be called something along the lines of "Suggested Guidelines for personal conduct and appropriate behaviour for general service conference delegates".

The phone service is working really well with approximately 30 members offering their time to cover the phone for a week at a time. Well done to James O S for his great service. Positions are available at Intergroup for Treasurer, Phone Convenor Prison Convenor and PI. We are also very short of Intergroup Delegates and we are encouraging all areas to send their full quota of 4 members from each area to Intergroup. I wish outgoing Conference member for Connacht Marilyn K, all the very best for the future and welcome incoming member John G. Indeed I wish all outgoing, current and new conference delegates the very best in 2023. I look forward to attending this 2023 Conference in Tullamore which will be my first face to face conference.

Yours in Service Sean C

DRAFT

27TH VIRTUAL WORLD SERVICE MEETING

1st - 6th October 2022

THEME: Carrying the message of A.A. in the Digital Age

The WSM was held online over one week with extensive technical preparatory sessions offered and ongoing professional tech support provided throughout the meeting. The two key languages used were English and Spanish, with translators available for other languages when required. The Meeting was moderated by Bob W. General Manager USA/Canada and coordinated by Racy J. GSO US/Canada.

Each delegate was given one minute to introduce themselves *Red Ball Meeting*. There were thirty-seven countries attending with most countries represented by two delegates. WS delegates presented their respective Country Highlights over the course of the week. These offered an insight into how well AA is today globally and how different countries are dealing with challenges. A two thirds majority vote admitted Mongolia to the meeting (sixty-two yes votes from a possible 76).

There were very informative Literature Fund and World Service Meeting Fund Presentations given by Bob W. It was noted that although the cost to each country service structure to send a delegate to a face-to-face WSM is 1500 USD, the actual cost per delegate is in excess of 5000 USD and this funded by GSO US/Canada. We were proud to report that AA Ireland is contributing to the International Literature Fund again, a valuable service which helps countries all over the world who can't yet afford to translate and publish in their own languages. Since the inception of the International Literature Fund in 1990, the impact on the increase of the reach of our literature into the hands of hopeless alcoholics is incalculable. The generous contributions from around the world since that time are truly amazing – approaching three million dollars. David R. the Publishing Director also summarised the broad reach of the Licensing & Translation services offered by A.A.W.S.

In addition to the Country Highlights, the week was broken up into themed workshops, committee meetings and presentations, many of which focused on the theme of the new virtual era. The committees included ongoing World Service Meeting business topics *Agenda, Literature, Policy Admissions and Finance* and *Working with Others*. The presentations given by different WS delegates were all very well researched and included topics such as: *A.A. and New Technologies; A.A. Literature on Digital Platforms; Technology and A.A. – Reaching All Generations; What is our Attraction? – Unity and Service;* and *The Seventh Tradition: Fully self-supporting in the Digital Age*.

In the presentation *Our non-alcoholic friends*, a key theme was how do our *Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community committees reach professionals "on the frontlines"*. A further question was unravelled: *Does A.A. literature attract and encourage professionals to refer clients to A.A; do we speak "their language?"*

In workshops comprising approximately fifteen delegates the following themes were discussed and reported back to the main meeting.

Workshop I: How to encourage the seventh tradition in the time of a pandemic/social isolation at each level of the structure.

(a) What are the barriers for members in contributing to their groups and service entities?

Some of the main barriers included decreased attendance, technology issues, lack of transparency with online groups, lack of integration of online groups, lack of communication, information, language barriers, unwillingness, fear of online banking and even a lack of a bank account for virtual groups and, initially, less-than-perfect transparency in reporting of funds due to use of personal bank accounts.

A financial crash in contributions in the early days of lockdown had service structures worldwide concerned about the future of AA and many groups closed but we are a resilient lot and through innovative and resolute leadership we have bounced back.

Groups needed to pause and figure out how to fulfil the Seventh Tradition in the new online group world and then needed help in training group members in the technology and in accepting the new paradigm. This modern generation is familiar with online banking and other digital payment methods and so the oldsters had to be taught by the youngsters, which created a new and refreshing dynamic. Some countries have seen online groups become the fundamental pillar and leader for contributions. It is accepted that we are entering a cashless world and we will need to adapt further.

(b) What is the effectiveness of the online basket? Have online baskets increased or decreased group contributions to A.A. service entities? Are the A.A. groups contributing or are we leaning on individual members' contributions?

Online basket donations gradually increased as the pandemic progressed; contributions were from individuals mostly and as payment methods became more sophisticated and secure the fear of loss of anonymity decreased among members. Many members tended to send more money than they would normally have put in the physical basket.

There is a strong sense of understanding regarding the need for contributions. Communication and training in contributing helps, especially as new members arrive. With a lack of an online group structure the need for contributions needs to be highlighted and perhaps combine the online group with the physical group to create a good group conscience will aid this. Online groups are here to stay, they won't close; the virtual basket will begin to work better with time.

(c) Does the sharing of our experiences and stories on how A.A. uses Seventh Tradition funds help inspire members to contribute in order to support the services?

Yes, spiritual sharing vs. reporting increases the donations. Members need to understand that money and spirituality do mix in this tradition. Fellowship encourages participation. Sharing about the Seventh Tradition and communicating its importance through explaining about how the money is used and the lives that are saved is paramount to survival and growth in the digital age.

When we support our GSO and international funds we can see the growth of AA worldwide. What came across clearly during the workshops was that although we all come from diverse cultures, overall, we have experienced the same problems and in general applies the same solutions, being open and informative inspires members to contribute. Members respond positively to trustworthy communication; it is our collective responsibility to contribute to the services that effectively support carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Workshop II: Virtual Groups: How can they be integrated into the General Service Conference structure?

(a) Do your local service entities list online groups and if so, are the groups considered geographically based?

Most countries do list online groups, but autonomy was essential, with each country needing to consider existing structures and constraints. Approaches were agreed by their individual group consciences. Many countries list online groups but currently this does not necessarily mean they have been accepted into the country service structure.

Two distinct types of online groups seem most common. There are geographically identifying groups which have sprung out of former physical groups or have decided to align with a particular geography. And then there are groups identifying as international with a non-specific geographic identity. Hybrid groups, which are geographically based are becoming popular. There are also many international online groups that are non-structure specific but who require a personal name for contact records. Many geographically based online groups which developed from physical

meetings have GSRs or Intergroup representatives that take part in the service structure.

A few countries reported having no online groups but some of those are interested in learning more about digital AA. Many online groups want to be involved in the service structure and many countries want to incorporate them into their structure and are still exploring ways to accommodate this whilst recognizing that there is a difference between online groups and online meetings. Countries have developed different approaches to including online groups; one country created an "Online Committee" at the GSB level.

(b) Do online groups have a vote and a voice in your structure?

Russia includes online geographically based groups in their traditional structure and has a virtual area that consists of groups that are not geographically based.

Many European countries have incorporated online groups into their structures with full participating rights. In other countries online groups have no voice and no vote. There are also countries where online groups may take part at the local intergroup level but not at the Conference. In some smaller structures groups participate at the Conference directly and again some include online groups with a voice and a vote. There are those who believe that if a group can send a representative to attend a service meeting physically, they can participate.

Australia has a virtual area whose delegate will attend their General Service Conference for the first time this year. Established guidelines are available on their website: <https://aa.org.au/>. Literature is available which includes information about the participation of online groups. One structure shared that while digital forums worked well during the pandemic, they now only accept physical participation.

It was noted that discussions about the inclusion of online groups reveals different opinions that could challenge unity and that changes in society at large brings change also to A.A. It was acknowledged that some members only experience of A.A. was virtual and that we have a responsibility to allow them to be represented – but how?

Some countries do not recognize online groups at all while some countries felt it was important to have a vision for acknowledging online groups as part of A.A. in their country. Some countries only include geographically based online groups in their structure with a voice and a vote but not international online groups. Online groups need to join a structure if they want to participate.

c. How might online group participation in our service structures help or inhibit A.A.'s growth and reach?

Online groups can help reach alcoholics in remote areas or encourage older members, new mothers and those with mental and physical impairments to attend meetings. All this plus an influx of young people will help grow AA. Clear guidelines on how to include virtual groups would be helpful. Some feel online groups lack the spiritual element present in physical meetings. There is a possible non-interest in service in online groups and a lack of service positions. There are still concern about privacy/confidentiality and 7th tradition contributions.

Workshop III: A.A. in Society: Relationship with networks and social media

a. How do we adhere to A.A. Traditions while being on the platforms that people use? (Example: Anonymity and affiliation).

The consensus was that one of the main challenges about maintaining a presence on the Internet is preserving A.A. Traditions, especially traditions 6 and 11. Generally, this is possible in the case of web pages managed by the offices of each service structure. In many structures, such as Mexico and the United States/ Canada, the appropriation of the A.A. logo by entities that do not adhere to the A.A. Traditions presents an obstacle in terms of people reaching the central office. Experiences do vary. The structures' official sites are expanding their tools. The US/Canada delegate shared that their structure is trying to work with "Google Profiles" in order to keep information updated for the Fellowship.

b. What social media platforms are members, groups, and service entities using to carry the message of A.A.?

Many delegates agreed that the public seeks help through the Internet. Most countries represented at the WSM use all known social media platforms to carry the A.A. message to those who have a drinking problem. There are those also who think that anonymity is hard to maintain in the virtual world with platforms such as Zoom, Skype and WhatsApp. Delegates generally agreed that the tendency is to incorporate such tools into the structure.

Facebook is used widely by A.A. members in many countries, but with accounts that are not connected to GSOs or CSOs. There are also structure's that have created Twitter and YouTube accounts with official names and a quick path to their AA web page. Conversely, countries such as Japan do not use social media and the country in general is a paper-based society. India also favours the written word with the big book printed in 14 languages. Many structures have created guidelines for managing the Internet and social media but clearly many challenges lie ahead.

c. How do social media platforms and professional networking platforms help alcoholics we have yet to reach? Is the language we use on these platforms from our literature an effective way in reaching diverse current and potential members?

Social media, Facebook, WhatsApp and others, are used to carry information to professionals, agencies and institutions. The delegate from Japan mentioned that this was akin to the impact the article by Jack Alexander had in its time but much still had to be done. Working jointly with Class A trustees to spread the message of A.A. through social media to professionals likely to encounter alcoholics in the course of their work was discussed as was the difficulty of sourcing trustees in some structures.

We were privileged to represent Ireland at the 27TH VIRTUAL WORLD SERVICE MEETING. The excellent technical support and translation services on offer helped us all sustain the seven days online. Dancing and music between sessions helped to keep us energised! There were members attending in the middle of the night from their respective time zones. We were quite blessed to have been daytime attendees! We hope that you find the experiences of other countries valuable and helpful. The full report is available as a PDF and online: <https://www.aa.org>

Moira S. and Tom D.
World Service Delegates

FIFTY-SIXTH GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS – GREAT BRITAIN 8-10 APRIL 2022

THEME: THE FAMILY AFTERWARDS

The Fifty-Sixth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain convened in person at the Park Inn Hotel, York on Friday 8th April 2022 with a hybrid option for those who could not attend in person. The Conference comprised: 83 delegates from sixteen Regions of which 6 joined online; 24 members of the General Service Board of which 2 attended online; Adele S. (Conference Chair), Ranjan (General Secretary) and 7 members of staff from the General Service Office. Also in attendance were 9 Observers including ourselves from Ireland.

The Conference was opened with a very moving keynote address from the Chair Adele S. from Scotia Region on her chosen theme *The Family Afterward*.

Presentations

The following extracts from the most informative General Service Board Reports were given. These Finance, Literature, Safeguarding and PI/Communications Presentations were all passed by two-thirds majority vote.

Finance Presentation

Clive K. (Honorary Treasurer GSB) spoke of how although AA GB had endured a second year of restrictions due to the Pandemic, the Fellowship had shown its true colours by continuing to step up and adapt to this challenge. GSB holds 3 accounts for the Charity and these include a *Development Fund Account* serviced by the royalty's derived from the sale of the Hard Copy versions of the Big Book and the Twelve Steps and X Twelve Traditions. This money is used to promote Primary Purpose activities and aid the AA infrastructure around the globe, mainly in Eastern Europe & Sub-Sahara Africa. There is also a *European Service Meeting Account* which is serviced by the English speaking countries in Europe to fund their bi-annual meetings which are held in York. And thirdly there is a *General Open Account* serviced by the contributions from the Fellowship, sale of AA literature and Investment revenue. GB also have an Investment Company which acts on the Charity's behalf investing the money in their *Ethical Fund*.

Safeguarding Guidelines

Jonathon P. presented the final version of the Safeguarding Document. He spoke of how the welfare of the individual, anonymity and our primary purpose are at the core of our understanding that safeguarding is for everyone. The aim of the guidance is to provide the background and a general framework for AA groups seeking to tackle safeguarding issues. Abuse and exploitation in all its forms should not be tolerated at

any level of the structure; members have the right to feel secure in meetings and whilst going about AA service / business. Some examples given included cyber abuse, direct physical or emotional abuse, or negligent treatment. People may be abused or exploited, for example, because of their disability, religion, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, gender, age, stature, appearance etc.

In dealing with any unacceptable behaviour the response must also be measured and reasonable, given all the circumstances. Members should neither place themselves in danger physically, nor open themselves or the group to legal repercussions. If an incident cannot be defused quickly and safely, members and groups may have to consider involving appropriate outside agencies. None of us is above the law. If an issue is within the law, our Traditions apply; if outside the law, then contact outside agencies.

Literature

Erik K. of The Literature Service Committee presented revisions to four pamphlets this year: *Sponsorship: Your Questions Answered*, *AA Business Meetings*, *the Group Conscience and Group Conscience Meetings*, *Growing into Service* and *Younger People in AA*.

PI / Communications

Tom Fox (non-alcoholic Trustee) introduced the AA GB 75 year Anniversary video before screening it. He spoke of how the Committee looked at a variety of different life stories, with different people coming from different places coming to the Fellowship in different ways; all of them bringing with them an insight into how this Fellowship has evolved and changed. People who came to the Fellowship because somebody told them to go to a meeting; people who came to the Fellowship because they saw an advert; people who came to the fellowship through the telephone helpline, people who came to the fellowship online for the first time.

Stevie S. of the **75th Anniversary Convention Committee** also spoke of the excitement about the upcoming 75 years Convention and the special publication for the event.

Sub Committee Updates

There were also Updates from a broad range of subcommittees including: National Conventions, Probation, 2020 Survey, First Response, Roundabout + Share magazine subcommittees. After all the subcommittee presentations there was an Open Session for general questions. Here are a selection of the updates:

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

Archives Update: Responses from the Archives Sub-Committee to the Conference question concerned the transfer of materials from regional and intergroup archives to the AA Archive at the Borthwick Institute. The Committee agreed that the best way to keep archive material intact is for it to be moved to GSO/Borthwick for the best protection of the fellowship's history.

Electronic Communications: In Spring 2021 GSO were pleased to welcome AA-GB's new Web Manager who joined GSO staff, and ECSC were happy to help her find her way through our large and complex website. Much of the early-stage work was of a housekeeping nature and a great deal of tidying up has already been carried out with some much-needed streamlining of background processes.

Employment Update: The enthusiastic nucleus of members are continuing interaction with Regions. The "Now You are an Employment Liaison Officer" pamphlet is now available and being distributed. An informative flyer to interest potential Employment Sub-committee members is under preparation.

The "Blue Light" initiative is being continued. Active results with local Employment Liaison Officer involvement are being achieved with Humberside and Dorset Police Welfare teams. Other Police opportunities are being pursued. A more nationally attractive approach for all "Blue Light" services is under planning. The value of working with Health and Public Information subcommittees is recognised and encouraged.

Health Update: Undaunted by the Pandemic, the Health Subcommittee continued to support Health Liaison Officers at Regional and Intergroup level, who in turn continue to meet online to carry out regular Open Meeting Workshops within universities, colleges, hospitals, health practices and other health care facilities throughout AAGB.

Prisons Update: The Prison Liaison Officers have been doing a marvellous job in delivering Roundabouts and Shares to the still suffering alcoholics in Prisons, as well as using Postal Sponsorship, these have been well received.

Young People: The Young Peoples section of the AA GB web site is being revamped to make it more user friendly and bring it up to date. During their meetings they have looked at literature and pamphlets available for young people and submitted revisions to the 'Younger people in AA' pamphlet to the Literature Sub Committee who have chosen 4 new stories from the ones collected. The rest of the stories submitted by young people will be forwarded to Share and Roundabout.

Committees

The Conference participants are broken in to six committees to hear responses from the Regions to recommendations. In addition, every Conference Committee reviewed one or more sections from *The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain* and / or *The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain*. Below are the six committees' topics, which were thoroughly discussed, voted on and reported back by each chair to the main Conference body:

1. What more can be done to raise awareness that as AA members, especially in a sponsorship capacity, we do not give unqualified medical advice on the treatment of another member, especially concerning the use of prescribed medication for a mental illness?
2. Would the Fellowship share experience and make recommendations on how groups can continue to meet in-person and abide by government COVID-19 regulations, such as contact tracing, vaccination status, whilst being mindful of our Traditions?

Would the fellowship consider how post lockdown the website can evolve to meet its requirements?

3. Would Conference discuss and make recommendations on making our language and literature more inclusive, taking into account the numbers of non-binary and gender- fluid members accessing the fellowship in recent times.

Would the fellowship share experience on how, under pandemic conditions, it:
a) has carried the message to members and potential members in hospitals, treatment centres and other institutions; b) has carried out PI activities aimed at doctors and other professionals working in these institutions?

4. Would the Fellowship please consider deleting the second point of the "Just for Today" card, "Just for today I will be happy. Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be", as it is potentially misleading for newcomers?
5. Should AAGB update the AA Preamble published on its website and in literature to the gender-neutral version recently updated by the AA Grapevine and agreed upon at the 71st General Service Conference (US/Canada)?

Will the fellowship (through Conference) discuss and give further guidance concerning the autonomy and authority of National Conventions and their committees relating to online marketing, AA commemorative merchandise & raffles etc within their venues.

6. Would the fellowship discuss and share experience on the following matters concerning group autonomy:
 - a. How may a group's qualification for inclusion in the AA GB and English-Speaking Continental Europe service structure and local and national meetings lists be determined?
 - b. How should secular AA groups using a modified version of AA's 12 Steps and AA's 12 Traditions be viewed within the context of the legacy of AA unity?

Summary

The AA GB was an absorbing, diligent, democratic and most informative few days. It was wonderful to meet our counterpart committed trusted servants from over the water. The format of using subcommittees, something that we have already been

doing in Ireland, is very valuable for more focused discussion and feedback and definitely something to consider more for Ireland.

The fellowship faces some of the same issues as we have in Ireland, such as underrepresentation from certain regions (for example rural Scotland). One significant difference however is the strikingly higher proportion of women at this level of service whether as delegates or trustees. There were also a small but vocal body of younger members participating. There is an active and evolving focus in AAGB PI on attracting more women, young people, people of ethnic diversity and those from the LGBTQ+ and Blue Light communities into the fellowship.

Although we were observers we were welcomed to contribute our experience strength and hope in the Committee sessions.

Full AA GB 2022 Report:

<https://www.alcoholicsanonymous.org.uk/Members/Document-Library> > Conference Reports & Background > Conference 2022

Moira S. WSD and Hubert J. GSCD

65th ALL IRELAND CONVENTION REPORT 2022

The 65th All Ireland Convention was hosted by Munster Intergroup on behalf of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland and was held in the Metropole Hotel, Cork on the 22nd to the 24th of April 2022 with an Early Bird Meeting held on 21st April 2022

In April 2021 proposals were sought from Areas within Munster to host the 65th All Ireland Convention. While the Convention in 2021 was held online there was a strong desire within Munster Intergroup to host a physical Convention in 2022, if possible.

In July 2021 Munster Intergroup received proposals from Cork City and Kerry Area to host the Convention. It was clear from these proposals that the costs of hiring a hotel for the Convention would be substantially higher than in previous years. A decision was made by Munster Intergroup in August 2021 that the Convention would be held in The Metropole Hotel, Cork.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE

The Convention Committee, comprising of the Munster Trustee, four Conference Delegates from Munster and the three Intergroup Officers was appointed and held its first meeting on 7th July 2021.

It was agreed at that meeting that the Committee would meet on a regular basis, with the majority of the meeting being held online, and that all significant decisions regarding the running of the Convention would be made by the Committee as a whole.

It was that the theme of the Convention would be "One Day at a Time".

After a venue was chosen by Munster Intergroup negotiations took place with the Metropole Hotel in relation to the contract to hold the Convention. The Committee were very conscious that there was a significant risk that the Convention would have to be cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions and everything possible was done to reduce any potential loss that would arise because of any such cancellation. A budget for the Convention was agreed and it was further agreed that expenditure on insurance, badges, banners, printing etc would not be incurred until mid-March of 2022. Given the projected costs, the registration fee was set at €15 which would require around 540 members to register to break even.

It was agreed to send an invitation to Al Anon who would be responsible for their own dealings with the Hotel.

During the period from October 2021 to January 2022 a detailed programme for the Convention was agreed. In addition, a Plan B was in place if the physical Convention had to be cancelled.

PRO:

The poster was placed on the AA website in October 2021 and word was spread through the fellowship about the upcoming Convention. Press releases were issued to local and national press in advance of the Convention and members spoke on local radio in Cork City and County.

MAIN MEETINGS:

The main ballroom of the Hotel was used for the Opening Meeting, presentation on "How AA Came to Ireland", workshop on the theme "Is Apathy Killing AA", Meet the Board and Closing Meeting.

All these meetings were very well attended.

MARATHON MEETINGS:

Marathon meetings were run on an hourly basis, these were well attended as was the Early Bird Meeting on the Thursday night. One marathon meeting on the topic "Sex, Love and Intimacy in Sobriety" had an attendance of over 200 members.

MEET THE BOARD:

Meet the Board Meeting was held at 4:00 pm on the Saturday. The vast majority of those who attended appreciated the opportunity to meet the Board and ask questions of them.

ENTERTAINMENT

A disco was held on both Friday and Saturday night. In addition, there was a music session in the hotel foyer on both nights. These were well attended, and everyone had a good time.

LITERATURE

Traditionally the literature stand was manned by members of the GSO staff. For this Convention a decision was taken that the Convention Committee themselves should look after the literature desk. The Convention Committee are very grateful to the literature Committee of Cork City Area for their work in running the literature desk at the Convention over the weekend.

REGISTRATION

538 members registered over the weekend.

Tickets for the discos on Friday and Saturday were €5 each and 91 tickets were sold on each night.

Registration was supervised by the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer and money was banked on a regular basis. The Committee are very grateful to all those members who manned the registration desks over the weekend.

ARCHIVES

A room was set aside for the Archive Display and there was considerable interest over the weekend. R=The Committee are very grateful to the member who travelled a long distance to set up the archives and supervise the display over the weekend.

DRAFT

