

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF IRELAND**



**ROLL CALL AND MINUTES  
OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GENERAL & RECONVENED MEETING  
OF CONFERENCE 2018**

**TULLAMORE COURT HOTEL**

**9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**and**

**12<sup>th</sup> May 2018 (Reconvened)**



## 1. Opening of Conference by Chairperson

Seamus B. opened Conference by welcoming everybody, he then asked for a moments silence to consider why we were here. Conference then recited the Serenity Prayer and Tradition 2 was read.

### Approval of Trustee

Outgoing Trustee Colly G. thanked the Board and Conference for their support during his term as a member of the Board.

Brian F. was proposed by Colly G. and seconded by Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) as the incoming Ulster Trustee. Liam O' B. (Connaught Trustee) thanked Colly for his exemplary service to the Board and Conference.

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

Brian F. thanked the outgoing Trustee for the nomination and stated that he very much looked forward to serving the Fellowship and working alongside fellow Board Members.

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

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

- 1.1 All Items or Motions passed unanimously becomes Conference policy immediately and are recommended in trust to all Groups, Area Committees, Intergroups, Conference and Board.
- 1.2 All items or motions passed by a two-thirds majority are recommended and unless rescinded by notice of motion, become Conference policy after the expiry of one year.
- 1.3 All Items or Motions receiving only a simple majority are recommendations and shall be further debated at the next Annual General Service Conference.

## 2. Roll Call

| <b>Connaught</b> |               | <b>Munster</b>   |                        |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Trustee          | Liam O'B.     | Trustee          | Patsy O' K.            |
| Delegate         | Richard O'M.  | Delegate         | John D.                |
| Delegate         | Harry MacG.   | Delegate         | Martin C.              |
| Delegate         | James O'S.    | Delegate         | Nicholas R.            |
| IG Secretary     | Jacqueline G. | Delegate         | Eddie H.               |
|                  |               | IG Secretary     | Mick McG.              |
| <b>Leinster</b>  |               | <b>Ulster</b>    |                        |
| Trustee          | Pat K.        | Trustee          | Colly G.               |
| Delegate         | Emmet O' H.   | Delegate         | Tom D.                 |
| Delegate         | Anthony McN.  | Delegate         | Colum P.               |
| Delegate         | John S.       | Delegate         | Michael L.             |
| Delegate         | Michael D.    |                  |                        |
| IG Secretary     | Teresa S.     | Delegate         | Charles D.             |
|                  |               | IG Secretary     | Billy I.               |
| <b>Other</b>     |               | <b>Observers</b> |                        |
| Board Secretary  | Tony O'C.     | Incoming Trustee | Brian F.               |
| WSD              | Pat D.        | WSD Nominees     | Helen H.<br>Francis K. |

|                  |               |                |                     |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Non-Alc. Trustee | Eamonn Dillon | GB Observers   | Jeff B.<br>Roger B. |
| Non-Alc. Trustee | Seamus Dooley |                |                     |
|                  |               | Irish Observer | James McC.          |
| Chairperson      | Seamus B.     |                |                     |

### **3. Adoption of 2017 Conference Minutes and Matters Arising (Appendix 1)**

Chairperson went through each page of the Minutes, No matters arising, the Minutes were proposed by Mick Mc G. (Munster), seconded by Charlie D. (Ulster).

#### **Adoption of Agenda and other urgent business in accordance with Paragraph 12.3, page 66 of 2014/1 Service Handbook (Appendix 2).**

Brief discussion took place on Draft Agenda and Conference agreed to prioritise item 15 WSM report to 5 A on the Agenda.

### **4. Election of World Service Delegate**

Two nominations were before Conference for the position; Helen H. (Munster) Francis K. (Leinster)

Third Legacy Procedure was used and as Helen H. received a clear two thirds majority on the first ballot, she was deemed to be elected to the position. The term of office commences on January 2018 and is for a period of four years, ending on 31<sup>st</sup> December of the fourth year.

A request by Secretary Tony O'C. to record the proceedings of Conference was put to the floor; he stated that this would greatly assist in accurate note taking and the recording would be deleted after a period of one year when the Minutes were adopted. He went on to say he could only do this with the unanimous approval of all Members of Conference. However it was pointed out that no other Members of Conference has the authority to record proceedings.

This was unanimously agreed by Conference.

### **5. Motions to Conference 2018 Motion 1 (Appendix 3)**

#### **Connaught Intergroup - Oranmore Group Motion Title: A National Insurance Scheme for AA Groups.**

Harry Mc G. (Connaught) presented the Motion and spoke in favour of it saying it could be beneficial for any Groups that wished to participate in such a scheme.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) stated that a similar scheme is currently operating in Leinster and seems to be operating well with an 'opt in' or 'opt out' system and offered to follow up on a service provider who is providing a not for profit Insurance company delivering such a policy for organisations such as ourselves. John S. (Leinster) said that the current scheme operating was costing €40 per annum and was working very well for Groups to his knowledge.

John D. (Munster) asked if such a scheme would be in breach of Tradition 6. Seamus Dooley (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) stated that it was a service provider offering a service that the client could either accept or reject.

Eamonn Dillon (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) said that there are wide variations in Insurance premiums and we just need to be sure that policies cover 'member to member' liability. Patsy O' K. (Munster Trustee) agreed with Seamus Dooley that we were not in breach of any Tradition and stated that he had a serious concern around any Groups that do not have Insurance cover. Patsy (Munster Trustee) pointed to the fact that every group carrying the AA name ought to be properly insured.

Nicholas R. (Munster) said that a lot of Groups in his areas would welcome such an Insurance policy and that he would be supporting this Motion. Jacqueline (Connaught) stated that this was an excellent Motion and that she would be encouraging its approval by Conference.

Michael L. (Ulster) said he thought it was a very good Motion and thought it was worthy of Conferences support.

Brian F. (Ulster Trustee) made the point that it should be up to each Intergroup to ensure that its Groups had its own Insurance and it should not be up to Conference or the Board to give approval, he pointed out that already this type of scheme exists in Leinster and Ulster without the assistance of the Board/Conference.

After a further very lengthy discussion with contributions from many Delegates, the Motion was put to Conference to vote on the Board investigating and exploring the possibility of a National Insurance Scheme for AA Groups.

*20 Voted in favour of the motion 3 were against.*

*The Motion was passed.*

### **Connaught Intergroup - Motion 2 Mountbellew AA Group Co Galway. Title: National Helpline.**

Jacqueline presented the Motion on behalf of Connaught. John D. (Munster) quoted from General Service Handbook under Guidelines for Telephone Service and urged caution on the use of the word Helpline. Nicholas (Munster) could see the merit in such a service. Seamus Dooley (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) on the point of a question rather than expressing a view, the idea of having a National Helpline or Information Line is a good one, however there are implications of coordinating, staffing, and logistics and this could be an issue.

Liam O' B. (Connaught Trustee) stated that he had attended a seminar on the telephone service in AA Great Britain and their National Service worked very well and he thought the Motion was worthy of investigation, he felt that maybe a Sub-Committee might be set up to examine the feasibility of such a system.

Martin C. (Munster) said he thought the ideology behind the Motion was very good but felt it would be a full time job for somebody; he too thought the setting up of a Sub-Committee to examine the possibility of such a system might be an option.

Pat D. (WSD) pointed to the wording of the Motion stating that '*The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland installs a National Phone Helpline*' it does not ask us to investigate the feasibility or to set up a Sub-Committee to examine a National Telephone Helpline, he pointed out that Conference does not have the authority to alter a Motion.

Patsy O' K. (Munster Trustee) said he would agree with the sentiments expressed by Pat D. (WSD) he pointed out that we do not have the resources or the finances to implement this Motion currently. He went on to say that if the Motion perhaps came back to Conference with different wording it could be examined maybe by a Sub-Committee but in its current format as a Motion, he could not support it.

In conclusion Jacqueline G. (Connaught) said she was more than prepared to take on the views of Conference and thanked members for their contribution and she realised it was a big ask.

*The Motion was voted on and it was decided unanimously not to carry the Motion.*

#### **Munster Intergroup - Motion the Shannow Group, Co. Kerry Title: Reversal of Conference Decision.**

John D. (Munster) presented this Motion. Billy I. (Ulster) said the Motion did not read well. Patsy O' K. (Munster Trustee) stated that he had difficulty reading and understanding the Motion and believed the Motion possibly needed to be re-worded for the purpose of clarity. Eddie H. (Munster) said he found the Motion a little ambiguous. Seamus Dooley (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) said it would be important that the Motion be properly worded and maybe re-presented to Conference. Michael L. (Ulster) felt the wording was dangerous and his view was also that it needed rewording. Mick Mc G. (Munster) noted that some Motions coming in are not entirely clear.

Eamonn Dillon (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) pointed out that the Board is completely neutral on this Motion. It is up to Conference to decide what role the Board should have in a Concept Five Appeal. The Motion is an important one but is not clearly drafted and Eamonn said he would urge the proposer to withdraw the Motion and bring it back to Conference when it is drafted in more understandable format.

*John D. (Munster) said he would withdraw the Motion and bring it back to the Group for rewording.*

#### **Ulster Intergroup - Motion No 1. 62 Lisburn Rd Group Alcoholics Anonymous.**

Billy I. presented the above Motion on behalf of Ulster. Tom D. (Ulster) spoke on the Motion stating that the Motion had nothing to do with a Specialist Meeting. He went on to say that this particular meeting had been running for 28 twenty years. Emmet (Leinster) pointed out that this Motion had come before Conference previously and received a simple majority. A discussion on the Motion took place with views expressed on Beginners Meetings, some Delegates shared how their groups had Beginners Meetings but are not advertised in Directories.

Jacqueline (Connaught) said she would not be in favour of calling the meeting anything else other than a Meeting of AA. Tom D. (Ulster) clarified that the group in question were holding

15 meetings per week and one meeting was designated to welcoming beginners to an AA meeting. John D. (Munster) his view was that we could be opening the door to other Specialist Meetings.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) referred to our Service Handbook Page 11. What is an AA Group? {the 6 points} and stated that his view was that in reading the Motion it is not a Specialist Meeting because it does not exclude anybody. As the Motion had already received a simple majority and was debated again.

*The Motion passed.*

#### **Ulster Intergroup - Motion No 2 - 62 Lisburn Rd, Group Alcoholics Anonymous.**

Billy I. (Ulster) presented the Motion. The Leinster Trustee Pat K. clarified that the said Motion is now already part of our new Constitution. Tom D. (Ulster) made the point that in relation to the Motion and in light of the change to the Constitution that the Service Handbook be updated accordingly, and this was one of the main points of the Motion. It was pointed out that Service Handbook review would be coming up for discussion and as it stands this Motion is already superseded by our new Constitution. Ulster were respectfully requested to withdraw the Motion.

*Billy I. stated that in light of the explanations given he was willing to withdraw the Motion.*

#### **5A. European Service Delegates – WSM 2017 Report (Appendix 4)**

Pat D. (WSD) wished to distribute Appendices to Conference on the above report. A debate ensued on this matter with proposals and counter proposals. After discussions and referring to the General Service Handbook {Article 12, 2.1.page 65} a Conference decision was also unanimously carried in March 2003 {see page 24 Conference Decisions "The Board recommend that Conference discuss the distribution of documents at Conference. Jimmy L. (Munster) proposed the discontinuation of the practice of giving out documents at Conference. Joe D. (Ulster) seconded this. This proposal was unanimously carried by Conference."} regarding same.

#### **6. Structure Layout – proposed revision (Appendix 5)**

The above proposed new layout was placed before Conference, a variety of views were expressed from many members. After much discussion the consensus of Conference was not to approve the proposed new layout.

#### **7. CRA Meeting 25.11.17. (Appendix 6)**

Tony O' C. (Secretary to the General Service Board) read the report on the above to Conference.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) raised a matter in relation to the report that was read and cited that the report differed somewhat to the advisory note that was sent to groups a number of months ago in that the name of the Charities Regulator was mentioned in the advisory note and was not in the report that was just placed before Conference.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) responded and clarified that the Charities Regulator addressed us in his role as a member of the Regulators head of compliance and not as an individual. Pat also said that it was an error that the officer of the CRA should not have been named. Liam O' B. (Connaught Trustee) stated that it was also a Data Protection issue.

Nicholas R. (Munster) wished to make a point in relation to GSO accepting contributions directly from AA Groups. He believed that this was not adhering to our General Service Handbook.

Patsy O'K. (Munster Trustee) responded by quoting a Conference Decision of 2002 regarding contributions going directly to the General Service Office. Patsy O' K. stated that this decision can be reversed by bringing a Motion to Conference if so desired.

A lengthy discussion ensued and the following points were made by members of Conference:

- Table Top contributions at AA Groups and the need for such funds to go through the Structure, as per the General Service Handbook.
- The importance of Intergroup Reps calling to AA Groups and encouraging them rather than issuing ultimatums to attend their Area Meetings.
- How does the Charities Regulation impact on AA Groups?
- What the Charity Regulator wants are clear financial procedures and policies and he wants them followed.
- Does the Conference decision of 2002 mean that given the Charities Regulators advice to Conference make the decision of 2002 accepting contributions by GSO null and void?
- The 2009 Charities Act requires that we have clear and transparent policies and that AA money is not used for anything other than AA purposes.
- The Board of AA's view is that monies ought to go through Structure. The Regulator is not telling AA what to do, the Regulator is saying that we must have clear policies and we must follow them.
- GSO accepting money directly from the Groups is causing the Structure to weaken.
- We have to have a Structure that is properly financed.
- The role of the Board is to fulfil the wishes of Conference.
- Currently the position is that a decision was taken by Conference to accept contributions directly from groups at GSO. Until this is changed via a Motion from a Group or Conference, the Board does not have the power to make alterations or changes to the Conference Decisions Book.
- Service in Alcoholics Anonymous is in decline.
- Conference cannot be seen to be dictating to Groups, we ought to seek their cooperation.



## **8. AA Group Financial Guidelines & Record Book**

This proposed item was presented to Conference by Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) as an In-House Publication and is an updated version of the AA Group Treasurer's Notebook. Pat stated that if this item was passed with or without amendments, it would be available free of charge at the forthcoming All Ireland Convention and a copy would be sent to all Groups throughout Ireland for use as soon as possible to facilitate and implement the changes as suggested by the Charities Regulator.

John S. (Leinster) welcomed the new proposed booklet and suggested minor amendments to same including a change to the introduction.

John D. (Munster) Charlie D. (Ulster) Mick Mc G. (Munster) Tom D. (Ulster) pointed out that a lot of small AA Groups would not have Bank Accounts.

Helen H. (WSD) had a suggestion on pages relating to accounting procedures in the proposed book as did many members.

Conference went through the proposed Booklet painstakingly, page by page.

Conference agreed the Booklet with amendments as discussed be passed and then forwarded to the Office Committee to make any final alterations to the AA Group Financial Guidelines & Record Book.

This was proposed by Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) and Seconded by Jacqueline G. (Connaught)

*This was unanimously approved by Conference.*

## **9. Area & Intergroup Financial Sheets (Appendix 7)**

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) introduced this item stating that these documents will be available in word document to download from the AA Website, when the upgrading of the facility is completed.

The Area Financial Sheets were discussed, minor changes were suggested.

Proposed by John S. (Leinster) and seconded by Tom D. (Ulster) that the Office Committee agree and complete the changes to the Area Financial Sheet, as they deemed appropriate and present same to the Area Committees for use.

The Intergroup Financial Sheet, minor changes were also suggested by members and on a proposal from John S. (Leinster) seconded by Eddie H. (Munster) the Office Committee would again make the necessary adjustments to the document and issue them for use at Intergroup.

*The above was unanimously approved by Conference.*

## **10. Conference Delegates Reports (Appendix 8)**

**Reports on Areas were read by;**

**Leinster:** Emmet O' H. Anthony Mc N. John S. Michael D.

**Munster:** Martin C. John D. Nicholas R. Eddie H.

**Ulster:** Michael L. Charlie D. Tom D. Colum P.

A number of discussion points were raised as a result of reports; with all Conference members participating. The following is a synopsis of the topics raised:

- Major problems filling service positions.
- Groups not sending GSR's to Area.
- Why has Limerick County Area gone so weak?
- Why has Kerry Area gone so weak?
- Intergroup Reps need to visit AA Groups.
- AA members going to meetings, but not willing to partake in service.
- Groups not sending GSR's or making any financial contributions to Area should be removed from the National Directory. A discussion needs to be had on this issue.
- If AA Groups are donating monies to charities they should not be included in our Directory, such groups are affecting AA as a whole.
- Areas need to have regular Inventory meetings.
- Give Groups a platform to express their views at Area. We don't change the Service Handbook, only the Groups have the power to do this.
- It is not all about financial contributions.
- What can we do about Groups holding monies above their prudent reserve? We need to reflect and debate this matter.
- We need to encourage rather than discourage.
- Monies collected at AA Meetings belong to Alcoholics Anonymous.
- Conference is working very well, the problems seems to arise in a breakdown between Groups and Areas.
- A way needs to be found to bring Groups into service at Area level; Conference needs to look at this.
- Groups having the same Secretary for years at a time, not enough rotation.
- One Secretary opening a number of Group meetings, too many small Groups.
- AA Group members not attending Group Conscience meetings.

- It was noted that no Area reports were received from Connaught.
- Groups need to hold regular Group Inventory meetings.
- Service is part of recovery.
- Ulster Intergroup was thanked for having GSBA in Belfast last year for a very informative discussion.
- How many of us are sponsoring people into service?
- The greatest way to influence others is to show example.
- Let us become part of the solution rather than part of the problem.
- We cannot sanction anyone.
- Groups need to be informed of the consequences of Areas closing.
- We may need to look at the six points 'What is an AA Group?' Page 11 General Service Handbook.
- Should we be supporting Groups who have not attended Area for a lengthy period of time?
- Financial losses at Conventions.
- Table top contributions ought not to be used to subsidise shortfalls in AA Events Conventions etc.; this message needs to go out from Conference.
- All Ireland 2016 Convention held in Leinster, there was a problem regarding a substantial sum of money that went missing. The current Leinster Trustee was requested to investigate this and did so, no record of this is recorded in Minutes and he wished to have it noted that an agreement was in place to repay the funds and this was and still is being honoured since 2017 in the spirit of Step Nine.
- It is disgraceful that the current practice of adopting Conference Minutes takes over a year. This is a serious matter and warrants the attention of Conference.
- The Fellowship should not have to wait over a year for the Minutes of Conference.
- Minutes of Conference are meant to be an accurate reflection of what was discussed.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) proposed on the issue of Minutes of Conference, that the Draft Minutes be sent out to the Fellowship within 90 days of Conference (including Reconvened) and that they remain 'Draft Minutes' until they are approved and adopted at the next Annual Meeting of Conference. Emmet O' H. (Leinster) seconded the proposal.

*This was carried and accepted by Conference.*

## **11. Election of G.B. Observers for April 2018**

Harry Mc G. (Connaught) was proposed by Michael L. (Ulster) and seconded by Martin C. (Munster).

Michael D. (Leinster) was proposed by Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) and seconded by Anthony Mc N. (Leinster).

Alternate Nomination for either of the above Emmet O' H. (Leinster) proposed by Michael L. (Ulster) seconded by Jacqueline G. (Connaught)

### **G.B. Observers address to Conference - Roger B. & Jeff B.**

Roger B. said all of the issues discussed at General Service Conference of Ireland were akin to all of the problems in G.B.

Roger went on to say that there was a lot discussed this weekend and that he found it beneficial and enlightening. Roger in conclusion said that all of what he had heard at this Conference assured him that AA in Ireland was healthy and that it was going to be okay. He thanked Conference for their kindness and warmth during their visit.

Jeff B. stated that both Roger and he had received a very warm welcome in Ireland and that he had a truly wonderful time. Jeff said he was particularly fascinated with the Structure here and the integration between the Board / Company and Conference, and the discussions on the transparency of finances.

He pointed out that even in the U.K. there was black propaganda going around about Area and Intergroup meetings, this he said usually comes from people who have not attended either.

In conclusion Jeff stated that he found the entire weekend uplifting and was very grateful for the experience.

## **12. Report of Sub-Committee – Mobile number for Deaf Community (Appendix 9)**

Jacqueline G. (Connaught) presented the report on behalf of the Sub-Committee which consisted of Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) John D. (Munster) Emmet O' H. (Leinster) Jacqueline G. (Connaught) Michael L. (Ulster).

The Sub-Committee was seeking the approval of Conference to create a Table Top Card to be displayed at all AA Meetings for hearing impaired people along with an information leaflet relating to the same matter.

It was agreed by Conference that the Office Committee would examine the production of same for the purpose of making both available to the Fellowship in due course.

Seamus B. (Conference Chair) thanked all for their Contributions over the weekend and confirmed that we would reconvene on Saturday May 12<sup>th</sup> at 10.00 am. Venue; Tullamore Court Hotel.

Conference concluded with the Serenity Prayer.

# ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

## GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF IRELAND



### ROLL CALL AND MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE RECONVENED MEETING OF CONFERENCE 2018

**TULLAMORE COURT HOTEL**

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

#### **13. Opening of Reconvened Conference by Chairperson**

Seamus B. opened Reconvened Conference by welcoming everybody, he then asked for a moments silence to consider why we were here. Conference then recited the Serenity Prayer and Tradition 2 was read.

#### **14. Roll Call**

| <b>Connaught</b>    |              | <b>Munster</b>           |             |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Trustee             | Liam O'B.    | Trustee                  | Patsy O'K.  |
| Delegate            | Richard O'M. | Delegate                 | John D.     |
| Delegate            | Mary S.      | Delegate                 | Martin C.   |
| Delegate            | Harry MacG.  | Delegate                 | Nicholas R. |
| Delegate            | James O S.   | Delegate                 | Eddie H.    |
| IG Secretary (Alt.) | Marilyn K.   | IG Secretary (Apologies) | Mick McG.   |
| <b>Leinster</b>     |              | <b>Ulster</b>            |             |
| Trustee             | Pat K.       | Trustee                  | Brian F.    |
| Delegate            | Michael D.   | Delegate                 | Tom D.      |
| Delegate            | Anthony McN. | Delegate                 | Colum P.    |
| Delegate            | John S.      | Delegate                 | Michael L.  |
| Delegate            | Emmet O' H.  | Delegate                 | Charles D.  |
| IG Secretary        | Teresa S.    | IG Secretary             | Billy I.    |
| <b>Others</b>       |              |                          |             |
| Board Secretary     | Tony O'C.    |                          |             |

|                                 |                    |  |  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--|--|
| WSDs                            | Pat D.<br>Helen H. |  |  |
| Non-Alc. Trustees               | Eamonn Dillon      |  |  |
| Non-Alc. Trustee<br>(Apologies) | Phil Garland       |  |  |
| Chairperson                     | Seamus B.          |  |  |

## 15. Public Information Reports 2018 (Appendix 10)

### Leinster

Teresa S. read report on behalf of Leinster Intergroup.

### Connaught

Mary S. read the Connaught Intergroup report and a query arose regarding the Galway Area Website. A lengthy discussion took place on this item and it was noted that the Website was outside the Structure, that there was only one official AA Website.

- It was stated that if this was to change it would have to come in the form of a Motion.
- It was agreed during the debate that the contents of the PI report be noted without prejudice.
- It was stated that this particular Item regarding the particular Website should not even be discussed.
- The question was asked if there is a facility on the National Website to include Regional information.
- It was recognised that while the Website was outside the AA Structure it was well intentioned in its work and a number of people found it a helpful aid.

### Munster

Nicholas R. presented PI reports from Limerick City / County and Clare Areas.

Martin C. read report on behalf of Cork City, West Cork.

### Ulster

Billy I. presented the PI report on behalf of Ulster.

- Discussion took place on the need for PI to be more active in carrying the message.
- What can we do to encourage people into Service?
- Important for Conference Delegates to transmit the views of Conference down through the Structure in relation to PI.
- Clarity was sought on the podcasts for the AA Website.
- Lack of understanding of PI work, new PI Kit may help somewhat.
- Workshops needed on PI.

## **16. Possible formation of Sub-Committees of Conference.**

A suggestion from Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) was that a Sub-Committee be set up to help carry the message on Service in AA.

A number of points were raised and a very healthy discussion ensued, James O' S. (Connaught) said a discussion needs to take place on attracting people into Service. Marilyn K. (Connaught) stated that the same commitment to Service was not present now compared to a number of years ago.

John S. (Leinster) said he would wholeheartedly agree with the formation of a Sub-Committee on Service.

Harry Mc G. (Connaught) said he would agree with the formation of Committees of Conference particularly in the area of Public Information.

Brian F. (Trustee Ulster) believed that the General Service Conference is a Committee and it was up to each of us to carry the message.

Patsy O' K. (Trustee Munster) pointed out that he was not in favour of Sub-Committees; he felt they had the capacity to be 'talking shops' he thought that this Conference was a Committee and represented the Groups of Ireland.

Pat D. (WSD) said that he didn't believe in setting up Committees for the sake of setting up Committees, but he did believe that the Structure needed to be looked at.

Tom D. (Ulster) believed that we had four natural Sub-Committees already and they were our Intergroups and they should be used.

Nicholas R. (Munster) stated that he didn't need to be a member of a Sub-Committee to tell him to do his job in carrying the message.

Martin C. (Munster) didn't believe in Sub-Committees he stated that his role as Conference Delegate began and ended with him, he felt it was with sadness that he could have done more as a Conference Delegate.

Liam O' B. (Connaught) believed that the overriding arch should be carrying the message and he believed the PI Kit was very successful as a result of the PI Sub-Committee of Conference.

Richard O' M. (Connaught) said that the previous PI Committee of Conference had done fantastic work.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) said that he didn't think that Committees were the way forward. Pat went on to say that we are failing in sponsorship into Service.

Eamonn (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) made the point that if each person in the room today got one person into Service it would have a ripple effect.

Michael D. (Leinster) said it is our responsibility to carry the message and encourage members into Service.

Anthony Mc N. (Leinster) stated that while he spoke at the outset in favour of Sub-Committees he was hearing that Conference was not altogether in favour of this and that he was very grateful for the discussion on this matter. He suggested that the topic of Service be

placed on the agenda for March 2019 this was seconded by Michael L. (Ulster) this was accepted by Conference.

After further discussion after lunch an agreement was reached that a request be placed before the four Provincial Intergroups to discuss Service in AA, the results of which will be discussed at March 2019 Annual Conference.

### **17. All Ireland Convention 2017 Report (Appendix 11)**

Liam O' B. (Connaught Trustee) presented the Report.

Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) and Patsy O' K. (Munster Trustee) complimented Liam O' B. and his Committee on a very successful All Ireland Convention.

### **18. GB Conference April 2017 Observers Report (Appendix 12)**

Colum P. (Ulster) & Martin C. (Munster) presented the Report.

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

There was a discussion on this item and the merits of inviting Observers from other European Countries to attend the Annual General Service Conference of Ireland. After discussion, Pat D. (WSD) proposed that we invite along with two GB Observers a further two from another European Countries (taking one Country at a time) at the discretion of the Board. This was seconded by Pat K. (Leinster Trustee) after further debate this proposal was withdrawn, and it was agreed that two GB Observers be invited to the 2019 Annual Conference and that it be outlined in the Invitation that there may be the possibility of a Reconvened Conference should the Observers wish to return.

### **20. IREYPAA – Update to Conference**

Correspondence read by Secretary and noted.

### **21. Election of 2019 Chairperson**

Two Nominations of outgoing Delegates were placed before Conference. Martin C. (Munster) and Michael L. (Ulster). Third Legacy procedure was used and as there was no clear two thirds majority after three rounds of ballots, both names were placed in the hat. Martin C. (Munster) name was drawn as Chairperson of the Annual General Service Conference on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 with Michael L. (Ulster) as Alternate Chairperson.



## 22. AOB

- (a) **Group Financial Guidelines and Record Book.** John S. (Leinster) complimented the Office Committee on the Booklet.
- (b) **GDPR** John S. (Leinster) raised the matter of the upcoming new European Laws on Data Protection Regulation and sought clarification on how AA was dealing with this issue.  
The Board Secretary responded to the query and stated that work was under way at GSO relating to the new General Data Protection Regulations and we had a Data Protection Officer in place who was briefing the General Service Board on what was required to ensure that AA is compliant with the new E.U. Legalisation.
- (c) **Garda Vetting** John S. (Leinster) wished to draw attention to the fact that a Sub-Committee of Leinster Intergroup had written to the Board Secretary on February 9<sup>th</sup> 2018 on behalf of Leinster Intergroup, regarding Garda Vetting for Members giving Presentations in Schools on behalf of Alcoholics Anonymous and to date he was disappointed that he had not received a response. The Board Secretary said that he had not, to his recollection, had sight of the correspondence but assured John S. that he would follow up on same and ensure that the query was placed before the Board for discussion.
- (d) **Ulster Intergroup Motion 62 Lisburn Rd.** Leinster Delegates were querying a Motion regarding a Beginners Meeting that had been, debated at both the 2017 Annual Conference and was again up for discussion at March 2018 Conference. It was clarified that this Motion had now been passed by Conference.
- (e) **Suggested Timetable for 2019 Annual General Service Conference** Pat D. (WSD) proposed that the 2019 Annual General Service Conference of Ireland commence on Friday March 1<sup>st</sup> at 4.00pm and end on Sunday March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1.00pm in an effort to get all the business of AA completed in one sitting of Conference, hence there would be no need for a Reconvened Conference and that it could be a cost-saving exercise. This proposal was seconded by Michael L. (Ulster)

Patsy O' K. (Munster Trustee) pointed out the fact that we had an AGM that needed to be held before the business of Conference took place and the Auditors needed to be in attendance to present the Annual Accounts and it may not be logistically possible to do this.

John D. (Munster) and Martin C. (Munster) both suggested that the schedule for Conference ought to remain as is, commencing on Friday at 8.00pm with the Annual General Meeting.

A debate on this item ensued with a number of views being expressed both for and against the proposed change. Following this discussion no change was made.

Conference concluded with the Serenity Prayer.

# Appendices

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| (Appendix 1)  | Adoption of 2017 Conference Minutes and Matters Arising  |
| (Appendix 2)  | Adoption of Agenda and other urgent business in accordance with Paragraph 12.3, page 66 of 2014/1 Service Handbook |
| (Appendix 3)  | Motions to Conference  |
| (Appendix 4)  | World Service Delegates Report - ESM 2017  |
| (Appendix 5)  | Structure Layout – Proposed Revision   |
| (Appendix 6)  | CRA Meeting 25.11.2017   |
| (Appendix 7)  | Area and Intergroup Financial Sheets   |
| (Appendix 8)  | Conference Delegates Report  |
| (Appendix 9)  | Report of Sub-Committee – Mobile No. for Deaf Community  |
| (Appendix 10) | Public Information Reports   |
| (Appendix 11) | All Ireland Convention 2017 Report   |
| (Appendix 12) | G.B. Conference 2017 Observer's Report   |

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS  
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF IRELAND**



**ROLL CALL AND MINUTES  
OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
GENERAL & RE-CONVENED MEETING  
OF CONFERENCE 2017**

**TULLAMORE COURT HOTEL**

**10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2017  
and  
9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> June 2017 (Re-Convened)**

## 1. Opening of Conference by Chairperson

Mark opened Conference by welcoming everybody. He then asked for a moment's silence to consider why we were here. Conference then said the Serenity Prayer and Tradition 2.

### ***Service Handbook for Ireland (2012/1) Article 14, voting at Meeting, page 66***

The decision of Conference resulting from any vote or any motion or item before Conference shall be:

- 1.1 All items or motions passed unanimously become Conference policy immediately and are recommended in trust to all Groups, Area Committees, Intergroups, Conference and Board.
- 1.2 All items or motions passed by a two-third majority are recommended and unless rescinded by notice of motion, become Conference policy after the expiry of one year.
- 1.3 All items or motions receiving only a simple majority are recommendations and shall be further debated at the next Annual General Meeting.

## 2. Roll Call

|                                       |  |                |                 |            |              |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| <b>Connaught</b>                      | Liam O' B  | Trustee        | <b>Leinster</b> |            | Trustee      |
|                                       | Richard O' M                                     | Delegate       |                 | Sheila K   | Delegate     |
|                                       | Harry McG  | Delegate       |                 | Michael W  | Delegate     |
|                                       | James O'S  | Delegate       |                 | Emmet O' H | Delegate     |
|                                       | Breege G   | Alt - Delegate |                 |            | Delegate     |
|                                       | Jacqueline G                                     | IG Secretary   |                 | Anne O'D   | IG Secretary |
| <b>Munster</b>                        | Patsy O'K  | Trustee        | <b>Ulster</b>   | Colly G    | Trustee      |
|                                       | John D   | Delegate       |                 | Tom D      | Delegate     |
|                                       | Martin C   | Delegate       |                 | Colum P    | Delegate     |
|                                       | Paddy S  | Delegate       |                 | Michael L  | Delegate     |
|                                       | Tony O'C   | Delegate       |                 | Charles D  | Delegate     |
|                                       | Michael McG                                      | IG Secretary   |                 | Billy I    | IG Secretary |
| <b>Board Secretary</b>                | Breda F  |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>World Service Delegate</b>         | Seamus B<br>Pat D (Leinster)                     |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>Non Alc. Trustee</b>               | Seamus Dooley<br>Eamonn Dillon<br>Philip Garland |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>ESD WSD Nominee</b>                |  |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>Chairperson</b>                    | Mark D   |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>Observer/<br/>Incoming Trustee</b> | Pat K  |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>Apologies</b>                      | Michael O'R (Leinster Trustee)                   |                |                 |            |              |

### **Matters arising from Roll Call**

Tony O'C brought to Conference attention that an Alternate Delegate was present with Leinster and was not replacing a sitting Delegate. This contravenes the Service Handbook and he referred to Conference 2013 where Munster Alternate Delegates were not allowed to attend Conference, as they were not replacing sitting Delegates.

The position of Alternate Delegate arose due to the resignation of Delegate at Leinster Intergroup. Discussion took place, Patsy O'K read from Conference decision March 1992, Page 25 regarding "Alternate Delegates to substitute for the Delegate at Conference". For any changes to be made, a motion would be required to come from the Groups through structure to Conference to change the 1992 decision. Michael L proposed to follow the guidelines, seconded by Emmet. The Leinster Alternate Delegate left Conference.

### **The following times agreed for Conference**

**Friday:** 8pm–10pm

**Saturday:** 9am–11am, 11.15am–1pm, Lunch, 2pm–6pm, Dinner 6pm–8pm to be revisited on Saturday.

**Sunday:** 9am–11am, 11.15am–1pm, Lunch.

### 3. Approval of Trustee

Eamonn (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) proposed that Conference ought to agree, due to the absence of the Leinster Trustee (outgoing), the immediate ratification of the incoming Leinster Trustee, seconded by Sheila K. Conference welcomed Pat K.

### 4. Adoption of Agenda and other urgent business in accordance with Paragraph 12.3, page 66 of 2012/1 Service Handbook (Appendix 1)

Discussion took place and the draft agenda agreed with changes. Agreed Agenda as per Appendix 1 to this report.

### 5. Adoption of 2016 Conference Minutes and Matters Arising (Appendix 2)

Chairperson went through each page of the minutes. Some items discussed and no changes. Conference 2016 minutes proposed by Sheila (Leinster) and seconded by Seamus (WSD)

### 6. Financial Statements & Auditors Report 2016 (Appendix 3)

Chairperson welcomed Auditor Jason Dowling from Whelan Dowling & Associates, Santry.

Jason outlined to Conference it was a clean audit and presented the Financial Statement for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016. He informed Conference that there was a deficit in the trading year of €101,035 as against a deficit of €54,480 in 2015. It was a challenging year for the Company, contributions continued to decrease and using annual donations for 2014 of €220,144 as a base year, the annual contributions have decreased by €37,782 in 2015 and €63,004 in 2016. The overheads have remained constant with over the 2 years except for a one of expense in 2016 to accommodate delegates to the World Service meeting. This means in the last two years, the company has utilised significant resources to maintain the level of services currently provided by the General Services Board.

Jason also outlined to Conference that the cash position has dropped within the year and there is a need to encourage contributions otherwise, the prudent reserve will not exist. He outlined following a question, that the expenses were not excessive, and that Contributions needed to increase. He also outlined that the Company has adopted the Governance Code, compliant with Charity Regulator and Revenue Commissioners.

Patsy on behalf of Conference thanked Jason for his presentation to Conference.

### 6a. Finance Sub-Committee

Following presentation of the Trading Accounts for 2016, Conference had questions for the Board regarding Page 22 Schedule 2 Overhead Expenses.

#### ***Why three Bank Accounts?***

Patsy outlined the fact that the State Bank Guarantee limits the guarantee to accounts holding a maximum of €100,000k only. It would therefore be improvident of the Board to hold more than €100,000 in any one account as amounts over €100,000 would not be guaranteed.

#### ***World Service Meetings – Is it necessary to send two Delegates?***

Yes, as two representatives are required due to different group meetings held during the weekend. The most expensive is the World Service Meetings as they are held every second year in New York. There is also a contribution to assist other Countries to attend who do not have sufficient funds.

Patsy mentioned the World Literature Fund, and how Ireland was one of the largest contributors and in recent years, no funds forwarded.

#### ***Photocopying Costs***

Costs relate to day-to-day printing of In-House books, also in recent years increased Conference documentation.

#### ***Postage***

Due to An Post price increases and cost of posting out Minutes (twice yearly). Conference needs to look at setting up email to Groups, Areas and Intergroups.

#### ***Sub-Committee Events***

Sub-Committees set up with the approval of Conference and these costs relate to the Committees.

### **Board Expenses**

Full complement at each Board meeting and the Non-Alcoholic Trustees to receive expenses.

### **Incoming Contributions - Is this consistent with all Intergroups?**

Not consistent, do housekeeping first, keep prudent reserve at each level of Structure and send surplus through Structure.

### **Is there money missing?**

The Munster Trustee confirmed that Munster Intergroup was holding an investigation into apparent financial irregularities. It was obviously solely a matter for the Munster Intergroup, but as it was a matter that could potentially affect AA as a whole, Conference had to be informed. As it may be a Garda and Charities Regulatory matter, he could not comment further. As he himself was a member of the GSB as well as Munster Intergroup, for legal reasons, he had excused himself from any involvement in the investigations.

Michael L suggested that it would be helpful for Conference to see a graphic spread over 4–10 years showing the trends of Contributions and Expenditure. Secretary to follow up and present at Re-Convened Conference.

Eamonn (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) welcomed the discussion and outlined to Conference that each Board Meeting spends 2 hours discussing finance. Seamus (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) stated that our purpose is to help the suffering alcoholic, proper structure needs to be adhered to, and ensure two people are responsible at all times.

During discussions, Trustees reminded Conference Delegates that AA monies that were donated cannot be spent on meals, agencies or donations to other Charities, as those would be outside our Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts. In addition, they may also constitute a breach of the Charities Act. It was emphasised that there was no evidence for the same but it was being mentioned as a general reminder as part of the GSB's role in the Governance Code and in terms of encouraging overall compliance and best practice at all levels of AA.

It was also noted that less than 36% of Groups engaged in Structure, as Delegates we are responsible to get communications going at all levels. We all know now where the problems are, we now need to look at the solutions.

Pat D (WSD) – The Fellowship is in a critical financial situation and welcomed the discussion and hard questions need to be asked at each level of Structure – Group, Area, Intergroup and Conference.

From the in-depth discussion regarding finances, the following Delegates were elected to meet on Saturday evening to work on a document for presentation to Conference on Sunday morning for ratification, unanimously agreed by Conference:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Trustee: Patsy         | proposed by Sheila K (Leinster), seconded by Pat (Leinster Trustee) |
| Sheila K (Leinster)    | proposed by Ann (Leinster), seconded by Emmet (Leinster)            |
| Tom (Ulster)           | proposed by Billy (Ulster) seconded by Colum (Ulster)               |
| Tony (Munster)         | proposed by Pat (Trustee), seconded by Charlie (Ulster)             |
| Jacqueline (Connaught) | proposed by James (Connaught), seconded by Richard (Connaught)      |

Patsy (Trustee) thanked the Committee for their dedication and for giving their time on Saturday evening. The original report to Conference was proposed by Colly (Trustee) and seconded by Harry (Connaught) along with the following inclusions:  
Intergroup, Area and Group (all omitted in original version, presented to Conference)

The following report is the outcome of lengthy discussion at Conference for which it was agreed that the Conference Delegates would initially pass and discuss through Structure (Intergroup, Area and Group).

The General Services Board is to look into the logistics of emailing groups, and to come back to Conference with outcome.

## **Conference 2017 Report on Finance (Appendix 4)**

At the Conference of March 2017 and following the auditor's report, Conference was shocked to discover that in three years we will not be in a position to offer the level of services that we have come to expect from AA in Ireland. Conference has decided to look at the following cost saving measures as a matter of urgency.

- Group
- Area
- Intergroup
- Board expenses
- Conference expenses
- Sub-Committee expenses
- Printing stationary and postage

We recommend all Minutes now be transferred online; this will create a substantial saving. Each AA group has a unique number, which can be found in the National Directory beside each group. This unique number will now act as their password to access all Area, Intergroup & Conference Minutes.

### **Tradition 7:**

***Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.***

### ***Concept X11: General Warranties of Conference: Warranty Two:***

***"Sufficient operating funds, plus an ample Reserve, should be its prudent financial principle"***

Table top contributions are AA money and should be spent only to further our primary purpose of helping the still suffering alcoholic. All who are trusted with the responsibility of handling AA money at every level should remind themselves constantly of this simple traditional principle. The groups are the stakeholders in the overall service structure. The flow of AA money through the service structure is essential to further our primary purpose of helping the still suffering alcoholic in accordance with the traditions of the Fellowship.

Experience has shown us that every level of AA work is important, and we neglect them at our peril.

***"Both these principles we understand, that A.A wants no charity, that we support our own service." Bill W'. (Language of the Heart Page 350)***

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

### ***Conduct of Annual Conference Meeting (Page 69, last paragraph)***

Where a Motion is put before a full meeting of Conference, no Delegate, other than the proposer of the Motion shall be permitted to speak more than once on the same Motion. The proposer, however, may exercise his/her right of reply in winding up the debate but shall confine his/her reply answering points raised by previous Speakers.

## **Motions to Conference March 2016**

### ***Munster Intergroup Motions***

#### **Carrigtwohill Group, North Cork City - Motion 1**

As Minute taking is an integral part of AA service, Carrigtwohill put forward the Motion that AA draw up guidelines for our appointed Secretaries to insure accurate minute taking for all our Area, Intergroup, Conference and Board Meetings. This is to insure factual, accurate, objective, impartial, unbiased and unemotional Minutes.

Reason for Motion: - See attachment.

John presented the Motion.

Discussion followed and guidelines of Secretary as set out on Page 25 Service Handbook 2014/01 were discussed.

The motion was defeated 28 against, 2 in favour.

### **Carrigtwohill Group, North Cork City - Motion 2**

It has come to the attention of Carrigtwohill Group that the GPS co-ordinates for many of the Meetings shown on AA Website are incorrect. Many of our members and potential members now rely on this form of meeting search. We, the Carrigtwohill Group propose that each group in Ireland fill in the group information sheet with their correct co-ordinates, to ensure that the AA site has accurate information so as to continue this vital service.

John presented the Motion.

Discussion took place around the responsibility of the Group putting the correct co-ordinates on the Group Information Sheet and issues highlighted. The co-ordinates can be located by putting the address of the Group into Google Maps or by entering the Eircode (Rep of Ireland) or Postal Code (NI).

The Motion was defeated 21 against, 7 in favour, 2 abstentions.

### **Phoenix Group, Kerry**

We, as a Group would like Intergroup and Conference to allow the Convention Chairperson as nominated and appointed by Area to deal directly with GSO to avoid delay, confusion and loss of information as at present.

John presented the Motion.

Conference discussed the motion and took into account current guidelines in the Green Service Handbook. The Motion was unanimously rejected.

### **Into Action Group, Kerry**

Please note that as a Group we were unhappy with the request for more funds and propose that, as per Concept One, more consultation should take place between the Board and Conference before large expenditure and changes to how AA structure works in Ireland.

#### **Concept One**

**“The final responsibility and ultimate authority for AA World Services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.”**

John presented the Motion.

Discussion took place and Conference unanimously rejected the Motion.

### **Adare Group, Limerick**

That the Green Handbook be amended to clarify and clearly define our policy of rotation in service roles.

Reason for the motion:

- In order that personalities do not come before principles.
- It would prevent cliques and sub groups with their own agendas dominating.
- It would safeguard the Fellowship.

Tony presented the Motion

Conference discussed the Motion and “we are responsible” if we keep bringing people back into service when they have completed their terms. Roles were outlined as per the Green Service Handbook 2014/01.

The Motion was defeated 22 against, 8 in favour.

### **Mallow Mercy Group Petition**



At the Mallow Mercy Group Conscience held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014, it was decided to petition North Cork Area, Munster Intergroup and Conference for information on changes taking place in our Structure at Board Level, namely why it is no longer possible for a Company Director to be Company Secretary.

We as that discussion on these Structural changes be put on the Agenda for the March part of our 2017 Conference.

#### Reason for Petition

Having the Company Secretary as Secretary of our Conference is against our "Traditions" and "Concepts for Service" as stated in Article 12 of our Constitution for Conference (Green Hand Book).

John presented the Petition.

Eamonn (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) outlined page 64 2.1; The General Services Board is Secretary to Conference. The Board choose to delegate to one person to take notes, which are then circulated and approved by the Board before going out to the Fellowship.

The General Service Board of Ireland itself, by law, is a Company Limited by Guarantee incorporated under the Companies Act 1963 (as subsequently amended). Whilst this was the Original Act pursuant to which the Company was originally incorporated and established, the current applicable structure is now the Companies Act 2014, which replaced the earlier Companies Act 1963 Act as amended.

The Companies Act 2014 came into effect on the 1st June 2015. Before that, as stated above, the Companies Act 1963, as amended, was the applicable legislation.

The 1963 Companies Act required every Company that was a Company Limited by Guarantee (which is all we are concerned with here) to have a Company Secretary. This Company Secretary could be one of the seven directors but did not necessarily need to be so. A separate person could be appointed to this role and position.

The 2014 Act retained this requirement for every Irish company to appoint a Company Secretary and it reaffirmed the role and duties of the Company Secretary, although some changes to the relevant law were introduced.

The 2014 Act removed the previous requirement under the 1963 Act for a Company Secretary to ensure the company's compliance with company law. This duty and obligation is now primarily imposed on the Directors of the Company although the Company Secretary also has statutory obligations in this regard.

Instead, a new duty is now imposed on directors of all Irish companies to ensure that the company secretary has the skills and resources necessary to discharge his or her statutory, legal and other duties delegated by the board. This is actually imposed on the 7 Directors of the Company.

A new requirement in the 2014 Act is that, when consenting to act, a company secretary will be required to sign a declaration acknowledging his / her legal duties and obligations.

A further new requirement under the 2014 Act is the obligation imposed on a Company Secretary to exercise due care, skill and diligence in exercising his or her duties and can be held liable to the company for loss arising from negligence.

The seven Directors and the Company Secretary are all Officers of the Company.

As a Company Limited by Guarantee, The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous was required to have seven directors appointed to run, manage and be responsible the Company and this was always seems to have been done - at least from a review of the CRO.

A Company Secretary was also required under the original 1963 Act, and legally, it was always possible for one of the 7 directors also to act as the Company Secretary. Again, from looking at the CRO, this often appears to have been the situation in the past within the Company. Thus one of the seven directors also acted as Company Secretary.

It is important to note, firstly, that it was (and remains) solely a matter for the Board itself, as the legal entity, and in particulars the directors thereof, to decide who they choose to fulfil the statutory role of Secretary to

the Board. They may choose either one of the seven directors or choose another person to fill the official statutory role.

So why then would the Directors choose a separate person - rather than one of their own number - to act as Company Secretary?

Times have moved on and now we are in an era of far greater compliance, regulation and accountability than ever was the case in the past. Or, to be more precise, there is far greater recognition and acceptance of the importance of the said roles and position and the duties fulfilled by a Company Secretary. In recent years, there have been numerous legal actions, prosecutions and cases involving companies coming before the Court of Companies and Company Secretaries failing or allegedly failing in their duty to comply with the legal requirements under the said Acts.

Tradition 9 clearly states that: "AA, as such, ought never to be organised; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those whom they serve".

It makes good and practical sense for the one person therefore to hold the position of Secretary of the Board / Company on the one hand and Secretary to the Fellowship on the other hand.

The full text of Section 129 of the Companies Act, 2014, which is the current applicable law, is the appended (Appendix 4a)

### ***Munster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2017***

#### **Appeal based on concept 5 29-01-2017**

To Area, Intergroup and Conference:

The Secretary of the Munster Intergroup wishes to appeal the decision of the Munster Intergroup meeting to replace him as Secretary on that day due to inaccurate minutes.

The Secretary feels that Tradition 1 was not adhered to when the MI Chairperson ignored the Group Conscience of the Groups of Munster when the meeting proceeded to a vote to replace the Secretary without hearing the Area reports of the Groups who were consulted on this matter.

The clear implication of Tradition 1 is that the 12 Traditions which guarantee AA unity is that they contain not a single "don't" (page 129).

The clear implication of Tradition Two is the only authority in AA is a loving God as He is expressed in the Group Conscience. Concept 5 describes the type of Group Conscience of November 6 2016 as uninformed, misinformed, hasty and angry. It allowed no debate to find a consensus but went straight to a vote on foot of a prearranged proposal by a Conference Delegate and supported by the Trustee.

No Traditions were broken in the writing of the Munster Intergroup Minutes but many were broken in the organisation of the complaints against them, the Secretary feels that Munster Intergroup acted as a government and broke Tradition Nine, but to do so in such a degrading and humiliating way to a sitting servant is little more than a "tyranny" as described in this Concept.

Redress for this is sought and can only come in a reversal of the decision to replace the Secretary, also the reversal of Trustees decision to exclude him from his duties at GSO who were informed that Munster Intergroup no longer had a Secretary, this in turn will mean he will not get an invitation to Conference.

The meeting of November 6 did not follow the Agenda made out for that meeting but instead followed the Chairpersons Agenda and did not follow the normal Group Conference decision making procedure and should therefore be declared null and void and not be adopted.

Appeal presented by John.

Following lengthy discussion by Conference, the Appeal was defeated 28 against, 3 in favour and it was agreed that the Chairperson would write to the member.

## Leinster Intergroup Motions

### The Graignamanagh Group of Alcoholics Anonymous, Area 13

Propose the following Motion to the General Conference of Ireland:

That Conference provide a phone for texting in GSO and CSO.

To enable Alcoholics who are also members of the Deaf Community to contact Alcoholics Anonymous.



Motion presented by Emmet.

Following discussion the motion was unanimously agreed.

### Molesworth Street Group, Area 9

We propose that the Notes Section of the Meeting Listings Directory be expanded to use the information in the key below:

Information key for use in the Notes Section of the Meeting Listings Directory:

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Wheelchair Access Available |    |
| Polish Spoken               | (P)   |
| Russian Spoken              | (R)   |
| Lithuanian Spoken           | (L)   |
| Men's Meeting               | (M)   |
| Women's Meeting             | (W)   |
| LGBT Meeting                | (LGBT)  |
| Car Parking Available       |  |

All Groups in this Directory are listed on the understanding that they are non-restrictive.

Motion presented by Emmet.

Following lengthy discussion, and as buildings are not belonging to AA, the motion was rejected 24 to 6.

The motion was defeated

## Ulster Intergroup Motions

### Belfast Area Committee, Lisburn Road Group

In relation to previous attempts to have the attached Motion to conference approved.

We, the steering committee and members of 62 Lisburn Road Group wish to exercise our right for appeal and thus re-submit our request for ratification by Belfast Area and Ulster Intergroup.

We would draw attention in so doing to the flyer produced for the **week of celebration marking the 70<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary of AA in Ireland** which clearly welcomes all members to **a beginners closed meeting** on 20 October 2016 at 8.30pm in St. Pats, Dublin.

We quite frankly struggle with the fact that we as a Group cannot enjoy the same licence as those organisers of this important event.

In Fellowship  
62 Lisburn Group. 20<sup>th</sup> November 2016

### **62 Lisburn Road Group**

The Group Conscience of Lisburn Road Group formally request that Conference facilitate the inclusion of their Beginners Meeting on Thursday nights on the meeting cards returned through Area to CSO by all Groups in Ulster.

There is currently no notation on the card for this meeting.

The subsequent inclusion in the 'Where To Find' will assist Members specifically looking for a Beginners Meeting either to attend themselves or to accompany a new person.

The designated reference could be simply B or BG and the Group are happy to accept ANY reference, which clearly denotes BEGINNERS MEETING.

Although the meeting is designed to attract newcomers, anyone who fulfils the criteria specified in our fellowships Singleness of Purpose Statement is welcome to attend.

As per procedure, this request is going through Belfast Area Committee to Ulster Intergroup and forward as a Motion to Conference.

Yours in fellowship  
The steering Committee/PP  
The Group Conscience, Lisburn Road Group, Belfast, 30<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2015

Motion presented by Tom. He outlined to Conference about how hard it is to get young people into service via Sponsorship.

Lengthy discussion took place in relation to it being specialist meeting "Beginners meeting" and questions about "is every meeting not a beginners meeting" and helping the suffering alcoholic?

The Motion 15 in favour and 13 against, two abstentions.  
As the Motion received only a simple majority it shall be further debated at the 2018 Conference.

## **Connaught Intergroup Motions**

### **Frenchpark Group Motion**

That the Board of A.A Ireland through G.S.O, issue a statement about the current financial situation of the Fellowship in Ireland giving a BREAK DOWN of the Provincial contributions to the Fellowship in the years 2010-2016 to be sent to each Intergroup/Area.

#### **Reasons:**

"Members ask for greater transparency and openness about where their table top donations go".

So as to encourage AA Groups to send their surplus monies to AA through the proper Structures, and thus hope to put a stop to gossip about AA monies not arriving at GSO.

This should not be a huge job as Members only want to know how much each Province donated after each Intergroup Meeting for the years 2010-2016 and members feel it's their right to know this.

Harry presented the Motion.

Discussion took place about transparency and welcomed for the Re-Convened Conference that graphs would be presented showing Contributions and Expenditure for General Services Board. Conference also took into consideration the document that is to be presented to the floor on Sunday from the elected Finance Committee.

The Motion was defeated 28 against, 1 in favour, 1 abstention.

### **Oranmore Group Motion**

**Motion Title: Censorship of PI Reports**

On 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the Group Conscience of Oranmore Group would like the following Motion brought to General Service Conference of Ireland.

**Motion:**

That the General Service Conference of Ireland does not have the authority to censor Public Information (PI) reports of Groups, Areas and Intergroups, nor the authority to rewrite PI reports.

**Reason:**

We believe that censorship of reports is contrary to the principal of autonomy of Groups, Areas and Intergroups and the Spirit of Fellowship.

It rejects the voluntary work and service efforts of PI Committees.

It is the alteration of the history of our Fellowship. The Archives lose its credibility by distorting our history.

Reports according to Group Conscience are the only communication we have of expressing the voluntary service between all Groups in our Fellowship regarding the fulfilment of our Traditions.

The Service Handbook as stated on the first page "is ONLY intended as a guide to service...."

We bring this Motion, to support our view, that when future historians study our Archives, they will be confident that all the records are an honest and accurate reporting of AA service efforts.

As per AA procedure, this Motion approved at Galway West Area on 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2017, is forwarded to Connaught Intergroup and then to General Service Conference of Ireland

James presented the Motion.

Discussion took place, some Members felt it was a good motion and Conference was reminded that it has a right to edit, due to legal implications.

The Motion was defeated 22 against, 6 in favour, 2 abstentions.

## **8. Board Report - General Service Conference March 2017**

### **1. Board Members**

Colly G. (Ulster), Liam O' B. (Connaught), Patsy O' K. (Munster), Michael O' R. (Leinster), Seamus Dooley, Phil Garland, Eamonn Dillon – Non-Alcoholic Trustees.

### **2. Board Secretary**

Breda F., commenced January 2014.

### **3. Meetings of the Board**

The Board met ten times since Conference in March 2016. One meeting was held at Conference and the remainder were held in GSO.

### **4. Office Committee**

The Office Committee is made up of Breda F., Board Secretary, Michael O'R. Leinster Trustee and Barbara Counihan, Office Manager.

The Office Committee met on a regular basis, generally every two to three months, to discuss matters concerning the efficient and smooth running of the office. As a result of these meetings we have been able to deal with business, office and staff matters in a timely manner.

Costs and in particular service and maintenance contract costs are constantly under review and changes are implemented where necessary.

### **5. Staffing at the General Service Office**

The Secretary to the Board Breda F. also regularly meets the Office Manager after Board Meetings and conveys to her any decisions, made by the Board, relating to the smooth running of the office. Delivery of service to the Fellowship in Ireland is the primary purpose of GSO.

This service is provided very effectively by the three staff, Barbara, Noreen and Bridget, working in GSO. The staff are also very involved in the development a new software system in GSO.

The Board would like to thank the staff for all their hard work and help during the year. We would also like to thank Breda F. Secretary to the Board for her contribution since she took up her position as Secretary.

## **6. Premises**

The Board are legally in possession of two premises, these are:

- General Service Office, Block C, Unit 2, Santry Business Park, Santry, Dublin 9, the term of the lease is 20 years from 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007 and
- Central Service Office, North City Business Centre, Unit 11, 2 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast BT15 2GG. This is a one-year agreement from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016 on a three month terminable notice on either side.

All premises are compliant with Health & Safety regulations.

## **7. Archives**

At GSO in Dublin there is a room devoted solely to our Archives. There is a material from the early days of AA in Ireland, which is 70 years in Ireland this year.

The Archives contains articles and correspondence to and from the early members and AA books, pamphlets, directories, photographs and other material which documents the history of AA in Ireland. Almost all of the material we have has been digitised, which makes accessing and seeking information that much easier. There are approximately 40 recordings of A.A. Interviews and Talks which have been transferred from tape to a digital format.

There are also Area and Intergroup minutes which date back to the 1970's. I would like to remind Secretaries at both levels, that it is suggested that a copy of all Area and Intergroup minutes be forwarded to GSO. These Minutes will become part of our history here in Ireland.

An attempt was made in 1995 to collect histories of the Groups around the Country and this was partially successful. As AA in Ireland is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> year in Ireland it would be great if Groups, Areas and Intergroups would provide short histories to be included in the AA Archives in GSO. These may be forwarded to GSO to be archived.

There were a number of requests to visit the Archives in the past year and all these were facilitated. Also the Board would like to remind members that they may visit the Archives on completion of an Archives Request form which is available from GSO. A Board member or the Board Secretary will be present on such visits. There were also a number of requests for archival information on the history of Groups and AA in Ireland. All enquiries were answered where possible.

The Archives, along with their digital format were on view in The Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, Co. Offaly for the All-Ireland Convention on 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> April 2016 and in The Green Isle Hotel, Dublin, for the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AA in Ireland, on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

One of the Alcoholic Trustees has responsibility for Archives. This involves the management and updating of Archival material. It also requires the Trustee to be present to show visitors the Archives. The Archives has to be regularly updated and made more accessible to members and visitors. It is a very rewarding service but can be very time consuming. The Trustee's other responsibilities sometimes take priority, resulting in the Archives not receiving the attention it deserves.

Over the last number of years, the updating of the Archives has fallen behind due to lack of time. The Board should seek an AA member, with an interest in Archives/History to assist the Trustee responsible to update and maintain the Archives, i.e. part-time volunteer.

The possibilities of making the Archives more accessible to members of the Fellowship and the public in general should be explored. The News Sheet, Road Back and Website could be used to make the Archives history of AA more accessible.

It is important for our recovery that we know our history and learn from our past.

## **8. Literature**

The price of literature was reviewed by the Board at the end of 2015 and it was decided to increase prices to reflect the true cost of purchasing and selling literature. The new prices came into effect in April 2016. Updated price lists were posted to each group prior to this date. Members were asked to use the updated

order forms after that date. Any applicable VAT rates are incorporated into the sales prices. VAT is also included in the Road Back subscription rates.

## **9. Road Back/News Sheet**

### The Road Back – A Meeting in Print

The Road Back is the second oldest AA Magazine in the world next to the Grapevine.

Accordingly we are, with your help and co-operation, attempting to sustain and develop the Magazine into the future.

With the assistance and co-operation of my Sub-Committee on the News Sheet and the Road Back we compiled a number of issues of both publications for Board consideration. The acknowledgement of the help of the office staff at GSO goes without saying. They also help proof read the various editions before they finally reach our printers, who are also a fastidious lot in ensuring that the final product does us all proud.

The "new look" Road Back, launched in November with the bumper edition of the commemorative edition allows for a greater freedom in design and articles. I'd like to thank Colly G for his transitional help with the latter. The input of stories by our Members both here and abroad are by all accounts meeting a genuine need in our collective recoveries.

The Road Back appears to have grown in sales. The "new look" appears to have whetted the appetite of the Fellowship and I was amazed at the number of articles, stories and poems for the last issue.

The All Ireland Committee intend to purchase, hopefully at cost, 800 copies for the Convention and use the centrefold as a program and promotional flyer for the event as was done in Bundoran a few years back.

The contributions of our members in the form of stories, articles, poems and funnies are always welcome and actively encouraged. The Magazine belongs to the Fellowship. We are entrusted for the time being, on a rotational basis with the task of making the magazine meaningful and marketable. Bi-monthly themes are flagged well in advance for Members to tailor their contributions towards them.

Groups who have anchor Members to co-ordinate the purchase and sale of the Magazine play a huge role in the Road Back's survival.

#### News Sheet:

Similarly, the News Sheet has been given a lift in design and presentation. The Theme for the News Sheet meets current circumstances and Fellowship priorities.

The News Sheet is a free publication and provides up to date information on the Calendar of events by way of Conventions, Days of Gratitude and Commemorative Workshops etc.

Each issue of the News Sheet goes through a process that begins with a draft to the Sub-Committee and then to the Board, via the office staff and finally proofed by the printers for techs and specs. It is carefully distilled before it finally reaches the Fellowship in both hard copy and digital copy available on the website.

## **10. AA Database & Group Information Sheet for AA Groups in Ireland**

A new CRM system is now in operation in GSO. This is a work in progress but already it has proven a vital asset to the work of GSO in providing an effective and efficient service to the Fellowship and public. This system will be used to update the 'Where to Find AA in Ireland' directory, the official AA Website and the official AA App.

The information kept on this system originates from the Group Information Sheets provided by AA Groups. Therefore if groups update their Group's details at least once a year it would help ensure that the GSO can provide the most up to date information at all times. The official Website and AA App are increasingly being used to locate AA meetings so **it is most important that groups play their role in keeping their own Group information up to date.**

Any changes to your Group's information should be completed on a Group Information Sheet without delay and return it to GSO via the Structure of AA. The Conference approved Group Information Sheet can be

downloaded from our website [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie) or sent direct to you, simply just contact GSO and they can email or post a copy to you.

\*Over the past year there were approx. 6000 copies of the Directory sold. Please note the Directory is **confidential** and available **only** to A.A. Members.

A list of AA Meetings, without contact names and numbers, is available from GSO. This can be emailed or posted to anyone interested.

#### 11. Public Information

Colly G. Alcoholic Trustee, Ulster has now taken over personal responsibility for National PI, and as part of the PI Sub-Committee our DVD was forwarded for review to major media outlets, and this was greeted with some success, it resulted with two interviews on BBC Radio Ulster and requests from Irish Examiner to place clips from our DVD on their website. You will hear more about this in the PI Sub-Committee report. Also as part of our 70th Year Celebrations, a press release was forwarded to major newspapers and media outlets throughout the island of Ireland. I'm unaware if this was taken up by any journalist.

#### 12. Mini Conventions

The Board did not attend any Mini-Conventions in the last year.

#### 13. Meeting with AI Anon

The Board did not have a formal meeting with AI Anon in 2016/2017

#### 14. Website/App

Colly G. Alcoholic Trustee, Ulster is responsible for website. With the PI Subcommittee, we have been speaking to web development companies, as the website needs a major revamp. Over 60% of hits on our site is coming from mobile devices and tablets; again, we will discuss this further in the PI Sub-Committee report. On the AA Finder App for which I am also responsible, we had a few problems with the app last year as it was not updating the information on Groups and Meetings from the website. We discovered that this was due to the new database not linking properly with the app. The app developers have passed the code for the app over to us and with our present web company they were able to link the missing fields between the website and the AA finder app, which is now updating and working properly. Several people have been asking for changes they would like to the App, please pass these through the structure and we will see if they are feasible after speaking to our Web Company.

### Treasurer's Report to General Service Conference March 2017

In January, your Board met and discussed the audited accounts for the year ending 31st October 2016.

The contributions from the Fellowship have been substantially reduced. Munster's contribution for the year has been €16,000.

|                        | 2016            | 2015            |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Income                 | €266,059        | €277,518        |
| Costs                  | € 90,367        | € 82,078        |
|                        | €175,692        | €195,440        |
| Overhead expenses      | €278,847        | €252,906        |
|                        | €102,847        | € 57,466        |
| Miscellaneous Income   | € 1,812         | € 2,956         |
| Net Deficit            | €101,035        | € 54,480        |
| Overhead expenses      | €279,000        | €253,000        |
| Stock                  | € 40,000        | € 40,000        |
| Debtors                | € 48,000        | € 49,000        |
| <b>Prudent Reserve</b> | <b>€367,000</b> | <b>€342,000</b> |

*(These are rounded figures)*

**Operating Expenses** - Total operating services for the General Service Office and all its services for the 12 months ended 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2016 were €278,847 compared to the previous year's €252,906.



**Literature** – Sales of Literature increased this year.

|                  | <b>2016</b> | <b>2015</b> |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Literature Sales | €105,167    | € 90,340    |

**The Road Back** – Sales of Road Back increased this year.

|                 | <b>2016</b> | <b>2015</b> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Road Back Sales | €3,751      | €4,816      |

**International/European Literature Funds** - There has been no contribution to these due to the decline in contributions and deficit this year of €101,035

Your Board would like to make you aware of the costs at G.S.O., despite this; there has been no reduction in services.

Your Board would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your help throughout the year.

Following the presentation of the Board Report, discussions took place on the following:

1. Directories without 12 Step Contacts for Hospitals/Treatment Centres
2. Board invitations to Mini-Conventions
3. App
4. School talks vetting (transitions years)

In respect to:

- (1) The Board are to bring back to the Re-Convened Conference costs to print Directories without 12 Step Contact details and regarding (4) details regarding vetting.
- (2) The Board has checked and no invitations have been received in the last three years to attend Mini-Conventions.
- (3) The App has been updated and when you download it, there should be no permissions requested.

Paddy S (Munster) Proposed and Tony O'C (Munster) seconded the Board report.

## **9. Address of Non-Alcoholic Trustee**

On behalf of the Non-Alcoholic Trustees, Séamus Dooley outlined the involvement of all three in the ongoing review of Corporate Governance at Board level and welcomed the Auditors report and that Conference are now asking the relevant questions and are prepared to do something about it. There are times when the Non-Alcoholic Trustees are unwelcome, resented but, their function is to ask uncomfortable questions. He went on to say with common purpose and goals, unity and strengths, this Conference, can show how it works.

Referring to his address to the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, Séamus said the challenges facing AA were very different to those faced by the men and women who helped build the Fellowship in Ireland, but the role of AA had not changed.

The regulatory framework imposed new responsibilities on the Board and as Directors, the Non-Alcoholic Trustees are mindful of their responsibilities. Séamus stressed that the Non-Alcoholic Trustees had equal responsibilities and were full Members of Conference. Bill W had been very specific in seeking Trustees with a level of detachment from the Fellowship and the current Non-Alcoholic Trustees were following in a strong tradition.

Séamus confirmed that he had indicated his intention to step down from the role in 2017 and has only agreed to stay in the short-term at the request of Board Members, because of the perceived need for expertise in the context of the Corporate Governance review.

Discussions on the report ensued and in particular on the operation of the Board, Séamus said the Board does not make distinctions between Alcoholic Trustee and Non-Alcoholic Trustee, all of whom have equal standing at Conference.

As a Board we have to comply with all regulations – Governance, Charity, and Revenue etc. Alcoholics Anonymous is no different to any other charitable organisation and the fiscudary duties are the same, regardless of the purpose of an individual charity.

Eamonn Dillon (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) proposed the report and it was seconded by Michael L (Ulster).

## **10. Election of GB Observers April 2017 (GB Conference 21-23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017)**

Martin C (Munster) proposed by Tony (Munster) and seconded by Seamus (WSD)  
Colum P (Ulster) proposed by Michael L (Ulster) and seconded by Charlie (Ulster)

## **11. Date and time of Reconvened Conference.**

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Time: 9<sup>th</sup> June 6pm Dinner, Re-Convened Conference commences 8pm

Venue: Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore.

# ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF IRELAND



## ROLL CALL AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE RE-CONVENED GENERAL MEETING OF CONFERENCE TULLAMORE COURT HOTEL

9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> June 2017

### Opening of Re-Convened Conference by Chairperson

Mark opened Conference by welcoming everybody. He then asked for a moments silence to consider why we were here. Conference then said the Serenity Prayer and Preamble.

|                                       |                                 |                |                 |            |              |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| <b>Connaught</b>                      | Liam O' B                       | Trustee        | <b>Leinster</b> | Pat K      | Trustee      |
|                                       | Richard O' M                    | Delegate       |                 | Sheila K   | Delegate     |
|                                       | Harry McG                       | Delegate       |                 | Michael W  | Delegate     |
|                                       | Mary S                          | Delegate       |                 | Emmet O' H | Delegate     |
|                                       | Tony D                          | Alt - Delegate |                 |            | Delegate     |
|                                       | Jacqueline G                    | IG Secretary   |                 | Anne O'D   | IG Secretary |
| <b>Munster</b>                        | Patsy O'K                       | Trustee        | <b>Ulster</b>   | Colly G    | Trustee      |
|                                       | John D                          | Delegate       |                 | Tom D      | Delegate     |
|                                       | Martin C                        | Delegate       |                 | Colum P    | Delegate     |
|                                       | Paddy S                         | Delegate       |                 | Michael L  | Delegate     |
|                                       | Tony O'C                        | Delegate       |                 | Charles D  | Delegate     |
|                                       | David K                         | AIG Secretary  |                 | Billy I    | IG Secretary |
| <b>Board Secretary</b>                | Breda F                         |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>World Service Delegate</b>         | Seamus B<br>Pat D (Leinster)    |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>Non Alc. Trustee</b>               | Eamonn Dillon<br>Philip Garland |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>ESD WSD Nominee</b>                |                                 |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>Chairperson</b>                    | Mark D                          |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>Observer/<br/>Incoming Trustee</b> |                                 |                |                 |            |              |
| <b>Apologies</b>                      | Seamus Dooley                   |                |                 |            |              |

Mark outlined to Conference that the following items added to the Agenda (from 12<sup>th</sup> March) and asked Conference at what stage will they discuss them: Conference agreed to take them now.

- a. Reply to Chair from Member
- b. Constitution (Companies Act 2014)
- c. Garda Vetting Schools
- d. Update on costing of Directory (no names)
- e. Review IT Logistics – emails (set date)
- f. Mobile number for Deaf Community – Logistics
- g. IREYPAA
- h. World Service Delegate.
- i. Financial Graphs (March 2017)

**(a) Reply to Chair from Member**

Mark read out the following documents to Conference of which the Appeal was brought originally to Conference in March 2017 from a member and asked for guidance.

- o Appeal based on Concept 5
- o Letter from Chair of Conference to Member
- o Letter received from Member to Chair

Conference discussed and referred back to Concept 5 and was reminded that they voted 2/3 majority for the Chair to correspond with member. Throughout the discussion, it was noted that any paragraph in isolation could be contradictory. Following discussion, it was agreed at the Re-Convened Conference that the Board write to the member.

**(b) Constitution (Companies Act 2014) Appendix 6**

Secretary passed out to Conference the Constitution of the General Services Board of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland, a Company Limited by Guarantee and not having Shared Capital, which has been updated in line with the Companies Act 2014 by Dechert Solicitors.

Eamonn (Non-Alcoholic Trustee) outlined the changes from the original Constitution (July 1978). The main change is the number of Members from Seven (7) to Thirty (30) and the AGM of the Company would take place where practicable, shall precede the Annual General Meeting of Conference.

The Members shall at all times be the same as the Members of Conference the details and requirements for which are set out in the Service Handbook, unless such numbers would cause the number of Members to reduce below 30 Members. On ceasing to be a Member of Conference, member(s) shall automatically cease to be a Member of the Company, to be replaced by newly appointed Members as selected in accordance with the Service Handbook.

The quorum for the AGM of the Company shall be 16 Members (50% of Members plus 1) present in person or by proxy. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called at any time by the Secretary on written request from at least 16 Members.

Eamonn also outlined to Conference that if we do not adopt this Special Resolution, the Act imposes amendments on us and we will have no say in the matter.

Concern arose from the floor of Conference that this was been pushed through and why was Conference not notified sooner and should be brought back to the Groups. Page 62 Article 7 Trustees and Page 70 Right of Decision of the General Services Handbook 2014/01 was read out. It was also noted that if there were any changes made subsequent to this meeting, would cause issues in respect to our CHY Status in relation to the Revenue Commissions, Charities Regulator and Companies Registration Office.

Following lengthy discussion and clarifying that, the Board is being more transparent.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Proposal:         | Trust the Board and accept new Constitution proposed by Michael W (Leinster) seconded by David (Munster).                |
| Counter proposal: | Take back to Intergroup for decision to be made by October proposed by Paddy S (Munster) seconded by Michael L (Ulster). |

Following vote the proposal was carried 23 to the Counter proposal of 5

- The new Constitution for the Company approved.
- (c) **Garda Vetting in Schools**  
Eamonn spoke to this and notified Conference that he has been in contact with the Vetting Office in Thurles and the general practical guidelines will be issued in a couple of weeks. From the discussion already had and the oral advice given it is likely that the proposal as made by us to the Garda Vetting Office will be accepted by the vetting Office and, as the AA Visitors will not be alone with children no formal vetting obligation arises and the present exemption in the Act applies. On the proposal from Michael W (Leinster) and seconded by Pat K (Trustee) that the letter include identifiable contact in advance for which Conference agreed.  
Your Board is awaiting correspondence from the Garda Vetting Office and when it is received it will be made available to Conference Delegates.
- (d) **Update on costing of Directory (no names)**  
Secretary outlined the costs €1,210 plus VAT for 500 copies of the Directory similar to the current directory without 12 Steps names and contact numbers.  
  
Discussion took place regarding this and the use of the App and the cost and the downturn in purchasing of Directories with names. It was also noted that it was the responsibility of Area to bring the meetings to Treatment Centres and Hospitals. It was outlined that to print 500, which would be in stock for some time and would be out of date a few days later.  
  
Breda (Secretary) proposed the use of the App and Website (which are updated daily), seconded by Colly (Trustee).  
A counter proposal from Seamus (WSD) and seconded by Liam (Trustee) to go ahead and print 500 and review.  
  
On a vote the counter proposal received 8 and the proposal received 20.  
The proposal carried, not to print 500 directories with no names.
- (e) **Review IT Logistics – Emails (set date)**  
Colly updated Conference on the cost to set up the use of emails to access Minutes etc. The IT cost would be €160. Conference agreed with proceeding slowly with Conference Minutes to Conference Delegates.
- (f) **Mobile Number for Deaf Community – Logistics (Appendix 7)**  
Secretary passed out queries from GSO in relation to the logistics of the Mobile phone number for Deaf community.  
Conference discussed same and rescinded the agreed motion until end July 2017 and take down the Mobile Number from the Website until the selected Committee meet and look at set of protocols and look at the Framework set up in UK proposed by Liam (Trustee) and seconded by Billy (Ulster), Unanimously agreed by Conference. Committee elected as follows:
- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Pat K (Trustee)        |  |
| Jacqueline (Connaught) | proposed by Tony, seconded by Patsy                        |
| John (Munster)         | proposed by Martin (Munster), seconded by David (Munster)  |
| Emmet (Leinster)       | proposed by Paddy (Munster), seconded by Sheila (Leinster) |
| Michael (Ulster)       | proposed by John (Ulster), seconded by Charlie (Ulster)    |
- Mobile Number to be put back on Website following meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- (g) **IREYPPA (Appendix 8)**  
Secretary handed out to Conference copy of email received from IREYPPA requesting to attend 2018 Conference.  
Following lengthy discussion, Conference aired concerns about “splinter groups” and their affiliation outside of Ireland to Europe. The Board also outlined their meeting with them and that the members of IREYPPA attend AA meetings within the Structure.
- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Proposal-Board:   | Explain very clear why we are not inviting, but use Structure and welcome them to attend the All Ireland and meet the Board proposed by David (Munster) and seconded by Tom (Ulster). |
| Counter Proposal: | Propose to invite and listen, at least give them the courtesy to meet. Proposed by Liam (Trustee), seconded by Paddy S (Munster).   |

On the vote, the counter proposal received 6 and the proposal received 20, 2 abstentions. The proposal carried, for the Board to write and explain why not inviting as outlined.

**(h) World Service Delegate**

Secretary outlined the term of office for Seamus B (WSD) ends on 31/12/2017.

Nominations for WSD as outlined in the Service Handbook 2014/01 to be with the Secretary to Conference in writing for meeting in March 2018.

Term of Office to commence on 01/01/2018 until 31/12/2021

**(i) Financial Graphs – follow up from March 2017 meeting (Appendix 9)**

Patsy (Trustee) presented each of the Graphs individually which followed by questions and comments. In his presentation he asked all Conference Delegates to bring these back to their Intergrups for distribution to their Areas and in turn Area to the Group.

These graphs outline the transparency of Contributions and Expenditure over a 10-year span in the General Services Office. It is hoped these graphs will elevate misinformation and be more transparent in the Fellowship.

Michael L (Ulster) who requested these in March, thanked Patsy and the Office Manager for the work done.

Discussions took place about the lack of transparency at levels of Structure that it up to each part of Structure to look at their tabletop contributions and pass on monies over prudent reserve through Structure.

## **12. Sub-Committee 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (Appendix 10)**

Sub-Committee of Conference elected in 2015.

Michael O'R (Trustee), Michael W (Leinster), Martin C (Munster), Charlie D (Ulster), Joy C (Connaught).

Martin C (Munster) read the report, concern was expressed at the timing of the event and other activities were held the same night, which would have taken from the venue. The history presentation was excellent and well presented, but should have been recorded.

It was agreed, that lessons have been learned and we need to look at costs for forthcoming events and run National event only.

The Committee were thanked for their hard work and have stepped down.

## **13. All Ireland Convention 2016 Report (Appendix 11)**

Secretary passed out revised All Ireland report, which replaced the report presented in folders in March 2017. Emmet on behalf of Leinster Committee presented the report.

Colly thanked Leinster for the report and work completed by the new Trustee Pat. Lessons have been learned, we need to work within our guidelines - Minutes of all meetings, Treasurers' reports and take extreme caution with people whom we put into positions to take up the responsibility, and issue like this would not have arisen.

## **14. 2015 PI Sub-Committee Report & PI Kit costings (Appendix 12)**

Presented to Conference by all members of the Committee - Colly G Trustee, Sheila K (Leinster) Tony O'C (Munster), Michael L (Ulster), PJ O'M (Connaught, rotated out mid-year)

### **Doctors Presentation**

Proposed by Colly (Trustee) and seconded by David (Munster) that the Presentation be available through the Structure via Intergroup Secretary to GSO for distribution to Doctors Surgery. Change of Phone Numbers to be rectified and passed to GSO. Conference unanimously agreed that the Presentation would not to be put on Website.

### **PI Kit**

Committee agreed to go ahead with Option 1, which includes, DVD, PI literature and explanations of how to work the folder. Breda (Secretary) expressed concerns as to the non-professional presentation of the kit and the cost to the Fellowship and the longevity of same. Conference agreed to go ahead with the Kit with changes and nametags included and that once it is purchased it is the responsibility of the PI individual.

Board to add the PI Kit to the Literature list and include cost.

Proposed by Paddy S (Munster), seconded by Martin C (Munster).

### **Non-Alcoholic Trustee & Media**

Discussion took place and the role of the Non-Alcoholic Trustees in relation to PI. It was noted that the current policy was based on Conference Decision 1981;

*"they had given assurance's however that their services would always be available when they are needed for a specific purpose such as publicity or making public appearances on behalf of the fellowship. Conference unanimously accepted these assurances".*

As outlined in the report the Conference guidelines needs to be updated.

### **Social networking**

It was agreed unanimously by Conference that the following be added directly under the heading – Social Networking.

*This could be revisited in the future as further safe guards become available, which could be embraced within our Traditions.*

### **Website & App**

As the Website is the responsibility of the Board, and following meetings with web designers by the Sub-Committee, the Board will follow up with quotations for the upgrading of the Website.

The App has been successfully been updated. To obtain the new version, you will need to delete the old version and reload the new App on Google Play or Apple iTunes.

The full report with small adjustments was proposed by Michael L (Ulster) and seconded by John (Munster), unanimously agreed by Conference.

## **15. Sub-Committees of Conference**

### **Public Information**

The Sub-Committee elected in 2015 has completed its work and stepped down. The recommendations, which were made, the Board will follow through.

### **Road Back/News Sheet**

Liam (Trustee) updated Conference of the meeting, which took place at the 2016 Conference, which discussed the appearance and "tiredness" of both. On behalf of the Board (who are the Editors) he took a brief from the Sub-Committee to give them both a new look, for which good feedback has been received.

#### **Road Back**

The Board are always looking for new articles to put into the Road Back.

#### **News Sheet**

The News Sheet is a communication tool to the Fellowship on a bi-monthly basis and is available on the Website.

Pat D (WSD) suggested that snippets of the World Service and European Service reports should be included in the News Sheet.

#### **Archives**

Pat K (Trustee) outlined to Conference the need for an Archivist to assist with the day-to-day upkeep of the Archives in GSO. He outlined the Trustees duties on a yearly basis and this particular role did require more attention.

The Archivist would work alongside the Senior Office Assistant and be answerable to the Board and Leinster Trustee. The position is in the process of being given to an ex-Trustee who has an interest in Archives. The role would be on a yearly basis.

Conference discussed this at length, and felt that it was inappropriate for an ex-Trustee to hold the position. They felt that when a Trustee completes their term on the Board (4 years) they should rotate – in the spirit of rotation.

John proposed – Former Trustee is not asked to continue in a position of service in the structure of AA. Seconded by Sheila. Vote: 14 for, 8 against, 3 abstentions – simple majority.

#### ***Finance***

See earlier report in minutes.

#### **Sub-Committees – the way forward.**

Discussions took place at length to the requirements of Sub-Committees of Conference. Patsy (Trustee) asked that costs be kept an eye on.

#### ***Literature – Service Hand Book***

On the proposal of Tony (Munster) it was unanimously agreed that there is a need for a Sub-Committee to look at Literature and a “root and branch review” of the Service Hand Book and to bring up to date with Conference Decisions. Last update 2004. Literature Sub-Committee of Conference to be elected at March 2018 Conference.

#### ***PI***

PI Sub-Committee of Conference to be elected at March 2018 Conference to help to promote PI and help get the message to the still suffering alcoholic in line with the agreed PI documentation.

#### ***Road Back/News Sheet***

It was also agreed that a Sub-Committee of Conference to be elected at March 2018 Conference.

### **16. Conference Delegates’ Reports (Appendix 13)**

On the proposal of John D (Munster), Conference unanimously agreed to take all the Conference Delegate Reports taken as read. The documentation submitted was available to all Delegates since the commencement of Conference in March in line with Service Handbook; page 65 Article 12, 2.1.

### **17. Public Information Reports (Appendix 14)**

On the proposal of John D (Munster) Conference unanimously agreed to take all the Public Information Reports taken as read. The documentation submitted was available to all Delegates since the commencement of Conference in March in line with Service Handbook; page 65 Article 12, 2.1.

### **18. World Service Delegates Report – meeting 2016 (Appendix 15)**

Report presented by Seamus and Liam.

Discussion arose about the need for two Delegates to go to meetings considering the cost of second year to New York and it was agreed to keep within guidelines and principle that two Delegates always attend.

### **19. GB Conference April 2016 – Observer’s Report. (Appendix 16)**

Michael presented the Report.

### **20. Polish Conference 11-13<sup>th</sup> November 2016 – Observers Report (Appendix 17)**

Emmet (Leinster) proposed revised report be accepted by Conference, which was accepted and Paddy (Munster) made an intervention with addition to the report.



Paddy (Munster) had buff cards from Polish Groups from various Intergroups in Ireland and Conference agreed to pass these to the individual Intergroups to pass to Area's for follow up.

## **21. Invitation to GB Observers March 2018**

It was agreed by Conference to extend an invitation to GB for the 2018 Conference in March.

## **22. Election of 2018 Chairperson**

Chairperson – Tony O'C (Munster) proposed by Martin (Munster) and seconded by Colm (Ulster).

Vice Chairperson – Seamus B (Outgoing WSD) proposed by Tony (Munster) and seconded by Pat (Leinster).

### **Date & Venue for Conference 2018**

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018

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

**Time:** 6pm Dinner & Conference commencement at 8pm

Mark thanked Conference for the conduct of the meeting and he in turn was complimented on his chairing.

Patsy (Trustee) thanked the Secretary and all Delegates especially out-going Delegates for their dedication and hard work over the past number of years. The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer.

# Appendices

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| (Appendix 1)  | Adoption of Agenda and other urgent business in accordance with Paragraph 12.3, page 66 of 2012/1 Service Handbook |
| (Appendix 2)  | Adoption of 2016 Conference Minutes and Matters Arising  |
| (Appendix 3)  | Financial Statements & Auditors Report 2016  |
| (Appendix 4)  | Conference 2017 Report on Finance  |
| (Appendix 5)  | Motions to Conference  |
| (Appendix 6)  | Constitution (Companies Act 2014)  |
| (Appendix 7)  | Mobile number for Deaf Community – Logistics   |
| (Appendix 8)  | <i>IREYPPA</i>   |
| (Appendix 9)  | Financial Graphs – follow up from March 2017 meeting   |
| (Appendix 10) | Sub Committee 70 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary   |
| (Appendix 11) | All Ireland Convention 2016 Report   |
| (Appendix 12) | 2015 PI Sub Committee Report & PI Kit costings   |
| (Appendix 13) | Conference Delegates' Reports  |
| (Appendix 14) | Public Information Reports   |
| (Appendix 15) | World Service Delegates Report – meeting 2016  |
| (Appendix 16) | GB Conference April 2016 – Observer's Report.  |
| (Appendix 17) | Polish Conference 11 <sup>th</sup> - 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2016 – Observers Report                             |



## **AGREED AGENDA**

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

**Date:** Friday 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018

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

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1. Opening of Conference by Chairperson
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of 2017 Conference Minutes and Matters Arising
4. Election of World/European Delegate
5. Motions to Conference
6. Structure Layout – proposed revision
7. CRA Meeting 25.11.2017
8. AA Group Financial Guidelines & Record Book
9. Area & Intergroup Finance Sheets
10. Conference Delegates Reports
11. Public Information Reports
12. Report of Sub-Committee – Mobile number for Deaf Community (Website)
13. Possible formation of Sub-Committees of Conference
  - Literature
  - Road Back / News Sheet
  - Public Information
14. All Ireland Convention 2017 Report
15. European Service Delegates – WSM 2017 Report
16. GB Conference April 2017 Observer's Report
17. Election of GB Observers April 2018 (13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, Park Inn, York)
18. Invitation of GB Observer 2019
19. IREYPAA – update to Conference
20. Election of 2019 Chairperson
21. AOB



## **MOTIONS**

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IRELAND  
9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### **2018 Motions to Conference**

- Connaught Intergroup
- Munster Intergroup
- Ulster Intergroup

**Connaught Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2018**  
**The Oranmore Group, Co. Galway**

**Motion Title: A National Insurance Scheme for AA Groups**

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017, the Group Conscience of Oranmore Group would like the following Motion brought to General Service Conference of Ireland.

**Motion:**

That The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland, authorises, as it sees fit, to negotiate and agree a Group Insurance Scheme for AA Groups in Ireland.

**Reason:**

The present situation is that each Group needs its own Insurance, independent of Venue/Landlords Public Liability Insurance. This additional Insurance is to protect the Group against certain risks, actions and behaviors at Meetings.

The Group Insurance Scheme can be negotiated and agreed and then offered to Groups. This will save Groups considerable funds which can then be used to "carry the message of AA". Exiting data shows that considerable savings can be made.

A National Scheme would also allow Areas and Intergroups, who presently facilitate this service to focus on Tradition 5.

This would also guarantee continuity of supply and administration of the scheme.

**How it could Work:**

The scheme is negotiated and agreed, by either GSO, the Board or an approved Committee, then each AA Group in Ireland will be notified of the Provider. The Scheme is voluntary, and the Group can arrange Insurance cover, should they wish. The Group maintains its autonomy and a direct relationship with the Provider, in the same way that they maintain a direct relationship with their present Provider.

The Scheme is reviewed yearly.

Yours in Fellowship  
Oranmore Group Conscience  
1<sup>st</sup> September 2017

As per AA procedure, this Motion approved at Galway West Area, is forwarded to Connaught Intergroup and then to General Service Conference of Ireland.

**Connaught Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2018**  
**The Mountbellew Group, Co. Galway**

**Motion Title: National Helpline**

On 27<sup>th</sup> August 2017, the Group Conscience of Mountbellew Group would like the following Motion brought to General Service Conference of Ireland.

**Motion:**

That the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland installs a National Phone Helpline.

**Reason:**

It would give AA in Ireland a National Public Identity instead of the present bewildering and disorganized choices, of 16 Phone Helplines advertised on the National Website.

Modern telephone technology can be used reasonably to offer such a service at specific times, with easy automatic redirections when necessary.

By having one phone line, a suffering alcoholic or any interested party can easily call and be put in touch with the correct responder.

It is increasingly more difficult to attract Telephone Responders into this area of service and this facility would greatly help us engage with the suffering alcoholic

Yours in Fellowship  
Mountbellew Group Conscience  
27<sup>th</sup> August 2017

As per AA procedure, this motion approved at Galway East Area, is forwarded to Connaught Intergroup and then to General Service Conference of Ireland.

**Munster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2018**  
**The Shannow Group, Co. Kerry**  
**Motion Title: Reversal of Conference Decision**

That the Conference decision of March 1987 (Conference felt that Concept Five was clear and concise and required no further discussion. Conference also empowered the Board on behalf of Conference to accept or reject any application under this Concept. If the Board had a particular difficulty with a specific application they could always draw the matter to the attention of Conference) as it states quite clearly that the Report should be given to Conference, Paragraph One, Concept Five, Page Twenty, Twelve Concepts.

This decision needs to be reversed.

Shannow Group AA, Abbeydorney, Co. Kerry

**Ulster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2017**  
**Belfast Area Committee, Lisburn Road Group**

In relation to previous attempts to have the attached Motion to conference approved.

We, the steering committee and members of 62 Lisburn Road Group wish to exercise our right for appeal and thus re-submit our request for ratification by Belfast Area and Ulster Intergroup.

We would draw attention in so doing to the flyer produced for the **week of celebration marking the 70 year anniversary of AA in Ireland** which clearly welcomes all members to **a beginners closed meeting** on 20 October 2016 at 8.30pm in St. Pats, Dublin.

We quite frankly struggle with the fact that we as a group cannot enjoy the same licence as those organisers of this important event.

In Fellowship

62 Lisburn group. 20 November 2016

**The group conscience 62 Lisburn Road Group Alcoholics Anonymous**  
**Motion to Conference:**

The group conscience of Lisburn Road Group formally request that Conference facilitate the inclusion of their beginners meeting on Thursday nights on the meeting cards returned through Area to CSO by all groups in Ulster.

There is currently no notation on the card for this meeting.

The subsequent inclusion in the Where To Find will assist members specifically looking for a beginners meeting either to attend themselves or to accompany a new person.

The designated reference could be simply B or BG and the group are happy to accept ANY reference which clearly denotes BEGINNERS MEETING.

Although the meeting is designed to attract newcomers anyone who fulfils the criteria specified in our fellowships singleness of purpose statement is welcome to attend.

As per procedure, this request is going through Belfast area committee to Ulster Inter group and forward as a motion to conference.

Yours in fellowship

The steering committee/PP

The group conscience, Lisburn Road Group, Belfast

30 Aug 2015

**Ulster Intergroup Motion to March Conference 2018**  
**Belfast Area, Lisburn Road Group**

The Lisburn Road Group of Alcoholics Anonymous, through its Group Conscience, wish to submit the following as a Motion to Conference:

We the Group Conscience of 62 Lisburn Road, request that the section in our Service Handbook for Ireland in P. 63, 2.2 (Terms of Office for Non Alcoholic Trustees) be changed to specify that Non Alcoholic Trustees serve no more than two by four year terms.

We believe in the spirit of rotation within our Fellowship, and believe it should extend to our Non Alcoholic Trustee servants. We are of the opinion that eight years is a suitable period for Non Alcoholic Trustees and ask that Conference agree this Motion and take steps to update the Service Handbook as requested.

The Group Conscience 62 Lisburn Road (Belfast Area)  
AGM 2017 November

Billy I  
Ulster IG Secretary  
28<sup>th</sup> January 2018



**Report from 19<sup>th</sup> ESM: 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> October 2017  
For Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

The 19th E.S.M. was held in York, England, from the 14th to the 17th of October 2017. AA Ireland was represented by Seamus B. and Pat D.

The Theme of the meeting was '**PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES**'

Michael, (Czech Republic), gave the opening address and its emphasis was on Concept IX.

Our leaders do not drive by mandate; they lead by example, in effect we are saying to them, ACT FOR US, but don't BOSS US.

The keynote address was given by Mary Cumings, International Desk, G.S.O. New York (see attached). Roger, AA G.B. gave the Financial Report. Reserve: €76,805. This is sufficient to cover expenses for the next 3 E.S.M. Meetings. This is made up of contributions of €23,048 from participating Countries, with the balance being contributed by AA G.B.

On Friday evening, each Country presented a report on how 'The Fellowship ' is functioning in their respective Countries. I was honoured to give the Ireland report (see attached). Saturday was spent in various Committees and Workshops. On Saturday evening, reports of above were presented to all Delegates, and where necessary, after discussion, amendments were made, and the reports were approved. (I will make these reports available to all Members of Conference, at the March meeting of Conference).

Sunday morning was an Open Forum Meeting where Delegates were offered an opportunity to share on issues not covered by Committees/Workshops. I used this opportunity to seek clarification regarding the possibility of producing an up to date simplified version of 'The Concepts for World Services'. It generated a healthy debate among the Delegates.

The outcome of the debate was:

1. There is an up-to-date publication of the Concepts 2016 available.
2. AA G.B. has published a modified version of the Concepts, which has been approved by G.S.O. New York.  
N.B. As our Structure, Government Laws, language, etc. is quite similar to AA G.B., we may benefit from viewing same with a view to publishing our own understanding of the Concepts.

Some other highlights from the Meeting;

- A. Spain will request permission to use our DVD and the 'Road Back'.
- B. AA G.B. has a Young Person's Liaison Officer.
- C. A number of Delegates from Eastern European Countries thanked Ireland for its contribution to the International Literature fund, which helped in producing 'The Big Book ' in their native language.

**Conclusion:**

Our gratitude to Barbara and Staff for forwarding the Literature to York, i.e. our DVD, Meeting in Print; 'The Road Back ', our Service Manual, etc.. We put it on display and by lunchtime on Saturday, it had all been taken up by fellow Delegates. This is a simple example of Country to Country Sponsorship.

On a personal note, I wish to thank Seamus for his assistance and guidance before and during the weekend. To you, Members of the Conference, thanks for offering me the opportunity to serve at this level of service. It has been one of the most humbling experiences of my time in the Fellowship. I am enclosing with this report, the official Minutes of the Meeting.

Yours in AA  
Pat D.

Theme for 20th ESM: "UNCHANGED MESSAGE IN A CHANGING WORLD"

**European Service Meeting Statement of Purpose**

*The primary purpose of the European Service meeting is the same as that of all AA activity – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, whoever he may be, whatever the language he speaks. The European Service Meeting seeks ways and means of accomplishing this goal by serving as a forum for sharing the experience, strength and hope of Delegates who come together from all parts of Europe. It can also represent an expression of the Group Conscience throughout Europe.*

*Experience teaches us that developing a sound Structure enables us to deliver our services more effectively. The European Service Meeting encourages the planning of the sound Structures suited to the needs and capabilities of the various Countries and the exploration of expanding AA Services to reach the alcoholic through internal communication, community relations and institutions work.*

**SUMMARY**

Delegates from 31 European countries gathered together at The Park Inn, York, on the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017 to take part in the 19<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting. The European Information Centre at York issued invitations to European services offices and listed below are the countries which attended. Included is the Delegate from Bulgaria who we were pleased to welcome for the first time.

|          |               |             |          |                               |
|----------|---------------|-------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| Austria  | France        | Latvia      | Slovakia | German Speaking Europe        |
| Belarus  | Great Britain | Lithuania   | Slovenia | Belgium (Flemish speaking)    |
| Bulgaria | Greece        | Malta       | Spain    | Switzerland (French speaking) |
| Croatia  | Iceland       | Netherlands | Sweden   | Czech Republic                |
| Turkey   | Ireland       | Norway      | Ukraine  | Denmark                       |
| Finland  | Italy         | Poland      | Portugal | Romania                       |
|          |               |             |          | Russia                        |

On Friday afternoon, registration and reception took place which provided an ideal opportunity for the Delegates to familiarise themselves with the venue, to renew friendships and to share with those Delegates attending for the first time.

The 19<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting was opened by the Chairman, Michal Stehlik, with a moment's silence, followed by the reading of the European Service Meeting's Statement of Purpose. He welcomed all the Delegates, the staff of the ESM, including Roger Booth, General Secretary of The European Information Centre (EIC), and last but not least, our special guests from GSO New York International desk – Mary Cumings, and the Publications Director, David Rosen.

Following the Welcome and Opening Address, a presentation of the 24<sup>th</sup> World Service Meeting (WSM) was given by Jurgen Reck (German Speaking Europe). This was followed by the Keynote Address which was presented by Mary Cumings, International desk, GSO New York. Roger Booth, General Secretary, EIC also gave a short talk on the Financial Report. There then followed individual presentations of Country highlights which were given by one Delegate from each Country.

On Saturday, Delegates took part in the Committees and Workshops to share and discuss their experiences of Service within their Countries. Reports were given from the Committee and Workshop Chairs detailing these discussions on Saturday afternoon (Committees) and also on Sunday morning (Workshops). Two Question and Answer sessions were also held during the day with many interesting discussions. David Rosen, the Publications Director at GSO New York, answered questions on his time in the role and Roger Booth, General Secretary of the EIC also explained the decision to invite representatives from differing Structures within Russia. Saturday evening allowed a little time for relaxation with the Sharing Meeting. Presentations were given by Fatima Osorio (Portugal) and Lubomir Babulik (Slovakia) on the Theme 'Anonymity in Service' and which was followed by sharing around the room.

On Sunday morning, elections were held to determine who would become Chair of the 20<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting and we are pleased to welcome Rita Moretto (Italy) to take up the position. Lotus Andersen (France) was elected to prepare and present a report on this 19<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting to the 25<sup>th</sup> WSM which will take place in 2018. She will then report back to the 20<sup>th</sup> ESM in 2018.

The Agenda Committee for the 20<sup>th</sup> ESM will consist of the following;

Rita Moretto (Italy), Chairman of 20<sup>th</sup> ESM, Roger Booth, General Secretary of EIC, Yury Tarnavskyj (Ukraine), Chair – Service Committee, Lotus Andersen (France), Chair - Recovery Committee, Anastasia Royer (Switzerland - French), Chair - Unity Committee.

The Agenda Committee will meet from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> July 2018 to discuss all questions forwarded to them via the EIC up until May 2018. The Programme of the 20<sup>th</sup> ESM will be finalised and the Agenda set. To finalise the weekend, closing addresses were given by Dagur Hilmarsson (Iceland), Brit Aukner (Norway), Jiri Hrnak (Czech Republic) and Anastasia Royer (Switzerland – French Speaking), all of whom recalled their feelings with positive emotion, some recounting their experience over the weekend and others, their years leading up to this ESM. David from New York made a presentation about the work of the Publications Department of AA World Services which was entertaining, informative and very well received. Lastly, Michal, our ESM Chair, gave a heartfelt address, expressing great hope as he looked forward to the future of Alcoholics Anonymous across Europe and around the world.

As there was a little time to spare at the very end, to close the 19<sup>th</sup> ESM, all Delegates formed a circle around the room and took turns to share the Serenity Prayer in their native language, and ending with all delegates sharing the Serenity Prayer in English as one.

### **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

#### **“PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES” – Mary Cumings, GSO US/Canada**

My name is Mary. I am an alcoholic and a grateful sober member of AA. I have the privilege of serving as the staff member on the International desk at the GSO in US/Canada. Thank you for allowing David and I to be here as observers. Members of our General Service Board, AA World Services and Grapevine Boards, as well as staff and employees of GSO and the Grapevine office extend deep gratitude to each of you for your service dedicated to AA's Primary Purpose. I want to thank GSO Great Britain for your loving invitation to deliver the keynote address at our 19<sup>th</sup> European Service Meeting with its theme – Principles before Personalities.

What a long way this is from my lonely apartment over the liquor store 29 years ago! It was the custom of most of the Groups in the community where I got sober to read the 12 Traditions at the beginning of each meeting, but I confess I did not pay much attention to them in the early days of my sobriety. Then my estranged husband and his girlfriend started coming to my home group. I was incensed and called my Sponsor to express my outrage that they would come to “my” group. She referred to Tradition 12 and explained that I would have to put “principles before personalities”; that they too had the right to get sober as guaranteed in Tradition 3. My Sponsor knew that I needed specific instruction on how to apply the Traditions so she instructed me to continue attending my home group – I wanted to change groups – to treat them with courtesy and kindness, do not go and sit with them (!) but if I encountered them, welcome them as I would any newcomer, any fellow alcoholic.

As I continue to stay sober in AA, my understanding of what it means to place principles before personalities has grown, but the basic purpose is still the same, to allow every alcoholic the opportunity to recover. Tradition 12: “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles over personalities”. The very first sentence of Bill's essay on the 12<sup>th</sup> Tradition says, “The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice. Because AA's 12 Traditions repeatedly ask us to give up personal desires for the common good, we realise that the sacrificial spirit – well symbolized by anonymity – is the foundation of them all.

Each one of the 12 Traditions requires sacrifice:

- We must put the group's welfare ahead of our own desires.
- We have to trust God instead of running the show ourselves.
- We must welcome all newcomers who have a problem with alcohol regardless of what we think or feel about them.
- We must place AA's welfare above that of our own group.
- We must practice humility in realising that AA cannot be all things to all people.
- We must remain independent of all outside affiliations.

- We take responsibility for our own finances, supported only by voluntary contributions of members and maintain a policy of corporate poverty.
- We acknowledge that sobriety is a spiritual gift, that we are not professionals, simply alcoholics who have found a way out and are never paid for our 12 Step efforts.
- We give up our dependency on authority and power structures, depending on instead on the ultimate authority, a loving God expressed through the group conscience.
- We rely on as little organisation possible, with all those who serve being directly accountable to those they are serving.
- We give up our cherished opinions on everything, even AA.
- We give up our desire to 'market' or 'sell' AA, and our desires for personal distinction.

"Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction as AA members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. As we lay aside these very human aspirations, we believe that each of us takes part in the weaving of a protective mantle which covers our whole Society and under which we may grow and work in unity." 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.

The Big Book reminds us that a mere code of morals is not sufficient, for this spiritual foundation to be strong and meaningful; it must be supported by spiritual actions. I am not capable of the degree of sacrifice the 12 Traditions require unless I am actively practicing the spiritual actions of the 12 Steps as a way of life. Only through this spiritual exercise is my ego reduced to right size, allowing me to make the sacrifices of pride and ego that each one of the 12 Traditions requires. I cannot skimp on my AA program because of service related commitments. Working with other alcoholics and participating in a home group are perhaps even more important as we become immersed in service.

Daily Reflections shares this gem, "My sponsor told me that I should be a grateful alcoholic and always have "an attitude of gratitude" – that gratitude was the basic ingredient of humility, that humility was the basic ingredient of anonymity and that "anonymity was the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

I must bring an open mind and an open heart to the group conscience. Tradition 2 says that. "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." Therefore, when we are developing the informed Group Conscience, we are seeking God's will for AA. In essence, we are taking the 11<sup>th</sup> Step together, so I try to bring the same attitude to Group Conscience meetings and discussions as I do to my personal practice of the 11<sup>th</sup> Step. I have been challenged to listen as if I have no opinion.

"The AA Group" pamphlet offers this guidance; "On sensitive issues, the group works slowly – discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective view emerges. Placing principles before personalities, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a

decision. The result rests on more than a 'yes' or 'no' count – precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the Group Conscience. The term 'Informed Group Conscience' implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes."

In AA, I learned we do not conduct campaigns to convince others of my point of view, on social media, or at the coffee shop. Not that we cannot discuss ideas, issues and challenges but we must do it with the spirit of love and tolerance without gossip or judgement of people, groups, service entities or even Countries – what Group they represent, Area or who their Sponsor or Service Sponsor is, etc. or if their practice of the AA program differs from mine.

I must learn to respect and accept the group conscience even when I disagree. What does that look like? I must not try to undermine either the people on the 'winning' side or the course of action that has been decided upon; in fact, I should support the group conscience. As active servants of AA I know that all of you, like me, have had many opportunities to put this into practice!

I give up the idea of being right or wrong, winning or losing, and realise that there are simply different experiences and as many points of view as there are degrees in a circle. One of the most powerful demonstrations of placing principles before personalities was when I first saw members who had strong opposing points of view during the Group Conscience discussion, talking and laughing together at coffee after the meeting – no sulking, pouting, silent scorn or gathering forces!

I have learned to welcome spirited discussion of many diverse points of view and not use our spiritual tools as weapons. Useful debate seems to end when a particular point of view is labelled as "fearful", "spiritual", or "not spiritual" or when someone says, "this is what Bill or Bob would do or say about a particular issue." I have learned to ask, "Help me understand", rather than "How did you come up with that?" And to share saying, "this is my point of view."

It is amazing what we can accomplish together if we do not care who gets the credit. Of course, in AA we are here by grace rather than Virtue so the 'credit' always belongs to AA and a power greater than ourselves. I have to set aside my desire for personal distinction and approval and become one of many, a worker among workers.

I used to think that placing principles before personalities was all about me being loving and tolerant of others, but as I have grown in sobriety and in service I find that the personality that most threatens my behaving in a principled way I find most challenging is my own.

When Bill first introduced the 12 Traditions to the Fellowship in 1946, he stated, "But AA unity cannot automatically preserve itself. Like personal recovery, we shall always have to work to maintain it. Here, too, we surely need honesty, humility, open-mindedness, unselfishness and above all – vigilance." Each of us bears the responsibility of remembering our pasts and taking on the future of AA. Our lives and the lives of those who come after us depend on our ability to work together in harmony.

AA is a gift to each of us and each of us is responsible for AA's future. We represent those who have gone before, who so masterfully communicated their vision of

recovery, unity, and service. Let us have the humility and courage to place principles before personalities. Let us "pass it on."

"And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all."

## **IRELAND'S REPORT TO THE 19<sup>th</sup> EUROPEAN SERVICE MEETING**

AA in Ireland, now in its 71<sup>st</sup> year, has grown from humble beginnings to now having in the region of 900 groups. Our estimated Membership of approximately 15,000, ensure that over 100,000 meetings are held annually.

Our Structure of Group, Area, Intergroup and Conference is functioning efficiently. Our Board takes responsibility for National PI, with the assistance of a Sub-Committee elected by Conference.

Over the past 2 – 3 years there has been a concerning drop in contributions to GSO. Our most recent Conference decided to implement measures, that will reduce expenses, and together with an appeal to our members to increase contributions, we are confident that our financial situation will improve considerably.

All our services i.e. Phone, PI, etc., are functioning well. Our DVD "The Road Back", with subtitles in English and Irish Sign Language is widely being used by our Public Information Committees.

At our 2017 Conference, we were given a presentation of a new DVD, which it is hoped will be used by the Medical Profession, to help the public in becoming more aware of Our Fellowship. It is our hope that it will be shown in Hospitals, Doctor's Surgeries, etc.

Realising the importance of social media, we have released an App called "The AA Finder", which is of great benefit to members in finding the location and times of meetings throughout the Country. This information is accompanied by relevant Google maps. Our AA bi-monthly magazine, "The Road Back" has undergone a revamp over the past 2 years and the feedback from our membership is very encouraging.

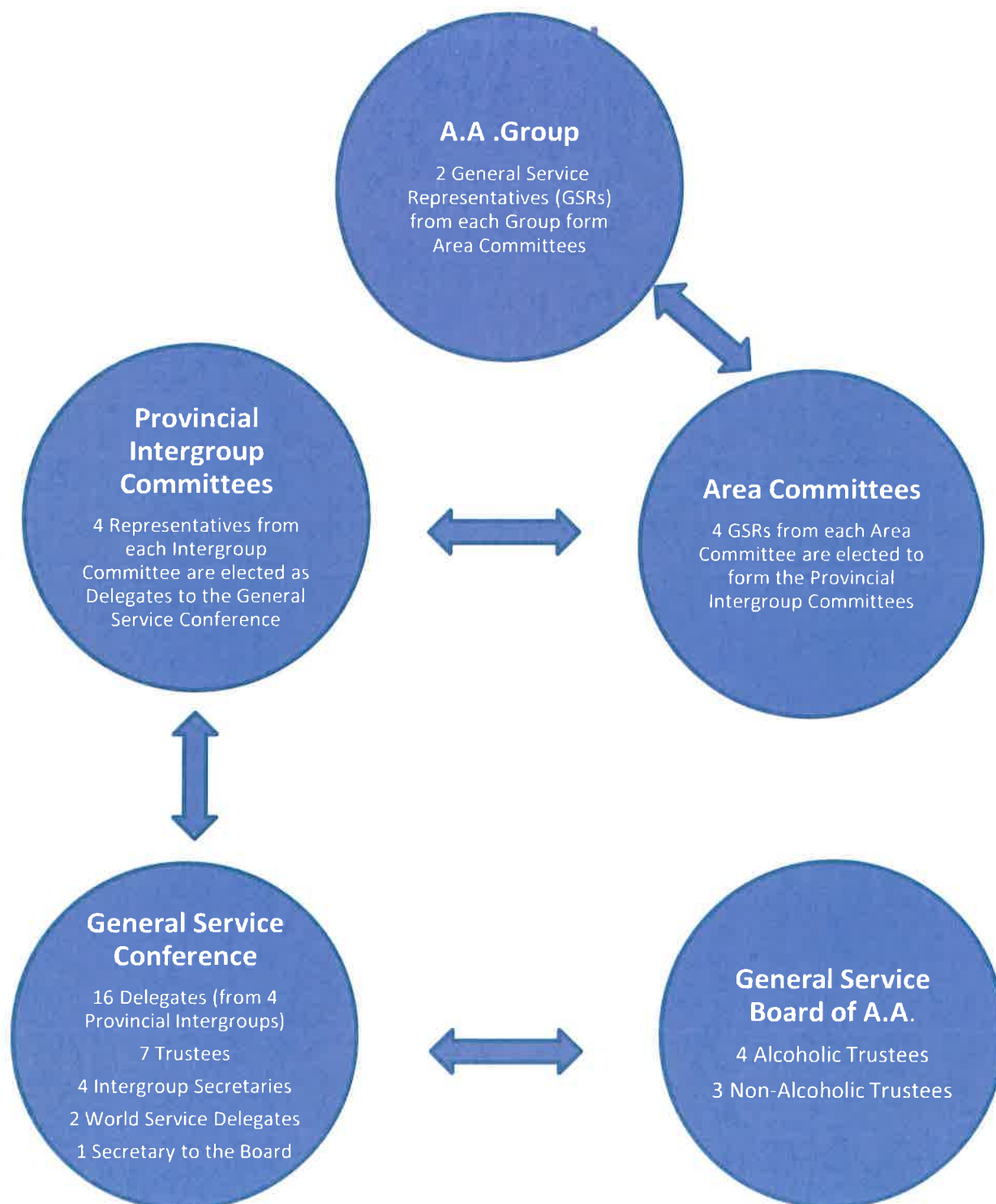
One aspect of concern to The Fellowship is the difficulty in getting more members involved in our service structure. We are addressing this problem by holding Service Workshops throughout the Country.

In conclusion, The Fellowship in Ireland is continuing to grow, and we are taking the relevant steps to continue carrying our message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic.

Pat Deering & Seamus Boylan



## Structure of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in







## ROLL CALL AND MINUTES OF Information Day 25<sup>th</sup> November 2017 Members of Conference

**Venue:** Clayton Hotel, Liffey Valley, Clondalkin, Dublin 22.

### **In attendance**

|                               |                                |              |                 |            |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| <b>Connaught</b>              | Liam O' B                      | Trustee      | <b>Leinster</b> | Pat K      | Trustee      |
|                               | Richard O' M                   | Delegate     |                 | Emmet O' H | Delegate     |
|                               | Harry McG                      | Delegate     |                 | John S     | Delegate     |
|                               | James O'S                      | Delegate     |                 | Michael    | Delegate     |
| <b>Munster</b>                | Patsy O'K                      | Trustee      | <b>Ulster</b>   | Colly G    | Trustee      |
|                               | John D                         | Delegate     |                 | Michael L  | Delegate     |
|                               | Martin C                       | Delegate     |                 | Colum P    | Delegate     |
|                               | Nicholas                       | IG Secretary |                 | Billy I    | IG Secretary |
|                               | Eddie H                        |              |                 |            |              |
|                               | Michael McG                    |              |                 |            |              |
| <b>Board Secretary</b>        | Breda F                        |              |                 |            |              |
| <b>World Service Delegate</b> | Seamus B<br>Pat D (Leinster)   |              |                 |            |              |
| <b>Non Alc. Trustee</b>       | Seamus Dooley<br>Eamonn Dillon |              |                 |            |              |
| <b>Chairperson</b>            | Colum McD                      |              |                 |            |              |

Secretary to the Board Breda welcomed all present and introduced Colum McD (Ex Trustee) who accepted the role of Chairperson for the proceedings. Meeting opened with the Serenity Prayer and Breda in turn passed to Eamonn (Non Alcoholic Trustee)

Eamonn said he did not fully appreciate just how special AA actually was until he was accorded the privilege of serving in the dual role that he has. AA is truly an amazing organisation. It is a truism to say that AA is not organised. However, of course, we are and we must be. When we say that AA is not organised, what we really mean is that no one is in charge of anyone else or tells anyone else what to do. Our principles specifically provide that we must do what we do in a business-like fashion.

It is also true that only the General Service Board as a Company Limited by Guarantee - and not the Fellowship as a whole - is a Charity. However, to say that is to miss the point.

Each individual euro that is contributed at an individual meeting is being contributed by a member of the public and the public is entitled to know what happens to it. What affects one part of AA affects all parts of AA.

However, AA is not above the law and nor should it be. Indeed, I would say that AA has never claimed to be outside the law in any respect. One of the essential key principles of AA is the acceptance of personal responsibility and that principle does and must extend to our position and actions in society as a whole. Regardless of what has happened in the past and no matter how successful AA indisputably has been in the past, the Irish and legal landscape has changed and changed irrevocably. Times have changed and we must change with the times.

We can always improve and we should always strive to improve.

The Charities Act 2009 has blown the winds of change throughout the Charities sector. The first thing that we need to be aware of is that compliance with the provisions of the Charities Act, 2009 is not optional. One cannot say that one does not like the taxation regime in this country and how the government spends its money and so opt out of paying tax. Similarly one cannot say that one lives in a rural part of Ireland with few people and poor roads and so opt out of the requirement to insure, NCT and tax a car. It is the same with the Charities Act, 2009. When an AA member places their hard-earned euro on the plate at their local meeting, they are a member of the public, that euro is AA money and they - and the indeed public generally - are entitled to know how that money is distributed and spent throughout structure.

There is also no realistic alternative to the Charities Regulatory process and compliance with the Act. If AA was not a registered charity, the level of regulation would be very significant. All monies collected at every group meeting would have to be recorded and either Income Tax or VAT paid on the same. Our accountancy and compliance costs would increase exponentially and perhaps our audited accounts would have to extend down to individual group level.

We ought to view the Charity Regulator and the Charities Act not as a threat or a difficulty but rather as an opportunity - an opportunity to do what we do, just doing it better. We ought as a matter of first principle, strive to be as open and as transparent as possible. We are not a secret society. Our members - and indeed the wider community - are entitled to know how money is spent by and within AA. The new Charities regime will assist us in this regard. The Charities Act and the role of Regulator ought to therefore be welcomed and not condemned, as it will provide greater clarity, regulation, compliance and transparency.

The whole *raison d'être* of AA ought to be to support the membership and reach out a helping hand to the still-suffering alcoholic, and the Charities Regulator and the new regulatory regime will assist us to be more efficient, more transparent and, dare I say it, organised.

Following Eamonn's talk, various members of the floor asked questions and welcomed the Information Day.

Also from the Regulator's presentation, members thanked him for giving his time to meet and asked questions and the following was the outcome.

## **Advisory Note on Importance of Good Financial Procedures**

On invitation, the Charity Regulator's (CRA) Head of Compliance met members of Conference on Saturday 25th November 2017.

The purpose of this note is to alert AA groups to the CRA's advice in relation to the importance of maintaining good clear financial procedures.

The Regulator displayed an excellent understanding of the purpose of AA and its structure, explained that he had previously met with some of the Trustees by invitation at his offices. This arose from two separate complaints received by the Regulator.

The CRA's priority is to ensure that Charities comply with the Charities Acts 2009, including the obligation to register and comply with all obligations, especially financial controls and accountability.

The CRA accept that in large, diverse organisations such as AA, it was highly likely that there may be theft and fraud. It was vital that Trustees put processes, procedures, controls and checks in place to ensure that such unlawful activity did not happen and, to the extent that it did, that the damage was minimised and quickly addressed.

The CRA accept that it is not practical for almost 1,000 individual groups to register as individual Charities – too much regulation would threaten the survival of small groups. The cost of compliance by a group ought not to be such that it would close groups and defeat the very purpose for which AA was founded.

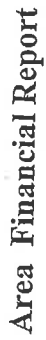
The CRA noted that AA did not solicit or accept donations from the general public and was entirely self-financing. At the same time however, the Regulator had to ensure that the law was complied with and that monies donated for one purpose - in this case AA's primary purpose - was not used or applied to a purpose outside of the specific objectives of AA.

The Regulator said that he had reviewed our documentation, guidelines and controls very carefully. He noted that AA had a Treasurer's Notebook, which required two people at group level to count and record all monies received, held, expended and passed through structure. The Regulator said that if these were properly implemented and this continued through structure, it may well be the case that the present situation whereby only the General Services Office needs to be registered as a charity.

The Regulator said that these were important on several levels; in terms of compliance with the law, safeguarding the reputation of AA as a whole and protecting the reputation of individual treasurers who handle money.

Essentially AA already, in its traditions and principles, has all the necessary protocols and procedures in place.

The key message to group is that AA groups that they ought to return to the basic principles of good management of money donated by members: no one person should be exclusively responsible for handling cash and accounts should be kept up to date and reviewed by the Group Conscience on a regular basis. AA money ought to be spent in strict accordance with AA principles i.e. that funds in excess of the prudent reserve required for the smooth running of the group are forwarded through the structure in a timely manner.



Date of this Area Meeting:

11

Meeting of Area \_\_\_\_\_ held on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Balance from last Area Meeting:

Contributions since last Area Meeting:

Total Funds

Expenses since last Area Meeting:

Total Funds less Expenses

Less agreed Area Prudent Reserve:

### Contribution sent through Structure of AA:

Cheque: ☐ Cash: ☐ EFT (bank transfer): ☐

Balance at this Area Meeting:

**First Signature:**

**Second Signature:**

### Group Contributions:

[illegible]

**Total Contributions: € / £**



Meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ Inter-group held on \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

### Area Contributions:

[illegible]

Total Contributions: €/£

03/2018

# Intergroup Financial Report

€/£

Date of this Intergroup Meeting:

Balance from last Intergroup Meeting:

Contributions since last Intergroup Meeting:

Total Funds:

**Expenses since last Intergruop Meeting:**

**Total Expenses:**

**Total Funds less Expenses**

Less agreed Intergroup Prudent Reserve:

Contribution forwarded to G.S.O:

Cheque: ☐      Cash: ☐      EFT (bank transfer): ☐

Balance at this Intergroup Meeting:

**First Signature:**

**Second Signature:**

03/2018



## **Delegates Reports**

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IRELAND  
9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### **2018 Delegates Reports to Conference**

- Leinster Intergroup
- Munster Intergroup
- Ulster Intergroup

## **Leinster Area 1 Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Area 1**

Covers the Louth Area with approx. 15 groups.

I've recently started to attend the Area. The Area is working hard to encourage Groups that are not attending Area to attend. Recently all Groups have been invited to come to the next meeting so that the Area can work in carrying the message together. There are some Service positions open, and are encouraging all Members to embrace service. While attendance at meetings is quite good, attendance at area could be improved. Members that attend are very enthusiastic.

## **Leinster Area 2 Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Area 2**

This Area covers Meath (23 Groups). The Area meets in Navan, and reports well on how the Area is running. Groups that attend participate well. The Area is trying to encourage other Groups to attend. Most Service positions have been filled, although it seems that there is a general reluctance of Members to become involved in Service.

The Area has noticed that there seems to be a change over time where Members are attending meetings rather than being Members of a Group. An observation has been made where there are too many meetings which are taking away from people being active in Groups. The Area reads from our Handbook every month which is helping Members gain knowledge. They have recently produced a local meeting card, which is currently being distributed. Apart from looking for more support, the Area is working very well.

## **Leinster Area 3&4 Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Area 3&4**

Area 3&4 is situated in the Midlands. Area Meetings are held in the Spitu Offices, Trinity Hall, Church Street, Tullamore, Co. Offaly on the first Wednesday of every month. Meetings are conducted in a cordial and extremely efficient manner. There are 36 AA Groups listed in Area 3&4 with 60 meetings in total. Attendance from Groups at Area Meetings generally ranges from 10 to 14. As per the Area Treasurer Report from April 2017, 12 Groups availed of group insurance policies which are due for renewal in April 2018. Area 3&4 has at present 1 Intergroup Representative, a Phone Convenor, and a P.I. Convenor. Area 3 & 4 are actively seeking to secure at least one more Intergroup Representative, a Prison Convenor and a Hospital Convenor. Area 3& 4 are also actively trying to encourage more groups to attend Area Meetings. Area 3& 4 invited Barbara A, the Leinster Hospital Convenor to an Area Meeting to explain her role. This has resulted in Members, of Area 3&4 making initial contact with Hospitals in their Area. Area 3&4 regularly make financial contributions through the AA Structure to Leinster Intergroup.



## **Leinster Area 5 (Kildare) Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **AREA 5 (Kildare) - Delegate John S.**

The Area 5 Committee meets at 8 pm on the second Tuesday of each month in the Day Care Centre, Bride Street, Kildare and is functioning very well.

Meetings are harmonious and constructive with good participation in discussions. Area representatives have visited local groups to encourage participation in the Area Committee and in service generally. There are 25 groups in Area 5. Attendance at Area meetings has doubled since 2016. Usually 16 groups (64%) were represented at meetings during 2017, mainly groups in South Kildare. An extract from the General Service Handbook is read at each meeting. Most of the key positions are routinely rotated and are currently filled i.e. Secretary, Treasurer, Telephone Convenor, Hospital Convenor and two Intergroup Representatives. Area 5 does not have a Prison Convenor but individual members participate in the Prison Service. The PI Officer rotated out at the end of 2017 and there is currently a vacancy for this role. School talks and other PI activities are covered (but very few requests for School talks were received this school year). Area 5 participates in the Telephone Service and has recently completed its tour and passed the telephone to Area 3&4.

Area 5 received financial contributions from 23 (92%) groups in 2017.

Typically 2 or 3 representatives attend Intergroup and financial contributions are made to Intergroup regularly.

Almost all (92%) of the groups in Area 5 avail of the combined AA Group Insurance Scheme co-ordinated through the Area 5 Committee. The Area 5 Committee itself has Public Liability Insurance through this scheme.

Area 5 has 25 listed Groups with 38 meetings per week. The meetings are held in Athy (7), Ballysax (1), Celbridge (4), Clane (2), Curragh (1), Kilcock (1), Kilcullen (1), Kildare (2), Leixlip (1), Maynooth (3), Naas (5), Newbridge (9) and Straffan (1). The 38 weekly Closed Meetings in Area 5 include 3 Step meetings, 1 Tradition meeting and 2 Big Book meetings.

An Open Meeting was held in Naas Hospital in September 2017. The Hospital has agreed to host two Open Meetings per annum. Contact has been established with Clane Hospital.

Closed meetings (3 per week) are held in Cuan Mhuire Treatment Centre in Athy.

A Service Workshop was held in Kilcullen in October 2017.

## **Leinster Area 6 Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Area 6**

This Area is on the Northside of Dublin, and has regular attendance from 5-7 Groups out of approx. 20. The Area runs quite well with a small number of people doing a lot of work. Meetings in local Hospitals are running well, PI is strong, School Talks are very regular and Open Meetings are held regularly. Most Groups report strong attendance. Again, the Area notices that it is increasingly difficult to get Members into Service. Attendance at Group Conscience continues to be low. The Group regularly has lively and constructive discussions.

## **Leinster Area 7 (Dublin NE) Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **AREA 7 (Dublin NE) - Delegate John S**

The Area 7 Committee meets at 8.30 pm on the second Wednesday of each month in The Oratory, Kilmore Road, Artane and is working well. There are 33 groups in Area 7. Typically 8 to 10 groups (30%) are represented at Area meetings and an extract is read from the General Service Handbook. Discussions are respectful and business-like with good participation by all persons present. The positions of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer are filled. Positions vacant include PI Officer, Telephone Convenor and Prison Convenor but Area 7 continues to participate in the Telephone Service and the Prison Service. The PI Officer position is vacant since mid-2017. Requests for 7 school talks in Autumn 2017 were managed directly by the Leinster PI.

Financial contributions were made by 17 (52%) groups of which 16 groups contributed to Area 7 and 1 direct to GSO.

An Area Inventory Meeting was held on Wednesday 13 December 2017.

Almost all of the Groups in Area 7 avail of the combined AA Group Insurance Scheme. The Area 7 Committee itself has Public Liability Insurance through this scheme. Only two Groups arrange their own Insurance cover. The use of the combined scheme generated savings of some €5,940 in Area 7 in 2017.

Area 7 participates in Intergroup (usually two or three representatives attend) and makes regular financial contributions to Intergroup, retaining only a small Prudent Reserve. Additionally, one group in Area 7 contributes directly to GSO.

Area 7 has 33 groups with 65 listed meetings per week. Most groups hold one or two meetings per week. The meetings are held in Dublin Airport (1), Artane (4), Balbriggan (3), Beaumont (1), Clonshaugh (2), Clontarf (5), Coolock (6), Darndale (1), Dollymount (2), Donabate (1), Donnycarney (2), East Wall (1), Fairview (3), Howth (1), Killester (2), Lusk (2), Malahide (2), Portmarnock (1), Raheny (3), Rush (3), Santry (1), Skerries (2), Sutton (7) and Swords (4).

The 65 Closed Meetings in Area 7 include 9 weekly Step meetings, 3 weekly Big Book meetings, 1 monthly Step meeting and 2 monthly Tradition meetings.

An Open Meeting is held every month by the Coolock group.

A once-off Open Meeting was held in 2017 by each of the groups in East Wall, Howth and Sutton Groups.

The Clontarf Hospital Group held a meeting on Service.

## **Leinster Area 8 (Dublin SW) Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **AREA 8 (Dublin SW) - Delegate John S**

The Area 8 Committee meets at 8 pm on the first Tuesday of each month in the Pastoral Centre, 199 Kylemore Road, Ballyfermot (at main roundabout). The Committee is functioning well despite low levels of attendance.

The core support for Area 8 is provided by a relatively small number (about 10) of dedicated members. There are 15 groups in Area 8. Typically 5 groups (33%) are represented at Area Meetings. A Chair is elected for each meeting and an extract is read from the General Service Handbook. Meetings are harmonious and constructive with good participation by all persons present. Minutes of meetings, including a separate financial report, are sent out to all Groups in advance of the next meeting. The service positions currently filled are Secretary, Treasurer, Prisons Officer and Telephone Convenor. The Treasurer has served for 7 years and wishes to rotate out but a successor is not available. An Annual Group Conscience was held in February 2018.

Area 8 received financial contributions from 5 (33%) groups in 2017.

The Area participates in Intergroup (usually two or three representatives attend meetings) and contributes financially to Intergroup. Area 8 participates in the Phone Service and Prison Service. Area 8 did not have a PI throughout 2017 and School Talks in Area 8 were managed directly by the Leinster PI.

Area 8 has good relationships with adjoining Areas and hosted a 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event jointly with Area 10 in 2016.

Four (27%) of the groups in Area 8 avail of the combined AA Group Insurance Scheme (co-ordinated through Area 10).

The low level of attendance at Area 8 meetings is a concern. Area representatives visit local groups to encourage participation in the Area Committee and in service generally. It had been hoped that an increase in attendance would be generated by the relocation of the Area 8 meeting from Rathcoole to Ballyfermot in April 2017 but an increase in attendance did not occur.

Area 8 has 15 groups with 40 listed meetings per week. The meetings are held in Ballycragh (2), Ballyfermot (9), Clondalkin (4), Lucan (4), Palmerstown (2), Rathcoole (3) and Tallaght (16). A major centre is Tallaght Village with 14 meetings weekly. Two of the meetings in Area 8 are held in Hospitals Separately, meetings are held in Prisons at Cloverhill and Wheatfield in Area 8 through the AA Prison Service.

The 40 Closed Meetings in Area 8 include 5 Step Meetings and 3 Big Book Meetings per week as well as 2 Tradition Meetings per month.

The Tallaght Village Group hosted an Open Day in May and a Service Workshop in November.

The New Hope Group (Killinarden, Tallaght) holds a Polish-speaking meeting.

## **Leinster Area 9 Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Area 9**

Area 9 is located in Dublin South City. The Area 9 Meeting is located in the Grand Lodge of Ireland, Freemasons' Hall, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2 on the 4th Wednesday of every month. Meetings are conducted in a friendly manner and in a spirit of cooperation.

There are 22 listed AA Groups in Area 9. Only 8 of these Groups have attended Area since May 2017. The key positions filled in Area 9 are, Area Secretary, Intergroup Representative and Phone Convenor. Key Service positions currently not filled in Area 9 are that of Prison Convenor, Hospital Convenor and P.I. Convenor. Area 9, are in the process of trying to encourage more Groups to attend Area Meetings. Area 9, through the AA Structure regularly makes financial contributions to Leinster Intergroup.

## **Leinster Area 10 Report for Conference 9th-11th March 2018**

### **Area 10**

#### **Delegate: Anthony McN.**

The Area 10 Committee meets at 8 pm on the first Friday of each month in St. Michael's Centre, Tempelogue and is functioning very well. Meetings are harmonious and constructive with good participation in discussions. There are 22 Groups in Area 10, all from South Dublin. Area Meetings are very well attended, with 20 – 25 in attendance being the norm. 16 Groups were represented at Area in 2017. An extract from the General Service Handbook is read at each meeting. All of the key positions are currently filled. 10 - 12 Members from the Area participate in the Prison Service. There are 2 Treatment Centres in the Area – The Central Mental Hospital and The Rutland Centre. There are 2 Open Meetings in the Rutland Centre weekly as well as a new monthly Open Public Meeting. 39 Members from the Area have Garda Clearance to attend the CMH, where 2 Closed Meetings per week are held as well as one Open Meeting every December. There is a new PI in the Area and he seems to be very enthusiastic. Area 10 participates in the Telephone Service and shares a phone with Area 12. Area 10 received financial contributions from 16 Groups in 2017. Typically 3 or 4 Representatives attend Intergroup and financial contributions are made to Intergroup regularly.

All of the Groups in Area 10 avail of the combined AA Group Insurance Scheme co-ordinated through the Area Committee.

Area 10 has 22 listed Groups with 58 Meetings per week. The Meetings are held in Ballinteer (4), Ballyboden (2), Ballyroan (1), Churchtown (7), Clonskea (3), Crumlin (8), Donnybrook (10), Drimnagh (1), Dundrum (2), Kimmage (6), Knocklyon (1), Rathfarnham (2), Rathgar (7), Tempelogue (1), Terenure (1) and Walkinstown (2). The 58 weekly Closed Meetings in Area 10 include 8 Step Meetings and 4 Big Book Meetings.

Area 10 has tried to encourage as many groups as possible to hold Open Meetings.

## **Leinster Area 11 (Dublin SE) Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **AREA 11 (Dublin SE) - Delegate John S**

The Area 11 Committee meets at 8pm on the second Monday of each month in the Parish Centre, St Joseph's Church, Summerhill Road, Glasthule. There are 22 groups in Area 11. Typically about 7 to 10 groups (35%-50%) are represented at Area 11 meetings. A Chair is elected for each meeting. In recent months, there has been good attendance and good participation in discussions: meetings have been harmonious and business-like. This scenario is welcome following some disunity in 2017. An Area Inventory Meeting was held on Monday 12 February 2018. The Area Committee appears to be gaining strength in terms of attendance, service and unity. Financial contributions were made by 11 (50%) groups in Area 11 in 2017, of which from 8 groups contributed to Area 11 and 3 contributed direct to GSO.

The current Area 11 Secretary and Treasurer have indicated that they will rotate out of service in those roles in March 2018. There is a serving PI Officer: School Talks, and other PI activities, are covered. Area 11 does not participate in the Phone Service or the Prison Service and does not have a Hospital Convenor.

Area 11 is usually represented at Intergroup Meetings by one or two representatives who are appointed in advance of each meeting. The Area contributes financially to Intergroup.

A majority (11) of the groups in Area 11 avail of the combined AA Group Insurance Scheme co-ordinated through Area 10. The Area 11 Committee itself has Public Liability Insurance through this scheme. The scheme generated savings of €2,160 per annum in Insurance premiums in Area 11 in 2017.

The possibility of an Insurance claim is being investigated by one Group for recovery of expenditure incurred by the Group on repairs arising from damage done to its premises by an intruder in November 2017.

Area 11 has 22 Groups with 75 meetings per week. The meetings are held in Belfield (1), Booterstown (1), Dun Laoghaire (8), Foxrock (2), Glasthule (1), Kilmacud (1), Monkstown (41), Mount Merrion (4), Shankill (3), Stepside (1) and Stillorgan (12). Major centres are Monkstown (The Crypt) and Monkstown (Community Centre) which, respectively, hold 24 and 14 meetings weekly. A new meeting has recently opened at Belarmine, Stepside.

An Open Meeting is hosted by the Dun Laoghaire Group (Monkstown Crypt) on the first Monday of each month.

The 73 Closed Meetings held in Area 11 include 2 Step meetings weekly, 4 Big Book meetings weekly, 1 monthly Tradition meeting, 1 monthly Step meeting and 7 meetings weekly in St John of God Hospital, Stillorgan.

## **Leinster Area 12 Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Area 12**

Area 12 covers Co. Wicklow. Area Meetings are held in The Holy Rosary School, Convent Road, Wicklow Town on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month. Meetings are always conducted in civil, inclusive manner. Area 12 comprises of 17 Groups with 30 Meetings taking place on a weekly basis. Of these Groups, only 4 would regularly send a GSR to Area Meetings. All Groups opted into, and are insured through a collective Insurance Policy with 7 Groups yet to make a remittance. Currently in Area 12, the roles of Secretary, P.I., Telephone and Prison Convenor and Intergroup Rep(s) are filled. The current Area 12 Treasurer is due to rotate out shortly. Area 12, are constantly trying to encourage more Groups to attend Area Meetings. During the course of 2017, Area 12 received contributions from 9 Groups. Area 12, through the AA Structure regularly makes financial contributions to Leinster Intergroup.

## **Leinster Area 13 Report for Conference 9th-11th March 2018**

### **Area 13**

#### **Delegate: Anthony McN.**

The Area 13 Committee meets at 8 pm on the second Monday of each month in Askea Parish Centre, Carlow and is functioning well. There have been quite a few changes on the Area Committee recently, where most of the previous Committee rotated out and have been replaced. The new Secretary has been unwell for a few months. An assistant Secretary has now been appointed to assist her. Meetings are harmonious and constructive with good participation in discussions. There are 18 Groups in Area 13, 3 from West Wicklow, 6 from Carlow and 9 from Kilkenny. Area Meetings are well attended, with 14 - 16 in attendance being the norm. However, this is mostly made up by GSRs from Carlow and West Wicklow. Only one Group from Kilkenny is usually represented. An extract from the General Service Handbook is read at each meeting. All of the key positions are currently filled. A number of Members from the Area participate in the Prison Service. There are 2 Treatment Centres in the Area – Francis Farm and The Aisling Centre. A monthly Open Meeting is held in Francis Farm and a bi-monthly Open Meeting is held in the Aisling Centre. These are organised by the Hospital Convenor. Area 13 participates in the Telephone Service and shares a phone with Area 14. Typically 2 or 3 Representatives attend Intergroup and financial contributions are made to Intergroup regularly. The Area organised 2 Open Public Meetings in 2017. Most of the Groups in Area 13 avail of the combined AA Group Insurance Scheme co-ordinated through the Area Committee.

Area 13 has 18 listed Groups with 31 Meetings per week. The Meetings are held in Blessington (1), Baltinglas (1), Dunlavin (1), Bagnelstown (1), Carlow (9), Tullow (2), Ballyragget (1), Callan (1), Castlecomer (1), Graignamanagh (1), Kilkenny (10), Kilmoganny (1), and Thomastown (1). The 31 weekly Closed Meetings in Area 13 include 2 Step Meetings and 2 Big Book Meetings.

## **Leinster Area 14 Report for Conference 9th-11th March 2018**

### **Area 14**

#### **Delegate: Anthony McN.**

The Area 14 Committee meets at 8 pm on the second Monday of each month in The Parish Hall, Dun Mhuire Theatre, Wexford and is functioning well. Meetings are harmonious and constructive with good participation in discussions. There are 24 Groups in Area 14, all from Co. Wexford. Area Meetings have not been well attended recently (only 5 or 6 present). 8 - 10 Members rotated out of Area last November and have not yet been replaced. 14 Groups regularly attended Area Meetings in 2017. An extract from the General Service Handbook is read at each Meeting. Some of the key positions are currently vacant, namely PI and Intergroup Reps, however efforts are being made to fill these and all PI Talks are being covered. Some Members from the Area participate in the Prison Service.

There is 1 Treatment Centre in the Area – Aiseiri in Wexford. 2 Meetings are held in this Centre every week. Area 14 participates in the Telephone Service and shares a phone with Area 13. Area 14 received financial contributions from most Groups in 2017. Typically 2 or 3 Representatives attend Intergroup and financial contributions are made to Intergroup regularly.

All of the Groups in Area 14 avail of the combined AA Group Insurance Scheme co-ordinated through the Area Committee.

Area 14 has 24 listed groups with 58 meetings per week. The meetings are held in Ballygarrett (2), Bunclody (2), Coolgraney (2), Enniscorthy (10), Bridgetown (1), Fethard on sea (2), Gorey (7), Killinick (1), Kilmuckridge (1), Kilrane (1), New Ross (4), Rosslare Strand (1), Taghmon (1), and Wexford (22). The 58 weekly Closed Meetings in Area 14 include 6 Step Meetings and 1 Big Book Meeting.

Area 14 recently held a Mini-Convention in Gorey, which was well attended and was supported, and participated in, by every Group in the Area.

## **Munster (Clare, Limerick City and Limerick County Area)**

### **Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

#### **Clare Area Report**

Three new officers; Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer have taken up positions at the Area.

A new Public Information Convenor has also been recently appointed.

Attendance of Groups is average at Area Meetings.

Phone Service is operating well.

Four Intergroup Representatives are in place and are carrying out their roles.

A very successful Annual Mini-Convention was held in October 2017 at the Auburn Lodge Hotel, Ennis and the surplus funds from same was transferred through the Structure.

The Advisory Note which came from the General Service Board and Charities Regulator was generally welcomed; however a number of queries and concerns were raised regarding in particular a minority of A.A. Groups not contributing any monies to the Structure. The question being raised is what action ought to be taken in relation to such Groups? One of the suggestions is that if A.A. Groups are not attending their Area Meetings and have not done so for a lengthy period of time, and have not made any financial contribution to the Structure, then such Groups should be removed from the National Directory and the A.A. official Website. How does Conference feel about this, and could such an issue be debated here?

Clare Area also wishes to know if there are any plans to reduce the price of the 'Big Book'.

Serious concerns have also been expressed recently about surplus funds being transferred directly by Groups to GSO hence bypassing the Structure; the Area would be of the view that all surplus funds ought to be sent through the Structure i.e. Areas, Intergroup, GSO to ensure the survival of A.A. at local level.

#### **Limerick City Area**

There is a good attendance at the Area Meeting which is held monthly in Limerick City.

The Area has a new Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

Prison Meetings are going well.

Three out of four Intergroup Representative positions are filled.

Limerick City Area has its own Literature Store but sales are down slightly due to increased literature prices.

The Area has this year, decided to hold a 2 Day Convention, commencing on Friday and ending on a Saturday night instead of a 3 Day Mini-Convention.

### **Limerick County Area**

There are only three Groups represented at Limerick County Area out of a total of 21 Groups and this has been the situation for two years. Because of this, the Area Committee now meets four times per year.

The Area Telephone Service continues to operate.

An Area Treasurer is urgently required.

There has been no P.I. Convenor in the County for some time.

There are four Intergroup Reps in place. These attend the area Meeting along with two Officers, Conference Delegate, and Hospital Chairman.

Limerick County Area has now enlisted the help of the Groups in Limerick City to assist them in servicing the Open Hospital Meeting in the local Treatment Centre in County Limerick, which is held weekly.

The Area is struggling to function; however it is still self-supporting and is sending surplus monies through the structure despite the fact that some Groups either will not or cannot contribute funds to the Area.

The CRA Advisory Note was well received at the Area. Having said this, grave concern and much annoyance was expressed in recent months on receipt of information received at Munster Intergroup that a particular A.A. Group in the Province were sending their surplus funds to a Charity, the Area Committee feels that this Group has questions to answer as the monies belong to A.A.

## **Munster Cork City Area Report for Conference 9th-11th March 2018**

### **Cork City Area:**

#### **SHORT REPORT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION**

As of January 2018, Cork City Area is experiencing problems in filling Service positions. There is no Chairman and no one is coming forward. At the January Meeting a Member came forward from the floor to chair the meeting.

The Hospital Meetings are now being run on a rota basis with Area Groups taking over the running of the Meetings on a monthly basis co-ordinated by the Hospital Secretary. There are insufficient Groups on the rota and this results in Groups not getting a sufficient break between service. The meeting in the CUH has been suspended due to lack of attendance and no real cooperation from the Hospital. The Secretary remains in communication with the Hospital.

Both the Public Information Committee and Munster Intergroup are both looking for people to join the Committees.



The Open Meeting:

There is a Secretary in place, supported by another Member and discussion is ongoing within CCA as to the best way to facilitate the running of the Meeting.

The Prison Committee:

The Prison Service needs more Members. The situation, although it has improved somewhat, can still be unstable as if there is not enough Staff on the day the meeting cannot go ahead. This can be very frustrating for Members who show up ready to do Service. It has been proposed to throw the Service open and look for Members from Cork County to take part. This proposal is gone to MIG.

Munster Intergroup:

Munster Intergroup needs two more Delegates.

Convention:

There has been a lot of controversy and lack of communication around the Convention. It has resulted in no Convention going ahead this year as the Logo was not approved by MIG because it was not applied for in time, a matter which CCA was not aware of. The whole question brought a lot of division and controversy within CCA.

The Literature Bank is running smoothly.

The monthly meetings are represented on average by a little over half the Groups in CCA.

### **Munster (North and East Cork Area) Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

All going very well big improvement in attendance at area since Area Meeting alternates between North and East Cork.

New PI Committee in process of being set up.

Big interest in upcoming Convention.

Also seems to be improved communications between Intergroup, Areas and Groups.

### **Munster (Kerry Area) Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

The year started well, all positions filled except for Convention Committee. After a struggle, enough Members got to run a successful Convention.

Later in the year, Secretary needed for Kerry Area. A lot of problems filling this position even though the Groups asked several times, no names brought forward.

No Minutes being sent to the Groups as no Secretary.

The PI Committee has ceased to exist as no new Members taking up service despite many requests.

Major problems filling Service positions outside Groups.

### **Munster (Tipperary Area) Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

#### **Tipperary Area Report to 2018 Conference**

Area meets every 6 weeks in the Horse and Jockey Hotel.  
Attendance approximately 30%.

PI: No PI Convener at present. Area is looking to set up a new PI Committee.

There is a proposal to hold special meeting of GSRs in North Tipp to encourage new GSRs to attend.

We are looking for 3 Intergroup Delegates.

Phone going well and has moved to the north of the Area.

The Area Convention is to be held in the Clonmel Park Hotel from the 31st August to the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018.

The Theme of the Convention is "I Am Responsible".

Flyers are being sent out to Groups advertising the Convention.

We are looking for nominations for a new Chairman.

Regards, Eddie

### **Munster (Waterford Area) Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

#### **Waterford Area Report, 07-02-2018**

Waterford Area meets every 6 weeks.

It alternates between Dungarvan (Lawlors hotel) and Waterford (Woodsman hotel).

Attendance is approximately 40% of Groups.

PI is being reconstructed at the moment.

Phone well manned and handed around among Groups.

Area Convention was held in the Woodsman Hotel on 19th/20th/21st January.

It was well attended and seemingly very successful. We are awaiting the Convention Report.

We have a new Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, and we are looking for two Intergroup Delegates.

## **Munster West Cork Area Report for Conference 9th-11th March 2018**

### **West Cork Area Report from Martin C. Conference Delegate 29th January 2018**

West Cork Area consists of 14 Groups:

Approximately 7 Groups attend an Area Meeting, which is held every 6 weeks.

Since November 2017, it was decided to rotate the Area Meetings between all the Group locations, in the hope to attract Members into Service and attendance of Groups that had not been attending.

There is a new Secretary, Helen H. from Macroom Group and a new Treasurer, Bertie O'M., Bandon.

The Mobile Phone Service is also currently being manned by the Groups, by Members cleared at their Group Conscience.

This Service continues to be important in attracting newcomers to the Fellowship.

Donna D, Chairperson has put together a Mobile Phone Pack with all suggested Guidelines and a Log Book for the Phone Service to ensure continuity and transparency.

We currently have 3 Intergroup Delegates, with the 3rd Delegate elected in August 2017. They have visited a few Groups to encourage Service and attendance to Area Meetings. More Group visits are planned.

2 Members continue to organise Speakers for the Matt Talbot Ahiohill Centre, which treats adolescent males with addiction issues. Speakers attend on a fortnightly basis.

The Cork County Convention 2017 was held in The Maritime Hotel, Bantry. 144 Members attended.

The Opening Meeting was chaired by David, Bantry. Speakers were Helen - Skibbereen and Mick - Charleville.

A PI Workshop was held by Tony - Clare on the Saturday.

The Closing Meeting was chaired by John - Fermoy. Speakers were Ann - Schull and Kieran - Riverview. A surplus of €100 was sent to GSO.

In all, attendance at Area is hoped to improve and also Members taking up service. Rotation of service continues across all positions, however hard it may be to get Members involved. Members, who attend and give of service, continue to be enthusiastic and helpful, across the Area.

## **Ulster Delegate Area (Derry, Donegal and Tyrone) Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

I have attended Area Meetings mostly in Derry, Donegal and Tyrone and once in Armagh in the last year. While attendance can be disappointing at Meetings, I find business is being done in Areas in a very good atmosphere.

PI and Hospital Committees are all working ok. It does seem difficult to get Groups to send GSRs to Area and that is having a negative effect as regards filling posts and getting people to cover Hospital Meetings.

I have attended all Meetings of Ulster Intergroup in the last year. While the posts are filled and work is getting done very well, it is the same story as Areas; the attendance of Delegate's from some Areas is disappointing. It does seem very difficult to get Members to commit to service at all levels.

The GSCD's and Colly, our Trustee met the Board in CSO late last year. I found the Meeting was very informative. I would like to thank the people I met and worked with in the Area's, Intergroup and Conference in the last four years for their courtesy towards me.

Charlie D, GSCD Ulster

### **Ulster Area (Down and Tyrone) Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

#### **Down Area**

21 Groups:

Attendance at Down Area is 50%. Groups do be encouraged to attend.

Some Groups in the Area do not have a lot of members and are struggling to sponsor people into service which is most important for the wellbeing of AA.

Their Day of Gratitude was held in September and was very well attended and fully self-supported.

Down Area AGM was held in November and all positions where filled.

Siobhan as Chairperson, Ken as Area Secretary and John the Treasurer has another year to run.

Down Area is always very good at sending money on to Intergroup.

Brian PI Chairman in Down Area has done a lot of good work in bringing PI back to life in this Area.

The Hospital Meetings are always well run and supported.

Down Area is an Area that is well supported and works well in all departments.

#### **Tyrone Area**

23 Groups:

Attendance at Tyrone Area is around 50%. Like most Areas they find it difficult to get groups to attend Area.

Groups that do attend are always very upbeat and passionate about AA, on the whole their enthusiasm shines through.

PI and Hospital personal are doing great work in their relative positions.

Tyrone had a very successful Day of Gratitude in Mid-January 2018. This was achieved by having a good structured Committee in place which is important to make such a day successful.

This Area is always good at sending money over and above the prudent reserve on to CSO. This Area has a very vibrant Committee in place and work within the Traditions of AA.

Roma from this Area who has served at all Group and Area levels is now Chairperson at Intergroup after being voted in at the November AGM of Intergroup.

## **Ulster Intergroup Conference Delegate Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **1. Summary**

This report has been prepared for the 2018 All Ireland Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland and has been compiled by Tom D., Conference Delegate who visited three Areas in particular; Antrim, Armagh and Belfast during the course of the year.

Ulster's four GSCDs visit ten areas between Intergroups and a rota is agreed at each Intergroup Meeting.

The content deals specifically with the participation of the Areas within the Intergroup of Ulster of which there are ten. The purpose of the document is to provide an overview of the involvement of Areas and their constituent Groups within our Structure for Conference to consider and where needed, discuss relative to the Fellowship in Ireland as a whole.

### **2. Introduction**

Bearing in mind that the Group is the Primary Unit of our Fellowship, it is important that Conference be fully informed of how Groups in the four Provincial Intergroups are performing in terms of participation at Area level, Public Information, Hospitals and Prisons. It also needs to know how Area Committees are encouraging Groups to adhere to the six points which define an AA Group (page 19, Service Handbook for Ireland). In preparing this Report, the author was careful to ensure they had played their part in keeping Groups, Area Committees and Intergroup well informed during the period Nov. 2016 to Nov. 2017.

### **3. Groups by area**

See **Fig.1 and 2** for breakdown of Groups for each of the ten Areas within Ulster Intergroup. It will be evident that Areas are under-subscribed and there are a number of possible reasons for this:

- Some Groups have a core membership of only 3-4 people and stay afloat through visitors.
- Groups do not have members long enough sober and with the experience to be elected GSRs.
- Areas struggle to attract new GSRs and some areas struggle to fill officers' positions within the Area Committee.

Many members appear to have a lack of interest in getting into service at Area/Intergroup level and beyond.

There are of course many and varied reasons for this, one of which is perhaps lack of encouragement and guidance through sponsorship. It is this area that needs to be addressed.

Fig 1:

| Area    | No. of Groups | Average attendants at Area (approx) | % of Groups active within Area (approx.) |
|---------|---------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Antrim  | 19            | 11                                  | 57                                       |
| Armagh  | 22            | 3                                   | 14                                       |
| Belfast | 24            | 4                                   | 17                                       |

#### 4. PI/Hospitals/Prisons.

Paradoxically, several Areas report that in the above service functions all is going well with Open Public Information Meetings well attended and Prison visits encouraging as well as speaking in Schools and Youth Clubs etc.

Hospital meetings are also being manned and supported.

Belfast and Antrim Area are actively encouraging groups to designate PI members who will become members of an Area PI Committee.

#### 4.1 PICC

Ulster Intergroup have elected a Public Information Co-Ordinating Committee.

The Committee will endeavour to bring Area PI Convenors together to share ideas and develop a common well informed and unified approach to this vital element within our Fellowship.

Assisted and supported by GSCDs, their first interactive Workshop entitled **BACK TO THE FUTURE** will be held in Cookstown on Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> 2018 prior to Intergroup.

#### 5. General information on other Areas:

In Ulster; there are approximately 202 GROUPS WITH AVERAGE ATTENDANCE AT AREA OF 75, which equates to 37% - 41% (figs. 1 and 2)

There were 26 Intergroup reps from a possible 40 at the 2016 AGM.

18 at the Jan. 2017 meeting

14 at the March meeting

12 at the meeting in May

18 at the July meeting

11 at the September meeting

At Nov AGM 2017 there were 22.

*There were then 73 representatives from a possible 200 in 2017 at Ulster Intergroup (AGM 2016 and 17 figures excluded).*

Fig 2.

| Area      | No of Groups | Average attendants at Area (approx) | % of groups active within Area (approx) |
|-----------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Cavan     | 12           | 4                                   | 33                                      |
| Derry     | 19           | 9                                   | 47                                      |
| Donegal   | 42           | 12                                  | 28                                      |
| Down      | 20           | 10                                  | 50                                      |
| Fermanagh | 13           | 5                                   | 38                                      |
| Monaghan  | 8            | 7                                   | 88                                      |
| Tyrone    | 23           | 10                                  | 43                                      |

6. Conclusions/Recommendations:

To single out specific areas for comment would be counterproductive and divisive.  
The following observations can be considered and discussed by everyone.

- 6.1 Older, more experienced members need to commit to sponsoring younger people into service offering guidance and direction at every level.
- 6.2 More objectivity needs to be displayed at all levels in electing Trusted Servants into office thereby neutralising the human tendency for popularity votes.  
Ask are we putting the best people into responsible positions?
- 6.3 Perhaps Group Inventories at Areas and Intergroup would begin the process of addressing the involvement deficit in certain areas.

Tom D.  
January 2018

## **Sub-Committee on the Text Service for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

**Report to Conference on the Sub-Committee set up to deal with a query from GSO on the best protocol to use in the implementation of the phone text number for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing.**

Following the setting up of the Sub-Committee at the last Conference Meeting, the Sub-Committee which included Pat K. (Trustee), Emmet (Leinster), John (Munster), Michael (Ulster) and Jacqueline (Connaught), went to work straight away deciding the best way to proceed. Pat contacted U.K., America and Canada who all replied with lots of information on how they facilitate this subject.

Pat distributed this information to the rest of the Sub-Committee and afterwards we arranged to meet. Pat provided a location for us to meet free of charge, and all Members of the Committee spent a few hours on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2017 discussing and finalising the report together. Jacqueline then compiled the report and circulated it to Committee Members for further editing and finalising.

The finalised report was returned to Pat who passed it onto GSO who have put the recommendations in place. To date they have had two contacts through the Text Service. A copy of the final report sent to GSO is attached along with a copy of Table Top Literature for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing which is used in the U.K.

Overall, this group worked very well together and it was a positive learning experience for all involved. The Committee stuck closely to the brief in compiling the report but as a side, a possibly valuable idea came about. Pat showed Members a Table Top Card that the U.K. had sent over, on discussion, the group felt it would be worth looking into getting a similar card for Ireland. The Card has a message that creates awareness that there may be a person or people in the room who may have difficulty hearing and invites them to let someone know or ask for help. Pat went about researching the different options we have in accessing and initially we thought we may be able to get some from the U.K. but a problem arose in relation to the Logo so we are now going to be asking permission from Conference to create, print and place on the Literature List, an Irish version of this Card.



**Queries from GSO for Conference 2017**  
**Re Deaf Community Text Service on AA Website (087-1460387)**

1. When a text is received and the person is asking for help, what wording do we use? Shall we set up a template, is there wording that is more user friendly for the deaf community?

We suggest the following template:

Texter: *A text arrives at GSO.*

Office: *Thank you for contacting the Alcoholics Anonymous text number for the deaf and hard of hearing. How can we help you?*

Texter: *The texter replies.*

Office: *O.K., Please tell us where in Ireland you are.*

Texter: *The texter replies.*

Office: *Would you like a member of Alcoholics Anonymous to contact you?*

Texter: *Yes.*

Office: *How would you prefer to be contacted, phone call or text?*

Texter: *----- or -----.*

Office: *O.K., A member of Alcoholics Anonymous will contact you. Is there anything else we can help you with?*

Texter: *Yes or No*

Office: *Thank You [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)*

Following a discussion we decided on the above template. We agreed that texts would be best treated as per the usual protocol relating to phone calls received at the office, the only difference being that communication be through text and that when the office contacts a member from the directory to contact the new comer that they be made aware if the person is deaf or hard of hearing and that they may need to contact them by text.

2. If it is a 12<sup>th</sup> step request from the deaf community, who shall we pass it to?? Is it Safe to assume the would expect to be put in contact with someone who can sign And is familiar with the deaf community requirements and introduce them to an AA meeting

We suggest a request for a 12<sup>th</sup> step call be handled as per usual protocol for 12<sup>th</sup> step requests.

In answer to part two of this question the answer would be no.

3. Will we have a list of Groups/Contacts that are willing / able to cater for the deaf community or do we just treat it as a 'normal' 12 step call?

We suggest treating a text from a deaf/ hard of hearing person the same as a normal 12<sup>th</sup> step call except that it may be communicated by text.

4. What facility is available at groups for deaf people attending? No doubt this is a question that will arise and we need an answer. How are deaf people catered for at meetings??

There are no organised facilities available at present for deaf people at AA meetings.

5. We received a message through the text service from an AA member who wanted GSO to pass his number to a fellow deaf AA member so they can meet up: he is willing to travel to meet other deaf AA members.  
He also wants to start a group for deaf people who can share their experience, strength and hope through sign language. Is this considered a specialised meeting??? We passed this request to the relevant IG Secretary as we had no clear guidelines.

We suggest using the same protocol as is used when a hearing person rings up to ask for another member's number. If the texter wants to start an AA group he/she must go through the regular AA structure to do this.

6. Message received from someone looking for meetings in their area on a Sunday night, they didn't clarify if they were a member of the deaf community so we replied and referred them to our website for a list of meetings. We could have replied asking if they were a member of the deaf community before giving any AA meeting information but what if that's not 'PC'???
7. Should the text that appears with the mobile number state, the number is for those of the deaf community seeking help for a drink problem to avoid it being used by some for us to text AA meeting information.

We suggest the template at question 1. would take care of concerns raised in questions 6. and 7.



## Carrying the AA Message to the Hard of Hearing

All of the points raised below have been received from members of our Fellowship to help raise awareness of the needs of hard of hearing AA members.

Many of the problems that arise can be resolved easily, but only if our members are reminded regularly about them. People are people, and if not reminded will soon fall back into their old routine.

We say often enough that we want the hand of AA to be there when we share at meetings we need to make sure the voice of AA can be heard by those whose hearing is impaired.

- Deafness, ranging from mild to severe, is one of the most common physical disabilities with which we come into the rooms. It is invisible and therefore the least appreciated – and unfortunately easily forgotten.
- One in six of the population of the UK has some sort of hearing problem, so every group may have at least one deaf member.
- We as a Fellowship are responsible for carrying the AA message. A hearing impairment may affect a member's ability to receive it.
- It is of vital importance for members with disabilities to make their needs known.
- Remember that our own lack of awareness can be a problem to the hard of hearing whom we are trying to help to recover and participate in service.

### At Meetings

- The greeters and those serving tea and coffee are often in the best position to ascertain whether a newcomer is hard of hearing and can alert the chairperson before the meeting starts.

- Be prepared to open a closed meeting if a deaf person wishes to bring along a sign language interpreter.
- We can aid lip reading by having a good level of lighting and ensuring that the speaker can be seen. Candle-lit or dimmed meetings can be difficult for the deaf and visually impaired.
- The chairperson could remind sharers / members that there may be someone who is hard of hearing present. Groups can try to ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly and undisturbed fashion.
- Background noise – kettles, extractor fans etc. can be switched off.
- Consider the acoustics of the meeting room. Does it have an induction loop system? Very large meetings could consider buying a public address system, if you have either of these aids, are they included in the meeting's online listing and the Where to Find?
- If you are chatting with someone after the meeting and the noise level means it is difficult to hear, try moving somewhere quieter.

### At Intergroup & Region

- Members giving reports might be asked to present them facing the audience.
- Do your service representatives and members make a point of passing on experience through the AA service structure how the message can be carried to hearing impaired members? This experience can be shared either at meetings or by submissions to Share and Roundabout.



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To ensure everyone present can hear  
everything that is said

So please speak up

Some here may have hearing difficulties



**We can hear you –  
can you hear us?**

**Please let us know  
if you need us to  
speak up.**



## **Public Information Reports to Conference**

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF  
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IRELAND  
9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### **2018 Public Information Reports to Conference**

- Leinster
- Connaught
- Munster
- Ulster

## **Leinster PI Report For Conference 9th-11th March 2018**

### REPORT TO AA GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION LEINSTER INTERGROUP – MARCH 2018

One of the major on-going challenges facing PI activities in Leinster is still the lack of PI representation in many of the Areas. PI Representatives rotating out are not being replaced and this is putting undue pressure on the PI's in the adjoining Areas to cover their activities. We are very aware that a reluctance to do service is an ongoing issue in general in our Fellowship and PI is not immune to this.

We do believe, however that all Areas in Leinster should do their best to elect a PI Representative as a matter of urgency. At present (January 2018), there is no PI Representative in the following Areas: 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, and 14.

The Leinster Intergroup PI Committee will try to hold meetings approx. every 3 – 4 months. We have PI Area Reports presented, and we discuss matters affecting PI as a whole in all Areas. We feel at these meetings, the sharing of information is both very informative and very helpful. Members are very enthusiastic and they all do their best to attend these meetings which is not always the case. Minutes of previous meetings are provided to attendees and any PI Members not able to attend. These meetings are open to Observers and take place in the Green Isle Hotel. The issue of Garda Vetting was discussed at the last PI Meeting in November 2017 and it will be on the Agenda at future PI Meetings.

We look forward to the launch of the PI Kit Folder. We are delighted to see this new Kit being launched and coming into play – we believe it will be a very helpful tool and of great use – the Kit is now at the final stages and hopefully will be ready for launch in the near future.

We have been again very busy with School Talks. All Areas have received a positive response to the standard letter we send out to each School. Many Schools have again asked us back to carry out a second or even a third Talk this year. As a matter of course we are now including “Youth Reach” facilities – these facilities cater for young people who may have been excluded from the main stream School system, but continue their secondary education through Youth Reach. Talks in these facilities have been particularly successful, with Staff and Students benefiting. We continue to offer a copy of the Big Book and The Road Back DVD to all Schools, during our visit.

Leinster Intergroup PI Representatives have participated in a number of Workshops/Service days which were organised by some of the Areas in 2017. These occasions were a great opportunity to inform AA Members of the role and activities of PI, and to try and encourage Members to come on board and get involved. Posters and Literature are distributed at these events.

We still continue to get invitations to attend Health Fairs whereby we will erect a small AA Stand which can be either manned or unmanned.

We have a Pull-Up AA Stand available for this purpose and also Literature Rack, which can be filled with "Is AA for You?" and "AA at a Glance" Leaflets, both of which are FOC for PI purposes. We will also provide a copy of both the Big Book and the DVD "The Road Back" to Public Libraries so that Library members can borrow these to read/watch in their own time. We would like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to Bridget, Noreen, and Barbara, who process all the requests, through GSO. We would like also to thank any and all AA Members who have assisted our PI efforts during the past year.

John O'L, Leinster Intergroup PI  
17<sup>th</sup> January 2018

## **Connaught PI Report For Conference 9th-11th March 2018**

### **Connaught P.I. Report 2017/2018**

#### **Galway East and West Areas combined P.I. Reports**

Galway East and West Areas are without a formal PI Convenor however, PI is active in an informal way with individual Members taking various initiatives and jobs. Addiction Counsellors and Merlin Park Addiction Centre are also maintaining contact through the previous Convenor.

The local Telephone Service is an ongoing connection between the Public and AA in Galway. There is a panel of Responders to answer the local phone.

The Galway West Convention (January) and the Galway East Convention (May) are taken as two valuable opportunities to carry the message through their Public Open Meetings. Posters are distributed throughout Galway. The Professional Community are notified and the Media, Newspapers and Radio are utilised to carry our message.

There were two Public Open meetings in 2017, both were reasonably attended. These meetings are opportunities to get Posters out in the various public notice boards and keep AA in the minds of the Public and Professionals as well as carry the message of AA to the suffering alcoholic.

The local website ([www.galwayaa.com](http://www.galwayaa.com)) was established to carry the message of AA locally and is a valuable resource for suffering alcoholics to request help. There are between 30 – 70 visitors to the website per day. Source: Google Analytics.

#### **Sligo/ North Leitrim Area Report**

Sligo/North Leitrim Area works very closely with Sligo IT and provides them with AA Speakers when requested. The Institute holds an Alcohol Awareness week from time to time.

A member of Sligo/North Leitrim Area spoke on Highland Radio prior to the Donegal Convention in late 2017. Positive feedback was reported and is documented by Donegal PI.

#### **Mayo Area PI Report**

There is a new PI Convenor for Mayo Area since January 18th 2018. The PI Convenor reported at the last sitting of Connaught Intergroup that Mayo PI attended Schools with excellent feedback. The Convenor requested literature that is especially suitable for use in Schools. A more recent visit to St. Gerald's in Castlebar had taken place with another talk lined up for St. Muridecks Cathedral in Ballina.

At the time of the writing of this report, a Public Information Meeting is to be held on the 23rd of February in the Broad Haven Bay Hotel in Belmullet. The previous PI Convenor, Greta had set the ball rolling in contacting Garda Sergeants in Castlebar and Swinford, this has led to a request from the Gardaí for a talk to be given for Young People in PLC courses and at risk groups.

### **Roscommon/South Leitrim and Athlone**

A PI Meeting took place prior to the Area meeting on the 15th of January 2017. Four members were in attendance and a lot was discussed, including making local Schools aware of AA in their area through sending letters, the proper care and placement of AA Slogans and updating the Directory via the beige form, remembering to include the Eircode. A Day of Service, Unity and Recovery was held in Hannon's Hotel on Saturday 28th of October. It was a full day of events including a Workshop titled "How can we work better together, AA Structure, PI and Finance". There were Marathon Meetings, The History of the Road Back. A successful and worthwhile exercise was reported overall.

## **Munster (Cork City) PI Report For Conference 9th-11th March 2018**

### **Public Information Cork City PI Report**

Monthly Meetings: PI meet monthly 3/Feb 18

Al-Anon:

Speakers were provided for Al-Anon meetings All Months.

E-Mails:

Emails were checked regularly. Not a whole lot of correspondence comes through the email system.

Phone:

The phone was out of operation few months back. In operation since Dec. 2016.

Schools:

Speakers were provided at Kinsale (60 pupils) School and Middleton Career Guidance. We spoke to 20 adults on the day.

Speaker request for Kinsale College Co. Cork.

We are presently putting together an email to send out to all Schools and let them know of our availability.

Convention:

Public Information Committee, AA Cork



## **Munster (Clare, Limerick County and Limerick City Area) PI Report For Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Public Information Clare Area Report**

All-weather, adhesive Labels stating; 'If you want to drink that's your business', 'If you want to stop that's ours', with the Clare Area Telephone Service Number was placed on all Bottle Banks throughout Co. Clare during the year. This was done with the approval of the Environmental Department of Clare County Council who very much welcomed the initiative. As a result of this, a number of Twelve Step Calls were received to the local Area Phone Service.

There was one School and Youth Club presentation in Shannon and Kilrush carried out by P.I.

The Committee were also active in Annual Clare Area Convention in the preparation of Press Releases and Invitations to the Open Meetings etc.

A number of Radio Interviews took place with Clare FM throughout the year. These consisted of Members of the fellowship sharing their Experiences, Strength, and Hope.

Poster drops were also carried out throughout Clare Area.

A new P.I. Convenor has come forward and is now in place.

### **Public Information Limerick County Area Report**

No Public Information Convenor in Limerick County. The outgoing person was not replaced even though repeated calls went out to Groups for a P.I. Committee.

There was a request last year from a large Employer in the area to provide a Stand and Literature for a Health Information Day. This request was responded to, and was carried out by the Limerick County Area Chairman along with the outgoing Conference Delegate.

### **Public Information Limerick City Area**

New P.I. Convenor in Limerick City Area and Public Information is operating well.

Limerick Institute of Technology requested A.A. literature for a Healthy Lifestyle Day for Students and this was provided, along with posters.

Two School visits were requested in Limerick City and these were responded to with Speakers.

Poster distribution was carried out to Doctors, Garda Stations, and other Public Buildings.

A Feature Article on one female's recovery through A.A. was published recently in a local Newspaper in the City

## **Munster (West Cork) PI Report for Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **Public Information Committee Work of the Year 2017**

Eight Presentations have been made in Schools in West Cork during 2017, usually to Transition Year Students, although some older Students have also attended.

Approximately five hundred young people will, therefore, have been made aware of the purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous and the scope of its activities. The feedback from Teachers has been universally positive. Schools in West Cork now hold "Welfare Weeks", so I anticipate a larger number of visits being requested in 2018. Al Anon has been contacted with a view to informing Students of the activities of Al Anon and Alateen. One School has insisted on AA visitors being Garda Vetted before attending, although this has not been mentioned by other Schools.

A talk has also been given to young GAA Players and it is anticipated that this contact will be expanded upon.

Efforts to obtain permission to place AA Posters on Bottle Banks in West Cork have proved unsuccessful. A letter has been received from the Senior Engineer of Cork County Council Roads Department, advising me that the Department of Communication, Climate Change and Environment are undergoing a rebranding exercise for Bottle Banks and no other information can be placed thereon.

AA Posters have been placed on Community Notice Boards throughout West Cork. Garda Stations, Libraries, and Community Centres have been covered. Certain Supermarkets have also agreed to accept our Posters.

While the level of Public information activity is increasing, we are aware of the need to inform and attract rather than promote.

I trust that this provides a flavour of the work we do, and welcome any input into other ways in which we can inform the Public of our Purpose.

Dave B.  
Milo

West Cork Area Public Information Committee

## **PI Report from Ulster For Conference 9th-11th March 2018**

### **Ulster Annual PI Report January 2018**

#### **Antrim: 18 Groups**

PI has moved to meet before Area Meeting. This has resulted in better attendance at PI meetings. A new Chairperson has been appointed to PI and PI has purchased a new projector for Presentations. In July, the usual summer break was taken. A successful DOG was held at Corrymella on 15th of October.

#### **Armagh: 22 Groups**

PI is experiencing some difficulties, however a DOG and a PI Workshop was held. The DOG was successful and the PI Meeting was well attended. Michael (GSCD) gave a well-received presentation. PI needs a boost.

#### Belfast: 23 Groups

PI is not functioning but 2 Presentations were given to 2 Schools with attendance in the region of 100 Pupils. A DOG was arranged in The Beechlawn Hotel, which was very successful. Ulster PI meets in Lisburn Road on Friday. Lisburn Road are organising a week of Gratitude to celebrate 70 Years of AA in Belfast. All meetings will be Open Meetings.

#### Cavan: 13 Groups

Have been operating without a PI Committee.

#### Derry: 18 Groups

PI attendance has improved and they were involved at 2 Presentations at The University of Ulster. A PI Workshop was held at the DOG and a list of those available for PI work was drawn up. The University emailed Area to confirm a date for 2018. All Schools in the Area have been circulated and PI appealed for Members to offer their services. PI distributed Posters to every Surgery, Addiction Unit, Probation Office, Church and Police Station. Local Papers and Radio Stations broadcast details. In conjunction with Ulster PI Committee, a PI Workshop took place on DOG.

#### Donegal: 42 Groups

A new PI Committee has been formed and a successful DOG took place. PI has been active and delivered a responsive session to Staff at Letterkenny Hospital.

#### Down: 21 Groups

PI is well back on track and the DOG was successful in terms of attendance. Seven Groups were present at PI Orientation Day. Nine Groups have been in attendance at PI. PI is going very strongly and is well attended. Five Groups attended Area PI Meeting. The topic was "Why AA is Anonymous?" PI has been active in Schools with two Presentations in Ballynahinch, one in Castlewellan and one in Downpatrick. Down DOG PI Workshop went very well with 60 Attendees. The Theme was 'Our Primary Purpose'. Those interested in PI work with required qualifications should contact PI Chair. Bi-Monthly PI Bulletins continue and a visit by Ulster PI Committee is requested for next Area Meeting.

PI plans a Mini-Workshop for March 2018. The use of Podcast for Area is in progress. PI Kit is not yet available. All Groups to ensure a copy of The Big Book is in local Library. Plans are afoot to meet local media outlets with a view to presenting AA Members stories of recovery.

#### Fermanagh: 12 Groups

Have not been present at Intergroup.

#### Monaghan: 8 Groups

PI is well and up and running. The PI Committee have been proactive with committed action to delivering Pamphlets and Posters to Surgeries, Police Stations and Advice Centres.

#### Tyrone: 22 Groups

PI has been going very well and is heavily involved with the new centre at Asha (Hope). Attendance is good and PI is very active and support at Asha is very considerable.

The Dungannon Group have been very proactive and have been distributing Leaflets and Pamphlets to Surgeries, Advice Centres and the PSNI. During the year, Open Meetings were facilitated in Mountjoy, Stewartstown, Cathedral, Omagh and Dunamore. All were well attended with positive feedback. All Committee Members have contributed greatly during the past year in a spirit of cooperation. Suggest the importance of Buff Cards being completed regularly—an old chestnut, but a very important one. Encourage all Groups to hold a PI Meeting in the incoming year to enable us to address our Primary Purpose. Recommend that those with qualifications get involved in Service and PI.

### **Ulster Public Information Coordinating Committee**

Guidelines for a Public Information Co-Ordinator for Ulster were drawn up. The Member had to be an active Member of a Group preferably a Group Officer and familiar with Steps and Traditions. Have 5 years continuous sobriety and served on Group and Area PI. Clear understanding of 12 Concepts and will be required to attend and report to Intergroup. Appointee will be required to visit Area PI and liaise with PI Convenors, should encourage sharing and continuity of information exchange between Area PI Committees. In the end a Committee of 3 was formed and it meets on a monthly basis in Lisburn Road.

PI activity is at various levels across Ulster, some recording little activity, and some being very active. The Committee hope to develop more awareness through Workshops and engaging with Area Committees and PI Co-Ordinators. The Committee have identified several areas that they want to move forward on - explaining what PI work is and making Members aware of how it works, using the PI Handbook to make Members aware of its contents and relation to Traditions. To encourage Members to be appointed through Structure and to be responsible to their Group Conscience. Support those involved in PI work, developing the need to publicise PI activities, avoid potential affiliation with outside Agencies and emphasising we only carry the 12th Step Message.

In an effort to implement these and other issues, the Committee have asked for invites from Areas. Four Areas, Derry, Down, Armagh and Belfast have responded positively. The Committee are committed to a Workshop at Tyrone DOG in January. A “Back to the Future” PI Workshop is planned to take place before Intergroup on 28th January 2018.

Billy I. Ulster Intergroup Secretary

# 2017 ALL-IRELAND CONVENTION

**60th All-Ireland Convention**

**Alcoholics Anonymous 2017**

**A NEW FREEDOM**

*The Salthill Hotel, Promenade, Galway, Ireland*

*April 20th - 23rd, 2017*

Bookings: Salthill Hotel, Salthill, Galway. +353 91 522711  
e. [reservations@salthillhotel.com](mailto:reservations@salthillhotel.com)  
w. [www.salthillhotel.com](http://www.salthillhotel.com)  
e. [info@galwaytourism.com](mailto:info@galwaytourism.com)  
w. [www.galwaytourism.com](http://www.galwaytourism.com)

General Service Office, Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park, Dublin 9.  
+353 1 6420700 e. [gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie](mailto:gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie)  
w. [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)

## Venue

Salthill Promenade Hotel, Galway, 20th-23rd April 2017

The 60<sup>th</sup> Annual All-Ireland Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous was held over three days in Salthill, Galway 2017 and covered a comprehensive program of meetings, (open and public AA meetings, marathon themed meetings, around Ireland and international forum meetings etc.) film and slide shows, illustrated talk, archival displays, Public Information workshop and social dancing. Our convention ran concurrently with the All-Ireland Al-Anon Convention.

# 2017 All-Ireland Convention

SALTHILL PROMENADE HOTEL, GALWAY, 20TH-23RD APRIL 2017

## INTRODUCTION:

The genesis of the All-Ireland Convention stretches back over 60 years. The rationale for the All-Ireland Annual Convention is to carry the message of recovery to alcoholics growing in recovery through our program and to those who are caught up in active alcoholism and who express a desire for help. It is a showcase for AA to the public and professional community. It is also a medium through which we co-operate with our friends in Al-Anon in particular in order to help those who are affected by this "family disease". It is a statement that we are anonymous at the level of press, radio and film but that we are not 'alcoholics invisible'. It is an opportunity and an outlet for members of AA to share their experience, strength and hope both in recovery and in AA service. It is also a vehicle by which members congregate together and renew old acquaintances and hopefully make new ones. It is a means by which we socialize without drink and demonstrate recovery in action through our celebration of the gift of our sobriety.

**Connaught Intergroup** was key in taking the on the role to execute the wishes of the AA Conference in Ireland and the General Service Board in planning, organizing and executing the brief for the 2017 All-Ireland Convention.

**The planning and preparation for the 2017 Convention began in 2015** when the core committee came together to decide on the venue and the theme. Each conference delegate was afforded the opportunity to make a pitch for his/her respective geographical area. The "committee's conscience" decided on Galway. It had been eight years since the All-Ireland Convention had been held there and the proposal that had been researched by the local conference delegate ticked all the boxes in terms of facilities, scenic area, local amenities and terms offered by the hotel.

In keeping with established custom and practice we prepared a promotional convention flyer, which we had designed and printed in time for the 2016 All-Ireland Convention, at which the 2017 All-Ireland Convention was officially announced and the venue confirmed. Prior to this we had block-booked 40 rooms as is customary for Conference delegates and Board members and GSO staff etc.

**Early exposure and coverage** of the event was carried out through our PR representative via The Road Back magazine, our AA News Sheet and our official website. Continuous focus was given the event throughout the year and also in international AA media e.g. Share magazine (UK), Box 459 and the Grapevine including their respective web sites, which have international appeal in the English-speaking world.

All of this important early promotional work would pay key dividends come the convention proper itself.



The work of the committee began in earnest with the planning of the full schedule of programme events, workshops, talks, archive presentation and booking of dance bands well in advance.

**Key people took charge of speaker selection** for the both the opening and closing meetings as well as the international forum and the around Ireland meeting. **Sub-committees were formed** to take charge of the registration desks, the dances, and the marathon meetings.

**Liaison with the hotel fell to the charge of our Treasurer and all matters financial.** Each item of expenditure for printing, banners, programmes, flyers, signage etc, were all pre-costed and three estimates were obtained for all items of any significant expenditure.

**Our budgeting was tight** and all necessary expenses were drawn down on a meeting by meeting basis.

The cost of holding the convention was arranged with the hotel for the weekend on more than favorable terms. **The General Manager took personal charge** of the Convention and this was key to the success of all aspects of the hotel's involvement.

In the above very favourable budgeting context the committee decided that registration would be priced at €10 and also both dances on the Friday and Saturday nights priced the same.

Their contribution was enormous in ensuring that all events ran smoothly and efficiently. We had offers from volunteers from overseas members and these were either invited to share at meetings or helped with archives etc.

While the hotel had a **sound system** we decided to employ a professional system and we were unusually fortunate to have a 'technical' expert among our committee.

**Presentations were worked out with the IT staff at the hotel** and again we were fortunate to have among us members with the necessary expertise.

**AI-Anon:** A designated member liaised with AI-Anon and also spoke at their open meeting. They were completely satisfied with their facilities and the co-operation afforded them. In turn, the speaker they provided us for the closing meeting did an excellent job and was most entertaining to boot.

**Costs were kept to a minimum** and the hotel provided us with accommodation for almost all of our meetings and were more than generous with teas, coffees and sandwiches etc. In keeping costs down we enlarged our committee by engaging members from East and West Galway Areas who had acknowledged competence in running various aspects of conventions. This local knowledge coupled with various levels of experience and expertise were invaluable.

All of the **meeting rooms** were visited more than once by our committee and the allocation of rooms for marathon meetings, archives and main events were tabled on schedules that were agreed with the hotel. All rooms were adequate to the projected gatherings.

The **hotel itself** was excellently situated and the generous foyer, extending to the far reaches allowed ample space for members to gather informally for sharing and socializing.

Space for literature display and sales and registration positioned at both sides of the entrance were more than adequate. **The selection of the Salthill Promenade Hotel was a pivotal decision for us as a**

#### **2017 All-Ireland Convention**

**committee and was truly inspired. Location and venue were exceptional factors in the success of the whole venture and the network of support from the hotel staff was invaluable.**

#### **Public Information and Press Releases**

We had a number of press releases prepared both in short and long form for the press. We used the lists provided by GSO and local press contacts as well. The Galway Advertiser gave significant exposure to the convention, as did Galway Bay FM. Committee links to people in the media were extremely beneficial here. The community radio stations were very helpful and live coverage was given the event on the days preceding the convention and during the convention proper also.

#### **The Convention Proper... "A New Freedom"**

The "Early Birds" and "Late Hawks" meetings were a great success. The former had a panel of long-term sobriety members at the top table and more than 80 attended with superb contributions from the floor including significant sharing from overseas. We knew that "God would and could if he were sought" had become a realization for this convention.

**We started how we finished.** A committed team arrived for the "hands on" work of erecting banners and setting tables for various service areas. Signs erected in elevators and outside of them and comprehensive lists on the marathon meeting rooms. Themes all set beforehand of AA approved content and secretaries and chairs all pre-selected. Water changes and dispensers organized and all detail managed most efficiently.

The AV presentations of archive material, showing of The Road Back DVD on loop and all programme information current to the time of day as well as tv display in the bedrooms of events all kept pace with the conventions proceedings and changes that were made to the program to accommodate speakers etc.

#### **Communications was clear, relevant, timely and ongoing.**

Registration teams were rostered for two hourly shifts and our treasurer used a tight system of checks and balances for all moneys deposited to the hotel safe. Exactly 700 members registered. The same procedure operated in respects of the dance income also. All moneys were counted by three committee members on the Sunday afternoon and lodged to the bank in the university by two members so that processes and procedures around financial management would be fully satisfied. The loan from GSO was repaid within days of the convention closing.

**The elements of the programme** of the convention were all well supported. The main meetings were extremely well subscribed to. The dance on the Friday gave a few hundred euros surplus but the Saturday night was a huge success. The PI workshop and talk on the "links of the chain" were reasonably well attended and proved very interesting and thought provoking.

**The speakers for all the main meetings were superb and were extremely well received.** We even joined in the singing of "amazing grace" for one member. It was very much an emotionally and spiritually uplifting convention experience.

#### **Thanks**

A special word of thanks to each and every member of the committee and a few members seconded from overseas to act in service roles. The committee was Trojan and bonded beautifully. We also had our differences but the darn on the sock is always stronger than the original sock itself. The contributors to all the meetings and workshops and those that prepared general AV and Archive presentations as well as those that



coordinated and participated in the registration and the marathon sub-committees, the liaison with Al-Anon, the various around Ireland and international forum meetings as well as organizing dance bands and staffing doors and security duties a special thank you.

**The hotel staff was exceptional and couldn't have done enough for us. The GM is owed a special debt of gratitude for though she had been appointed to a new job in Dublin she determined to stay with the convention and see it through to the very end.**

To all the members who attended and those from overseas who continued to celebrate a great convention at our various groups in Galway city and county for the days following the convention.

A very special word of thanks to the staff of GSO for the prep work and also staffing the literature stand for the duration of the convention and to Rory H and his lieutenant from Malta for organising and caring for the Archives display.

#### **Endword**

It is said "we are only as good as the people around us". My privilege and pleasure was to work with as fine a team of people as one could hope to meet in achieving what was achieved through the grace of our Higher Power and celebrating our combined accomplishment with joyous sobriety. It was the experience of a lifetime and showed where service in AA results in pushing out still further the boundaries of this promise of a new and wonderful freedom. I sincerely thank each and every one of my committee and the additional helpers, the speakers and workshop presenters, the media and the members of the fellowship and their friends and partners who made the convention the success it turned out to be. (With due acknowledgement to the Higher Power.)

In fellowship and service,

Liam Ó B

Chair of the 2017 All-Ireland Convention Committee

# ALL-IRELAND CONVENTION 2017

## FINAL TREASURER'S REPORT

| DATE     | TRANSACTION  | DEBIT    | CREDIT   | BALANCE    |
|----------|--|----------|----------|------------|
| 30/05/16 | Loan from G.S.O.                                     |          | 2,000.00 | 2,000.00   |
| *****    | Bank charges   | 96.95    |          | 1,903.05   |
| *****    | Mc William park meetings                             | 53.05    |          | 1805.00    |
| *****    | Printing   | 1609.80  |          | 240.20     |
| 14/02/17 | Loan from G.S.O.                                     |          | 2,000.00 | 2,240.20   |
| *****    | Salthill hotel meeting s and food                    | 337.35   |          | 1902.85    |
| *****    | Committee travel expenses                            | 160.29   |          | 1,742.56   |
| 07/04/17 | G.S.O. Extra road backs with poster/flyer            | 452.35   |          | 1,290.21   |
| *****    | Signs for hotel,2x Banners, Dance tickets, laminates | 726.55   |          | 563.66     |
| 21/04/17 | Float for weekend                                    | 300.00   |          | 263.66     |
| 23/04/17 | Lodgement including float                            |          | 7,775.00 | 8,038.66   |
| 23/04/17 | Keady Communications sound                           | 570.00   |          | 7,468.66   |
| 28/04/17 | Repay loan to G.S.O.                                 | 4,000.00 |          | 3,468.66   |
| 02/11/17 | Bank Draft to G.S.O.                                 | 3,512.51 |          | a/c Closed |
|          |  |          |          |            |
|          |  |          |          |            |
|          |  |          |          |            |

\*\*\*\*\* More than one transaction on different dates.

Full treasurer s report given at every committee meeting with bank statements and receipts part of reports.

**NOTE:** A discrepancy of moneys over and above the final balance between the surplus of €3512.21 sent to GSO and the stated closing balance of €3468.66 i.e. €43.85 was explained by (a) an uncashed cheque of €40 issued for travel expenses and (b) a sundry sum of €3.85 believed to be mss change unaccounted for in the weekend's takings.

PJK TREASURER ALL-IRELAND CONVENTION GALWAY 2017

0001010890002045US

CONVENTION 2017

PATRICK J KE

GALWAY

Your account name **CONVENTION 2017  
CURRENT ACCOUNT**

Account number **79883078**

IBAN **IE06 2600 0040 1070 0030 70**

Statement date **2 Nov 2017** Number **10**

## Your Current Account Statement

| Date        | Transaction details | Payments - out | Payments - in | Balance  |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------|----------|
| 08 Sep 2017 | BALANCE FORWARD     |                |               | 1513.01  |
| 02 Nov 2017 | DRAFT 6671.39       | 3,613.01       |               | 1,149.70 |

\*ACCOUNT CLOSED\*



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ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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Email: [gs@alcoholicsanonymous.ie](mailto:gs@alcoholicsanonymous.ie)

Web: [www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)



10/11/2017 20

Received from AA Ireland Committee

Sum plus from all units 2017

the sum of Three Thousand Five Hundred EURO  
51 and twelve

51 cent

Received with Thanks

€ 3512 : 51

No. 14492

**Report from GB Conference: 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017  
For Conference 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS GB  
Fifty Second General Service Conference  
A New Freedom A New Happiness.  
Park Inn Hotel, York.  
21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017

Irish Overseas Observers  
Colum P - Ulster  
Martin C - Munster  
Report to General Services Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous  
March 2018

At the General Service Conference in March 2017, Colum P., Ulster Delegate and Martin C., Munster Delegate were elected to attend the 2017 GSC GB in York.

We travelled over separately, Martin C. travelled via Dublin to Leeds Bradford on the Thursday afternoon, while Colum P. travelled via Belfast City to Leeds Bradford early on Friday morning. After lunch on Friday, we both registered in the main concourse of the Hotel. All the overseas Delegates then had an Overseas Observers briefing session prior to the opening conference at 2.45pm.

There were 7 Overseas Observers at the session. Sirma from Bulgaria, Jana from Czech Republic, Michael and Maciej from Poland, Leonor from Portugal and of course our two selves. The briefing was chaired by Brian and Geoff where we were allocated to our Committees for the weekend session. Colum P. to Committee 5, and Martin C. to Committee 6. The Committees are an integral part of the Conference Structure.

Questions which had been submitted the previous year from Members, Groups, Intergroup and Regions were considered and responses composed; reflecting the conscience of the collective fellowship, through the voice of Conference. Each Committee is made up of representatives from each of the 16 Regions as well as General Services Board Members. The Committees include a Chairperson, a Trustee and Observers. During Conference the Committees worked over 4 sessions and finished late on Saturday evening, considering two questions each. Preliminary reports were presented to the floor of Conference on the Sunday morning, where they were discussed and considered before a vote was taken as to whether Conference should adopt them or not.

As an example:

Q. Committee 5: Would the Fellowship ask the General Services Board to conduct a strategic review of the future of its magazine publications and make recommendations?

Q. Committee 6: Would the Fellowship share experience and make recommendations on the use of mobile phones and other devices for photography and video recording during Conventions?

All the Committee Questions can be viewed on the AA GB website at <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Service/Conference-Question-20>.

The 2017 Conference composed of 95 Delegates from 16 Regions, 17 Members of GSB as well as 7 Office Staff and 7 Observers. Conference opened on Friday at 2.45pm. Conference Chairperson Sharon, read the Preamble and The Declaration of Unity. There followed an address by Roger B., General Secretary. Sharon then introduced the Committee Chairpersons. After a tea break at 4pm, we each went to the Committee Suite to begin the work on the question allocated. Dinner was at 6.15pm – 7.45pm. At 8pm in the Main Suite, the Nominations of Chair of Conference for 2018 were presented, each given a 3 minute slot of their service experience. 6 in total were put forward.

Following that there were GS Board Reports. The meeting ended at approximately 10pm. On Saturday morning, the Committee worked to bring a delegated response to the questions asked. This work was quite intense and a very frank and open discussion session by all participants. After lunch, the Committees reconvened to prepare their report for Conference. These were handed to secretarial staff by 5pm at the latest. After dinner at approximately 8pm, there was an Open Forum which gave Delegates the opportunity to ask Board Members anything they wished. This was quite lively at times. At 10pm the distribution of Committee Reports were given out and each region had the opportunity to discuss Preliminary Reports.

After breakfast on Sunday morning, Conference resumed with the 6 Committees presenting their preliminary reports where they were discussed and considered before Conference voted on whether to adapt them or not. At approximately 12.15pm, the election took place of the 6 candidates who put their name forward for Chair 2018. Sid from Eastern Region was elected as Conference Chair for the year 2018. The new Board Members were also confirmed.

Conference in GB had a genuinely positive and optimistic feel, as well as being very efficient and productive with a real sense of unity and sobriety. Voices were heard, particularly minority ones, with a great feeling of inclusivity. The Conference was closed by outgoing Chairperson Sharon, who thanked everyone for their help and support. The meeting ended with the Serenity Prayer. We both left at approximately 13.15pm by taxi to Leeds Bradford Airport. Colum via Belfast City Airport and Martin via Dublin Airport.

A special thanks to Sophie, Karen, Anne-Marie and Jenny for their continuous help and support throughout the entire weekend. As well as a special thanks to Barbara, Office Manager, GSO Santry, Dublin, for all her help and administrative efficiency.

Colum P.  
Martin C.