

MID SURREY INTERGROUP
CONFERENCE QUESTIONS FEEDBACK – 2ND MARCH 2017

COMMITTEE ONE – Question one:

- Not much experience of the chit system in Mid Surrey intergroup meetings
- No issues – just to be mindful of Tradition 11
- The system could be open to abuse – attendees using chits to get something they want
- The probation service has a regular open meeting in Guildford
- The chit system should definitely not be extended to Employment, Social Services or any other agency
- Newcomers attending their first meeting via a court directive would get the wrong impression of AA

COMMITTEE ONE – Question two:

- Various opinions of between 2 and 5 years but more emphasis on the quality of sobriety
 - 5 years is more appropriate than 2 or 3
 - As the people concerned are being employed by outside enterprises, is it any of our business? Tradition 10 – no opinion on outside issues
 - If the handbook needs consistency, the recommendation is a substantial length of sobriety
 - Many people make decisions in their first 5 years and change their minds later
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COMMITTEE TWO – Question one:

- The reason for the question isn't clear. The traditions cover the autonomy of groups
- Danger of AA becoming too dogmatic / prescriptive
- AA tends to be self-regulating. Disputes in groups can be referred to intergroups and regions but are usually handed back to the groups to be resolved at the group conscience meeting
- Groups are autonomous and can make their own decisions except in matters which concern AA as a whole

COMMITTEE TWO – Question two:

- General approval of the Central European map. Good visual aid to explain the Conference process and the timeline. Reinforces the principle of Conference being an ongoing process
- The map portrays an inaccurate impression of the involvement of Conference Delegates. It implies that delegates take responses to the questions from Region to Conference. It doesn't show the involvement of delegates at all other levels including intergroups, groups and individuals. It also fails to explain that Conference Delegates are elected by Regional Reps
- Regional Reps represent the conscience of their intergroups at Region but this doesn't include the Intergroup's response to Conference questions. This is the responsibility of the Conference Delegates
- Approval by Conference should lead to appropriate revision by the literature subcommittee before publication ie adapt and adopt

COMMITTEE THREE – Question one:

- They key is communication - AA needs to be flexible to be of service to the community by liaising with officers of the same discipline in other intergroups or even regions
- Intergroup liaison officers must attend the workshops at Region to get an overview of their responsibilities to the wider community. It would be a good idea for liaison officers to also attend other intergroup assemblies
- AA should form 'groups within groups' so that people in the same service discipline (eg prisons) can meet up and determine the needs of a wider geographic area

COMMITTEE THREE – Question two:

- AA is doing this anyway – why the need for Conference approval?
- Generally in favour of increasing the prudent reserve from 12 months to 15 months
- Board trustees are trusted servants – they must act appropriately
- AA needs to be equipped to pay all staff and office costs in times of economic uncertainty

COMMITTEE FOUR – Question one:

- General approval – need to show positive benefits of sobriety. However, don't include other family members as families are not always reunited
- Many AA members don't identify with a park bench and therefore don't think they qualify
- Should be 'as well as' because suffering alcoholics need identification with the misery depicted on posters and in advertisements
- Before and after is a good idea. The image should be of hope and freedom ie breaking out of the bottle
- It would be good to see examples before printing new posters
- Given the greater prudent reserve, can AA afford to print more posters?

COMMITTEE FOUR – Question two:

- Each group should decide its own policy at its group conscience meeting
- Primary purpose cards are available for both open and closed meetings
- It is easier to stipulate alcohol-related sharing at closed meetings
- AA members should be free to share on their experience as alcoholics coping with issues in life such as anxiety and depression, family issues etc
- We shouldn't compartmentalise alcoholism in meetings – AA members need to feel free to share on whatever troubles them
- AA members should talk to people on a one-to-one basis and make them aware of other fellowships such as NA, CA, OA, GA etc
- The letter from 1982 is good – it should be made generally available to groups to be used as a backup in case of need

COMMITTEE FIVE – Question one:

- General agreement on need to review AA publications
- Share magazine should be available to people unable to attend meetings. Groups should order them to supply to prisoners and other people with restricted access to AA
- Share to be available digitally for smart phone users – young people access information differently

COMMITTEE FIVE – Question two:

- AA survey was limited in effectiveness
- AA organises a survey and then asks the groups what they should do with it!
- Some conclusions can be gained – especially the increase in web-based enquiries
- Overriding confirmation that key elements in AA lead to long term sobriety (regular attendance at meetings, service and sponsorship)
- Personal referrals hugely influential. TV / Radio has minimal impact on membership

COMMITTEE FIVE – Question three: allow Conference to approve changes to the AA handbook

COMMITTEE SIX – Question one:

- Common-sense should prevail. Don't wear AA lanyards in public places
- Sponsoring committees of conventions should ensure that anonymity of AA visitors isn't compromised by people with phones or other photographic / video equipment
- AA members visiting conventions should be diligent and respond to breaches of AA's traditions
- The issues emanating from increased use of social media should be met with trust and cooperation
- Convention committees should follow the guidelines in AA's handbook
- Need for more signage at conventions: ie No photography!
- General need for greater awareness of anonymity issues and social media

COMMITTEE SIX – Question two:

- Small and large intergroups offer both advantages and disadvantages
- More pressure on key officers of larger intergroups (treasurer / secretary etc)
- Better feeling of involvement in smaller intergroups
- Small intergroups have time for GSR feedback at their assemblies
- Key issues don't always get discussed at larger intergroup assemblies
- Mid Surrey has nearly 70 groups. Will await the results of Conference 2017 before asking a working party to study a possible split into two smaller service committees
- Suggested maximum size of an intergroup, eg 35 or 40 groups, shouldn't lead to inflexibility. New groups should still be allowed access to their local intergroup

Bob S. / Anne W.

Thursday, 2nd March 2017

Quaker Meeting House, Guildford