

FIFTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2018

COMMITTEE No. 1

	CASTLE SUITE
First Meeting Friday, 13 April	4.00 pm - 5.45 pm
Second Meeting Saturday, 14 April	9.00 am - 12.45 pm
Third Meeting Saturday, 14 April	2.00 pm - 4.00 pm
Completed Reports to Secretarial Staff	5.00 pm

CHAIR	ANNE W	SOUTH EAST REGION
SECRETARY	GEMMA B	LONDON REGION SOUTH
		General Service Board General Service Board General Service Board Eastern Region London Region North Midlands Region North East Region North West Region South Midlands Region South West Region Wales & Borders Region East of Scotland Region Glasgow Region Highlands & Islands Region Scotia Region South West Scotland Region Continental European Region Observer
	Geoff C Charon B Mike E Kirk T	
	Chris S Graham S Stuart W	
	Donnie MacR Mary M Lenard C Ronald vV	

- 1. Would Conference discuss: a) whether the Fellowship's use of the terminology "closed" and "open" to describe AA meeting attendance restrictions confuses newcomers and thereby detracts from our primary purpose, and b) if required, recommend a better solution?**

Background

Some newcomers see an AA meeting listed as a "closed" meeting, and think that it is shut, or closed-down, and therefore may not attend the meeting. If this situation occurs, we may be failing to uphold Tradition 5: each group has but one primary purpose to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Even though the meaning of the words "closed" and "open" is usually explained in the meeting's listing footnotes (reproduced below) as well as in our literature, the wording may

still provide an initial source of misunderstanding to newcomers unfamiliar with our terminology.

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/About-AA-Meetings>

EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED ALL MEETINGS ARE CLOSED.

Definition of Open and Closed Meetings:

The Closed Meeting; is intended for alcoholics and for those with an alcohol problem who have a desire to stop drinking.

The Open Meeting; is intended for alcoholics and non alcoholics e.g. family, friends and anyone interested in AA.

Note: This question only concerns the use of the terminology “closed” and “open” to describe different meetings, and not the actual intention of restricting attendance at meetings.

References:

- Meeting Guide Footnotes on the AA GB website
- The AA Group (AA pamphlet)
- 2009 Conference Recommendation C4 Q1

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

2. Review Chapter 4 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2017 “For AA Members Employed in the Alcoholism Field”.

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2019.

4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2019.

FIFTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2018

COMMITTEE No. 2

	FOSS SUITE
First Meeting Friday, 13 April	4.00 pm - 5.45 pm
Second Meeting Saturday, 14 April	9.00 am - 12.45 pm
Third Meeting Saturday, 14 April	2.00 pm - 4.00 pm
Completed Reports to Secretarial Staff	5.00 pm

CHAIR	RON D	CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION
SECRETARY	BOB S	SOUTH EAST REGION

	General Service Board
Trevor E	Eastern Region
Ann O'K	London Region North
	London Region South
Steve W	Midlands Region
Lee M	North East Region
	North West Region
	South Midlands Region
Jo P	South West Region
Stuart B	Wales & Borders Region
Hazel McC	East of Scotland Region
	Glasgow Region
	Highlands & Islands Region
Jaqui McK	Scotia Region
John G	South West Scotland Region
	Observer

- 1. Would Conference please discuss and share its experience about Tradition 7 monies being collected electronically?**

Background

Traditions 4, 7, 12

Rents are rising in many meetings across GB. With many members no longer carrying cash, some meetings have asked intergroup and region for guidance around the use of contactless card readers being used to collect Tradition 7 contributions. Several meetings have adopted this method to make it easier for members to contribute, with initial reports of increases in Tradition 7 takings.

While every AA group is free to make its own decisions around how it collects Tradition 7, there are questions being asked which would benefit from guidance from the collective Fellowship.

- Is the use of card payments and the paper trail accompanying this compromising to members' anonymity?
- Is agreeing to the fees charged by card reader companies (usually 1.75%) diverting money away from our primary purpose/against the spirit of Tradition 7?
- Given the inevitability of a societal transition away from cash, especially in urban areas, how can we protect our Fellowship's income from contributions?

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

- 2. Would Conference discuss, consider and make recommendations on whether "speaker tapes" - audio files and/or podcasts of AA members sharing their experience, strength and hope - could be incorporated into the AA GB website www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk?**

Background

There are many good examples of AA shares available on the internet, and the success of the Young Persons' short animated video shows that the AA GB website can itself be an effective medium in carrying AA's message of recovery and not just about buying literature and finding meetings.

With 19% of people finding AA via the internet (AA 2015 Membership Survey), a selection of short audio shares by a cross-section of AA members (male, female, old, young etc.) accessible via the website could be a great starting point to enable newcomers to identify with the malady and provide them with a clear message about sponsorship and AA's Twelve Steps.

See also:

Step 12 - Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics [..]

Tradition 5 - Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

- 3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2019.**
- 4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2019.**

FIFTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2018

COMMITTEE No. 3

HOWARD SUITE

First Meeting Friday, 13 April	4.00 pm - 5.45 pm
Second Meeting Saturday, 14 April	9.00 am - 12.45 pm
Third Meeting Saturday, 14 April	2.00 pm - 4.00 pm
Completed Reports to Secretarial Staff	5.00 pm

CHAIR	STEFAN S	LONDON REGION NORTH
SECRETARY	GRETCHEN S	LONDON REGION SOUTH

	General Service Board
	General Service Board
	General Service Board
David C	Eastern Region
Alex J	Midlands Region
Phil M	North East Region
	North West Region
	South East Region
	South Midlands Region
David K	South West Region
Diane C	Wales & Borders Region
Allan M	East of Scotland Region
	Glasgow Region
	Highlands & Islands Region
Gordon M	Scotia Region
Willie H	South West Scotland Region
Tim S	Continental European Region
	Observer
	Observer

- 1. Would Conference discuss the idea of adding a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) AA Helpline service to the AA GB website?**

Background

Newcomers and members can contact AA via our National Helpline 0800 9177 650 and our new email address help@aamail.org. In addition, in 2015 Conference welcomed the idea of a 'chat now' facility on the AA website as an additional way for the still suffering alcoholic to contact the Fellowship. At Conference 2016, 'Pure Chat' technology was approved and in 2017 is now successfully integrated on the AA GB Website in the Newcomers area.

There is now the opportunity to utilise further advances in communications technology, such as Broadband Internet access and smartphones, and also provide an AA Helpline over the Internet using a methodology called Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

VoIP can be easily used on smartphones, laptops, and tablets, with voice calls made through 3G/4G or Wi-Fi. Many free instant messaging and/or social media services such as Skype, Google Hangout, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp already use VoIP extensively.

In addition to providing a more up-to-date service, a VoIP AA Helpline would also allow the Fellowship to meet the currently underserved needs of both English-speaking suffering-alcoholics and AA members who have difficulty calling the National Helpline (GB), in particular:

1. Ex-pats and/or travellers living in Europe, as they may incur high international-call charges (there is currently no Europe-wide AA Helpline).
2. Visitors to Great Britain from abroad, as they may incur high mobile roaming charges.
3. Younger and more tech savvy generations who are now using smartphones with “data only” plans and do not make voice calls to landline and/or mobile numbers.

A VoIP feature could be added to the Pure Chat service, or it could be a stand-alone voice call feature on the AA GB website. It could also function in much the same way as the current National Helpline service, and in fact could be incorporated to avoid any duplication of service efforts.

A feasibility study could determine the technological requirements, including potential use of “virtual numbers”, and further identify the risks and benefits as well as costs.

References:

- 2015 Conference Question, Committee 3 Question 1
- 2015 Conference Recommendation, Committee 3 Question 1
- 2016 Final Conference Report, pp 18-19
- www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/About-AA/Newcomers

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

- 2. Would the Fellowship discuss, share experience and make recommendations on how we are able to introduce telephone and internet banking at all levels of service, being ever mindful of our current practice of requiring two signatories on each cheque issued.**

Background

The banks have indicated that cheques will be phased out and replaced by telephone and internet banking.

Some banks have indicated that it is not possible to carry out internet banking using our current system of requiring two signatures from three.

Other banks have suggested that this is possible and treasurers at various levels of service appear to be using internet banking.

This raises several questions:

1. If we decide that we will endorse internet banking, will this exclude members who are not computer literate or do not have access to a computer from standing as group treasurers?
2. The only reference to telephone or internet banking in “The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain 2017” occurs on page 95 under “Region Money”. However it also

quite clearly indicates that this should only be used where payments and transfers still require authorisation by two signatories.

In order to ensure that the membership feels that AA money continues to be well managed, it is important that any suggested practices are being carried out.

If both telephone and internet banking are discussed and approved by Conference for introduction at all levels of service, then surely reference to them should appear in the literature.

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

- 3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2019.**
- 4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2019.**

FIFTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2018

COMMITTEE No. 4

NORTH RIDING SUITE

First Meeting Friday, 13 April	4.00 pm - 5.45 pm
Second Meeting Saturday, 14 April	9.00 am - 12.45 pm
Third Meeting Saturday, 14 April	2.00 pm - 4.00 pm
Completed Reports to Secretarial Staff	5.00 pm

CHAIR	MATT S	CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN REGION
SECRETARY	LINDA O	SOUTH MIDLANDS REGION

	General Service Board
	General Service Board
	General Service Board
Phyllis H	Eastern Region
Ruthie G	London Region North
	London Region South
	Midlands Region
	North West Region
Gareth P	North East Region
	South East Region
Justin T	South West Region
John M	Wales & Borders Region
Alan P	East of Scotland Region
	Glasgow Region
Ranald Mac	Highlands & Islands Region
Bill B	Scotia Region
Jackie B	South West Scotland Region
	Observer

1. Inventory Questions

a) Is AA still carrying the message of recovery effectively, i.e. sharing experience, strength and hope, offering sponsorship, talking about the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions?

b) Would Conference share its experience on how AA can do this more effectively?

Background

AA Survey 2015
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

2. **Review new addition “Chat Now Service” to be added to Chapter 3 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2017.**

Background

Draft “Chat Now Service”.

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

3. **Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2019.**
4. **Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2019.**

FIFTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2018

COMMITTEE No. 5

	REGATTA SUITE
First Meeting Friday, 13 April	4.00 pm - 5.45 pm
Second Meeting Saturday, 14 April	9.00 am - 12.45 pm
Third Meeting Saturday, 14 April	2.00 pm - 4.00 pm
Completed Reports to Secretarial Staff	5.00 pm

CHAIR	DEE Y	NORTH EAST REGION
SECRETARY	OSWIN T	LONDON REGION SOUTH

	General Service Board
	General Service Board
	General Service Board
Graham B	Eastern Region
Sean N	London Region North
Jill R	Midlands Region
	North West Region
	South East Region
	South Midlands Region
John P	South West Region
Zelma K	Wales & Borders Region
Lana K	East of Scotland Region
	Glasgow Region
Russ C	Highlands & Islands Region
Andy K	Scotia Region
Jim H	South West Scotland Region
Roger C	Continental European Region
	Observer

1. Inventory Questions

a) **Would Conference share experience and knowledge of the problems surrounding attracting members into Service at their Group and how to encourage Service at Intergroup, especially in rural areas.**

b) **Would Conference review the resources available to Intergroups and make recommendations on how best they are used to attract representation at Intergroup by Groups in their area.**

Background

The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2017: Introduction.

- Chapters 1.5 "A Step Further" and 1.6 "Service within the Intergroup"
- Chapters 1.8 and 1.9 "The Loner" and "The Housebound member"
- Chapter 1.10 "The Older Member"

The problem exists in both directions:

- Many Groups are not represented at Intergroup. This may lead to a potentially uninformed Group Conscience. Consequently, the AA message is not being taken to the suffering alcoholic in that area.
- Finding people to attend Intergroup is becoming increasingly difficult. Many Service posts within Intergroup are not filled and therefore the message is not being taken to the community effectively.

Our Intergroup covers a huge rural area of over 2000 square miles. We appreciate that the best method of recruiting is personal visits but with thirty plus groups in such a wide area this is not practical. The Intergroup does not have access to contact addresses for these groups so it is not possible to write to the groups directly. GSO is not in a position to help with sending out these letters either.

We would like to hear how other Intergroups around the country in similar very rural areas approach and solve this problem and would appreciate the experience and wisdom of the Fellowship in solving this issue.

This is not just recruitment of new members to Intergroup, but also how we can get older members to encourage and mentor new recruits to Intergroup, making their Service that much more fulfilling.

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

2. Would Conference consider how the Fellowship's social media presence can be improved to enhance AA's ability to carry the message?

Background

Ideas that Conference might want to consider could include, but should not be restricted to:

- a) Allowance given on website and any approved social media in (b) below to posting links to interesting articles and events, eg Alcohol Awareness Week, articles about AA on TV and the press, etc. (provided this can be done without suggesting affiliation to outside organisations);
- b) Social media presence on sites such as (but not necessarily restricted to) Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SoundCloud, YouTube, provided of course this can be done without compromising Traditions 11 and 12.

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

3. Elect Committee Chairman for Conference 2019.

4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2019.

FIFTY-THIRD GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE 2018

COMMITTEE No. 6

	WEST RIDING SUITE
First Meeting Friday, 13 April	4.00 pm - 5.45 pm
Second Meeting Saturday, 14 April	9.00 am - 12.45 pm
Third Meeting Saturday, 14 April	2.00 pm - 4.00 pm
Completed Reports to Secretarial Staff	5.00 pm

CHAIR TERRI S HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS REGION

SECRETARY BEN D LONDON REGION SOUTH

	General Service Board
	General Service Board
	General Service Board
John P	Eastern Region
Evie G	London Region North
Sue C	Midlands Region
June R	North East Region
	North West Region
	South East Region
	South Midlands Region
	South West Region
Nico V	Wales & Borders Region
Anne T	East of Scotland Region
	Glasgow Region
Adelle S	Scotia Region
Marc D	South West Scotland Region
Joel B	Continental European Region
	Observer

1. **Would Conference share their experiences and make recommendations on:**
 - a. **What can be done when a Group has no named Officers and/or the contact no longer attends?**
 - b. **Is there any way in which the local Intergroup can assist, given that we do not govern but are trusted servants?**
 - c. **Could GSO be asked to carry out an annual review/renewal process for Pink Form details for each Group to remain on the internet listings, Where to Find etc., and also inform the appropriate Intergroup of any significant changes?**

Background

Every AA Group treasures its autonomy under Traditions 2 and 4, but sometimes Groups can run into difficulties. Many Groups are prompt in informing GSO, Share etc., of changes to venues, times etc. but this is less successful when Officers have changed or left the

Fellowship. Such a Group may have completed a Pink Form with GSO in order to continue to appear on the internet listings and Where to Find etc.

Tradition 2 - short form

Tradition 4 - long form

The AA Group - AA Pamphlet 3270

The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain (2017) pp.74-86

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

- 2. Would the Fellowship share experience of money in AA bank accounts being inaccessible due to signatories having left the group and make recommendations as to how the Fellowship may make access to our funds possible.**

Background

Our local Intergroup has £400 to £500 stuck in a bank account for a previous convention fund. The treasurer left the area without arranging new signatories for the account. The bank won't release funds.

A local Friday group old timer reports that the group has £200 stuck in a bank account. Despite repeated requests for our money, the bank won't discuss the account with anyone but the treasurer who relapsed and left the group.

If these situations are replicated throughout the UK, it may be that many thousands of pounds are locked in accounts. This is money that belongs to the AA Fellowship.

The 21st General Service Conference strongly recommended that all groups, Intergroups and Regions have a bank account.

Consider the contribution to the carrying of the message, financial and practical implications when deliberating each question.

- 3. Elect Committee Chair for Conference 2019.**
- 4. Elect Committee Secretary for Conference 2019.**