

Minutes of the 156th MSIG Assembly on June 5th, 2018

Dates for your diary:

MSIG ASSEMBLIES 2018	Quaker Hall 8pm Tuesdays 4th September / 4th December
MSIG COMMITTEE 2018	United Reformed Church, 7.30pm Tuesdays 1st May / 7th August / 6th November
REGION ASSEMBLY	Sunday, 10.30am on 24th June / 23rd September / 25th November, Burgess Hill
WORKSHOPS	TBC
SOUTHERN NATIONAL CONVENTION	31st August – 2nd September, 2018, Hayling Island
LAST DATE TO SUBMIT 2019 CONFERENCE QUESTIONS	31st August 2018

Attendance list

GSRs present:

Matt, Priory Mondays; Paul, Guildford Mondays; Jon, Tuesdays Step Traditions; Katherine, Frimley Thursdays; Beverly, Ockham Wednesdays; Gail, Worplesdon Sundays; Trish, Womersley Thursdays; Tanya, Guildford Saturday mornings; Dina, Guildford Wednesdays; Nick, Guildford Friday Newcomers; Alexa, Guildford Sunday evening; Paul, Compton Fridays; Terry, New Haw Thursdays; Matt, Walton Mondays; Anne, Farnborough Wednesdays; Oonagh, Chertsey St. Peters Tuesdays; Dillan, Brookwood St. Johns Wednesdays; Mark, Merrow Sundays; Tim (standing in for Jason – Betchworth Fridays); Giles, Hawley Thursdays; Steve, Staines Thursday evenings; Jackie, Lightwater Wednesdays; Phil, Weybridge Saturday Evening; Peter, Egham Wednesdays; Sophie, Dorking Thursdays Ladies; Yvette, Farnham Fridays; Ken, Guildford Mondays; Judy - Alternate GSR, Aldershot Saturdays; Bridget, Aldershot Sundays.

Committee Members present:

Alice N., Chair; Stef. S, Secretary; Tony M., Treasurer; Catherine D., Vice Chair; Ellie C., ECLO; Yvette S., Health LO; Kevin, Region; Marie, Region; John H., Schools; Lindsay M., Share LO; Peter G., Telephones & Convention; Eddie, ASLO; Sue, Employment LO;

Visitors present:

Lesley G., Region Probation Liaison; Anne W. and Bob S., South East Region (SER) Conference Delegates; Andrew D, Alternate GSR for Guildford Friday Newcomers; John (Staines); Lisa; Andrew, PI.

Meeting Minutes

1. Open

- a. Welcome and Traditions
 - i. All were welcomed and the Traditions were read out by Gail.
- b. Housekeeping
 - i. All were asked to turn their phones onto silent and to not have food or drink on the carpeted area of the hall.

- c. Apologies
 - i. GSRs - Vivien, Aldershot Saturday; Michelle, Byfleet Sunday; Caroline, Cobham Monday; Susie, Camberley Monday; Matt, Priory Monday; Marta, Godalming Pepperpot; Cath, Tuesday Farnham; Tracey, Old Woking Thursday; Alan, Cove; Richard, Guildford Thursday
 - ii. Officers - Zara, Young Peoples LO; Elizabeth M, PILO; Barbara M (Archivist)
- d. GSR introductions
 - i. All attendees of the assembly were asked to introduce themselves and to let us know if they were visitors, new GSRs, alternates or officers.
 - ii. New GSR's – Catherine, Frimley Park Newcomers; Alexa, Guildford Sunday 8pm; Paul, Guildford Monday; Jackie – Alternate for Old Woking Thursday; Peter, Egham; Phil, Weybridge Saturday Eve.

2. Administration

- a. Teas
 - i. Ockham Wednesdays lunch time were thanked for the teas and coffee provided for the assembly.
- b. Expenses
 - i. All were made aware of the fact that they can get reimbursed by Tony for mileage or public transport travel cost to attend the assembly.
- c. 12 Step responder telephone forms and PI volunteer forms
 - i. Attendees were made aware of 12 Step telephone responder blank forms and PI volunteer forms that were located on the main table to take back to groups.
 - 1. **Action: All** to take and circulate forms in their groups, obtain contacts and forward to Stef via email or text.
- d. CCL/Attendance sheets
 - i. The new Confidential Contact List (CCL) / Attendance list was introduced. It was proposed that we share GSR and officer contact details (email and phone number) with each other going forward. The purpose of this would be to allow GSRs and the Committee to communicate more easily with each other in order to carry the message to the newcomer. A column was been added to the sheet saying 'Email happy to be shared with MSIG GSRs and Officers' and 'Phone number happy to be shared with MSIG GSRs and Officers' for all to complete if they were happy with this idea. This is a proposal at this stage and for all attendees to consider.
 - ii. Attendees were also asked to check that their details are correct and enter their 'date elected' on the CCL/Attendance sheet that was circulated.
 - 2. **Action: GSR's to** consider sharing contact details with each other and the Committee via an emailed CCL. To be further discussed. Email Stef your and your groups' up to date details if in doubt.
 - iii. The CCL/Attendance sheet also contained a column for 'Alternates' in the event that a group's GSR couldn't attend and an Alternate attended. The chair noted that the Alternate GSR should be elected by the group. (ref. p 81 of the AA Structure Manual for GB 2017)
- e. Raised hand count for voting
 - i. Of 70 groups there are 67 registered GSRs and of those 30 attended Assembly. Of a total of 12 serving officers with a vote - there were 10 in attendance.
 - ii. Anne W asked about a quorum for voting. Alice replied that for the last 3.5 years MSIG has been guided by the AA Service and Structure handbooks for Great Britain which

have no mention of a quorum aside from in relation to Conference. If we did need a quorum to elect officers and make decisions, we would not be able to do any business at the assembly today which is not practical. It is for the groups to take responsibility and elect responsible members as GSR's who will commit to attend Assembly, and the group can also elect an alternate GSR at their Group Conscience. Only those groups who attend can expect to take part in making decisions in the Intergroup. Having said that, for any very dramatic decision to be made we would aim to let groups know in advance and encourage participation at assembly.

- iii. We had 41 attendees eligible to vote present and we agreed that any votes would be carried.
 - 3. **Action:** All **GSRs** to attend the quarterly assemblies as much as possible. If they can't attend, then an elected alternate can be attend in their place (see point 2.d.iii. above).
 - iv. Alice apologised for providing confusing information at the last Assembly when she suggested that abstaining from voting can have the same effect as voting against a proposal. This is a voting theory and not AA. So she assured us that members are welcomed to abstain from voting if they so choose and the number of members abstaining will be recorded, along with votes for and against a proposal.

3. Meeting minutes from 155th MSIG assembly

- a. These were proposed by Beverly and seconded by Alice, Chair, and passed. No further matters arose.

4. Vacancies & Elections

- a. VACANCIES - Please remember details of all roles are available in the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, and from Committee Members who will be happy to discuss.

- i. Probation – CURRENTLY VACANT

- 1. **Action: All** GSRs to announce current Probation Liaison Officer vacancy to their group members and consider themselves, referring to Service Handbook for details.

- ii. Treasurer - Tony is rotating out of the role in December and we need to vote his successor in at the September MSIG assembly. Both Treasurers – incoming and outgoing attend the December/end of year assembly. This will be advertised in the June and September MSIG agendas. We currently have one nomination.

- 1. **Action: All** GSRs to announce the Treasurer vacancy arising in September to their group members and consider themselves.

- iii. Prisons – Lee E has had to stand down from this role due to personal circumstances. The Vacancy is publicised in the June and September Assembly Agendas. Darren O would like to serve. He has been sober for 15 years and has done service in prisons from 2004-2011. He is nominated for the role by the former Prison LO, Lee E, and his home group GSR, Nick W of Guildford Friday Newcomers. He served as MSIG Prison LO from 2006 to 2009. He has a sponsor and is always sponsoring at least two men through the steps. The Assembly approved Alice to co-opt Darren into The Prison LO role, until elections in September. The position remains open for other nominations until then.

- 1. **Action: All** GSRs to announce Prisons Liaison Officer role to their group members and consider themselves by September Assembly, bearing in mind we have a nominee, currently co-opted to serve.

- iv. Share – Lindsay is rotating out of the role after 2 years of wonderful service to MSIG. The Vacancy is publicised in the June and September Assembly Agendas. Alice thanked Lindsay for her hard work and the positive changes she’s made to Share.
 - 1. **Action: All** GSRs to announce Share Liaison Officer role to their group members and consider themselves for possible election at the September Assembly.
- v. Young People – Zara is rotating out of the role after almost 3 years. The Vacancy is publicised in the June and September Assembly Agendas.
 - 1. **Action: All** GSRs to announce Young People Liaison Officer role to their group members and consider themselves too, for possible election at the September Assembly. The ideal candidate will have found sobriety at under 30 years of age.

NB Excellent information on Intergroup and Liaison Service is found in the Structure and Service Handbooks – available at no cost from GSO

b. ELECTIONS

- i. ECLO – Dina has been nominated by the current ECLO, Ellie, and is supported to apply by her sponsor. Dina has been sober for 7 years and is the GSR of Guildford Wednesdays Step Meeting. She has held many service positions over the past seven years including teas, greeting, literature, and secretary. She has also been assisting the Vice Chair with MSIG flyers and WTF cards. Dina has experience with communication and her professional background lies in web design. She believes that Ellie has done an amazing job as ECLO and that she will find the role interesting. Ellie also feels that Dina has the skills required to fulfil the role and has agreed to support Dina in the initial months. Bob inquired whether Dina will be able to attend two regional workshops each year and Dina confirmed this. Dina was then unanimously voted into the role. Alice thanked Ellie and stated that the MSIG website had been transformed beyond recognition under Ellie’s watch.
- ii. We were reminded that if Groups need information – for example is an MSIG event cancelled due to inclement weather – this will be found on our MSIG website in the news shown on the front page.
- iii. Alice also thanked Peter for a great job on putting together this year’s MSIG convention on June 2nd and welcomed Mark, next year’s convenor.

5. Chair’s Report

c. Conscience meeting in September

- i. The 157th MSIG Assembly in September will include our annual Intergroup Conscience Meeting. The Conscience Meeting part of the meeting will be chaired by Alan, Chairman of South East Region. This is for GSRs to bring any topics or concerns about the Intergroup or Recovery.
 - 1. **Action: GSRs** to submit questions beforehand to Stef at secretary@aamidsurrey.org.uk.

d. Printed materials

- i. PI Wallets – PI wallets were suggested by Yvette who has seen them used to assist in passing the message to professionals in Chiltern & Thames Intergroup. Committee liked them in February, and Alice had intended to ask the GSR’s to approve their printing at the 155th Assembly in March. She apologised to Assembly that she forgot to do this. These are A5 wallets that would hold contents such as a newcomer pack,

information for professionals, WTF cards and other relevant AA information. They can be used to inform professionals who may have contact with suffering alcoholics, such as GPs. Alice decided to go ahead with printing as there was a clear indication in December and in March that GSR's wished to see some MSIG funds spent prudently on carrying the message. We have since proceeded to ask Dina to design them and then with printing 1000 wallets at a cost of approximately £500.

1. **Action: GSRs and other MSIG Liaison Officers** working with the public and professionals to see Yvette for more information and how to obtain them.
- ii. WTF – we've had another 3,000 printed for £310 as information was updated and the WTF cards are our most powerful PI tool and have been distributed to the Women's Refuge in Guildford, I-access in Guildford, Woking Homeless Shelter, various GP and dental surgeries, The Guildford probation Office, The Royal Surrey Hospital A&E dept. and NHS Alcohol Liaisons. Many of our members and GSR's actively pass the message in the community, for which our up to date WTF card is invaluable.
- iii. Meeting in a Pocket (MIAP) – We've printed an additional 1,000 copies for MIAPs for £500, based on a decision taken at the December 2017 Assembly. These are available for 50p each for GSRs and are free for treatment centres and hospitals. Dina asked if groups need to charge for them now that MSIG are charging for them. Alice replied 'no, not if you still have any leftover from the print run that was given to GSRs for free previously. After that it's up to each Group's Conscience what literature they give away at no cost.'. It was questioned whether we should charge groups for the MIAP's and Lindsay responded that the December Assembly minutes state that MIAPs would be given to treatment centres and hospitals (and PI) for free and that groups would pay for their own copies and therefore this is what we are now doing. Lindsay also stated that initially GSRs didn't request any further copies and that only treatment centre GSRs were requesting more. More recently there have been requests from Groups. We will review again when these copies run low.

6. Vice Chair report

- a. Catherine stated that she understands her role to be that of a 'just in case' person, to print the WTFs and to organise and run workshops. She confirmed that she will reschedule the Bill W. movie on traditions that had been scheduled for March but was cancelled due to the snow. Catherine also mentioned that it's been suggested that MSIG provide a workshop on sponsorship. She also thanked the attendees for voting her into the office.

7. Treasurer report

- a. The accounts can be seen in full on the website. Contributions were up by 18% in the last three months and are roughly the same as in the previous year. Tony stressed that we have a healthy reserve. Tony requested that group numbers are added to any funds transferred or sent to him so that he can allocate the payments accordingly.
 - iv. **Action:** Please mark or notify your Group's contribution very clearly.
- b. York is also doing well with mild surplus with prudent reserves. Region on the other hand is requiring some additional support. We currently have £4,433 in surplus and Tony proposed that we send £3K to Region. The average that we send annual is between £12K - £15K / year and if we transfer £3K now then we'll have paid £13K for the year. We can further review our financial position in September. The proposal was carried.
- c. Gratitude week is held during the week of June 10th every year to celebrate AA's birthday. It is suggested that the pot is passed twice during that week and all that members put a second contribution into the gratitude at their home group meeting. Traditionally members are

requested to put an amount equivalent to their last day's drinking cost into the gratitude pot in today's prices.

- d. Tony reminded all groups to hold a prudent reserve which is typically 1 month worth of running cost including rent, coffee, tea, chips and literature. Lindsay mentioned that some groups have to pay their rent three months in advance and Tony responded that as an accounting principle that doesn't make any difference and the one month suggestion still applies. It's also important to consider what the group is comfortable with.
- e. Tony reiterated that he's rotating out in September and that someone has come forward with 25 years of sobriety. It's a good service role, Tony encouraged anyone else who is interested, to speak to him.
- f. Trish requested a list of group contributions and Tony confirmed that they can be found on the table. It is suggested all GSR's keep a copy of this for their records and share with their group.

8. GSR Forum

- a. Alice opened the GSR forum by stating that this is an opportunity for GSRs to share their experience with each other and call on each other for support.
- b. Phil, GSR Weybridge Saturday evening, stated that his group is struggling to raise enough contributions to cover rent every week. The rent has also recently increased. Phil suggested that he meets with the other two GSRs who use the same venue and that they approach the church as a team. He asked whether the other two (Saturday morning and Monday evening) GSRs were present but they weren't. Yvette and Eddie offered to speak to the Saturday morning GSR and outline the issue. Tony suggested that being honest with the church and outlining the financial challenge may be the best approach. Sometimes groups can't be saved though and need to close; other times they might recover and thrive again. John suggested that the meeting is shortened to 1 hour in order to save rent. Yvette contributed that the church is amenable in her view and to appeal to them; also, try and get numbers up. Trish suggested that the church may have a smaller room that can be rented for a lower price. Leslie contributed that her group has once been granted a three month rent sabbatical by their church landlord when they couldn't make the rent.
- c. Paul contributed that Guildford Monday Night Big Book Recovery have started using contactless credit / debit card readers in his group and takings are up. Mark confirmed this and explained that he's treasurer at the group, that the group has a bank account. The money goes into the group's account via an app on Mark's phone. They also use this contactless form of payment for literature. Mark stated that anecdotal evidence suggests that takings are up and that they'll have more concrete information in 6 months' time. Steve inquired whether there are charges and Mark confirmed that there is a charge of 2% of the transaction value and that members are aware. The card reader costs about £30. Terry inquired how Mark takes the payment and Mark replied that he stands in a specific spot at the end of the meeting and members come to see him. Stef inquired whether the group needs their own bank account as in her experience this has been difficult to accomplish. Mark replied that technically that's not necessary, but Alice replied that this is AA best practice. Ken added that it can cause problems when the treasurer rotates out. Alice stated that it's occasionally difficult. but important to set up group bank accounts. Once an account is set up it is wise not to remove signatories if they are long sober, regular members of the group.

9. Conference Update

- a. Bob and Anne provided updates on conference questions as discussed by York in April. Bob has provided a summary which can be found here:
<http://aamidsurrey.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/FEEDBACK-CONFERENCE-2018.pdf>
- b. Alice pointed out that the Winter Service News (in December) will include the new conference questions for 2019. The closing date to submit a Question for next years' Conference is August 31st. Bob and Anne (2nd and 3rd year delegates) and our website have lots of information about how to do this.

10. Liaison Officer updates

- a. Convention update
 - i. Peter gave a summary of the convention on June 2nd, 2018. Attendance was a record high with 415 visitors (compared to 312 and 346 in '16 and '17 respectively). We had 13 speakers in total with Dennis from Maidstone being the visitor with the longest sobriety with 54 years. The total gross takings on the day were £2,269.
- b. Telephones
 - i. Peter confirmed that the phones are running well and that 2 new responders have joined. Peter has put himself forward as Region Telephone Liaison Officer.
- c. Share
 - i. Lindsay is rotating out of the role and the position is vacant from September Assembly. Lindsay states that it has been a pleasure and a privilege getting to all of the groups. It's a great service that allows you to interact directly with the groups. The service was initially implemented in 1948 and has a requirement of 2 years continuous sobriety. Lindsay thanked the group for allowing her to do service for the past two years.
 - ii. MIAPs are available again and can be purchased for 50p / copy. Treatment centres and hospitals will have them at no cost. We have set up an email for groups to obtain copies - Please email Gail G. on miap@aamidsurrey.org.uk
 - iii. Alice adds that MSIG committee minutes are on the aamidsurrey.org.uk website for anyone who'd like to know what has been discussed.
- d. Employment
 - i. Sue has met people from the Job Centre Partnerships at Easter and stated that it was a useful meeting. She is due to meet with a team that meets with more complex cases.
- e. Armed Services
 - i. Eddy has had two types of engagements: 1. Unit Health Fair which is a grass roots fair that every unit is required to hold. 2. Brigade HQ for the whole of SE region. Eddy spoke to them about sign-posting people to AA.
- f. Health
 - i. Yvette showed the sample of the health wallets and suggested that anyone who is willing can approach their local GP surgery. Yvette has made up some wallets and suggested that they are handed directly to a GP and not left with a receptionist. Yvette also suggested that GSRs offer up some training to GPs. Please let Yvette know if you have any ideas or questions.

11. AOB

- a. September MSIG Assembly teas - Wonersh Thursdays have offered to do teas at next assembly.
 - ii. **Action: Trish** to please bring her own tea, coffee, sugar, etc and to get reimbursed by Tony against receipts.

- b. Leslie added that we are still waiting for someone to come forward to take over as Probation Liaison Officer. There are meetings scheduled in the Probation office every other week and these are run by Darren. Details can be found on the website. A meeting with the Probation offices is scheduled to relaunch AA involvement in Probation as 90% of the probation officers that were trained 2 years ago have left.

12. Meeting close

- a. Everyone was thanked for their attendance and the meeting was closed with the Serenity Prayer.

MSIG Committee Contacts - June 2018

Position	Name	Mobile/Home	Email
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Other			
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