

Minutes of the 157th MSIG Assembly on September 4th, 2018

Dates for your diary:

MSIG ASSEMBLIES 2018	QH 8pm Tuesdays 4th December / 5th Mar '19 / 4th Jun / 3rd Sep
MSIG COMMITTEE 2018	United Reformed Church, 7.30pm Tuesdays 6th Nov / 5th Feb '19 / 7th May / 6th Aug
REGION ASSEMBLY	Sunday, 10.30am on 23rd September / 25th November (Burgess Hill)
MSIG WORKSHOP	Sponsorship, Oct 30th, 2018, Quaker Hall, 8pm.

****For more information on the above dates please visit www.aamidsurrey.org.uk****

Attendance list

GSRs present:

Kath, Farnham Tue; Paul, Guildford Mon; Mark, Merrow Sun; Jon, Woking Tue; Janine, Woking Mon; Gail, Worplesdon Sun; Trish, Womersley Thu; Julie, Walton Wed; Vivien, Aldershot Sat; Judy, Aldershot Wed (alternate); Bridget, Aldershot Sun; Jason K., Betchworth Friday and Region rep nominee; Michelle, Byfleet Sun; Susie, Camberley Mon; Jill, Dorking Mon; Lisa, Dorking Thu; Annette, Farnham Fri; Stuart, Fleet Mon; Tanya, Guildford Sat; Ken, Guildford Mon; Ken, Guildford Tue; Giles, Hawley Thu; Stephen, Leatherhead Tue; Edwin, Ockley Sun; Fran, Ockham Wed (alternate); Gail, Guildford Sun; Matt, Hersham Tue; Moya, Woking Mon JFT; Peter, Compton Wed (alternate); Andy, Godalming Tue; Caroline, Cobham Mon; Marcus, Guildford Fri After 8; Nick, Guildford Fri Newcomers; Hugh, Farnham Thu; Terry, New Haw Thu; Paul, Compton Fri; Jeff, Farnborough Fri; Gerard, Woking Thu (alternate); Donna, Guildford Tue Lunch; John, Staines Sat; James, Sheerwater Mon (alternate); Pee, Egham Wed; Oonagh, Chertsey Tue; Alexa, Guildford Sun.

Committee Members present:

Catherine D., Vice Chair; Alice N. Chair; Stef S., Secretary; Tony M., Treasurer; Yvette S., Health LO; Michael B., Region Rep and GSR Dorking Sat morning; Marie, Region Rep and GSR Dorking Wed; Bob S., Conference delegate; Peter, Telephones LO; Barbara, Archives; Elizabeth, PI LO; Eddy, ASLO and GSR Weybridge Sat morning; Dina, ECLO; John H., Schools; Dina W., ECLO and GSR Guildford Wed Step.

Visitors present:

Alan T., South East Region Chair; Andrew D; Dave S; Julie, Guildford Wed (alternate); Ian, Treasurer nominee; Nicole, Womersley Thu incoming GSR.; Mark, Secretary Woking Mon JFT

Meeting Minutes

1. Open

- a. Welcome and Traditions
 - i. All were welcomed.
- 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. The following GSRs could not attend: Beverley, Ockham Wed; Susan, Ockham Fri; Belinda, Merrow Fri; Robert, Compton Wed; Caroline, Aldershot Wed.

- ii. The following committee members could not attend: Zara, YPLO; Darren, co-opted Prison LO; Shaun, co-opted Probation LO; Sue, Employment LO.
- 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.

2. Administration

- a. Teas
 - i. Wonersh Thursdays 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 CCL was circulated, and Stef requested that attendees placed a check-mark by their name to indicate attendance and to tick the appropriate boxes to indicate whether they are happy to share their phone number and email with other MSIG GSRs and officers.
- e. Raised hand count for voting
 - i. Of 69 groups there are 67 registered GSRs and of those 48 attended Assembly. Of a total of 18 serving officers - there were 15 in attendance (4 of these are also GSRs and will be voting as GSRs at Assembly).

3. Meeting minutes from 156th MSIG assembly

- a. These were proposed by Steve and seconded by Catherine and Barbara and passed. No further matters arose.

4. Vacancies & Elections

- a. **ELECTIONS** - *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. Prisons – Darren is currently co-opted in as Prisons LO. Assembly was asked to vote on Darren continuing to be co-opted in as Prisons LO. Assembly voted in favour of this.
 - ii. Probation – Shaun is currently co-opted in as Probation LO. Assembly was asked to vote on Shaun continuing to be co-opted in as Probation LO. Assembly voted in favour of this.
 - iii. Jason (Region rep nominee) and Ian (treasurer nominee) were asked to provide brief AA CVs to the Assembly before they left the room and Assembly voted.
 - 1. Jason – His sobriety date is 23/10/13 and his home group is Dorking Saturdays. Jason has been Secretary four times and would like to expand on his knowledge of the workings of AA at intergroup level.

2. Ian – Ian has been sober since 30/05/88 and is an accountant by profession. He has attended AA meetings for the past 30 years and his home group is Monday Guildford. Ian has held service positions throughout and was MSIG Treasurer in the 90's. Ian would be taking over the treasury position after December assembly and a 3-month sponsoring-in period by Tony.
 - a. Bob inquired whether Ian would be able to attend at least one of the two Region Workshops per year and Ian confirmed this.
3. Both Ian and Jason were voted into their new roles by the Assembly.

b. VACANCIES

- i. Share LO is currently vacant.
 1. **Action: All** GSRs to announce Share Liaison Officer role to their group members and consider themselves.
- ii. Young People – Zara is rotating out of the role. Alice commented that Zara has done an amazing job in the role and that Zara will be submitting a final report as YPLO.
 1. **Action: All** GSRs to announce Young People Liaison Officer role to their group members and consider themselves.

5. Chair's report

- a. A Workshop on Sponsorship will take place on October 30th, 2018, 8pm-9pm, Quaker Hall, Guildford.
 - i. **Action: All GSRs** to distribute the flyers and share with your groups.
- b. November is Alcoholism Awareness month. MSIG will provide a generic invitation in October, as a word document that you can amend for your group.
 - i. Alice proposed an ad - either ¼ (£500) or 1/2 (£800) page - in Surrey Advertiser to run in November. If approved in principle by Assembly, we will email a draft of the advert in due course. Paul questioned whether we would advertise for one week in November or for all of November. Alice replied that whilst we are anonymous we are not invisible. In view of availability of funds for passing the message locally, we later agreed on a minimum of 4 weeks of advertising. Advertising like this is in fact suggested under PI and in the Group pamphlet.
 1. Assembly voted on Alice's proposal with 33 votes in favour; 2 objections and 3 abstentions.
 2. Action: All to email Alice with their thoughts (if any).
- c. Meetings in a Pocket – Several GSRs asked about the availability of the MIAPs for their groups. Gail holds the available stock and can be reached at miap@aamidsurrey.org.uk. They are free of charge to meetings in rehabs and cost 60p each to non-rehab meetings.

6. Treasurer report

- a. Tony presented the accounts which were updated through 29/08/18 and balanced to £200. They will update by year end which is 30/09/18. MSIG are doing well financially. Contributions are up year on year by £3K. Gratitude week had consistent contributions and the convention provided a net contribution of £1.3K. Including payments for MIAP and literature we saw £27.5K in total receipts.

- i. Action: All GSRs to extend MSIG's appreciation to their groups for the generous contributions.
- b. Region contributions by MSIG have been £13.5K so far and during this Assembly we will agree on the final contribution for the year.
- c. Expenses were lower than last year as were print costs. We currently have about £9K in cash remaining. Tony asked what of this amount we should spend locally, how much to keep in reserves and how much to contribute to Region. We typically keep about £2K in reserves leaving £7K to contribute and spend locally.
- d. Tony pointed out that he's seen £1.5K of unclaimed contributions and encouraged all GSRs/Treasurers to ensure that their contributions are marked clearly so they can be allocated to a group. Terry inquired whether the information needed to reach Tony or claim contributions was on the website and Tony replied to contact him via email with any questions.
- e. Nicole suggested that given that we had funds available to spend locally we could consider a ½ page per week in November in the Surrey Advertiser. Alice inquired how much we would send to Region if we reserve £4K for our standard prudent reserves and the advertising. Tony replied £5K. A vote was cast to send £5K to Region and it was carried.
- f. Tony needs two people to act as auditors for the accounts for year end. Ian and Michael volunteered their time.

7. Conscience meeting – chaired by Alan T., Chair of South East Region

- a. Alan thanked Alice for asking him to act as guest chair for the annual MSIG conscience meeting. Alan explained that the conscience part of MSIG is a new feature and that MSIG have held them now for a few years. The purpose of the conscience meeting is to raise questions that Assembly usually can't allocate time to and Alan will conduct the conscience on that basis. There are 6 questions and Alan has allocated about 6 minutes to each question. He proposes to go through the questions in the order they are listed.
 - i. **Q1: *How can we protect 'singleness of purpose' within groups?*** Dina informed the Assembly that her group submitted this question as they are a closed group and have visitors from rehabs who have addictions other than alcoholism and some can drink alcohol. They've considered speaking to the rehab to suggest they only send those with struggles with alcohol, but they couldn't find anything in the literature. Gail responded that her group meets on Sundays at Primrose Rehab which has 19 beds and regardless of the addiction all residents are required to attend the Sunday meeting. Gail reported that her group has no issues and that they have it in their script to 'confine your sharing to alcoholism'. Alan suggested that Gail shares her card with Dina. Bob suggested that perhaps there's a difference between open and closed meetings when it comes to this issue as it's a different setting. Gail replied that their meeting is open on request. Annette informed Assembly that at the Farnham Friday meeting they say, 'Remember that our primary purpose is to recover from alcoholism'.
 - ii. **Q2: *Would assembly consider whether nominations for MSIG service positions should be made and supported by the nominee's home group GSR***

and/or sponsor and/or committee member? Alan encouraged the person who submitted the question to start the discussion. Michael shared with the group that he thought it would add weight to a CV or application for a committee role. Tony replied that his only concern would be that – if we struggle to get candidates already – this may be perceived as another obstacle. Tony also questioned whether it would add value and while he appreciates the sentiment he didn't think that it would add value. Paul agreed that it wasn't needed. Steve inquired whether there are any issues with questionable candidates and if there aren't any issues then this extra support by the home group's GSR and / or sponsor isn't required. Mark replied that he discussed this question with his group and the group didn't feel it was needed. Catherine agreed that we shouldn't have this as a rule; someone on the periphery might perceive it as a role they are not fit for. Terry also raised the point that if it's not someone known to Assembly it would raise a red flag in any case. Susie agreed with this and added that we didn't need more obstacles as it's not easy to find people willing to take on the committee positions. She also stated that we'd notice if the person wasn't a good fit. Jon proposed another angle: The outgoing LO could sponsor the new person in and the outgoing LO could raise a concern if needed. Eddy shared that in 90% of the cases people are known to Assembly. He only returned from France last year and by March he was ASLO. Even so he felt that it was not too much to ask of a candidate to have the backing of a GSR in the Inetgroup. Susie felt that it was too much to ask of a candidate to have the backing of a GSR. General consensus, according to Alan, appeared to be that nominations for MSIG service positions do not need support from the nominee's home group GSR and / or sponsor. There was no decision to formalise this practice.

- iii. **Q3: How are other Groups supporting PI (primarily at the Group level)?** Nick, whose group submitted the question, explained that his group, Guildford Friday Newcomers, would like to support PI activities in a coordinated manner. How can this best be achieved? Alan thanked Nick and opened it up for discussion. Elizabeth thanked Nick for the question and stated that it was great to hear that people want to be involved in PI. She suggested that those interested put their names on the PI volunteer list as this seems to be working well. For each group the needs vary as MSIG covers a wide geographical area. For example, in Woking it's worth considering what can best be done about the homeless shelter. Woking might want to concentrate on the sober house on York road. PI is done by all of us, Elizabeth continued. It's best to put your name on the list. It's also up to each group's GSR to let Elizabeth know what support they would like from MSIG level. Nick replied that his group would love to create a PI service position. If there are more schools / GPs / etc than people interested in working in PI then we needn't worry about overlap. If not, then perhaps a number of people who are interested can get together and coordinate agree on who

coordinates what. Elizabeth stated that she'd like a PI committee and PI workshop to take place. The purpose would be to discuss what PI is. We are anonymous, not invisible. We'll need to understand that if groups want to create dedicated service positions and to be careful to avoid those who are on the 'pink cloud'. Alan suggested that Elizabeth provides a proposal on creating a committee. Yvette also shared that whilst she hasn't discussed this with Elizabeth other intergroups set ½ day aside to hold an educational workshop on PI. We could cover where we already are and vote to see who's interested in taking it further. Alan reminded Assembly that contributions to the questions should come from **members of the Assembly (GSR's and Committee members)** only during the conscience meeting. He asked whether there is consensus to move forward as Elizabeth and Yvette propose. Eddy shared that there are other LOs interested in PI and Alan confirmed that all those LOs should work together.

1. **Action: Elizabeth** to make a proposal on the committee and workshop.
- iv. **Q4: *Does the meeting believe we should make available some guidance text to be added to groups' scripts around the subject of 13 stepping?*** Alan reminded Assembly that there is no such term as '13th stepping' in AA literature. Annette suggested that wording addressing this issue is put into the newcomer's pack. Ken shared that the issues surrounding advice on medication is addressed with guidance texts that groups can choose to read out at their meetings and perhaps we can have the same for 13th stepping. Ken and Alan agreed that this is a perennial problem and Alan suggested that each group conducts research into the matter by referring to the Structure Handbook and by speaking to other groups and adapting for their group what they feel addresses the issue best. A document from a discussion in Wiltshire Intergroup is now on the news section of our website. No further decision was taken on this issue.
- v. **Q5: *What can a group and Intergroup do to fill service positions?*** Terry raised the question as New Haw & West Byfleet Thursday group is struggling to fill service positions. Jon shared that we can't force people and that in his experience it's always the same people offering to do service. In his view sticking to the rotation for service is healthy and that those doing service should hand it over when their commitment length comes to an end. He suggests that it's always raised at the beginning of each meeting. Marie also suggested that those in service positions approach those who they believe are suitable specifically rather than waiting for someone to come forward. Nicole also commented that it makes a difference when someone is sponsored into a service position and that it's helpful for the outgoing person to ask, 'who can we sponsor in?'. Steve stated that his group had no issues with filling service positions and in his experience it works best of sponsors put sponsees forward; 'service breeds service'. Ken also suggested that when those of us in Assembly are asked to do a chair at a meeting that we stress the importance of putting ourselves forward for service and that

we always speak to sponsees about it. Steve agreed and said that sponsors need to embed the principles of service in their sponsees. Paul also added that it's the GSRs responsibility to announce it at every meeting. Alan stated that the sponsorship leaflet used to have a wonderful section on service in it which has been removed in the new version (this is now on our website here <https://goo.gl/T36vtE>).

- vi. **Q6: *Would Assembly consider a proposal to formalize the planning of AA funded workshops?*** Fran informed Assembly that four years ago Trish, then MSIG secretary, asked her to hold an interactive workshop which led to Fran and Lesley holding discussion groups. Fran voiced concern because she's heard that it is thought that the topics weren't AA topics and that Fran and Lesley took contributions for these discussion meetings. Fran stated that the topics were indeed AA topics and that Tony, MSIG treasurer, said that MSIG would cover the hall rent for the discussion groups. Fran stated that for one of the discussion groups the date clashed with an MSIG organised conference question workshop. Fran further referred to a letter which she had put onto each chair at Assembly and requested the GSRs take these back to their groups. Tania commented that she attended these discussion groups and that she felt the topics were AA topics. Tania also found them very helpful. Tania further felt that rather than having people talk 'at you' the format of discussion and sharing experience was more helpful. There was no charge for refreshments and Tania felt that Fran and Lesley worked very hard to make these discussion groups helpful. Alan inquired whether the discussion groups were run by MSIG or an individual group. Fran replied that she had assumed that the discussion groups had the MSIG blessing but later realised that they did not. Barbara shared with the group that based on her memory some of the topics were co-dependence and cross-addiction workshops and that they were also put on to the MSIG website. In her view this hasn't been addressed since it took place last year and she felt that it needed a discussion with Catherine (our Vice chair who organises the formal MSIG workshops). Barbara further added that in her view it was great to have people interested and suggested that a unified discussion with Catherine was to be held. The fact that Tony miscommunicated about the funding further added to the confusion but in her view we need workshops and this requires a coordinated approach. Bob added that workshops in MSIG are well-spaced throughout the calendar and receive the funding and promotion (i.e. flyers) that they need from MSIG. In Bob's view other events can take place but they shouldn't be funded by MSIG. Kath, GSR Farnham Tue Lunch, commented that her group feels that it should be kept simple. Intergroup should concentrate on groups and formal workshops. It's great to have extra events like Fran and Lesley's discussion groups, but not as a part of Intergroup. It was not personal at all but they wanted us to remember principles before personalities within the AA structure. No further decision was taken on the subject.

8. In closing, Alice noted that PI material was available for group members to take to their local GP/dental surgeries, libraries etc. She feels that up to date Where to Find cards are very valuable for local PI, and are very much appreciated by her local gp and dentist surgeries.
 - a. Mark, secretary of Woking Mon Just for Today meeting, offered to do teas at next Assembly.
 - i. **Action:**, to please bring their own tea, coffee, sugar, etc and to get reimbursed by Tony against receipts.
9. **Meeting close**
 - a. Everyone was thanked for their attendance and Stef asked Jon to help close the meeting with the Serenity Prayer.