

CONFERENCE 2019 COMMITTEE ONE

QUESTION ONE:

Inventory question

Would the Fellowship share its experience and make recommendations with regards to the Young People's Liaison Officer (YPLO) service position, in particular:

- a. Recent integration into our service structure**
- b. Getting more younger members into AA and involved in service generally**
- c. Relations with Young People in AA (YPAA) Conventions**

- a) The experience of the Fellowship ranged from no experience with YPLOs to a positive response from Intergroups and Regions where there are people in position. Where there are YPLOs in position, those areas have benefitted from the collaboration with other disciplines including PI, Prisons, Employment and Health.

It is clear that there is still a need to raise awareness of the Young People's discipline across areas of AA GB. Particular reference is made to page 73 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2018 which outlines the role. In addition, in accordance with Tradition 3, it should be emphasised that young people's meetings are open to all members of the Fellowship.

- b) The Committee recognises the work already done by the Sub Committee and YPLOs at Regions and Intergroups. Work done to attract young people into the Fellowship includes the introduction of new posters and videos, the recruitment and placement of YPLOs, the introduction of meetings at educational institutions and young people-focussed workshops.

Young people are actively involved in service disciplines across Groups, Intergroups, Regions and Sub Committees and the committee encourages all liaison officers to make use of younger members when holding PI talks.

The Committee recommends that the Young People's Sub Committee rolls out a roadshow across AA GB and contributes articles to AA Service News.

- c) Where Young People's conventions have been held, these have been well received by those participating. The inclusion of younger speakers at established conventions has highlighted the experience of getting sober earlier in life to the wider Fellowship.

The Committee recommends that there is formal inclusion of the Young People's discipline on the agenda of the 75th Anniversary Event in 2022.

The Committee recommends that all convention committees consider the inclusion of younger members when selecting speakers for their meetings.

Vote for (Committee One): unanimous

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

QUESTION TWO:

Would the Fellowship consider reverting back to the name General Service Representative as intended by Bill W. and as described in the Concepts?

Following feedback from the Fellowship, the Committee compared the US and AA GB service structure as part of the discussion and found that the term 'Group Service Representative' (GSR) is more descriptive of the AA GB 'inverted triangle' structure where final authority lies with the Groups.

As such, the Committee recommends that the term 'Group Service Representative' be retained.

The Committee would like to emphasise that the GSR is the vital link between the Group and the wider Fellowship as advised in the newly-approved pamphlet 'Now that I'm a GSR'.

Vote for (Committee One): unanimous

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

Committee One chair 2020: Geoff C (Eastern Region)

Committee One secretary 2020: Shirley S (South East Region)

CONFERENCE 2019 COMMITTEE TWO

QUESTION ONE:

Would the Fellowship review our current 'public image' as portrayed by our literature, with respect to our primary purpose, and identify any areas for improvement and make recommendations?

The Fellowship has identified the following issues concerning our current 'public image' with respect to our primary purpose as portrayed by our literature:

- a. our image lacks consistency / cohesion
- b. a perceived negative image of an alcoholic
- c. insufficient focus on the diversity and geographical location of our target audience
- d. much of our written message is too 'wordy'
- e. website navigation difficulties

The Committee also found that it is difficult to have a clear view of how the public and the professional community perceive the image of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The recommendation of Committee Two is therefore as follows:

- a. that the GSB should undertake a project to establish a better understanding of how our Fellowship is perceived by both the general public and the professional community
- b. that professional advice is sought to bring our literature and other communications materials in line with the following objectives:
 - i) clear, cohesive and attractive visual identity
 - ii) to enhance the positive image and benefits of Alcoholics Anonymous as a free resource (mutual help and recovery)
 - iii) to support the efforts of AA's public information service disciplines to connect with the professional community and the public at large
 - iv) to consider the appropriate presence of AA in all forms of digital media

- v) to ensure that our literature and other communications materials are suitable for use in Continental European Region e.g. telephone helpline number and website information

Vote for (Committee Two): unanimous

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

QUESTION TWO:

Would the Fellowship review the AA GB pamphlet ‘Now that you’ve stopped: 15 points’ against our Twelve Step recovery programme and, if any inconsistencies are found, consider revising or withdrawing it from publication?

The Fellowship reviewed the AA GB pamphlet “Now that you’ve stopped - 15 points” against our 12 Step recovery programme and in line with the background information.

The Committee agreed that some points in the existing pamphlet have been found to be very useful to newcomers and therefore it should not be withdrawn. However, there are inconsistencies and we suggest the Literature Sub Committee revise the pamphlet whilst considering the following points:

- a. The focus of the pamphlet is for the newcomer. Its purpose is to share some coping methods for staying away from the first drink in early recovery
- b. Any revision should ensure that the message is consistent with the principles of our recovery programme as set out in the Big Book “Alcoholics Anonymous”

Based on the responses from the Fellowship, the Committee recommends that the pamphlet be revised to emphasise our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service.

Vote for (Committee Two): unanimous

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

Elections for Conference 2020

Chair: Johnny J. (South Midlands Region)

Secretary: Carina H. (Central European Region)

CONFERENCE 2019 COMMITTEE THREE

QUESTION ONE:

Will the Fellowship discuss the use of digital voting equipment during Conference?

The Committee discussed the merits and issues of introducing digital voting equipment and shared feedback from the respective areas. Feedback from regions was varied and was based on the background information provided.

The Committee further discussed the question and noted the following points:

- a. Concern whether the background information had been sufficiently researched, specifically in relation to:
 - i) the indicative figure of £2,000

- ii) whether manual voting is time consuming in relation to digital voting
- b. Expense – funds being spent on activities other than primary purpose work
- c. Whether equipment would be rented or purchased
- d. Which voting mechanisms (voting buttons / phone apps) we would use
- e. Digital solution better protects the anonymity of voters
- f. Moving to a digital solution would mean ‘loss of Fellowship’ through teller service positions being removed.

The committee agreed the response by

15 for / 0 against / 1 abstention

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

QUESTION TWO:

Would the Fellowship share its experience and make recommendations as to updating existing literature in order to raise further awareness for internet safety and security when using social media, apps and other forms of electronic communications?

The experience of the Fellowship is that members’ anonymity and security have been breached through use of social media. Social media is not secure, and information is trackable.

For example – an individual’s location can be identified through the ‘location services’ function available through mobile devices; administrative rights on group chat functions means information can be exported; anonymity can be breached through photos being published on social media platforms; algorithms can track personal information which, once posted on social media, and even if subsequently deleted, may be accessible.

Experience is that, due to rapid development of the internet and technology supporting social media, perhaps existing literature doesn’t reflect the current risks.

The existing ‘Hints & Suggestions on Internet Safety’ card remains relevant, but feedback is that it’s not a well-known piece of literature. We recommend that it be:

- a. Regularly reviewed and updated in line with developments on internet and new social media channels
- b. Sent out to all groups with AA Service News.

The Committee recommends that:

- a. When reviewing all existing literature and online content, the emerging risks in the use of social media are highlighted
- b. Conference requests the General Service Board (GSB) distribute the USA AA ‘Anonymity in the Digital Age’ table card to all groups in the first instance to raise awareness and subsequently make it available to groups through the online shop
- c. On the new website we introduce information on using the internet and social media safely
- d. All groups to use existing literature on the use of social media to provide guidance and highlight dangers of social media in meetings.

Vote for (Committee Three): unanimous

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

QUESTION THREE:

Would the Fellowship consider having a Young People's National Convention?

The Committee considered the feedback from the Fellowship. While there was minority support for a Young People's National Convention, the majority of feedback was opposed to it.

The feedback highlighted concerns about the legacy of unity; that AA should be inclusive.

Our structure already allows for Young People's conventions at intergroup and region level. As a Fellowship, we should encourage and support all members to grow within the existing service structure. This could lead to a natural evolution over time where the Fellowship may introduce a Young People's National Convention.

The committee agreed the response by

13 for / 0 against / 3 abstentions

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

Elections for Conference 2020

Chair: Allan M. (East of Scotland Region)

Secretary: Kathryn C. (North East Region)

CONFERENCE 2019 COMMITTEE FOUR

QUESTION ONE:

Would the Fellowship consider and make recommendations on the common practice at Intergroup, Region and other service committee meetings to collect Tradition 7 contributions and how it affects the 'power of the purse'?

This question provoked lively discussion within the Fellowship.

The Committee reports that the practice of Tradition 7 within regions, intergroups and other service committee meetings is common in some parts of the country but not universal.

The Committee finds that the practice is unnecessary for such meetings are not AA groups. However, they may practice Tradition Seven in accordance with their conscience. If Tradition Seven is practiced, it is recommended that the funds collected be passed through the service structure.

The Committee recognises that the power of the purse (Concept V11) is a valuable mechanism of last resort in the event of a dispute, but that the Tradition Seven funds collected at these meetings are typically insufficient to undermine this power.

Vote for (Committee Four): unanimous

QUESTION TWO:

Would the Fellowship:

- a. Share experience on how our Twelve Concepts for Service are currently being practiced at the group, intergroup and region levels**
 - b. Provide useful examples of the Concepts as applied in practice at the group**
 - c. Recommend ways to further apply the Concepts throughout our Fellowship**
- a. The Committee reported the following experience of the practice of the Twelve Concepts for Service at group, intergroup, and region levels, amongst other examples:
- i) Knowledge of the Concepts within the Fellowship was generally limited, with some exceptions.
 - ii) The principles contained within the Concepts are widely observed in practice at group level and throughout the structure, without the Concepts in question being referred to explicitly.
- b. The Committee reported the following examples, amongst others, of the Concepts as applied in practice at group level:
- Concept I: the democratic principle reflected at groups and throughout the Fellowship
- Concept III: trusting our group members to fulfil their service responsibilities
- Concept IV: right of participation – actively enabling equal contribution by all members
- Concept X: authority and responsibility going hand in hand – the right to participate in decision-making is conferred by doing service
- Concept XI: rotation of officers is commonly observed
- Concept XII: discussion, vote, and wherever possible, substantial unanimity – no major decisions to be reached by simple majority.
- c. The Committee found that, given limited awareness of the Concepts, further application requires improved knowledge, through the following means, amongst others:
- i) Encouraging use of existing literature, particularly the Twelve Concepts Checklist, The Twelve Concepts for Service in Great Britain Illustrated, and Section 6 of the AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain.
 - ii) Coverage in Share, Roundabout, AA Service News, and at conventions
 - iii) Active sponsorship into awareness and use of the Concepts as service tools
 - iv) The option of the three scrolls (Steps, Traditions and Concepts) as a single purchase
 - v) GSB reviewing the possibility of producing an animated video on the Twelve Concepts for the AA GB website.

The Committee also recommends the following ways of further applying the Concepts throughout our Fellowship:

- i. When decisions are made, consider how the Twelve Concepts apply to the decision in question using the available literature

- ii. Reference the Concepts in discussions and cite them in minutes
- iii. Cite the Concepts in new and revised literature

Vote for (Committee Four): unanimous

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

Elections for Conference 2020

Chair: Ranald Mac (Highlands & Islands Region)

Secretary: Tim M (London Region North)

CONFERENCE 2019 COMMITTEE FIVE

QUESTION ONE:

Would the Fellowship discuss the feasibility of publishing a special edition of the Big Book with the original text but with British members' stories at the back?

After a lengthy discussion the Committee concluded that it was feasible but not desirable.

A strong feeling amongst the Committee was that the question was limited in its scope by the word feasibility, when the majority of group responses were concerned with the desirability of a special edition.

The Committee's response was a majority against the proposal.

Some of the reasons given were:

- a. Cost implications
- b. The definition of British was unclear as we live in a multicultural and multinational society
- c. Who chooses which stories are included?
- d. Dilution of AA's primary message

Minority view: a special edition of the Big Book with British stories is desirable

Vote for (Committee Five): unanimous

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

QUESTION TWO:

Would the Fellowship consider making the AA Meeting Finder available in app form?

The Committee considered making the meeting finder available in app form and whilst there was initial overwhelming support fed back from the Fellowship for the proposal, after further discussion the following views emerged:

40% in favour. Some of the reasons given but not limited to the following are:

- a. Answering a request from the Fellowship
- b. Available offline
- c. Attracting young people into recovery

- d. It would be Conference approved
- e. It would adhere to Tradition 5

40% were against. Some of the reasons given but not limited to the following are:

- a. Duplication of the current meeting finder therefore it is not needed
- b. Minimal requirement for offline use
- c. Unknown build and running costs
- d. Affiliation to outside organisations eg Google Play and Apple Store may contravene Tradition 6
- e. Requires additional regular updates to meetings list
- f. Possible demise of the hard copy of the Where to Find in some Regions.

20% were undecided.

Recommendation: after lengthy discussion the Committee recommends that the Electronic Communications Sub Committee review making the AA Meeting Finder available offline in app form and explore the financial implications, reporting back to Conference 2020.

Vote for (Committee Five): unanimous

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

QUESTION THREE:

In order to help AA carry the message to the greatest number of Fellowship members, would Conference consider extending the remit of ECSC to allow the use of external links enabling those in service to download items such as the new Conference-approved videos?

The Committee voiced its concern that the use of the acronym ECSC (Electronic Communications Sub Committee) without further explanation caused confusion to the Fellowship.

The Committee recommends extending the remit to the Electronic Communications Sub Committee to allow the download of recently approved media files.

The Committee recommends the Electronic Communications Sub Committee is permitted to seek Board approval for other appropriate external links provided clear disclaimers and warnings that the user is leaving the AA website are displayed.

The Committee noted that this changes the previous Conference decision of 2013 (reference background material).

Minority view: The Electronic Communications Sub Committee should assess reputational risk and trust that they would use this delegation of power appropriately.

Vote (Committee five): substantial majority in favour

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

Elections for Conference 2020

Chair: Zelma K (Wales & Borders Region)

Secretary: Dena A (Continental European Region)

CONFERENCE 2019 COMMITTEE SIX

QUESTION ONE:

Would the Fellowship share experience and make recommendations on how individual groups could include within its Group Conscience a strategy to deal with safeguarding issues should they arise?

Inappropriate behaviour in its various forms is a problem and the consequences of not dealing with it can have a significant impact for the victims, the group and the Fellowship. Group safeguarding issues are primarily the responsibility of its group conscience.

The Committee acknowledges the importance to groups of a safeguarding strategy. Many groups have already given this due consideration. Some are also now developing their own strategy as a result of this question being asked at Conference.

The Committee heard experience of effective safeguarding strategies:

- a. Newcomers have been made aware of the group's safeguarding practice and whom to speak to regarding any safeguarding concerns
- b. The personal conduct card is being read at the start of the meeting
- c. Safeguarding issues have been brought to a group conscience
- d. When immediate action was required, two members within the group have made an approach to the perpetrator
- e. Where the group has not had experienced members to deal with the issue, an approach has been made to intergroup/region for support
- f. Some groups have approached this effectively by using the guidance of the Structure Handbook (Section 5 Violence and Personal Conduct), other relevant literature and by following the Traditions
- g. The relevant authorities were contacted when necessary

The Committee recommends consideration of the following:

- a. Workshops to enable groups to share experience and to develop and implement their own safeguarding strategies
- b. Ask that the General Service Board (GSB) collate relevant materials, together with feedback from the Fellowship, to produce a safeguarding guidelines document for the whole Fellowship, which will be presented at a future Conference, preferably at Conference 2020, which groups may adopt
- c. Ask that the Board review the 'Sponsors' section within the 'Safeguarding Standards in the AA Fellowship: June 2018' document prepared for the Charity Commission.

Vote for (Committee Six): unanimous

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

QUESTION TWO:

Would the Fellowship consider that all posters and videos put to Conference be looked at on an individual basis ie voting on each poster and/or video separately. And that all posters and/or videos are circulated and made more accessible to the Fellowship through the service structure.

The Committee agrees that all posters and videos submitted to Conference be voted on an individual basis.

The Committee suggests that proposed posters be watermarked as 'DRAFT', as per previous practice, and distributed with the Conference background material.

The Committee recommends that proposed videos be presented in a separate room throughout Conference. This would enable Delegates to review and discuss with their Region's Conference Delegates prior to voting.

The Committee lacks the expertise to determine whether videos can be practically and securely distributed prior to Conference approval and therefore asks that the Electronic Communications Sub Committee and General Service Board explore this further.

Vote for (Committee Six): unanimous

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

QUESTION THREE:

Review changes to the AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain on the following pages:

Page 79 Treasurer

Page 82 Group Money

Page 90 Intergroup Money

Page 95 Region Money

Vote for (Committee Six): unanimous

Plenary: carried by over 2/3rd majority

Elections for Conference 2020

Chair: Adelle S (Scotia Region)

Secretary: Michael McL (Glasgow Region)