

**Mid Surrey Intergroup  
Minutes of the 172nd Assembly  
Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

**Dates for diaries:**

**MSIG ASSEMBLIES**      The Quaker Meeting House in Guildford. 8pm –9.30pm  
1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month:  
Sept 6<sup>th</sup> (MSIG Group Conscience)  
AGM Dec 6<sup>th</sup>

**MSIG COMMITTEE**      Zoom until further notice - Wednesdays - 7.30pm Aug 3<sup>rd</sup>  
/ Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>

**REGION ASSEMBLIES:**    Sundays 10:30am:  
26<sup>th</sup> June (Post Conference); 25<sup>th</sup> September Workshops (all members welcome);  
20<sup>th</sup> Nov (AGM and Conscience)

**MSIG WORKSHOPS      TBA**

**Attendees:** Ali, GSR Guildford Womens; Paul, Aldershot Sat; Tania GSR Farnham Tues; Alice N, Alternate Guildford Friday Newcomers; Sam D, Aldershot Weds; Dulcie M, Aldershot Sunday; Stephen W, Betchworth Friday; Oonagh M Chertsey Tuesday; Duncan (Compton Mon & Friday Mens' online; Pete, Compton Mens' Friday breakfast; Tim, Dorking Mon; Darren (Dorking Tues online); Carl G, Fleet Monday; Gurj, Frimley Thurs; Jaqui, Guildford online Women's Courage to Change; Samantha D, Guildford Thurs Lunch; Matt B, Guildford Friday After 8; Kevin F, Guildford Saturday Discussion; Jane H, Guildford Sunday night; Janice, Merrow Sunday Step; Nicola, Hersham Tues; Michelle G, Leatherhead Tues; Sue B, Lightwater Weds; Rose, Shere Tuesday; Alistair, Sunningdale Friday; Lynn, Walton on Thames Friday; Michelle, Walton on Thames Weds; Stuart R, Walton on Thames Step Mon; Jon, W. Horsley online Weds; Mags H, Weybridge Sat morning; Tyger, Weybridge Sat eve; Ian H, Chobham Mon eve; Chris B, Cobham Thurs night BB; Lorraine K, Womersley Thursday eve; Brian C, Guildford Thurs eve; Shaun, Woking Living Sober; Melissa, Guildford Let Go & Let God Tues; Jenny, Woking Living Sober Thurs; Pat, W. Horsley Friday night Big Book

**Visitors:** Julia M, Jean H, Paula S, Martin F.

**Committee Members present:** Bob, Chair; Jon, Vice Chair; Micky F, Share LO; Yvette, PILO, Jon L, Treasurer; Seth J, ASLO; Marco, Probation; Peter G, Safeguarding; Seth, Armed Services; Sarah D Schools; Sarah C, Employment & GSR, Woking Mon lunch; Steve E, Region Rep, Alternate Conference Delegate & GSR Farnham Tues; Stephen B, Region Rep & GSR Dorking Weds; Justin P, Convention & GSR, Woking Tues Step.

**Conference Delegates:** Robin H; Marie L

**Apologies:** Claire F, Secretary; Sue A, Telephones; Trish B, Health; Barbara M, Archives; Gail (Meeting in a Pocket)

**Apologies from GSRs:** Peter F (Farnham Friday lunchtime), Jon (Cobham Monday lunchtime), Rose (W. Horsley Friday Eve), Rütger (Dorking Saturday morning), Jez (Frimley Hang Tight Men), Hugh (Farnham Friday eve), Donna (Guildford Tues lunchtime)

## Meeting Minutes

### 1. Open

#### a. Welcome and Traditions

All were welcomed. A fantastic turnout at our first face 2 face Assembly for 2 years!

Traditions read by Sarah D. (MSIG Schools Liaison Officer)

#### b. Housekeeping

- i. All attendees were asked to sign the attendance sheet being passed around the room
- ii. Thanks to Paul W. and Yvette S. for refreshments and to Chris B. our sound engineer

#### c. GSR and Officers introductions

- i. All new GSRs of the assembly were asked to introduce themselves
- ii. New GSRs to ensure they've completed the form on <http://aamidsurrey.org.uk/gsr/> so that MSIG secretary has your details. Please also complete the pink form on [https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Submit-Your-Meeting-Information-\(Pink-Form\)](https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Submit-Your-Meeting-Information-(Pink-Form)) so that GSO, York has your details
- iii. Please also update MSIG and GSO (as above) if your meeting details change

### 2. Minutes from 170th Assembly

Sarah D. proposed to accept them. Tania seconded. No matters arising

### 3. Vacancies & Elections

#### i) VACANCIES

MSIG has two vacancies:

- a) Armed Services Liaison Officer. No experience of military service required. MSIG thanked Seth for his commitment and service over the last 3 years
- b) Young Persons Liaison Officer. Ideally needs to have joined AA by the age of 30. Our thanks to Joe H who has stepped down due to other commitments

Claire (Secretary) and Karla (ECLO) are due to rotate out in December. We are now seeking candidates to take on these key roles

#### ii) ELECTIONS

Paul W. applied for the post of Regional Rep. Following the presentation of his AA CV to the Assembly, Paul was duly elected to the post. We wish Paul every success

### 4. Officer reports:

- i) **Chair:** Bob gave a brief summary of the main intergroup events so far in 2022. Poster advertising on railway stations in February / March, the Darkness into Light archives display in Woking and Guildford libraries in April (supported by a full-page

newspaper advertorial in the Woking and Guildford editions of the Surrey Advertiser) and the PI event in the Guildford Guildhall (also in April)

- ii) **PI:** Yvette presented the outcome of the PI event enthusiastically, citing our new connections with the DWP, the Samaritans and the Amber Web Housing Association. It is planned to repeat this event on an annual basis
- iii) **Employment:** Sarah was delighted to report on her meetings with the two Job Centres in Woking and her meetings with their 20 work coaches. Sarah was invited to a community day where further contact was made with Richmond Fellowship, Catalyst and Maximus. This initiative could eventually lead to a wider cooperation with the DWP across our intergroup area
- iv) **MSIG Convention:** Justin confirmed that everything was going well with the convention and that his team are looking forward to hosting the event on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> June at Millmead Baptist Church in Guildford. Flyers were distributed at Assembly. They are also available online at [Mid Surrey Intergroup 2022 Convention - Mid Surrey Intergroup \(aamidsurrey.org.uk\)](http://aamidsurrey.org.uk)
- v) **Vice Chair:** Jon E. kindly recorded the meeting minutes in Claire's absence. Jon and Claire organized a workshop in May which focused on the AA group. The workshop had 4 speakers and a good attendance. GSRs were able to contribute their experience of service in all group service positions
- vi) **Treasurer:** Jon L. reported that income from our groups was being paid in as planned and that we are on target to meet our budget. Most of the agreed PI expenditure has now been paid and the Google Ads campaign has been suspended. The Google Ads expenditure was focused on MSIG 'Where to Find' information being available during the pandemic. MSIG has printed 3,000 Where to Find cards for distribution at Assembly. The rest of the cards will be distributed at our convention. Printing cost was £330.00. The cards will be re-printed in September to include the latest changes to meetings.

Assembly was reminded that the week which contains 10<sup>th</sup> June (AA's official birthday) is gratitude week. Traditionally the pot is passed around a 2<sup>nd</sup> time so that our members can contribute to this cause. Gratitude Week funds are sent to Intergroup marked as 'Gratitude Week' and then sent directly to GSO.

As MSIG has about £5,000 cash with relatively little expenditure planned, Jon proposed that we send £2,000 to Region. The proposal was agreed by Assembly

## 5. Conference feedback:

Robin, Marie and Steve E. reported on the results of the discussions at Conference in April. Each Delegate / Alternate Delegate covered two committees each. Robin reported on the ongoing development of AA's safeguarding policy. He confirmed that it was planned to include the practice of giving unqualified and unsolicited advice on prescribed medication in the final policy document. Our thanks to all 3 delegates for coming along and giving up their time to present the findings of this year's Conference. The final report has been issued in this summer's edition of AA Service News:

[191 Summer 2022 .pdf \(alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk\)](http://alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

## **6. GSR forum:**

### **Several issues relating to safeguarding were raised:**

- a person being banned from a group allegedly without a full explanation of the reason being given
- confusion at some groups on hearing the reading of the MSIG safeguarding alert in April
- a recommendation that the intergroup safeguarding liaison officer role should require 5 – 7 years' sobriety
- a reminder that AA's safeguarding policy is outlined on pages 84-86 of the AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain
- safeguarding matters at group conscience meetings
- Tradition 3 – The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking

### **MSIG's response was outlined as follows:**

- Safeguarding concerns in MSIG were formerly notified by our GSRs to the MSIG Chair. As it was considered that these concerns needed to be addressed appropriately by a qualified liaison officer, a new role of Safeguarding Liaison Officer was proposed and agreed at the December 2021 Assembly. At the March Assembly we appointed Peter G. as our SLO. He was the only candidate. Peter is highly qualified for the role as he has over 7 years' sobriety and is currently working with GSO lawyers on the development of a safeguarding policy for AA's telephone service
- Following the issue of an MSIG Safeguarding Liaison Officer email address in the minutes of the March Assembly, several anonymous emails were sent to the address reporting distress caused by a male member who was procuring female members' mobile numbers on the pretext of asking them to share at an AA meeting. Having freely given their mobile numbers, the female members were subjected to harassment throughout the day and night with calls and text messages. A safeguarding alert was issued by MSIG in mid-April and no further incidents of this nature have since been reported
- Intergroup is not a governing body or a court of appeal. It is a service committee responsible to the groups it serves. It was felt in this instance that an alert was in the best interests of vulnerable members of our fellowship who might be unaware of the dangers of giving their mobile number to people they don't know
- Our SLO explained that all mutual aid charities like AA (and the venues at which we meet) are being subjected to safeguarding legislation and must comply with the law. GSO has appointed lawyers to develop AA's future safeguarding policy and the final document is awaiting completion. The matter is constantly reviewed at Conference and will eventually impact on AA procedures at all levels including group level
- Tradition 3 does not apply in this case as the above does not affect the requirement for AA membership. The appropriate traditions are 1. Common welfare and AA unity; 2. The ultimate authority of a loving God in our group conscience and 4. Each group is autonomous

## **7. Other matters raised:**

- The return of Assembly to face to face meetings without a hybrid function
- MSIG 'Where to Find' cards not including online meetings
- The use of card readers for Tradition 7 payments
- The focus of AA pamphlets and posters on the negatives of drinking rather than the positives of sobriety

## **8. Chair response:**

- MSIG has traditionally held its Assembly meetings at the Quaker meeting house in Guildford for many years. This tradition was interrupted for the period of the pandemic without a GSR vote due to the necessity of holding the meetings online. As the pandemic is behind us, there is no longer a need to meet online. GSRs are encouraged to come along and meet face 2 face and share their experience with each other. Where to Find cards are made available for collection at Assembly. It is not possible to offer a hybrid facility as The Quaker rooms do not have wifi
- The idea of 'Where to Find' cards is that groups can keep a stock of them and give them to newcomers who can then find meetings in their area. The cards include information on how to find online meetings on the MSIG website
- Card readers are increasingly popular in AA – especially post pandemic as we move towards a cashless society. A report on the use of card readers is available on the email with these minutes
- Some of the recent posters offer a more positive approach. Questions on AA literature can be put to Conference 2023 by emailing GSO by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.

## **9. Next Assembly:** Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> September at the Quaker Meeting House in Guildford.

Samantha closed the meeting with the serenity prayer

**YiF**

**Bob S.**

**07968 194092**