

## Committee No. 1

1. **In the interests of transparency and consistency, could Conference discuss how open GSB expenditure and investment accounts are, and whether they are presented in a way that is useful and easy to understand for the wider Fellowship, thus giving members an insight of how funds are spent?**

### ***Background***

Some members and groups have found the GSB accounts to be unclear with no detailed breakdown compared to the accounts produced by their groups, intergroups, or regions.

As an example, the quarterly accounts sent out to Regional Treasurers appear in a wide variety of formats from one quarter to another. The level of detail in these reports is different to that presented to the Fellowship (e.g. via the final Conference report). This inconsistency makes it difficult for members to see, in a simple format, how money is being spent on an ongoing basis, or to make meaningful comparisons with previous accounting periods. If a standard format were to be used, with detail particularly around areas funded by Tradition 7, it would make it easier for the members of the Fellowship to understand what the figures indicate, thus making the accounts more useful.

This question is not asked out of concern that bad practices are in place, but out of a desire to understand the practices themselves.

2. **Would Conference discuss and make suggestions as to how the Question for Conference selection and process could be made more open and democratic?**

### ***Background***

Conference Steering Committee Terms of Reference  
Structure Handbook for AAGB  
AAGB Conference Charter  
12 Concepts

3. **Considering the Board's "surplus funds" (Conference 2022 Report, P14), can the Fellowship discuss and recommend how the Fellowship may better spend money locally and the Board nationally, to carry the message using these funds?**

The prudent reserve has regularly been exceeded for several years now – see annual reports 2018/9/20/21 - with Groups sending surplus pot money to Intergroup, Intergroup to Region, and Region to GSO. These surpluses are opportunities for primary purpose work both locally and nationally, so would the Fellowship discuss and propose guidance on how the money might be spent both locally by Region/Intergroup and nationally by the Board to keep surpluses as low as possible?

It is acknowledged and understood that income streams are difficult to predict but in the past, whenever financial pressure has been foreseen, the members have responded positively to a request for increased donations via the Pot and there is no reason to suggest this would not be repeated, even in the difficult economic climates. Budgets could always be reviewed if needs be.

4. **Review revision of 'Location of the Conference', AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain, page 104, (Conference 2022, Committee 6, Question 2).**

***Background***

Revision of 'Location of the Conference'.

## **Committee No. 2**

1. **Would the fellowship review the practice of singing religious songs/Christian Hymns at AA meetings, particularly at National Conventions and Special Events and Conference make recommendations for guidance on this subject.**

**Background:**

Currently, there is no guidance in The AA Handbooks of GB concerning the practice of using motivational or praise songs/Hymns at AA meetings, particularly at National Conventions and Special Events, such as AA 75th Anniversary Celebration.

Over the last twenty years or so, the singing of songs has been incorporated into meetings at conventions and special events. Many of these meetings are entitled 'spiritual meeting'; this is so that it is recognised as specially connected to our spiritual way of life, however, all AA meetings are spiritual in nature.

The AA fellowship is a society based on a spiritual way of life. Many members of the fellowship are not part of a religious faith and some may find singing of this type of song at AA meetings unnecessary and perhaps offensive.

At conventions in America, it is traditional to sing songs **before** the AA meeting, hence, preserving the meeting for sharing our Experience, Strength and Hope.

References:

AA preamble: indicates that we are non-denominational.

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on AA unity.

Conference 2022, Committee 3, Question 1: re Language or material offensive to minority groups.

Revised Safeguarding and Personal Conduct Section of The AA Structure Handbook of GB, Chapter 'The Group, Section 5.2 and the Conclusion by Bill W.

2. **Would Groups discuss, and through Conference recommend, a way to engage the Fellowship's involvement in Conference Questions, considering particularly that modern technology is available to gauge reactions to proposed Questions, or topics for Questions.**

***Background***

AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain  
Conference Charter

3. **Would the Fellowship discuss, share experience and make recommendations on the following matters concerning service with limited or no internet access? -**
- a. **How to accommodate a willing member with no access to a computer or smart device hold a service post in this technological age.**
  - b. **How to accommodate a willing member with no technical abilities carry out service in this technological age.**
  - c. **Also, how can a willing member living in an area with patchy or limited internet connectivity carry out effective AA service.**
  - d. **At times of crisis what can the Fellowship put in place to ensure members without technology gain access to help and information.**

#### **References**

- The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2019 Chapter 1 (Growing into Service) Quote:- “Service is at the centre of every AA Concept and activity.”
- The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain 2020 Third Legacy of Service by Bill W (1951) Page 11 paragraph 1.
- Quote:- “Carrying the message- is the basic service that the AA Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence.”
- Pass it on (Page 347)
- Preamble and Tradition 3 Quote:- The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking
- Concept IV The Right of Participation

#### ***Background / Personal Experience***

The AA logo incorporates a triangle within a circle with the words, **Unity Service Recovery** (Our 3 Legacies).

If we stop / restrict any AA member from carrying out service due to lack of access to modern technology or personal inability to operate the said same technology, are we as an organisation denying a full interaction and inclusion within the AA Fellowship family.

Are we becoming a two-tier service? Shouldn't our communication system be broader and encompass all forms of communication

The traditional method of passing telephone numbers still works.

4. **Review revised section 'Regional Assembly', AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain, page 96.**

#### ***Background***

Revised section 'Regional Assembly'.

## Committee No. 3

1. In recent times, with the exponential growth of social media platforms there are more opportunities and media than ever before for well-meaning AA members to break their Anonymity at the public level. While there is ample AA literature available on how to respect/protect anonymity at the public level and on social media platforms (e.g., 'Hints and Suggestions on Internet Safety' card and ongoing work by the board) it seems to be occurring more and more regularly.

Could Conference discuss and make recommendation on what can be done by the fellowship (i.e., AA GB, Regions, intergroups, groups and individual members) to encourage well-meaning AA members to stop this harmful trend.

For example, the USA and Canada GSO send a regular letter to newspapers reminding them about the importance of tradition 11 (see link <https://www.aa.org/anonymity-letter-to-media> and AAGB anonymity letter from 2015 <see [Anonymity Letter | Alcoholics Anonymous - Great Britain \(alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk\)](#)>).

### **Background**

Language of the Heart pg. 391

*"Let's now examine that vital Tradition Eleven. It deals with our public relations. Here is our greatest channel of communication to the alcoholic who still suffers. Tradition Eleven reads: "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films." Since this great Tradition describes the most important application of AA's principle of anonymity, and because it sets the pitch and tone of our entire public relations policy, **nothing can be more critically important**. If personal ambitions ever invade our public relations we shall be badly crippled, perhaps lost altogether.*

*The danger, of course, is the possibility that we may one day recklessly abandon the principle of personal anonymity at the top public level. This possibility arises from the fact that many of us AAs have been, and sometimes still are, possessed by enormous power drives. These are frequently fuelled by an almost irresistible craving for money, approval, and public acclaim. My own past history is outstanding in this respect. I can well understand the constant temptation to turn oneself into a public figure. Therefore I have urged, in season and out, that we AAs maintain our personal anonymity at the top level, no matter what the personal sacrifices may be.*

*Our chief hope for the future is that these appalling urges of ours will be held in restraint by self-discipline, by love of AA, and by firm group and public opinion. These powerful constructive forces, all working together, have thus far been enough. We pray that they may always prevail.*

*Let's look once more at how immense this temptation really is. A vast communications net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reaches. Granting all its huge public benefits, this limitless world forum is nevertheless a hunting ground for all those who would seek money, acclaim, and power at the expense of society in general. Here the forces of good and evil are locked in struggle. All that is shoddy and destructive contests all that is best.*

*Therefore nothing can matter more to the future welfare of AA than the manner in which we use this colossus of communication. Used unselfishly and well, the results can surpass our present imagination. Should we handle this great instrument badly, we shall be shattered by the ego demands of our own people—often with the best of intention on their part. Against all this, the sacrificial spirit of AA’s anonymity at the top public level is literally our shield and our buckler. Here again we must be confident that love of AA, and of God, will always carry the day.”*

Tradition 11

Tradition 12

See ‘The Language of the Heart’. Page 91-92 for Editorial by Bill W. A.A. Grapevine, October, 1948

*“Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never a need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us”*

Tradition 11 (long form).

2. **Would conference consider changing the imagery used in the illustrated Traditions pamphlet Product code: 3290. Should the Fellowship decide to update this to a more inclusive format?**

#### ***Background***

The images are dated for example men with short hair, dressed only in suits and women with longer hair wearing dresses and heels.

One image depicts a meeting in Africa, set in a jungle, with African members barefoot and a Western male explorer in footwear, with no chairs, furniture or buildings. The pamphlet illustrations show no evidence of advanced society in its African image.

The imagery could also be seen as heteronormative.

3. **Would Conference discuss and make suggestions as to how links between AA groups and the General Service Board (GSB) can be strengthened, to encourage members to take an interest and participate in the projects undertaken by the GSB.**

#### **In particular:**

- (1) **Should there be reports from the GSB in AA Service News, and, if so, how frequent should they be?**
- (2) **Should the first names of GSB members be publicised more prominently within the Fellowship, together with their regions?**
- (3) **Should the identity and role of the Non-Alcoholic Trustees (NATs) be more widely publicised within the Fellowship?**

- (4) **Should the Structure Handbook of AAGB contain details of the purpose and work of the Sub-Committees of the GSB, and a clear statement of the role and responsibility of Sub-Committee members?**

**Background**

Concepts IX, X and XI

Structure Handbook (2022 edition) pages 112-116

Successive editions of AA Service News, containing details of recruitment to Sub-Committees of the GSB.

4. **Review Health Sub Committee revision of Chapter 6, AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, p51-54.**

**Background**

Revised Chapter 6, Service Handbook for Great Britain.

**Committee No. 4**

1. a) **Would the fellowship share its experience of appointing Safeguarding Liaison Officers at group level outlining the responsibilities of the role and explore the potential benefit of creating Safeguarding Liaison Officers at all levels of the service structure of AAGB.**
- b) **Discuss the need for the creation of a Safeguarding Sub-Committee of the General Service Board and make recommendations.**

**Background**

Safeguarding and Personal Conduct (Document Library) 6.0

Safeguarding is a huge topic and covers all aspects of our disciplines. It is becoming more common to hear safeguarding statements read out at meetings thus demystifying common misconceptions about what safeguarding means. No Service member will have all the answers to safeguarding questions, but by integrating Safeguarding roles into our structure, the Fellowship will be able to draw on its strength of shared experience and with time build up a repository of tools and advice that future members will come to rely upon.

2. **Would Conference consider whether having an AA stall at events whose aims are unrelated to those of AA is incompatible with AA Traditions and carries with it the risk of drawing AA into controversies associated with issues outside the Fellowship?**

**Does attendance at such events undermine or facilitate the unequivocal inclusivity of Tradition Three, either diverting us from or promoting our primary purpose?**

**Is attendance at events such as those described below consistent with our Traditions Six, Ten and Eleven, and the stated aims of PI work?**

## ***Background***

*Our local intergroup PI attended two events with pamphlets, volunteers and funds to pay for a stall at least one of the events. The first event was a stall at local Pride March. The second event hosted by a local organisation which holds an annual festival whose theme this year was “environmental justice”.*

*The group conscience unanimously supported both events but some members felt this was promoting the fellowship or that attending events, loosely termed as social justice, amounted to AA involving itself in outside issues which could be considered controversial. A hypothetical scenario envisaged why attendance at Pride was considered consistent with our Traditions but attendance at an English Defence League rally would not be? If the nature of the causes to attend is based on personal beliefs does this not undermine AA traditions?*

*Tradition Three (long form)*

*“Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.”*

*Tradition Six (long form, in part):*

*“While an A.A. group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An A.A. group can bind itself to no one.”*

*Tradition Ten (long form)*

*“No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues—particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever.”*

*Tradition Eleven (long form)*

*“Our relations with the general public should be characterised by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.”*

*The aims of fellowship PI work are expressed on the AA Great Britain website as:*

*“The aim of PI is to improve communications with professionals and the public sector and show how we can cooperate with your organisations in providing a free service to help with the growing problem of alcoholism.”*

- 3. Would the fellowship consider doing an audio version like a podcast of the Daily Reflection reading so that they can hear it on a morning please?**

## ***Background***

We already have the following books as audio versions:

An Inside View of AA for Professionals (DVD)  
Road to Sobriety (DVD)  
Who Me? (DVD)  
Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Audio (5 CD Set)  
Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions British Sign Language (3 DVD Set)  
Living Sober Audio Edition (4 CD Set)  
Audio 12<sup>th</sup> Step Starter Pack

Would it be possible to create an audio recording of the Daily Reflections representing a variety of regional accents in AAGB please? I have Dyslexia and audio versions are sooooo much simpler than reading text. Based on what we have so far so there is definitely a gap in our productions.

4. **Review revised Chapter 'Conventions', AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain, page 126.**

**Background**

Revised Chapter 'Conventions'.

**Committee No. 5**

1. **Following on from Conference 2018 and noting the recent increase in groups continuing to meet online due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, would the Fellowship please discuss, share its experience and make recommendations about Tradition 7 contributions being collected electronically and digitally by means of card readers and other digital payment technology?**

The Background for this question is: 53<sup>rd</sup> General Service Conference 2018 Final Report, Committee 2, Question 1:

*"Further research on the subject is needed. Groups are encouraged to share their experience via the service structure. If this method of collection becomes more widespread, the Fellowship may need to consider potential changes to existing AA literature."*

Tradition 4 "Each Group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Groups or AA as a whole".

This question recognises that this was touched upon in the answer to Conference 2021 Committee 6, Question 3, but a more focussed discussion is appropriate.

2. **Would conference share experience regarding members wishing to take up service positions at Intergrups and Regions which require attendance a minimum number of meetings before being voted into office?**

**Background**

Whilst it is recognised that each Intergrup and Region are autonomous, concerns have been raised by members wishing to take up service roles regarding the time it can take for them to be voted into the role and begin to carry out service.



It is recognised that a member may put themselves forward for a role, be elected and then never attend again and so a degree of commitment should be demonstrated.

However, it is also the case that where an Intergroup/Region require a member to attend three meetings before being elected then this can mean that this can disillusion service being actioned, potentially disillusioning the prospective servant.

3. **Would the Fellowship discuss, share experience and make recommendations on holding 'hybrid' Intergroup Meetings or Regional Assemblies. In particular, would the Fellowship consider the potential benefits and disadvantages, as well as the practical considerations of holding such meetings both online and in-person at the same time.**

***Background:***

*Our Intergroup is eager to ensure that all members are able to get involved in service, regardless of their location or personal circumstances, and the matter of holding 'hybrid' meetings has been discussed. The geography of our area is such that many people have to travel significant distances to attend in-person meetings. In addition, those with young children, transport problems or health issues can find it difficult to attend. However, discussion on the matter has highlighted a number of difficulties, and shown that a hybrid Intergroup is a very different undertaking to a hybrid AA Meeting. For example, how would the meeting be chaired, to ensure that everyone attending could participate equally, and what technology would be required to hold the meeting.*

4. **Review replacement text to AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain 'GSB operates through Committees' p.113**

***Background***

Replacement text 'GSB and Committees'.

## **Committee No. 6**

1. **Would Conference share experience of the awareness and observance of Concept V and Warranty Four at all levels of the Fellowship, and consider whether any recommendations for improvement can be made?**

***Background***

Minority Opinion (Concept V)

In the pamphlet *Twelve Concepts for Service in Great Britain Illustrated*, the section on Concept V opens with the words, "Newcomers to AA's General Service Conference are often surprised at the pains taken by the Chair of Conference to make sure the minority has a second opportunity to present its views. Even after extensive debate on an issue, followed by a vote in which a substantial unanimity is reached, those opposed are polled individually to see if they wish to speak further to their minority view"

From the questioners' experience and anecdotally from others, this approach, and particularly the procedure described in the second sentence isn't always followed.

The pamphlet goes on to say, "This is AA's Right of Appeal in action and Bill said the same principle should apply to meetings of our groups, intergroups, regions and boards. On an issue of grave importance, the minority has the actual duty of presenting its views."

#### Grievances (Concept V)

From the same pamphlet, "The Right of Appeal also permits any person in the service structure, whether paid or volunteer, to petition for redress of a personal grievance. He or she can complain directly to the General Service Board, without prejudice or fear of reprisal."

#### Substantial Unanimity (Warranty Four)

"That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity"

While this principle may be observed at the annual meeting of Conference, it can be used, as Bill says, in the Introduction to the Twelve Concepts, "... [it] can of course be used to good effect throughout our entire structure".

2. **Would the General Service Conference please consider the possibility of AA GB sourcing and selling "Sobriety Medallions/ chips" through the AA website shop?**

#### ***Background***

A number of groups celebrating sobriety birthdays by the presentation of a medallion to a member who is celebrating a Sobriety anniversary.

These medallions are sourced through a non-AA supplier (hopefully funded from a separate pot).

Given the merchandise that has been made available for the 75th this year, is it not a plausible idea?

If there were a positive decision on this matter then it would follow that all funds raised through the sale and availability of said medallions would remain in AA.

3. **Would the Fellowship share experience about the challenges faced in managing finances at group, intergroup, region and other service levels in recent years, and make recommendations to Conference for improvement?**

**In particular, what is the experience about the problems facing new treasurers in obtaining access to a bank account when taking over from a treasurer who has left or rotated out? How can they deal with the process of changing signatories and obtaining identification requirements?**

**What role might internet and telephone banking play in managing the finances of the group, intergroup or region?**

**How should dormant or inactive accounts be dealt with where a group has closed, signatories have passed away, or the account has been inactive for a period of years?**

***Background***

In times past a group treasurer might commonly bank cash using a paying in book and write cheques to intergroup and for rent, literature, gratitude week, and perhaps the tea and biscuits. The bank account would usually have the group's name on it. When the treasurer rotated out, the outgoing and incoming treasurers might commonly go along to the bank to formally hand over the new signatory information for the cheque book. It was all fairly straightforward.

Things seemed to have changed though.

Over the last few years, some groups trying to make alterations, change signatories, or set up new community accounts for new groups, have run into myriad problems.

For example, the banks have been (perhaps understandably) unwilling to open community accounts unless a named person already has a personal account with them, compromising both anonymity and ease of service rotation.

A member's proof of ID has also proved to be much more intrusive in such situations.

Various recent legal changes have not helped the situation. From money laundering and GDPR issues to corporate bureaucracy and remote working staff, it has become increasingly difficult to navigate the banking system in a way that is conducive to the status of AA groups and members' anonymity. It has become a less attractive proposition for a prospective treasurer rotating in. Another problem for the Fellowship is that groups are reluctant to stick to the usual period of rotation and most treasurers stay in post for much longer, making the transition harder for groups when, eventually, they do leave.

Although the points made above refer to groups, similar problems confront intergroups and regions.

Tradition Seven  
Tradition Twelve

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