

A Summary of Questions not accepted for Conference 2009

- 1. Should the first 2 paragraphs of section 19 on page 19 of the “AA Group” pamphlet be removed?**

Terms of Reference No. 5 Conference 2007, Committee 6, Question 1 discussed ways of how groups can carry the message to local communities and whether localised notices in newsagents, corner shops, taxi companies etc. of local meetings, giving place, and time and phone contact details of local group officers is acceptable.

- 2. I would like to propose that the 2008 General Service Conference in York considers adopting this recommendation adopted by the General Service Conference in New York in 1996:**

Special International Contacts be listed in A.A. Directories if they serve special populations (young people, doctors, gays and lesbians, etc.) which meet some of the following criteria:

(1) Large membership, (2) Annual international meetings, (3) Regional and state contacts, (4) Maintenance of membership lists and/or directories of special interest meetings for our Twelfth Step purposes, (5) Serve as a “bridge” into the Fellowship.”

Terms of Reference No. 6 Committee had difficulty in interpreting the background information to support the question.

- 4. Bearing in mind the reputation of AA as a whole and the unknown legal exposure of Intergroup Officers or other AAs responsible for running Telephone Services in the statistically unlikely but foreseeable event that a minor alleges abuse by one or more persons claiming to represent AA following referral of a minor to a 12th step list by a Telephone Responder, would Conference encourage the GSO to exercise its direct responsibility to those it serves by discharging one or more of the following:**

1. share existing legal advice regarding CRB that relates to the GSB’s constitution as registered charity and company exactly as it does or does not apply to Groups, Intergroups and Telephone Services, if necessary obtaining a formal legal opinion directly relating to Groups, Intergroups and Telephone Services as distinct from the GSO;

2. engage with Groups, Intergroups and Telephone Services in a dedicated work project to establish need / expressed demand for AA services from Young People, the suitability of the AA programme for persons aged 17 and under (perhaps drawing upon the notion of “age of minority” for surrender in response to hearing Chapter 5), ensuring as far as possible safe engagement (for both Young People and for AA members including trusted servants) by drawing up national guidelines for inclusion in the AA GB Service Manual;

3. share through formation (or resurrection) of a GSB sub-committee information regarding AA engagement with minors across the Fellowship acknowledging all correspondence in a timely fashion, responding to such correspondence as purposefully as possible, and referring enquirers to alternative sources of AA experience and other Fellowship resources as appropriate;

4. refer back to Conference all relevant legal advice and Fellowship experience in order to facilitate the clearest expression of wider Fellowship conscience in

relation to 12th stepping minors, beginning with whether and how this might be done ethically and effectively including the use of CRB vets for all AA members that might be involved.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Sufficient information/guidance within the Fellowship that currently exists in the ways of:

- The 12 stepping and sponsoring of minors issued by General Service Board which appeared in the Spring 2007 AA Service News.
- Hints and Suggestions for 12 steppers
- Questions and answers on sponsorship

- 5. Would Conference consider adopting the process recommended by Conference 2006 regarding Board Members Reports to Conference, whether their reports require approval or not at Conference.**

Terms of Reference No. 5 Discussed at Conference within the past three years (Conference 2006 committee 3, question 1).

- 6. I would request the following points be discussed at Conference level, for action:**
- 1. Sheet Promotion in AA meetings**
 - 2. Late arrivals**
 - 3. Talking in meetings during shares**
 - 4. Texting and taking mobile phone calls during a meeting**
 - 5. Lack of GSR's in groups**

Point 1

GREY SHEET FOOD MEETINGS AND FOOD PLAN

Myself and other members are regularly *encouraged* whilst attending an AA meeting! to attend meetings for food problems, known as Grey Sheet,

It is a severely restricted way of eating that is medically not for all, originating from obesity problems in America and designed for rapid weight loss so that surgery could be performed. Not as a way of life, each and every day.

More alarmingly this "recruiting" is largely aimed at newcomers to AA who are vulnerable and open to suggestions.

I can speak with experience on how damaging this food plan is, as I followed it for 9 months over 10 years ago and became extremely ill requiring hospitalisation.

This promotion has to stop so that AA meetings remain "pure" and remain simply to allow sick suffering alcoholics a life line for their alcoholism. The Grey sheet folk are proud to announce their second meeting has opened and leave flyers on church walls and handed out where AA meetings are held.

I AM ASKING FOR THIS GREY SHEET ISSUE TO BE MOTIONED AS A CONFERENCE QUESTION FOR DEBATE ASAP. Thank you.

Points 2 - 4

Late arrivals

Talking in meetings during shares

Texting and taking mobile phone calls during a meeting

I believe these points are also worthy of discussion as there is a new "trend" to treat AA meetings as "drop in" centres for tea, a chat and a bit of a wander around meeting friends. I would request each secretary is sent a sheet to read out for 1 month - 6 weeks, reminding people to show respect to our wonderful

fellowship. This was done many years regarding the growing sharing on drugs and proved very effective.

I understand each group is autonomous but I observe members afraid to "rock the boat" for fear of being disliked, so via secretary`s would enable it to be voiced without including individuals.

Point 5

Lack of GSR`s in groups

I have noticed a massive drop in GSRs and therefore *reduced or ZERO* AA fellowship information being passed to groups. Again, a discussion of the problem, followed by a secretary flyer to be read out outlining the concern, is requested.

I simply want (and above all, need!) AA to survive and I sense and see that we have a diluted, free for all attitude growing amongst us.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Points 1 – 4 of the question. There currently exists information/guidance available within the Fellowship in the way of:

- Traditions 3, 5 & 10 with reference to point 1
- Guideline 17 'Personal Conduct Matters' of the AA Service handbook for Great Britain with reference to points 2 – 4

Terms of Reference No. 5 Point 5 of the question. Conference 2007 Committee 4, Question 2 discussed practical ways of encouraging people into service.

- 7. What constitutes "appropriate CRB clearance" where we get a 12th Step call from a minor who is under no adult supervision is received and therefore appropriate CRB clearance is needed?**

Terms of Reference No. 6 Lack of sufficient pertinent background information to support the question.

- 8. Finance**
Guidelines 12 and 13 seek to explain the difference between 'Twelfth Step work' and 'Service' in relation to the claiming of expenses such as travel and telephone costs.

Would Conference:

1. Consider the definition of the phrase 'face to face Twelfth Step work' and make recommendations in relation to:

- i. Reimbursing the cost of telephone calls made by a Twelfth Stepper to arrange a meeting with a suffering alcoholic referred via the Helpline;**
- ii. Claiming expenses for travel costs incurred by Prison Responders visiting a prison to facilitate an A.A. meeting for prisoners**

2. Direct that the section in Guideline 13 relating to the payment of expenses be added to Guideline 12.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Covered in existing Guidelines.

- 9. Would Conference 2009 consider the following recommendation: That the timetable to be rescheduled to accommodate time for delegates to ask questions following and applicable to the board members' reports?**

OR

Alternately reports to be made available pre conference thereby allowing delegates to read and digest. Questions could then be submitted to the respective board member by March 31st thus allowing them time to prepare a response at conference.

Terms of Reference No. 5

Please refer to Conference report 2006, Committee 3, Question 1.

However, Board reports will go out by the end of February, the same time as the Board proposals requiring Conference approval. Questions from the Fellowship regarding such proposals need to be passed to Conference delegates by the end of March 2009 to be forwarded to the relevant Trustee. Questions on Board reports could also be submitted at the same time.

10. **Would Conference 2009 consider the following recommendation: That the nominations for Conference Chairman 2010 are made after dinner on the Friday evening?**

Terms of Reference No. 7

Conference itinerary comes under the remit of the Conference Steering Committee and the Committee decided to move the nominations as per the above suggestion.

11. **What's in a name?**

In this country, the name "alcoholic" has an increasingly negative connotation. To the public eye, is AA almost perceived as groups of "people?" who have run out of anybody "decent" to drink with and so meet anonymously to get pissed together? Unfortunately, our very name "Alcoholics Anonymous" (also that of our main publication) does not portray our Primary Purpose which is to stay sober and help others (alcoholics) to achieve sobriety. It doesn't even convey that the only requirement for AA membership is simply a desire to stop drinking. Alcoholism is an illness of self diagnosis. I don't have to be an alcoholic to be a member. In fact, surely many of us and certainly I only began to make the self diagnosis once in the Fellowship, not picking up a drink and attending meetings. Interestingly, the Fellowship's other main publication, "Living Sober" does more clearly portray our Primary Purpose but the name of this is not well known outside the Fellowship

In spite of our endeavours to get the message of AA out into the public domain, these have been swamped by the Govt's "controlled drinking" policy and the NHS "medical model" approach and publicity. A society has been created in which there is almost no such thing as an alcoholic, just millions of people abusing alcohol and therefore NOT alcoholic. So most "respectable" people cannot possibly be alcoholic as this obviously applies only to the lowest in, if not, outside society

Meantime, thousands of us are dying from our illness. Many have either never heard our message or are convinced by the "controlled drinking" professionals that one day they will be able to drink normally again. After all, who should a person believe - professionals or a bunch of alcoholics?

To try to convey more clearly what AA is really about we have tried slogans such as "If drink is costing you more than money..." "If you want to drink that is your business. If you want to stop, that's our business". I am sure these are good catch phrases, but do they really make clear our primary purpose? Only this week, the NHS decided that to get through the shame associated with the word "obese" and to make it easier for people to come for help, no more are people "obese", rather "overweight"! Amazing how a name can change the connotation. Whether we like it or not, what's in a name has tremendous significance

In our local contacts with the NHS, mental health teams, social services etc, we have, recently, at the suggestion of a local GP who was, for several years the main GP liaison with the mental health teams in this area, been introducing ourselves as "Alcoholics Anonymous, supporting sober living". To our amazement, this seems to have cut through all the crap about God, religion and makes our purpose crystal clear right from the first moment of contact. The GP, who does push people our way, laughed when he told us what his suggestion was, but while recognising it was "NHS Speak", he also said that it does make clearer to health (and probably other) professionals much more precisely, what AA is about.

We probably do need with some urgency, to consider changing the name of AA. The name may have been suitable for its time but if it in any way hindered getting the message out to the alcoholic who still suffers, I don't have any doubt about what Bill W and Bob would have said!! Well, certainly Bill!!

But, that is not my question for next year's conference.

Rather, as a first step to help convey more clearly to the suffering alcoholic and professionals what our Fellowship is all about, would Conference please consider suggesting to the Fellowship that we add the words "supporting sober living" when answering the telephone, on our letter heads, posters etc?

Terms of Reference No. 6 & 7

The changing of the AA name would consider World wide approval.

12. **The pamphlet Letter to a Woman Alcoholic. I would like to propose a question to Conference on this pamphlet. The pamphlet was discontinued without any real explanation to the fellowship here in the U.K. or Continental Europe. I wrote to G.S.O.York to ask why. I enclose Item 1a copy of the reply for your reference. I feel a bit more input by way of explanation would not have gone amiss in this reply, it is said that if the internal communication is good then it follows the external will be like wise. I believe this reply failed on this point.**

I then wrote to A.A. World Services I have enclosed Item 2 for your reference, I have also enclosed item 3 a copy of the pamphlet Letter to a Woman Alcoholic for your reference I note the pamphlet would require a Licence from Good Housekeeping Magazine, I know we have a Literature Committee whom I have no doubt would be well able to advise on this point. I feel that with more female members now in and coming to A.A. that the message in this pamphlet is very relevant.

I am a member of Blantyre Monday Night Group we had always kept a stock of this particular pamphlet, we passed it on to new female members then asked for their views which were always very positive.

I now ask the Question of your Steering Committee how many of you are aware of this pamphlet, how many of you have read it, how many of you kept it at your group while it was still available. I believe that through a Question for Conference 2009 G.B. and Continental Europe. The fellowship should be given the opportunity to view and discuss this pamphlet, mindful of any legality regarding licence from the original licensor. I note with much regret the failure of groups to have a good display of literature or in many cases any. I believe we are failing the new person on the point that all in A.A. should be readily available to them if you as a new person do not see it, how are you to know it exists. I would like you to return the pamphlet Item 3 to me I may be able to help a new person with. I know you are asked to take cost into consideration, I ask you this if this pamphlet can help to save but one life then it will have been worthwhile.

I ask the question would the cost of a pamphlet to the fellowship outweigh the cost of a funeral to a family, picture a table set for Christmas dinner with one empty space. What price a Letter to a Woman Alcoholic.



The General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain)

(Item 1)

PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

Tel: (01904) 644026

Fax: (01904) 629091

9th May 2008

Dear

Thank you for enquiring about the pamphlet Letter to the Woman Alcoholic, unfortunately we get this pamphlet from America and the they have decided to discontinue it so our hands a tied at this end.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name or initials.

General Service Office

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited
Registered Office: PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ
Registered in England and Wales
Company Limited by Guarantee
Company Registration Nos. 587316 : SCO38023
Registered Charity No. 226745
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Item 2



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES, INC.
475 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, NEW YORK, NY 10115 (212) 870-3400
(Between 119th and 120th Streets)

Please direct all communications to:

GRAND CENTRAL STATION
P.O. BOX 459
NEW YORK, NY 10163
FAX# 212-870-3003

July 7, 2008

Dear

Thank you for your recent inquiry regarding the pamphlet, "Letter to a Woman Alcoholic."

Firstly, I would like to respond to your questions about why the General Service Office ("GSO") US/Canada discontinued its publication of the work (more specifically, an action of the General Service Conference required GSO to discontinue publication of the work). The decision of the Conference was based on a number of considerations, including the following:

1. There was strong feeling by many that some of the references to women were entirely inappropriate from a twenty-first century view prospective.
2. The pamphlet, the contents of which first appeared in the 1950's, was not written by A.A. It was published by Good Housekeeping magazine who licensed A.A. US/Canada to reprint the material.
3. The material, which most agreed was extremely well written, appeared at a timewhen there were no A.A.-published pamphlets, or other materials, the expressed purpose of which was to convey AA's message of recovery to women alcoholics.

The foregoing indicates some of the concerns expressed by US/Canada Conference members in reaching the conclusion that further publication of the pamphlet should be discontinued.

You also inquired about obtaining permission from GSO US/Canada to reprint the pamphlet. Since we no longer publish the item, there might be a more precise legal basis for denoting York as a proper licensee if York were to obtain its license directly from the original licensor, Good Housekeeping magazine.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

In Fellowship,

Tom Jasper
Senior Advisor

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www.aa.org

Terms of Reference No. 7

There is an up to date Conference approved pamphlet for the 'Woman Alcoholic' available from GSO.

13. **The newcomer to the Fellowship is frequently unable to concentrate and may also have short term memory. The existing, excellent pamphlet, 'Questions and Answers on Sponsorship' can be too much too soon, so perhaps a much simpler version (which could be included in the Newcomer Pack) would initially be more helpful.**

Terms of Reference No. 6..... Referred to Literature Committee for consideration.

14. **If the Fellowship in its purpose of offering a promised freedom from alcoholism is to be visible and attractive, would Conference consider instituting a completely new approach to the image portrayed on our posters and contact cards by focusing on the solution, rather than the problem?**

Terms of Reference No. 6 & 7 Referred to Literature Committee for consideration.

15. **What is the opinion of Conference on the following: Some manufacturers of food or medical products do not clearly indicate when these contain alcohol. In the case of medical products an appropriate warning may be included in the Patient Information leaflet but this is not normally available until the product has been purchased. Could AA members, groups, intergroups usefully try and encourage them to add the words 'contains alcohol' in clear lettering as they often do for such information as 'sugar free'. Clearly the name of AA should not be mentioned in order that Tradition Ten should not be breached. This writer simply referred to herself as a 'recovering alcoholic'.**

Terms of Reference No. 7 In keeping with our Tradition 10 'Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A name ought never be drawn into public controversy'.

16. **GUIDELINE ONE states-**

"Whilst a Group is free to hold any type of meeting its members decide, Groups must work within A.A.'s Traditions and Guidelines. Our experience indicates that we must exercise certain precautions at our meetings or risk collapse.

THE CLOSED MEETING is for alcoholics only.

THE OPEN MEETING is one at which non-members (partners, friends and other interested people e.g. doctors, spiritual leaders and social workers etc) may attend.

THE MULTI-MEETING GROUP is an A.A. Group that accepts responsibility for providing more than one meeting per week."

Recently a growing number of meetings who, as part of their 'name' and meeting structure, read the Big Book and The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions have identified themselves as OPEN MEETINGS.

Remembering the words written by Bill W. in 1958 -

"We have to confine our membership to alcoholics and we have to confine our A.A. Groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse, and if we collapse, we cannot help anyone."

Would Conference share their experience and make recommendations as to whether these named groups should be OPEN to non-alcoholics.

Terms of Reference No. 7 In keeping with the spirit of Tradition 4 and Guideline 1.

In addition Conference 2004, Committee No. 4, Question 1 addressed this issue with this response:

‘We believe that there is an overall need to raise the profile of the Twelve Traditions throughout AA. Our recommendation is that each renew our commitment to show leadership by example. Let it begin with me. We should never underestimate the power of personal example and experience. At the same time personal recovery depends on AA unity. With autonomy comes responsibility. Autonomy cannot be used as an excuse to impact negativity upon other groups or AA as a whole’.

17. **It has been requested by top security prisons that individual inmates may use the national helpline number for support and information on the Fellowship and its recovery programme. Currently the use of the National Helpline number within prisons is discouraged as such calls may effectively block access to the helpline for other users; in addition telephone responders are unable to offer appropriate levels of 12th Step support for such individuals in terms of callback, 12th Step visiting, and the opportunity to attend an AA meeting.**

Would Conference consider doing a feasibility system study to determine whether it is viable to establish a dedicated AA Telephone Helpline (0845 or freefone) for use within the UK Prison Service?

Terms of Reference No. 6 Referred to Telephone Sub Committee for consideration.

18. **Literature for Conference 2009**

Will Conference consider and make recommendations as to how text, graphics and illustrations in new material presented to Conference by the Literature Committee can be synchronized so that a complete picture of new work may be seen by Conference and the wider Fellowship prior to approval?

Terms of Reference No. 7 The Literature Committee are working to resolve this problem. However this issue was discussed within the last three years therefore it is unable to be resubmitted to Conference until 2010.

19. **Can Conference discuss and advise additional guidelines for prison sponsors and visitors. Due to changes on inmates being released (under license)**

We feel inmates may be ill advised to what service they may carry out within the Fellowship I.e. telephone responders, public information etc.

The license for parole for sex offenders are quite strict to what and where, and what contact the inmate may do.

A sponsor may advise the inmates that they may join a group. That there is more to A.A, than meetings, there is a service structure within the fellowship i.e. Telephone responders, Twelve steppers, Public information etc.

This advise could put the released inmate in conflict with his term of release (under license) and could lead to the released inmate to be taken back into custody without any chance of appeal and would not be eligible for parole for 24 months.

The above has already happened and another ex inmate no longer comes to meetings because his anonymity was broken.

We feel that to avoid this in future PLOs and visitors should be advised on how to advise inmates prior to their release. Make recommendations.

Terms of Reference No. 6 & 7 The Prison Sub-Committee have specific guidelines and traditions already in place regarding prison sponsors. This question will be passed to this Committee for consideration.

20. **Would Conference consider the advantages and disadvantages of Regions electing General Service Board members?**

Terms of Reference No. 6 Background information not pertinent to the question.

21. **Would Conference be more effective and better reflect the members views if each Intergroup selected their own delegate.**

Terms of Reference No. 6 & 7 There is not enough background information provided. Refer to Guidelines 3 and 5 and Section 10 of the AA Service Handbook.

22. **Would Conference consider including the office of Region Representative for each Intergroup in the annual Directory of Intergroup and Regional Officers *Great Britain, Continental Europe and the General Service Board Great Britain.***

Terms of Reference No. 6 Insufficient background material.

23. **In order to ensure the quality of Conference questions, would Conference make recommendations on:**

- i) **How best questions should be selected to avoid general answers which simply restate standard AA practice;**
- ii) **How to achieve the preferred balance of questions which relate to the Fellowship's internal workings (for example, those which allow the AA group to hold other levels within the Fellowship to account), and those which relate to the Fellowship's external relations.'**

Terms of Reference No. 6 Insufficient background material

24. **Both Share and Roundabout magazines do not have a dedicated GSB Board member with exclusive focus on these publications and the service support structure.**

The current Roundabout and Share GSB Board Member's share that discipline with other GSB Board service disciplines.

Given the importance of both Share and Roundabout magazines I propose that a GSB Board position is created for both publications.

I feel this would help focus the importance of the magazines and help recruit new Liaison officers who could then support, grow and developed the publications.

This question is in no way meant as a reflection on the current GSB Board members, however it is a heavy load to be the GSB Board member for two disciplines.

Terms of Reference No. 6 & 7 Referred to the GSB for discussion.

25. **This question is about financial transparency in the Fellowship. At this time there isn't a full report on Fellowship income and expenditure. The Conference 2008 report is vague about where the money comes from and goes to. Would Conference discuss whether AA could be more financially transparent in the future?**

Terms of Reference No. 6 & 7 All AA financial information is presently in the public domain. Please refer to www.charitycommission.gov.uk our Charity Number is 226745.

26. **Could Conference discuss the wisdom of having too many groups in one area holding all meetings "open".**

Terms of Reference No. 7 In conflict with Tradition 4 and Guidance 1 - Group Conscience.

27. **Would Conference consider the amount of workshops/seminars held at York. Who attends them, and how many of the same people attend? Would they also consider the payment of subsistence and travel expenses? In some cases £250 per workshop/seminar, particularly in light of the current financial climate and the spending constraints on a charitable organisation.**

Terms of Reference No. 6 No background information submitted. This question has been referred to the GSB for discussion.

28. **Each group is autonomous except in matters that concern AA as a whole. If a group follows a course of study rather than demonstrates the primary purpose to reach the still suffering alcoholic and if its activities create a false impression of the objects and activities of Alcoholics Anonymous is this to be regarded as concerning AA as a whole and should it merit remark, interference or rejection by other groups?**

Concern over this issue has led to unrest in the Fellowship with threat to unity. Intergroups have even refused to "admit" a group. Statements and pages put on the Internet have encouraged accusations and suspicion.

One of the things that outside agencies, such as probation officers, report to us, is that people who might otherwise attend AA are put off by the initial impression that it is religious or that it is to do with counselling, character assessment and confrontation as some other organisations are.

It is therefore of concern to many A.A members that some groups are overly structured, requiring their group members and newcomers to adhere to a rigid procedure and make an in depth study of AA literature. It is felt by some that methods adopted in Treatment centres have begun to be used in AA meetings. Newcomers are advised that they must get a sponsor, study the books and the steps and believe in God if they are to stay sober.

Does this undermine the simple acceptance of anyone with a desire to stop drinking which is traditional in A.A and cloud the straightforwardness and simplicity and strength of the message that we can stop drinking a day at a time?

A good deal of concern and division is apparent which seems to be connected with certain groups. Can we have open discussion at Conference where the Traditions of AA (and any possible deviation from them) can be highlighted but also where any myths or unfair judgements about "problem" groups can be squashed. Sharing of experience can best take place when all can participate and none ousted out, where

members with "different ideas" are embraced within the Fellowship rather than outlawed and where the Group Conscience can be heard and heeded.

Terms of Reference No. 6 & 7 Lack of sufficient background material pertinent to the question. However existing literature i.e. Traditions and Concepts address this issue.

29. **Would Conference discuss the need and desirability for the fellowship to have somebody available for – *and proactively responding to* - media stories.**

Terms of Reference No. 5 & 7 There is a process in place; please refer to the Public Information Committee. However this submission cannot be accepted as Conference has discussed this within the last three years please refer to Conference 2008, Committee 6: Question 2.

30. **Would Conference discuss the need for a non-geographical Region within the UK service structure.**

Terms of Reference No. 6 & 7 Insufficient background material. This is covered in existing Guidelines and Traditions.

31. **Within the framework of our Traditions, can the Fellowship do more to reach out to the suffering alcoholic by cooperating more proactively with government and health agencies in national initiatives concerning the effect of alcohol misuse and thus raise public awareness of how we may be of help?**

Terms of Reference No. 5 Discussed by Conference within the last three years. Refer to Conference 2007, Committee No. 5, Question 1.

32. **Would Conference please provide guidance to the GSB about what proportion of the Board report it is reasonable to have presented only at Conference as "updates", relative to the size of the Board report that is circulated to the Fellowship as a whole preceding Conference?**

Terms of Reference No. 6 Insufficient background material. Has been referred to the GSB for discussion.

33. **Would Conference review how successfully the Board has followed the Conference's instructions regarding deadlines for submission of Board materials to delegates and the Fellowship, and if necessary provide guidance to help the Board stick better to its Conference deadline instructions.**

Terms of Reference No. 5 Discussed within the last three years. Refer to Conference 2006, Committee No. 3, Question 1.

34. **Would Conference provide guidance and leadership on what grounds AA groups should be excluded from Intergroup Where to Find lists?**

Terms of Reference No. 6 Insufficient background material. Refer to guidelines of Intergroup.

35. **Would the GSB become more transparent and accessible if minutes of board meetings be made available from GSO?**

Terms of Reference No. 7 GSB is a registered charity, Board minutes' circulation is limited to Board members.

36. **To help unity, Could conference recommend ways in which Intergroups can work more effectively with disenfranchised groups within their geographical areas.**

Terms of Reference No. 5 Discussed within the last three years – Conference 2008, Committee 3, Question 2 regarding “Unity” and “Participation” were discussed in depth.

37. **Would Conference review the need for the General Secretary to sit on the Conference Steering Committee?**

Terms of Reference No. 5 Discussed within the last three years – Conference 2007, Committee 2, Question 3.

38. **Some groups are growing steadily across all ages and ranges and Big Book sales are consistently high. They practice the principles of the Twelve Steps Traditions and have strong sponsorship ethic. AA GB generally is not enjoying the same success. Would Conference explore ways of assisting groups seeking guidance? Please consider the following points as aids to progress: Suggest ways in which the Fellowship as a whole can assist groups to become more structured in their approach to carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Make suggestions to those groups who want to avoid the dilution of the Steps and Traditions.**

Terms of Reference No. 5 Discussed within the last three years – Conference 2007, Committee 4, Question 2 and Conference 2008, Committee 3, Question 2.

39. **Is the current Regional structure in AA GB the most effective way to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers in light of declining membership reported in the Census?**

Terms of Reference No. 6 Insufficient detailed background material pertinent to the question.

40. **Would Conference confirm that, following the GSB Trustees' presentations of their reports, they would be expected to accept and answer questions asked of them by Conference Delegates, at Conference?**

Terms of Reference No. 7 Referred to GSB for discussion.

43. **The term Group Service Representative is an error and confusing. Please could we revert back to the name General Service Representative as Bill W intended and as described in the Concepts?**

Terms of Reference No. 7 Discussed at Conference 1987 and Conference 2001, Committee 5, Question 1. Refer to Guidelines 1, 2, 3 & 6.

44. **Would Conference confirm that literature proposals presented to Conference will "nearly always" require a two-thirds plus majority of the voting members of Conference to be approved by the Fellowship of AA in Great Britain?**

Terms of Reference No. 7 CSC were unable to proceed without a major redrafting of the question. Another consideration was the fact that each Conference is autonomous.

45. **TOPICS:**

- **Communications between Board and Conference.**
- **The Six Warranties**
- **"Principles before personalities" vs "the well informed minority."**
- **Us and them - increasing trust between Conference and GSB.**
- **Unneeded politics or resistance to growth.**
- **How best to encourage GSRs to Intergroup.**
- **Don't confuse "making accountable" with mistrust.**
- **Elected officers demanding trust or leaders who are trusted.**
- **Lessons of the past - UK Conference learning from US Conference.**
- **Plenary - a forum for stopping mistakes not designing policy.**
- **Tradition 2 and Concept 9 - inspiring trust.**
- **"Delegated authority" and accountability within conference.**
- **Concept 9 - "Every Sponsor is a leader."**
- **GSB "right of decision" and "accountability."**
- **"Trouble making nitpickers" vs "Vigilant Participants in democracy."**
- **The future of twelve stepping in an age of litigation.**
- **Concepts 1,2,6 and 7: the foundation of AA democracy.**
- **Taking responsibility vs hiding behind the veil of Unity.**
- **GSRs are the foundation - getting closer to the GSRs.**
- **As society evolves and changes does AA follow and does it have to?**
- **Accountability and Authority - the scales of AA service.**
- **GSB trustee - often a thankless task.**
- **Unity vs undemocratic compliance.**
- **Sponsoring in to General Service**
- **How well do we adhere to the Concepts and Traditions?**
- **Relatively speaking, AA is tiny; why?**
- **Applying the Twelve Concepts to Region, Intergroup and groups.**
- **New members not wanting to serve or Oldtimers not letting go?**

Terms of Reference No. 6 Insufficient background material

46. **Would Conference consider requesting more detailed costs from the General Service Board on the financing of Board Sub-committees and Seminars when the Annual Report is presented to the Fellowship? Discuss and make recommendations.**

Terms of Reference No. 7 The information requested by the questioner is already available in the public domain (accessed via Regional Treasurers). www.CharityCommission.Gov.uk/CharityNo.226745.

47. **Would Conference consider an additional clause to Section 11 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain specifically regarding the voting rights within the meetings of the General Service Board? Discuss and make recommendations that "members of the Executive Committee cannot vote on any items at meetings of the General Service Board."**

Terms of Reference No. 7 This question is already adequately covered within our Concepts, particularly Concept 4.

48. **The organisational principles of AA's Third Legacy (Service) are documented in *The AA Service Manual and the Twelve Concepts for World Service*, which remains the basis of the service structure and practice in the USA and Canada.**

The service structure in Great Britain differs in some significant respects.

Would Conference consider appointing a commission to examine and explain these differences, their effects, and whether or not the development and growth of the Fellowship might benefit if some of these differences were eliminated.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Service structure issues were discussed in detail by Conference 1974 and Conference 2001, Committee 5. Please refer to "Guidelines 1, 2, 3 & 6".

49. **Will Conference consider revising Guideline 17 to give clearer guidance on dealing with unacceptable behaviour which occurs outside of a meeting, especially when the offender is an elected trusted servant of the group?**

This is a difficult issue. Allegations of unacceptable behaviour such as sexual harassment or rape, occurring without witnesses cannot be verified, and as AA members we are not entitled to judge nor take any punitive action. It seems the easiest thing to do is regard the matter as an outside issue and if an offence has been committed, leave it to the police and the courts.

On the other hand, the consequences for victims of such behaviour could prove fatal if they do not receive adequate support from the Fellowship and return to drinking. They may avoid meetings where the offender attends or if the unacceptable behaviour continues, avoid attending meetings altogether. They may feel isolated and that the Fellowship does not care, if no action is taken to challenge the offender or support the victim. They may also not be in an emotionally strong enough or state to want to pursue the offender in a court.

When such behaviour occurs or is alleged to have occurred, it can affect a group's unity. There can be division between those who regard it as a outside issue and therefore no concern of AA and those who believe that sober members of AA and the Fellowship have a responsibility to protect the welfare of vulnerable newcomers from individuals who may use AA meetings as a first point of contact in which to find victims that they can abuse.

There is also the possible consequence that if such behaviour is not challenged an offender could become or continue to be an elected leader of AA, thus affecting the integrity of the Fellowship. (It needs to be recognised that in some towns there are many small meetings that do not necessarily possess a core of "elder statesmen". Leaders of a group are not always carefully chosen but service positions go to who ever is willing to do the job).

There is the potential that the reputation of the fellowship as a whole could be damaged within other organisations such as the National Health Service, councillors or treatment centres, if the victim is also under their care and does not receive adequate support from AA members.

Should an incident involve the courts and it is reported that AA members were aware of a history of allegations against an offender and that they stood by without taking any action this could invite bad press for the Fellowship, especially if the offender is continuing to hold a position of trust.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Sufficient guidance already exists in the Guideline, Traditions and Concepts to adequately answer these concerns.

It was also a consideration that these incidents took place “outside” AA where the Fellowship has no jurisdiction.

50. **Review the terms and conditions for Conference delegates unable to attend Conference due to circumstances beyond their control. Make recommendations”.**

Terms of Reference No. 7 Adequate reasonable provision already exists in The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, Section 10-5 of the General Service Conference of AA Great Britain, item 6 Delegates, part b2.

51. **Why have we not got the serenity prayer that AA adopted around the year 1942 as reported in the book Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age (page 196) printed in a card form that groups can then honestly address to God at the beginning or end of their individual meetings if they so wish?**

Terms of Reference No. 7 Referred to the Literature Committee for consideration.