

MINUTES: 35th Derbyshire Intergroup

16th May 2009

Attending:

<u>Heather</u>	Chair- Long Eaton Tuesday
Geraldine -	PI Derby
Jez -	Derby Weds
Barry -	Derby Sunday
Carina -	Derby
Chas -	Ashbourne
Val -	Ashbourne
Roger -	Notts/Leics webmaster
Glen -	Tea/coffee
Mac -	Ilkeston, Friday
Ingrid -	Buxton, Thursday
Liz -	Matlock, Wednesday
Sue -	Bakewell, Friday
Nick -	Webmaster
Claire -	Visitor-Matlock, Wednesday

Apologies: Wendy (Ilkeston Monday), Amanda (Share rep)

Introduction:

The preamble was read, and the chair mentioned that Claire was considering taking up the role of secretary and would take the minutes of today's meeting.

Matters Arising:

The group from Burton on Trent who attended the last intergroup, and were considering joining Derbyshire, have now decided to go back to Mid-Trent Intergroup.

Treasurer's Report - Liz:

When Liz took over the balance brought forward was £763.61. Today 2 cheques were received (totaling £430), £505 has also been paid in, and expenses have been paid out. That leaves a total balance of £1221.17. Heather asked if the Sudbury money agreed at the last Intergroup meeting had been paid, and Liz

confirmed it had, along with other outstanding payments, such as the telephone service and where-to-find card contribution.

Liz queried a letter she had regarding the books for the mini-convention, and it was confirmed that they had been ordered on a sale or return basis, so the organiser needed postage money to return them. The person in charge of this has dealt directly with York GSO, and Liz will check with him.

It was noted that we have not made a donation to Region for a while. Discussion was held about what a prudent reserve would be for Intergroup. £600 was agreed on. It was questioned whether we needed a larger reserve as Intergroup is now every 4 months, not 3. However, it was agreed to stick to £600, and all officers should bring their requirements for the next 4 months to each Intergroup.

Liz commented that we haven't had a treasury audit for a while, and it was agreed it needs to be done annually. Chas agreed to contact Ken from Stoke who did it last time.

Feedback from Region re: conference questions - Geraldine:

Geraldine read the feedback to the meeting. Please see attached for detail of this feedback, or AA website.

Heather suggested that she and Claire work together to produce a brief summary of how the conference feedback related to the topics specifically discussed by the Derbys groups, to promote future discussion in groups, and interest in future conference questions***. Ingrid and Geraldine both agreed that would be useful. Geraldine commented that she liked the individual typed responses that some groups had produced for their discussion of conference questions.

Heather asked for clarification of the anonymity card as mentioned in the conference feedback for Committee 6. Some discussion ensued about which card was meant; Val had a copy of the card 'What does anonymity mean to AA?' and it was agreed that this was the card intended. Heather suggested getting a card delivered to all GSRs who were at the meeting, so that they could read and discuss it with their groups in accordance with the conference feedback.

Val commented that the role of GSR is to introduce newcomers to the literature available, and this should include the anonymity card as it held important information for a newcomer. Barry queried if we could email its content to members, but the group felt that copyright issues would prevent this. Heather suggested sending a copy of it to all those present today, and this was agreed.

Liz wanted to clarify whether we were to read it at meetings, and Heather suggested we read it at one meeting, and then the group could decide how to use it in future. Val suggested each group could put a copy into the starter pack.

Action for GSRs- read the card to the group- possibly also have it as a topic for the meeting you read it in, or discuss reading it once a month/every week in order to remind the group of the place and importance of anonymity in the Fellowship.

Website update - Nick:

The website has been moved to a different company so no statistics are available prior to February. There are currently 35 visits per day. People view only 2 pages on average. Previously there were several enquiries a week, but there has only been one in the last 4 months. Nick queried that this could be a problem with Google. The majority of website visitors found the site via Google, and the next highest source was through other links. It was also found that the website is low on accessibility for disabled users

Nick said that the website has a lot of content, but has grown organically over the years, and is maybe a little disjointed. Various options were suggested to improve content: firstly, an option to allow groups to post content, secondly to have a discussion forum. The forum would require membership log-in facilities and would need at least 2 moderators plus Nick himself, to ensure the site was monitored on a daily basis.

Nick asked why we currently have separate websites for Notts and Leics and Derbyshire Intergroups, when we have the same phone service - are we just duplicating the same thing? Some discussion ensued, it was agreed that we should organise the Derbys website before considering any other web activity.

Val asked if we are still on the main AA website- Nick confirmed that we are, Derbys has 1 static page on the main AA website , with a link to our website and a download for the where to find.

As regards the forum on the website, Chas commented that we need to be in the spirit of AA guidelines for websites. We need to monitor it for what is being posted in our Intergroup's name, to ensure that all postings were in accordance with AA. Nick said that moderators would contact people who posted inappropriate comments or were disruptive, and individuals could be banned. Heather asked whether posts can go into an inbox first for moderation before public posting, but Nick said this is unworkable in practice as the delay kills any spontaneous discussion. Nick said that he could set it up so that only group officers could alter main pages or post onto the notice board.

Heather suggested we ask GSRs to ask groups if they are interested in a forum, and if they are, to email the website indicating their interest. A link will be put on the minutes.

Mac commented that he has put forward similar suggestions in the past. He was

not sure why there had been a drop off in the number of enquiries.

Nick returned to the issue of merging the two websites. Roger was unsure about this as they represented two Intergroup's different views, even though there is common material.

Heather suggested we wait for a response from groups re the forum, and also to ask groups what would they like the website to do, and if they are interested in the site being more interactive. Heather asked if it would be possible to put a questionnaire on the site, and Nick said it would, once the site has been updated.

Liz commented that the phone line no appears on posters but not the website address, which might be helpful for those not happy ringing in.

Nick confirmed he would like the response to the following questions from groups:

Action for GSRs, discuss with groups and come to next Intergroup with answers to these questions

- 1 - Would you like group officers to directly post content onto the website?**
- 2 - Would you like a discussion forum?**
- 3 - Any other suggestions on how the website can improve.**

PI - Geraldine:

Geraldine said that she had sent out several emails to various agencies and made telephone calls with regard to raising awareness. The response had been tremendous. Primary Care Trusts, the hospitals, medical staff, GPs, consultants, mental health staff, district and city councils, libraries, the Police, Victim Support, courts, had all responded positively. She said that where possible she had visited agencies and delivered literature and posters. She was trying to raise interest among group members in PI activity, and was beginning to get some response.

Geraldine and Jez S attended a seminar on 23rd April, 'Liver Disease – An Epidemic Waiting to Happen' by Dr Jan Freeman, Consultant in Gastroenterology at Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Chairman of the Liver Committee. Geraldine said that members of the audience were invited to ask questions, so she took the opportunity to mention AA to raise awareness in the community. They met other medical staff and were asked if AA representatives would be willing to give a talk to their staff.

Geraldine asked for support from groups to deliver literature to various local agencies, surgeries, etc.

On 28th May AA will talk to the Drug and Alcohol Strategy Team, St Peter's House, Derby NHS Trust; on 18th June a presentation will be given to the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy Group, County Hall, Matlock. The Primary Care Trust have provided us with GPs contact addresses and telephone numbers and we intend to contact them with a view to speaking to them at one of their GP meetings or forums. Following the Unison Annual Conference at Harrogate, their Derbyshire Branch Secretary, Brian Loader, has been in touch and we are arranging to speak to their members. Derbyshire Police are also interested in seeing us. Schools will be targeted after the summer break.

Heather and the group thanked Geraldine for her efforts. Many contacts have been made, it was clear that more support is needed. Geraldine asked for money for leaflets, as well as more people to be speakers. Heather suggested groups were asked for volunteer speakers, though there would be certain sobriety requirements depending on whether they were giving a talk or simply attending to help give out leaflets/support the speaker.

Liz asked Geraldine how much money she would need to carry out her work. She hadn't researched costs but thought a starter amount of £50 would suffice. Several people felt that this would not be enough to cover all the areas proposed, and said that Intergroup money is for things like PI and if we have the funds, we should use them. It was suggested that PI be allocated all of the funds apart from the prudent reserve, but Heather said that Foston would need some of the funds available, the group wanted to supply the new prisoner newcomer packs to prisoners attending meetings and also to cover a stall at the open day in August for prisoners and officers. £75 was requested for this, and £175 to cover travel until September. Intergroup agreed this and Nick suggested the remaining £350 for PI.

It was agreed that Geraldine start with £50 and once she had some experience of what literature was most effective for the target recipients, she could approach Liz for more, with a maximum of £350 agreed.

Sue suggested a copy of a budget breakdown could go out to groups so that they can see how the money is being spent. This was agreed, Heather and Liz agreed to provide Liz with a breakdown of the service expenditure and Liz said it could go out with the minutes.

Action for GSRs- ask in groups if anyone is prepared to attend/give talks about AA to interested parties (Health, Police, Education)- members will be needed to give talks and to go along to support members giving talks. Ideally everyone interested will be partnered with someone who already has experience in this and will be sponsored into this type of service. GSRs should bring names of volunteers to Intergroup, with a view to a list being compiled. Anyone requiring more information should ring Geraldine or Heather.

Any Other Business:

➤ **Regional Forum:**

Val brought the Regional Forum to the attention of the group. It will be held on Sunday 4th October at the Nottingham Sherwood community centre. It is only held once every 4 years, and is open to all. 2 members of the board have been invited to speak on special topics, this year the topics are Health and Prisons. Board members share on how they have served the Fellowship in these areas. There will be 2 workshops, where individuals can ask questions, and in the afternoon all feedback comes back to the meeting.

➤ **Service workshop**

Notts/Leics Intergroup are holding a service workshop at She rwood Community Ceber June 27th 1-4:30pm, covering all aspects of service that can be done by members from 1 month in sobriety onwards

➤ **Prison workshop:**

A prison workshop will be held at Sherwood community centre, Nottingham, on Sunday August 9th, 2-4pm. A prison governor will give a presentation on what they would like AA to do in the prisons. It is for anyone interested in doing prison service/already doing prison service.

➤ **Regional meeting:**

The next Regional meeting is on June 7th, Sunday, at Shardlow. Anyone can attend as a visitor.

Action for GSRs- please publicise these events at any meetings attended as well as your own groups.

➤ **Telephone line issues :**

Ingrid raised the issue that recently she had had people ringing her no directly: given to people from the phone line, and that this needs to be addressed. Heather is the telephone service rep and will pass this on.

➤ **Group attendance at Intergroup :**

Heather raised the issue that not all Derbys groups attend Intergroup. In particular there is a multiple meeting group in Derby city centre which is central to the service of Intergroup as they fill 5 responder slots on phone service and about 90% of the 12 step list for that area. She would like to encourage all groups to come, particularly those engaged in service activities, and asked for comments, commenting that historically there has been controversy.

Discussion ensued about the controversy, Heather said that she had contacted the group and understood they would be prepared to start at 'ground zero' and attend Intergroup, in an attempt to move forward and enable all groups to carry the message most effectively.

Heather asked if Intergroup was willing to start again at point zero?

The meeting agreed that in the interests of Fellowship it would be beneficial if all groups could work together, and would be happy for group members to attend Intergroup and to bring it back to point zero. Heather said she had agreed to send the minutes to the Derby city centre group, and they would be notified of future meetings.

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12TH FLAMSTEED CENTRE
ILKESTON.

***NB

The detailed analysis of how the Conference decisions and feedback relate to the issues and points put forward by Derbyshire Intergroup has not been done because it was suggested as a joint piece of work and I have not had time to write it up by myself. However I have compared the notes at Intergroup with the Conference feedback and one issue we felt strongly about, the recommendation that AA should put employers in touch with, or otherwise endorse, outside Agencies, was removed.