

Interlink

The newsletter for Southdown intergroup

In This Issue

We talk to Tony about the benefits of service

James gives us a full report on assembly

We need you for intergroup service roles!

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Editor's Message

Happy May to all!

As I write this the sun is shining on a perfect sunny spring day in Southsea which keeps this AA member cheerful. The other thing sure to alter my mood for the better is service. From one of my first roles doing the literature to drying up cups last week after a lunchtime meeting chatting away to a fellow on washing duty; I have always found helping others helps me more.

One of the main outcomes from a recent Liaison Offers meeting was the importance of de-mystifying intergroup level service positions so we can get more people in the fellowship involved in keeping AA Southdown running smoothly. One of the main tasks of Interlink, is just that - to give us an insight into what the LOs and other members of Intergroup get up to so others may take their turn fully understanding what it entails and being inspired to step up.

When I updated the outstanding service positions at Intergroup available, I couldn't help but notice the list had gotten longer not shorter(!) which means perhaps we need to work harder to make these roles understood. If anyone in the Southdown fellowship has any thoughts or ideas for Interlink content to help inspire sign-ups - we would LOVE to hear from you. Answers on a postcard (or an email) please!

In other news we have some great insights into the most recent assembly and thanks to Tony for stepping up to share his experience of being a Vice-Chair.

Finally James has kindly asked we include furlough correspondence from Q1 with this issue of Interlink (please find below) and shared a poster for the upcoming 75th Anniversary Convention in June. Thanks James!

Yours in fellowship,

Lucy S
Interlink Editor
Lucy S, Interlink Editor
interlink.southdown@aamail.org



OUR VICE CHAIR CHECKS IN...

I'd like to start with some feedback from our brilliant GSRs who have felt that the keep in touch meetings help them to feel supported in their roles, which is great to hear. We'll also continue to lean on Zoom to offer greater flexibility and less regional travel time for all; as well as offering a choice of dates and times to increase attendance. A reminder to all GSRs: please do reach out for support at any time and continue to raise issues for discussion at assembly - we love to hear from you.

Last month the Steering Committee met for coffee with Liaison Officers to discuss challenges and potential support. It was agreed that creating profiles including key information on what each LO role entails would help increase awareness and act as a myth buster; hopefully encouraging new AA members into these vital and rewarding service positions. This will also help give the LO's the confidence to undertake the tasks and support sponsorship into the roles.

Service is one of the fundamental elements of the fellowship, without service, there are only two sides to the triangle. I have had the privilege of attending meetings across the country and have always been met with a friendly face and warm welcome. I have attended these meetings knowing that I am safe and amongst friends. I also know that these meetings can't go ahead without members stepping forward to do service. I am always grateful that wherever I am in the country, I can find the safety and security of the fellowship. At many of these meetings I have heard the local group recite the responsibility pledge, 'when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help I want the hand of AA always to be there and for that, I am responsible'. What a really powerful statement and one I am grateful to see in action every time I walk through the doors of an AA meeting.

Sponsorship provides an ideal opportunity to support service within the fellowship. As GSRs, what is your group conscience in respect of sponsorship? How can you help encourage members of your group into service to support their recovery and the still suffering alcoholic as well as practicing the steps and traditions?

Yours in Fellowship

Tony, Vice-Chair Southdown Intergroup

vice-chair.southdown@aamail.org

Intergroup Vacancies

- **Health Liaison Officer**
- **Young Persons Liaison Officer**
- **Employment Liaison Officer**
- **Regional Representatives**
- **Armed Forces Liaison volunteers**
- **Archivist**
- **Public Information Liaison Officer**



Q&A WITH TONY

How long have you been in this role and how did you find out about it?

I have been the Vice-chair of Southdown Intergroup since February 2021 having been approached by the current chair and invited to join.

What is the highlight of doing this role?

It is a privilege to be able to be of service to the fellowship and it is rewarding to have been able to help support the local groups within Southdown Intergroup through the pandemic.

What impact do you think doing the role has had on your own recovery?

Doing service is always good for my recovery and supports step 12 of carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic and practicing the principles in all our affairs. This role has given me greater insight into the structure of AA, the AA traditions and Southdown Intergroup Aims & Structures. It has made me think about the conscience of Southdown Intergroup and how the role supports this as well as reinforcing the premise of tradition 2 that 'our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern'. It has also made me think more about the impact of sponsorship and sponsoring people into roles so that the fellowship continues to be there to help keep me and others sober.

South East Region

195th Assembly 2022

The assembly was held on Zoom and was opened by Patrick (Chair) at 10.30 am with the preamble. Sue (Vice Chair) gave instructions for the workshops.

Regional Reps Workshop

Adrian (Brighton) took the chair and invited topics: communications, WhatsApp, tradition 7 payments, conference questions, and sharing email addresses were suggested:

Communications: Sally P (H&R) set up a WhatsApp group for RRs, not liked by everyone, however good source of feedback

Email addresses: Confidential list gives everyone's email address; several RRs have had difficulty accessing the filestore. Advised one should make a request to York and receive back a pin to enable access. Ask admin@aamail.org Use <http://aa.files.org/login-aa.do> I (Jim Southdown IG) asked how we might obtain generic region rep email addresses, decided to take up with RECLO. Liz (E Sussex) suggested make up own RR email address using Google because of problems with AA system with passwords.

Tradition 7 monies: Several RRs said the £1 was given 20 years ago and that in many meeting this was still the usual contribution, with increases in prices the cost of a beer (£5) would seem appropriate. I (Jim Southdown) mentioned the use of phone based banking apps such as Revolut. Paul (WKent) makes a point of explaining to groups the true cost of running a group, however delicately! Stuart (NESurrey) Their meeting are hybrid with a pot and online payments using QR code or barcode, however meeting does need to be self-sufficient. EJ(ESussex) use PayPal and pot as both meetings and society become gradually cashless. Sally (H&R) do monthly payment and that we are able to contribute more at Zoom meetings as we are saving petrol etc. Liz (ESussex) Online bank account can have one person operating the account with secondary authorisation.

Note-taking at assemblies and sharing back to IGs: Suggested take notes and await minutes and treasurer's report.

Questions for conference: Marylyn (H&R) had a meeting with a conference delegate to explain the questions. Paul (WSussex) one question a week in the business section of the meeting. TomB (Northdown) liked the idea of a separate meeting just to discuss QFCs. Paul (WKent) had a workshop with a conference delegate to explain the QFC later meeting to feedback responses to delegate. Stephen (MidSurrey) had left the literature questions as nobody had read the relevant passages. MarkF (EKent) can send comments to the conference delegates directly until end of March.

195TH ASSEMBLY 2022

Main Assembly

Reports of the workshops:

Conference Delegates workshop: All 6 back. Need dates for the post-conference meetings. Groups to consider the main questions for conference, not the literature questions. Email confdel.se@aamail.org with conference questions. There is a leaflet on how to raise a conference question.

ECLO Workshop

3 people attended. Discussion of email migration problems. New system has teething problems. Access to confidential list on file store. Online meetings can remain franchised within structure.

Finance workshop

Sonia reported that only 3 treasurers attended out of 11 IG treasurers. Region moving from Barclays to Unity. Format for how reports are presented. Discussed gratitude week and how monies are passed up the chain. Intergroup Chair and Secretaries workshop: Patrick reported news that 2 members had sought restraining orders from one another, a sense of balance is needed. Comment on medication in a meeting. Some controlling behaviour by right wing people to newcomers in SE London.

PI/Employment/Health/Prisons/Probation workshop

Ellie discussed highlights, EKent adverts on buses and surgeries. NWSurrey bus campaign. Nick EKent described a presentation to students and medical school. WhatsApp group established.

Regional Reps workshop

Adrian chaired the workshop and presented the topics; Communication, WhatsApp groups, Tradition 7 pots Suggestions the true costs of meetings should be emphasised. Cashless society and PayPal.

Telephones workshop

AlanT (RTLO) 3 different versions BT cloud systems. Mentioned nuisance calls. 12th step guidelines, old guard still going out on their own.

Main assembly

Chairman Patrick read concepts and pledge; Secretary (Jan) apologies from Maureen, Jane and Tyeacer (WSx) Minutes revised edition with additions. Vacancies, applicants need a nomination from the secretary or Chairman of their IG or from an officer of Region.

Election AlanM moving to Brighton prospective RECLO, was co-opted rather than elected as position not advertised twice.



South East Region

Regional Reports

EKent (John) Had presentation on neuro problems with an explanation of ADHD. Signatories revamped. Workshop in January QFC explained and pre conference meeting.

ESussex (Emma Jane) IG assembly in January, listed officers needed and those in position. Telephones have moved to cloud. Carrying message to psychiatric wards.

Hastings and Rother (Sally) DIL report for input from September. Shirley & Jan gave QFC workshop last week.

MidSurrey (Stephen) Assembly 07/12/21 Vacancies RR and Safeguarding LO (to backup safeguarding policy and be point of contact for issues. Hope to restart bus advertising after Covid.

Northdown (Adrian) Vacancies, sadly no takers. Convention 26/06/22. Darkness into Light (DIL) venue at Free Community Centre, Winchester. 1 meeting at Winchester prison. Need home for archive material.

NESurrey (Stuart) Assembly 25th October. Many IG vacancies. Solent (StevieK) IG assembly 11/11/21. Discussion on Where to Finds (WTF) pdf versions.

Southdown (James) Bullet points of the written report given

WKent (Helen) Sadly Fiona RR has died. Discussion of pdf v printed versions of WTFs

WSx (Paul) Need YPLO, Robin appointed Health LO. Mini convention 13/01/22. Assembly on Zoom. Open meeting formed for new GPs. New Ditchling meeting.

MAIN ASSEMBLY (CONT.)

Board Trustee (Charles) Recent meeting, visited GSO. Some board meetings F2F. Final assembly of conference with voting at the end, of note the safeguarding document! Parliamentary meeting 12/05/22 at Portcullis House, strict security! Board trustees are elected for 4 years. Nomination committee, future plans, points of action. Charles chaired PI now employment.

Darkness into Light Nick showed a video of the Portsmouth DIL trial run including the Portsmouth mayor. Difficulty in finding a venue for the Eastbourne DIL exhibition, information on how to get into libraries needed.

75 Convention Agnes: She has visited IGs. Need to pre-register. Supply quotation to banner, possible "doggerel" from the Winchester tomb stone. 1st UK AA meeting was held at Dorchester Hotel 1947. IGs to supply possible 75 speakers, need to be 5 years sober and going to the convention.

Treasurer (Sonia) Regional treasurers meeting in York carried out on Zoom. SE Region currently healthy financially. First quarter summary report, prudent reserve £8445.78, therefore send £19K to GSO. Although agreement moneywise, proposal made by Jan (Secretary) and Sue (Vice-Chair) to withhold these funds until furlough monies resolved. Pat spoke against. GSO current reserve is over £2 million. To date GSO say they are not repaying the furlough monies. Regional bank account is still with Barclays, the Unity account having been started but is not yet operational. Unidentified payment to Region from Lewis SR for £100.

Chairman Patrick Has attended the regional chairman's meeting in York. Lack of information about the 75 convention, though Agnes is doing well. Members of the Southern National Convention committee were dismissed before they had a chance to carry out their function, this issue needs to be resolved. Online presence has holes in carrying the message.

Vice-Chairwoman Sue Regional assembly in June is F2F so WSx are requested to make the teas.

Secretary Jan Attended Fiona's funeral on behalf of Region. Fewer workshops due to Zoom numbers. Messaged Ranjan re furlough. Sat 20th May 2023 for web management etc.

Furlough monies Allen T unhappy with this money being taken in relation to Tradition 7. GSO Treasurer says was itemised at the 20/21 conference and that Board had a legal right to ask for furlough money, though it was not compulsory they could have just continued to pay the staff as GSO had sufficient reserves and continuing income. AA is not taxed on its income. Should have been referred to conference delegates not regional chairs. Board and charity status are a red herring in relation to furlough. This offends against decency as our contributions continued and increased during furlough. Pat felt the wording of responses to GSO were hostile. Many differing opinions were expressed. Jean asked if we could bring an emergency motion to conference. Allen T said a question for conference was submitted and rejected. An emergency resolution was voted for and passed, to seek the response of other Regional chairs.

Liaison Officer's Reports

Archives

Southdown has reacted well to the pandemic by opening online meetings. In June 2017 we had 67 groups registered at GSO. This has now reduced to 60 in April 2022. At the height of the pandemic, we had 32 online groups in November 2020. This number has now reduced to 14 in April 2022.

GSRs now need to update their group details. Please fill in the Southdown Intergroup Registration/ Amendment form (pink form), then email to Southdown and GSO. The minimum information required for amendments is the group name, day, time and venue, together with two telephone contacts and a group contact email address. This helps Southdown and GSO communicate directly with your group.

We are looking for a replacement Southdown archivist. Are you interested? You would not be alone, but part of the National Archive Network. Nobody can be expected to have an understanding and skills for the job, right from the start but an enthusiasm for archive work is a pre-requisite. You would be part of the SE Region archive team and mentored by me.

I've included some information about the role below to help clarify but please do get in touch if you have any questions or are interested in the role.

Looking for someone who:

1. has completed one or more posts at Intergroup
2. is prepared to make a long-term commitment to the post
3. is prepared to learn archive skills and local AA history
4. can collect Intergroup minutes and other reports of Intergroup activity
5. has a working knowledge of AA Service Structure and Traditions

After settling into the job, you will:

6. encourage enthusiasts to document the history of their group
7. liaise and co-operate with regional Archivists on a regular basis
8. regularly report to Intergroup on work done or planned
9. have a working knowledge of GB Archives Policy and Procedure documents
10. encourage others to keep memorabilia and paperwork
11. set up an inventory of who is keeping what

In time you will learn how to:

12. turn information collected into another form (e.g. write one-page history of prison service work from Intergroup prison reports)
13. gather from archives enthusiasts, a group of like-minded people to work on bigger projects such as the history of Intergroup
14. consider various forms of archives displays and assess where it could be used

Further information on the Archives role can be obtained from Chapter 11 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain pages 67 to 71 or just ask!

Thanks,

Nick, Archives Liaison Officer
archives.southdown@aamail.org



Liaison Officer's Reports

Telephones

We started 2022 with a steady volume of calls with an average of 450 calls per month in January and February. In March, however, there was a marked decrease of just over 100 calls.

Although we currently have a full complement of responders, we still continue to see a high degree of 'churn' amongst responders which can stretch the service on occasion.

The Southdown telephone service was represented at the recent Isle of Wight Convention where there was a good interest in telephone and 12th step service.

We continue to block withheld telephone numbers from 6pm to 7am which has greatly assisted the evening and overnight responders. This measure has significantly reduced the number of nuisance calls and allowed responders to focus on callers genuinely in need.

Greg B, Telephone Liaison Officer
telephones.southdown@aamail.org



12th Step

I can happily say that I am now settled into my new 12th step LO role, and have been busy maintaining the spreadsheet and looking after the inbox. Just wanted to say a huge thanks to my predecessor Clare M for her service and support.

The annual 12th Step list review took place in October 2021, where each Group Service Representative was sent a list of the current 12th Step volunteers for their group and asked to check their willingness and availability. This will be conducted again in October 2022. In addition, a quarterly email to 12th Step volunteers was sent at the beginning of 2022 to ask them to confirm their willingness to help the newcomer and to update their contact details and availability if necessary. I'll be sending out an email in the coming weeks now my role has been fully transitioned, so I look forward to liaising with members of the Southdown fellowship.

Finally an update on figures... As April 2022, there are 168 people on the 12 Step list which has barely changed since July 2021. We are always looking for new fellows to join us and would value the support. To find out more on becoming a 12th stepper please get in touch!

Paul H, 12th Step Liaison Officer
12step.southdown@aamail.org



AA GB 75th Anniversary Convention
with Al-Anon participation

www.aa75.co.uk



10th - 12th June 2022

**Tickets on sale
now!**

Leeds Arena Programme

Friday	20:00 to 22:00	Opening Meeting
Saturday	10:00 to 11:30	AA Open Meeting
Saturday	14:00 to 15:30	AA Open Meeting
Saturday	20:00 to 21:30	Shared Platform
Sunday	10:00 to 12:00	"Old Timers"
Sunday	13:00 to 15:00	Final Gathering

**With your registration you
will get:**

- ◆ 75th Publication
- ◆ Lanyard
- ◆ Pin Badge
- ◆ AA 75th Pen
- ◆ A bag to carry it all in

For info contact: admin.aa75@gsogb.org.uk

◆ Volunteer ◆ 5km/10km run ◆ AA Services





South East Region Alcoholics Anonymous

To: The Chair, General Service Board

Cc: Board Members
General Secretary
Conference Steering Committee

General Service Office , Alcoholics Anonymous,
PO Box 1,
10 Toft Green,
York YO1 7NJ

Dear Amanda,

Re: Objection to CJRS (furlough) grant

We are aware that you have said that this is a matter for Conference to discuss. We agree.

Unfortunately, when this issue was submitted in the form of a question (See Appendix 1), it was not accepted by the Conference Steering Committee but was referred to the General Service Board with a request that the Treasurer includes it in his report for Conference 2022.

The matter came to the attention of South East Region too late for us to submit a question, but we have raised our concerns (see Appendix 2) and found that the answers supplied by the honorary treasurer (see Appendix 3) do not alleviate them. In fact, our concerns have been increased by some of the points in that reply.

We believe that the matter requires a full and informed Conference discussion and are therefore submitting a resolution for inclusion in the Conference agenda, in line with the Structure Handbook (2021) page 105, and within the required timeframe:

Any further resolutions from individuals, groups, intergroups or regions must be submitted to the Board at least two months before the Conference for possible inclusion in the final Agenda.

A resolution, in two parts:

1. Conference believes that the General Service Board's application for, and receipt of, a CJRS (furlough) grant in April 2020 was contrary to the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, particularly Tradition Seven, and was inappropriate.
2. Irrespective of Part 1, Conference believes that the grant should be repaid, as the money was not necessary to maintain the staff in employment.

An informed Conference discussion requires the presentation of the Board's arguments and ours for consideration before the annual meeting in April. We therefore request that Appendix 4 be sent out, with the resolution, to Conference delegates, Regions, Intergroups and groups.

With thanks,

Jan Adams

Jan A
Secretary, South East Region, Alcoholics Anonymous.

APPENDIX 1

Question Submitted to Conference Steering Committee

Would the Fellowship discuss, share experience and make recommendations on whether applying for and receiving Government Grant funding is contrary to Tradition 7, and whether funds received under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (“furlough”) should be repaid?

Background :

- Tradition 7
- Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2020

Tradition 7 suggests that “Every AA Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

As disclosed by the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2020 filed at Companies House on 8 June 2021, the General Service Board applied for and received grants from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for “furloughed” staff totalling £29,997 during the year. This outside contribution was received while the Board reported a surplus for the year to 30 September 2020 of £156,000 and held reserves at the end of the period in excess of £2,500,000.

My intention behind asking this question is to get a definitive interpretation from the Fellowship as to the scope of Tradition 7 specifically with respect to Government Grants, and whether given the extremely robust nature of our finances, surpluses and reserves, the Grant received by the Board should be repaid as we can now clearly see it was not necessary to maintain our solvency.

APPENDIX 2

Initial letter from SE Region to the General Secretary



South East Region Alcoholics Anonymous

16 November 2021

Dear Ranjan

I hope this finds you well.

Last Sunday, 14 November, South East Region held its AGM and Conscience Meeting at which we discussed funding applied for and received from Her Majesty's Government. For accuracy's sake, the questions were worded as follows:

In 2020, the General Service Board applied for, and received, a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) grant of £29,997.00 (See pages 13 and 21 of the Annual Report 2020 – AA GB Website/Members/Document Library/Finance/Annual Reports).

Does the SE Region Assembly consider that this is contrary to Tradition Seven? and

Notwithstanding the answer to point 1, does the Assembly think that this grant should now be repaid, particularly bearing in mind that over 125,000 mainly for-profit organisations have repaid some or all of their grants?

Assembly had sight of your response when asked about this, as well as your reply to an email from our Conference Delegate. As such, we are aware of your justification for this action and decision not to repay the grant.

Our members expressed most vehemently, our belief that this action is contrary to Tradition Seven and the description of the GSB in the AA Structure Handbook which states that "The Board is responsible to the General Service Conference" and "The General Service Board is the custodian of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous of Great Britain. As such, it has a responsibility to ensure that the Traditions are preserved intact ... " The Traditions Checklist, published by GSO asks the question, "Do I understand why it is important for GSO to refuse finance from government.....?"

We could find no justification for this action, considering firstly that members of the Fellowship continued to send contributions to GSO during that time that were well in excess of the grant. Furthermore, reserves of over £2,500,000, with no stated purpose, were held and there was an operating surplus of £156,000. It is important to note that the reserves are well in excess of the prudent reserve of approximately £1.6 million as explained in the Structure Handbook. Additionally, returns on our reserves are as much, if not more, than the Government Grant applied for and received.

Some members described this action as 'shabby', 'spiritually wrong' and 'the tip of the iceberg'. Once one Tradition is broken it is only a matter of time before others are ignored.

Finally, we were somewhat surprised that no mention of this grant was made in the Treasurer's Report to Conference in April 2020. We wondered why this was. We noted with interest however that the report stresses, in bold letters, "The Charity (GSB) has no control over any aspect of its income."

Whilst SE Region accept that there is now nothing that we can do about your decision to apply for and accept money from an outside source, we ask that the money be returned as a matter of urgency. We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Jan Adame.

Jan A

Secretary, SE Region.

APPENDIX 3

Reply from the Honorary Treasurer and the General Secretary

26th November 2021

Dear Jan,

I hope this finds you well. Thank you for sending the Regions enquiry regarding the Furlough.

First of all, there was no report to Conference in April 2020 due to no conference being held, however the April 2021 Conference report did itemise the Government grant figures. The Board had discussed and approved participation in the furlough scheme as:

1. The Charity's employees are UK Tax and National Insurance contributors and AAGB Ltd as an employer is a NI contributor, and therefore are entitled to draw upon those funds to which they have contributed. All furlough money received went entirely and directly to our employees most of whom are non-alcoholic. Therefore, neither the Charity nor any of its employees were taking anything they were not entitled to.
2. The charity applied for the furlough to comply with the Government's Stay at Home Order and so protect our staff's employment, health and wellbeing. Had it not done so, by either keeping its offices open and requiring staff to come in, or dismissing those staff, then it would have placed itself in the position of endangering lives and breaking the law or having to engage in an expensive recruitment and training process for new staff, which would have resulted in a poorer service at greater expense to the Fellowship. Furthermore, dismissal of such loyal and experienced staff would not have been within the Fellowships spirit of love and compassion.
3. The charity "The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited" was set up by the Fellowship to provide it with goods and services to further its Primary Purpose, by being a registered charity and operating as a company limited by guarantee and therefore utilise advantages inherent in such an arrangement, such as VAT rebates (money also received from government), no tax on income (Government subsidy) and income from investments (Company profits).

As a further note as of September 2021, only £1.3 Billion out of £70 Billion grants paid out under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme had been repaid.

Given these points there is no requirement under Tradition 7 for the Board to repay any of these funds to the Government. Furthermore, at the recent Regional Chairs meeting, all other Regional Chairs present indicated their regions agreement with the Board reasoning and decision. GSO has only received one other enquiry from an Intergroup on this matter.

Thank you again for your kind letter on behalf of your Region and for your continued service to our wonderful Fellowship.

Love in Fellowship

Clive K, GSB Honorary Treasurer & Ranjan B, General Secretary

APPENDIX 4

Resolution from South East Region with background information for distribution pre-Conference

1. Conference believes that the General Service Board's application for, and receipt of, a CJRS (furlough) grant in April 2020 was contrary to the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, particularly Tradition Seven, and was inappropriate.
 2. Irrespective of Part1, Conference believes that the grant should be repaid, as the money was not necessary to maintain the staff in employment.
-
1. In 1986 Parliament enacted a special bill (Alcoholics Anonymous (Dispositions) Act 1986) to allow AA (GB) to refuse monies from non-members, enabling us to legitimately remain faithful to Tradition Seven under all circumstances.
 2. In 2020, the General Service Board applied for, and received, a Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) grant of £29,997.00
 3. We do not dispute the legality of this action, nor do we dispute the Board's legal right to apply for it.
 4. We do, however, feel that this was an inappropriate decision as, in our view, it clearly breaches Tradition Seven. Our views have been conveyed to the Board and their response is included below. It does not change our view for reasons explained here
 5. We also consider it to have been somewhat unethical in that the grants were intended to support organisations whose income streams would decline as a result of Lockdown.
 6. This situation does not apply to AA, as money continued to flow in from member contributions and no decline in income was ever experienced – and indeed none should have been anticipated.
 7. Furthermore, our reserves stand at somewhere in the region of £1million in excess of a prudent reserve. The prudent reserve (app £1.6m) is sufficient to cover one and a quarter year's full operating expenses, even if no contributions at all are received from members.
 8. It is clear that there should never have been any possibility of having to lay off staff and we were quite capable of continuing to pay our workers in full – without even having to touch our reserves – and if reserves are not there to provide for such eventualities, why are we keeping them “for no stated purpose”? (Tradition Seven - Long Form)
 9. *“The General Service Board is the custodian of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain. As such, it has a responsibility to ensure that the Traditions are preserved and that the Fellowship of AA in Great Britain acts in accordance with the Traditions”* (Structure Handbook (2018) page 109)
 10. Whatever the technical or legal arguments put forward to support the case for this grant, we feel that it is a fundamentally simple matter. AA now has £30k more and the government £30k less, and this is not in any way in the spirit (or the letter) of our precious Traditions. As it says in the Traditions Checklist, published by our own GSO:
Do I understand why it is important for GSO to refuse finance from the government or other sources when it is short of funds?”

We were not even short of funds.