

Interlink

The newsletter for Southdown intergroup

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Update on the GSR workshop

Southdown Legacy is coming!

Plea from the Liaison Officer Coordinator

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Editor's Message

Hello fellows,

Lots of news as we head into Spring, particularly with the comings and goings of service members and the need for more support.

On that note, this is my last issue of Interlink and have taken to the Q&A hot seat to reflect on what this brilliant bit of service has meant to me and my recovery. Next I'll be helping to launch the next issue of Southdown Legacy - more on that to follow at Assembly!

We also have an impassioned plea from our new Liaison Officer Coordinator Colin, who is asking members of the fellowship to please step up and help support the Liaison Officer Committee. Give it a read below and do pass the message on in your Home Groups.

There's plenty of other updates from LOC members too, from prisons to health - check out all the brilliant work that has been going on to spread the message to the still suffering alcoholic. Denise from Emsworth has also shared a lovely story for our 'meeting anniversary' page - do keep sending in your meeting anniversaries and any resulting celebrations!

Finally in our Spotlight feature, two GSRs share their experience of the recent Southdown GSR workshop which took place in April; plus a reminder to help us in our search to find a new ECLO (Electronic Communications Liaison Officer)

Yours in fellowship,

Lucy S, Interlink Editor
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OUR CHAIR CHECKS IN...

Greetings Fellows,

Well, it's been a busy few months and I feel I am well and truly immersed in the role of Chair! We had two zoom meetings for Questions for Conference, and I want to thank all of the GSRs who participated. It is important for all Groups within Southdown to have a voice when it comes to matters affecting AA. We are all responsible.

I am pleased that we have a nomination to join the Steering Committee and hopefully someone will come forward for the role of ECLO as then we will be truly self-supporting as an Intergroup with all service positions filled. I am excited that as an Intergroup we are supporting Fellows to be able to do service such as Dani attending the Young Persons Roadshow in Glasgow. For me, service has always been paramount to my recovery, and I encourage everyone to get involved where they can!

As requested at the December conscience meeting, we recently held a GSR Workshop. This was for new or current GSRs or anyone interested in the role. Bob and Chris from Mid-Surrey Intergroup came to lead the workshop with myself and H facilitating. I was delighted by the attendance, the participation and the great feedback received. Due to the success of the GSR workshop we have now planned a Traditions Workshop to be held on Saturday 12th October.

Thank you to everyone who has reached out to me to offer words of support, if anyone has anything they would like to raise with regards to Southdown Intergroup, please do not hesitate to email me.

Yours in Fellowship

Ellie, Chair Southdown Intergroup

chair.southdown@aamail.org

Q&A WITH LUCY

What is your role and how long have you been in it?

I've been Interlink Editor for three years, which is incredible really as its gone so fast! The role is really about letting members of the Southdowns fellowship know what has been going on at Intergroup - particularly with the Liaison Officers / Liaison Committee.

I liaise with members of Intergroup - from our lovely Chair to TLO - every few months to gather updates and reports, then edit them all together into our quarterly newsletter. I also work with members of the fellowship who fancy getting involved by writing something for our Spotlight page.

Interlink is then distributed to all members of the Steering Committee and any GSRs and fellows that have subscribed to receive it and printed for those that want to take a copy or two at assembly.

What are the highlights of doing this role?

It's been a privilege to get to know members of the committees and to learn how much work goes on behind the scenes at Intergroup level.

I've had lots of service roles at meeting level but I had no concept at all of how the cogs of AA kept whirring. It's made me even more passionate about the fellowship and just how brilliant us recovering alcoholics are in general.

It was also really fun working on the redesign of Interlink and working with the LOs on ideas on how to get it to more people.



LO Committee Update

Plea from the Liaison Officer Coordinator

Having recently been appointed as Liaison Officer Coordinator position for the Southdown Intergroup, work has started to shape the role with the aim of supporting all Intergroup members in service.

As a little background, in May 2022 the Southdown Intergroup Committee considered the position with vacant Liaison Officer positions. It was determined that a radical approach to take action to cover the important roles was required. A review of the historical position found that from the available 11 Liaison Officer positions there were significant gaps in roles being filled between 2018 and 2022. In summary the data indicated that throughout a four-year period the Liaison Officer positions were frequently vacant. As an average for this period, in 51% of the time the positions were not being covered thus raising concerns that the intergroup was not fulfilling its commitment to carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

The reasons why positions were not filled were considered and no one reason could be identified. However, it was deemed likely that the vacant roles were due to a number of factors, including lack of sponsorship and the fact that individuals who take on the Liaison Officer roles had been historically isolated and expected to cover a large geographical area with little to no additional support from other members.

Given the evidence the Intergroup created the Liaison Officer Committee (LOC) to take on responsibility as a collective to cover, Young Persons, Health, Public Information, Armed Forces, Employment and Criminal Justice. I was appointed as the LOC Coordinator in February this year.

Since my appointment, I have been reviewing and working towards updating our aims and structures and have met with the existing LOC team who tirelessly work to carry the message across all areas. I am blown away by their commitment and desire to help others - BUT THEY NEED MORE HELP AND SUPPORT FROM OUR FELLOW MEMBERS.

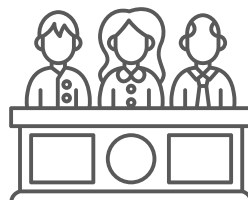
Every member of our intergroup has an opportunity to become involved in LOC service and therefore in the coming weeks all members will be asked to express their interest in undertaking service work in all areas including (but not limited to) health, criminal justice, public information, armed forces and young persons.

This could include, attending meetings in hospitals and prisons, hosting young person get-togethers, attending armed forces events and meeting with employers or raising awareness with the public through community meetings and delivering leaflets. Please do get in contact with me should you wish to get involved - I am absolutely certain that you will help us and our fellow members by doing so!

Much work is to be done but I remain upbeat that we can as a collective we can deliver even more great work to support the still suffering alcoholic.

Colin, Liaison Officer Committee Coordinator

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MEETING ANNIVERSARIES

Happy birthday to Emsworth Thursday As Bill Sees It who celebrated their 11th Anniversary on Thursday 11th April 2024!

"Some of you might remember Dr. Ken from Emsworth. He always felt there was a need for a meeting between Chichester and Portsmouth but a suitable venue could not be found. Fast forward a few years and after extensive searching, our founder member, Chas secured a suitable venue in the Emsworth Community Centre South Street and the first Emsworth As Bill Sees It was held 7.30 11th April 2013.

We have moved several times over the years and now very settled in the Waterside Church, Beach Road, Emsworth and will be celebrating our 11th Anniversary on April 11th.

Everyone was welcomed to celebrate with cakes and biscuits, tea and coffee."

Denise GSR Co-founder of the Group

To share your meeting anniversary stories including the big birthday number and any specific party activities, from cake to sparklers, to interlink.southdown@aamail.org



Q&A WITH LUCY (CONT.)

What effects has this had on your recovery?

Doing this role has had a huge effect on my recovery. I don't think you can do service among such hard-working fellows and not have some of the emotional sobriety rub off on you!

I moved back to Hampshire during lock down with a few years of not drinking under my belt. Because there were no face to face meetings and I didn't know anyone, I felt very isolated and worried that it would affect my sobriety.

Signing up as Interlink Editor in 2021, quickly meant I knew lots of faces at meetings and felt that sense of connection which is my kryptonite against the first drink.

Most importantly, being in a role which allows me to sit back and let others speak means I get to do the thing I'm worst at - listen!

As I rotate out of the role, I'm a very grateful alcoholic for the opportunities to grow and learn that doing this service has given me.

Liaison Officer's Reports

Electronic Communications

We desperately need someone to take on the currently vacant ECLO role. It is paramount that the website is kept up to date with meeting information. Andrew (previous ECLO) will provide full training.

Please mention this vacancy at your meetings. An established period of sobriety of not less than 2 years is required. Further information available on request.



"The goal is to have at least eight members with clearance on a rota to enable an AA meeting once a week in the prison"

Prisons

The AA meetings in the I.O.W Prisons are still on a monthly basis with three members going in to facilitate and nine inmates attending.

After talking with the lead from the DART team I was asked to resend all the details of members who are interested in this service. This I have done, and did hear from a member who has a face to face meeting at the prison April 24th.

The goal is to have at least eight members with clearance on a rota to enable an AA meeting once a week in the prison. I have faith that this is achievable with our members that have come forward, it just takes time with the vetting process.

I will be putting in an order for literature with our treasurer but please if any group has SOFT back literature that looks a little tatty would your group consider donating it for the prison and bring along to assembly, thank you.

Thanks,

Angie K, part of the Liaison Officer Committee



Health

All things are the same! The only new thing is will have just done four weeks in a row doing presentations and sharing for medical practitioners at Bognor Memorial Hospital. To continue in the future!

Also we have had good feedback from the detox unit in Fareham (Dame Carol Detoxification unit) and have a volunteer rota going for that and for QA Hospital in Cosham but always looking for volunteers.

Nicky, part of the Liaison Officer Committee



Liaison Officer's Reports

"In quarter 1 of 2024 we took 632 calls, with 26% of those resulting in 12 step intervention"

Telephones

Hi all, Marianne and I would like to thank each and every one of our Telephone Responders for their continued service.

In quarter 1 of 2024 we took 632 calls, with 26% of those resulting in 12 step intervention. 38% of the total calls are from out of our Intergroup area but as always these type of call are important to get the caller connected with someone in the fellowship who can potentially help.

We have seen an increase of calls lately where no action is needed but the caller wants to talk or get info about AA as a whole. We are always looking for people to be added as reserve responders and if anyone is interested please contact Marianne or myself.



Thanks,

Marianne + Ed, Telephone Liaison Officers
telephones.southdown@aamail.org

Archives

SOUTHDOWN LEGACY

The fifth edition of the Southdown Legacy is currently being prepared. This is an A5 30-page archive newsletter, that is published every so often. It highlights activities, service, and group histories within the Southdown Intergroup.

HELP REQUIRED

A group of enthusiastic members is being formed to help organise the Southdown archive collection. The idea is to meet once a month, working as a group, to carry out specific necessary tasks. Our first piece of work being to make a revised updated inventory of the collection. If you would like to join us, please do get in touch by emailing: archives.southdown@aamail.org

Nick, Archives Liaison Officer

archives.southdown@aamail.org



interlink spotlight



SOUTHDOWN INTERGROUP GSR WORKSHOP **FEEDBACK FROM ATTENDEES HELEN & CAROLINE**

On Saturday 20th April the Southdown Intergroup GSR Workshop took place. The first in a few years, the workshop was open to all and aimed to offer current, new and aspiring GSRs information on the role including the benefits. There was an impressive turn out and some excellent cakes - not to mention a deep-dive into the resources available to all GSRs by two experienced members of the Mid-Surrey Intergroup.

Below, we hear from two GSR attendees about their experience of the afternoon...

"Dear Ellie and H, Thank you very much for organising the GSR workshop on Saturday. The afternoon was informative, enjoyable and engaging - well worth coming along to. You're great examples of Tradition 11, with obvious enthusiasm and commitment to your roles, which is inspiring. You've helped bolster my own enthusiasm for and belief in the need for GSR service as well as Intergroup and Region more widely. Wishing you well in your service at Southdown."

Caroline, GSR

"I've been GSR of the Sunday morning meeting in Milton, Portsmouth for just over a year. I knew little about what the role involved before agreeing to take on this service position but nobody else seemed keen to take on what is a two to three year commitment and, with my time as Secretary of the meeting coming to an end, it seemed the next right thing to do.

I see now why the role needs to be the duration it is because some of the things required of a GSR only come round a few times a year or indeed only once a year in the case of co-ordinating your group's response to the Questions for the Annual AA GB Conference.

Whilst I had already attended a few of the quarterly Intergroup meetings held in Petersfield and the Keep in Touch meetings held in between on Zoom, I learned so much from the GSR workshop in April. There were lots of familiar faces and new people to meet and learn from too, including two very experienced GSRs visiting to speak from Mid-Surrey Intergroup.

An interesting discussion took place around Safeguarding and ways to encourage participation from newcomers and regulars at our meetings. One of the key messages I took away was the need to regularly ask ourselves as GSRs 'is this meeting the best it can be?' Being GSR I know I have a responsibility to my home group that goes beyond turning up at Intergroup and filtering information back and forth, and I now know who to reach out to for help and suggestions to help me do so. Thank you!"

Helen, GSR

"Being GSR I know I have a responsibility to my home group that goes beyond turning up at Intergroup"

