

# Interlink

*The newsletter for Southdown intergroup*

## *In This Issue*

**More news from  
our Intergroup  
Committee**

**We hear from our  
new Chair**

**Ed takes on the  
Q&A**

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## Editor's Message

Happy New Year to all,

It's been a busy start of the year for many in the Southdowns fellowship - the LOC (Liaison Officers Committee) have been busy finding new ways to spread the word to those that still suffer; and we have had new roles filled at intergroup. On that note, big welcome to Ellie our new Southdowns Chair, make sure you read her first report in this month's Interlink.

In the Q&A seat this month, we asked Ed to share his experience of co-manning the Telephone Liaison Officer role with Marianne. It's been almost a year since they both took over and they are happy to report the 24-hour telephone service is still running smoothly despite a dip in calls in the last part of 2023. Check out his answers below on why being TLO has helped with his recovery; along with the quarterly report.

There's plenty of other updates from LOC members too, from prisons to armed forces - all well worth a read. We've also had the first entries for our 'meeting anniversary' page - do keep sending in your meeting anniversaries and any resulting celebrations!

Finally to assist Nick's gentle nudge for GSRs to start filling out those pink forms with more regularity in the last issue, we've printed a previous AA Service News article about why they are so important.

Thank you all for keeping me sober today.

Yours in fellowship,

**Lucy S, Interlink Editor**  
[interlink.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:interlink.southdown@aamail.org)



# OUR CHAIR CHECKS IN...

Firstly, thank you for enabling me to be of service at Intergroup. Anyone who knows me knows I am passionate about AA and my recovery, and I am blessed to have celebrated 10 years of sobriety on 2nd February. I have spent the last three years at Southeast Region as Public Information Liaison Officer and prior to that I was Public Information Liaison Officer for Southdown for three years, so it feels like I have come home.

I'm grateful to Matt, the previous Chair, for his amazing efforts during his term in office and the support he has given me in handing over the role. I am extremely excited, and a little bit scared (honest program) of what I have taken on, but I am a true believer that if we don't challenge ourselves then we won't grow.

I ask for your patience and tolerance during my tenure, and I will endeavour fulfil my role, always placing principles before personalities. I would like to thank my sponsor for believing in me and suggesting I take on this position, and for her continued support and guidance. I look forward to serving you as Intergroup Chair and ensuring that Southdown continues to fulfil our Primary Purpose.

Yours in Fellowship

**Ellie, Chair Southdown Intergroup**

chair.southdown@aamail.org

*"I am extremely excited, and a little bit scared (honest program) of what I have taken on"*

## Q&A WITH ED

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

My role is joint Telephone Liaison Officer with Marianne.

We took over the role in March 2023 from Greg and between us, we organise the 28 shifts on a weekly basis, covering any holidays or illnesses and any other issues.

Each responder is trained on how to take certain calls and what action to take. The BT Portal is then updated each day/week with the latest shifts and who is covering them.

### **What are the highlights of doing this role?**

I think the main highlight for me is knowing that, as a telephone service, we are on hand 24 hours a day to take calls from people who are out there suffering.

We have a great team of responders and reserves who make our jobs so much easier. I've met lots of new people on the team of responders from all areas in our Intergroup.

Everyone chips in and contributes, especially when shifts need to be covered.

### **What impact do you feel this role has had on your recovery?**

This role has helped me get in touch with more people in the fellowship who I wouldn't normally meet. It can be quite time-consuming, but I am really enjoying it so far. I can access the BT Portal from home or wherever I am in case of any last minute shift changes.

# MEETING ANNIVERSARIES

*The **Ventnor Wednesday meeting celebrated 20 years** in September 2023. Members gathered early for cakes, coffee and chat prior to the meeting starting. This meeting is a chip meeting and a piece from Alcoholics Anonymous literature about Sister Mary Ignatia, the first person to give out a chip back then it was a Sacred Heart badge she gave to each patient who left the hospital. Asking for it to be returned if they drank again. And thanks to Boxer Frank who first told me about Sister Ignatia, this has been passed on to others.*

*The **Shanklin Big Book study meeting celebrated nine years** on 6th January 2024 with a gathering of members enjoying refreshments before the meeting. As this is a Big Book meeting it was decided that just for that week we would read from the 2nd Edition of the Big Book, as many members would not have read the stories in this edition. An enjoyable evening for all who attended.*

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](mailto:interlink.southdown@aamail.org)



# Liaison Officer's Reports

## Health

The meeting at St Marys is going well, consistently having anywhere between one to five patients a week. For the patients who are too poorly to come down and attend, they are visited by the AAers who are also hospital volunteers.

As the meeting itself is a type two hospital meeting (as per the The AA Service Handbook), it is not self supporting and not open to AA in general, nor listed in the Where to Find. We endeavor to find someone from a local group every week to come in and share their experience, strength and hope. Though this has been halted during the winter, as it has been quite tricky with illness and patient safety has to be paramount. We hope to resume having speakers in the spring.



**Nicky, part of the Liaison Officer Committee**

## Prisons

The two members that currently go to the prison were able to do a pre-Christmas meeting for the inmates. I also received the good news that one of our members on the island had passed the vetting process. He will attend the next meeting with the other two members who have the experience of prison AA meetings.

My thanks to our LOC members who attended workshops and carrying the message. As a direct result from this I had six members come forward from our Intergroup and Solent Intergroup willing to do this service. I currently have eight members waiting to be processed. Patience and Tolerance is our code, thank goodness!

Gosport 12x12 online Monday evening group also donated 4x Big Books, 3x Twelve steps and Traditions and 3x Living Sober, which was taken in for this month's meeting on 30th January 2024.

Thanks,

**Angie K, part of the Liaison Officer Committee**



# Liaison Officer's Reports

**"45% of the total calls are from out of our Intergroup area"**

## Telephones

Hi all, Marianne and I would like to thank each and every one of our Telephone Responders for their continued service. In quarter four we took a significantly lower amount of calls, 602 in total, with over 29% of those resulting in 12 step intervention.

45% 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 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

Thank you everyone who has sent in Pink Forms to the General Service Office recently. Read on to find an article that highlights their importance! If your group has not sent one in during the last 12 months, you are encouraged to do so as soon as possible. They can be found on the AA website, along with details of how to fill in the form: [https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Submit-Your-Meeting-Information-\(Pink-Form\)](https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Submit-Your-Meeting-Information-(Pink-Form)) Please remember to send a copy to our Intergroup secretary at: [Secretary.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:Secretary.southdown@aamail.org)

The 5th issue of the Southdown Legacy is currently being put together. We are looking for articles on the events and impact of Covid, and how it effected your groups. Please feel free to send details to : [southdownlegacy@outlook.com](mailto:southdownlegacy@outlook.com)

If any members have items that could be donated to the Southdown Archive Collection, please feel free to bring them to the Face to Face assembly meetings.

**Nick, Archives Liaison Officer**  
[archives.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:archives.southdown@aamail.org)



# Liaison Officer's Reports

## 12th Step

We currently have 172 12th Step volunteers on our list, which is up a little. The National Telephone Steering committee has now issued the National 12 Steppers Safeguarding Guidelines, which I sent out to all GSR's on the contact list on the 29th December. This formalises the requirements for 12th Step service below:

- Have a minimum of one year of continuous sobriety
- Fill in the application form. (info held IAW GDPR)
- Must be current members of AA as a self-regulated group and recommended by their Home Group Secretary, GSR or Treasurer
- Have read the guidelines thoroughly (Suggested to have worked the steps and have read Chapter 7 "Working with Others")

It also confirms that "Anyone on the Disclosure & Barring Service list is not eligible for 12th step service." Therefore I have asked all GSR's to relay this to their groups and ask anyone affected by this to get in contact with me via email.

Please take time to think about safeguarding prior to making 12th Step calls:

- It's advisable to withhold your number when calling for the first time
- Remember anonymity - don't leave indiscreet messages on their answerphone
- Don't meet them at their home
- If meeting in a public place, please don't go alone
- Remember we are not counsellors or qualified to give medical advice

If you are a 12th Stepper I encourage you to read the National Safeguarding Guidelines. These have been added to our document library under the below address: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Document-Library>

**Paul H, 12th Step Liaison Officer**

12step.southdown@aamail.org



***"what actually happens inside of the rooms now being able to be better communicated to those suffering alcoholics who are looking for help"***

## Armed Forces Liaison Officer's Report

Over the last couple of months there has been a flurry of activity in the Armed Forces Space. We have had a number of veteran volunteers come forward who are helping out by attending the monthly commitment to the Veterans Outreach Service (VOS) as well as in other areas of the committee such as prisons.

A connection with the military mental health department based out of HMS Nelson has been made with a member of the team attending a meeting in Gosport. A lot was gained from this type of liaison, where the nature of the illness was better understood and what actually happens inside of the rooms now being able to be better communicated to those suffering alcoholics who are looking for help but are unsure of what AA really offers.

More support is needed. If anyone who is a veteran or still serving who feels that they have something to offer by way of service to the fellowship please contact the LOC and let us know.

**Kelly, Armed Forces Liaison Officer**

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# interlink spotlight



## **IMPROVING COMMUNICATION IN THE FELLOWSHIP**

### **UPDATING HOME GROUP PINK SHEET AT GSO**

When I joined AA it was instilled in me I was no longer alone, I had joined an inclusive Fellowship which engendered togetherness and unity. As the days went on and I learned more about AA's primary purpose, the structure of the Fellowship and the joys of Service I began to understand the importance of Unity.

This to me was embodied in membership of the Fellowship highlighted in Tradition 3, the primary purpose and the three legacies left to us by our founders. In my opinion these are the keystones of recovery.

Firstly, let me articulate about membership. Membership comes in several forms

- Verbal membership
- Associate Membership
- Full Membership

In respect to AA, verbal and associate membership are in my opinion forms of insanity (doing the same thing and expecting a different result), it's like joining a gym and never going, nothing changes, but if you embrace Full membership of AA all the joys or recovery are passed to you through hard work and the Fellowship of AA.

By completing the Registration Form on an annual basis and passing the details to the General Service Office in York, your Groups details can be added to the database which is maintained by GSO staff. The contacts page on the AA website can be kept up to date with correct and accurate information. This allows AA's primary purpose to be correctly communicated. For example, when a newcomer looks at the website to find the first meeting, they can do so with the confidence that they will find a group that is operating where stated.

It also allows the National Where-to-Find to be updated so at each reprint the information contained is as accurate as the printing runs allow. It also allows GSO to communicate with groups, so when information / literature is required to be sent out it can be done so with the confidence that the nominated person will receive the information required. For example when the AA Service News and / or Conference documentation are sent out, the groups receive the required information and it is disseminated throughout the membership without undue delay.

Also, if it goes to the correct address first time, this saves AA's money on extra costs.

It can also help to avoid the distress to a member's family who has passed away or returned to drinking when AA information or literature is delivered erroneously from GSO.

Last but by no means least: an important aspect of the Registration form is that it takes the single group of say 6 members and unites it with the other 4000 plus groups within the UK. This allows the group to be INCLUDED within our Fellowship, not isolated outside.

So, I urge all groups to complete the Registration Form on an annual basis.

**Brian J. Board Trustee 2016 (The above article was printed in The Spring 2016 edition of AA Service News).**

