

**MINUTES OF GAM-ANON REGIONAL MEETING  
2pm Saturday 8th October 2016**

The meeting was held in Nicolson Square Methodist Church, Edinburgh.

1. The meeting was Chaired by Carol, Edinburgh, who welcomed everyone, and asked Margaret (Edinburgh) to read "I am Recovery".
2. All members were asked by Carol to introduce themselves.

**Present:**

**Glasgow Monday** - Elizabeth, Patricia, Pat, Ray;

**Glasgow Wednesday** - Ellen, George;

**Glasgow Thursday** - Morag, Ellen, Caroline;

**Glasgow Saturday** - Millie, Charlotte;

**Edinburgh** - Margaret, Carol, Susan, Lyndsay, Sheena, Ronnie, Shona, George, Kerry, Niclair.

**Apologies:**

All members from Aberdeen and Dundee; Jacqui (Glasgow Monday); Frances (Glasgow Wednesday); Jacqui (Glasgow Thursday).

3. **Minutes of last meeting** (5th March 2016) were approved. Carol referred to the previous Minutes where she had said she was willing to contact Heads of each Secondary Education to begin the process to discuss gambling integration in Social Education Package and School Curriculum. She reported back that she had made contact with James Lally at Education Scotland who believes that there is scope within the curriculum to take on the issue of gambling and she is on the list of invitees for the next Scottish Financial Education Forum.

4. **Secretary's Report**

Millie (Glasgow Saturday) read Jacqui's report as she had submitted apologies for today's meeting.

Apologies from Aberdeen (7 members) and Dundee members.

I.S.O. have stated that posters containing pictures of people must no longer be used as doing so would be a breach of confidentiality. Fresh ideas would be welcome.

If any groups need updates to literature please let Jacqui know.

An excellent new Parents book should be published shortly, but minor changes still need to be made. The price for printing 300 copies would be £473 and 500 copies £520. The meeting voted for 500 copies to be printed.

A request was made for contributions to the website.

Jacqui's 3 year term as Scottish Secretary ends in March 2017. A new appointment will be necessary so members are asked to give serious consideration to whether they might volunteer for the post.

### **Treasurer's Report**

£9,087.59 bank account balance, with copies of Statement of Account made available to members.

£5,252.10 term deposit account balance, with a letter available if required as statement only produced yearly.

### **L.D.C. Report**

Millie (Glasgow Saturday) reported no problems at present with the post, but raised concern over the cost of postage. Patricia (Glasgow Monday) suggested that since the bank account has a healthy balance, postage should not be an issue and the members present agreed. Millie also said that she adds amendments in with all orders.

## **5. Group Reports**

### **Glasgow Monday:**

10-15 varied members, with meetings going well. Recently 2 new members joined and have stayed. Double addiction members did attend but only stayed a few weeks. Contact is made with people who attend for a short time.

### **Glasgow Wednesday:**

Between 18-23 members, with a mixture of parents and partners attending.

### **Glasgow Thursday:**

25-30 members. A strong group, including 2 fathers. New members have stayed. At times visitors attend from other Gam-Anon groups.

### **Glasgow Friday:**

5-6 regular members, with a mixture of parents and wives attending. A strong group, although small. Friday evening might not be a good time to hold the meeting, but it is good that it is held in the centre of the City.

### **Glasgow Saturday:**

9-12 members, with 10 members regularly attending. A mixture of age, gender, parents and partners. Some members attend with a GA member attending a GA meeting. New members do not always stay.

### **Edinburgh:**

12 regular members with about a 50/50 split. A strong group supportive of each other. One or two regular members have not been attending at present due to various commitments. A few new members have attended over the last six months, a mixture of parents and partners. 2 members also attend a GA/Gam-Anon Steps meeting on a Sunday evening which has recently been set up.

### **6. Any Other Business**

George (Edinburgh) asked members to consider an awareness campaign for Gam-Anon. More awareness of the benefits of Gam-Anon may lessen heartache for people. Members suggested the following:

- If a person is desperate enough, they will find Gam-Anon;
- The internet is a good source of information via a Google search for Gam-Anon;
- PRO work with posters and school visits in the past have fallen apart, but posters in GPs surgeries should be encouraged;
- GA can help by telling their wives/partners or parents about Gam-Anon;
- Perhaps we should be more proactive with new GA members by a nominated Gam-Anon member introducing themselves at the refreshment break;
- Need to get the enthusiasm back and any ideas that can help must be good, especially to start up new groups.

Carol (Edinburgh) has made an enquiry to Radio Forth re a radio advert for a Gam-Anon awareness campaign. 20-25 thirty second adverts played over the course of a week would cost around £750 - £1000. Radio Forth would put an advert together in which Gam-Anon would have input and approve. Anonymity would be then be preserved. The members present discussed the following:

- Would our Steps programme allow Gam-Anon to go ahead with the advert, as promotion of the programme is not generally encouraged?
- Would a radio advert bring about family discussion?
- What phone number would be used in the advert? Could an individual area use their own number, eg Edinburgh, or if a general number were to be used would approval be required from Glasgow GA for use of their GA phone line?
- Is enough information on Gam-Anon support given through GA phone line?
- Would current discussions relating to compulsive gambling on radio phone ins be encouraged to mention Gam-Anon?

A vote was taken by the members present and it was agreed to relay this suggestion to individual meetings to gain their views, in order that this topic could be put forward again for discussion at the next Regional Meeting.

### **7. Date of Next Meeting**

Saturday 4th March 2017 at Bath Street, Glasgow. Dundee to Chair.

## **Topics for Discussion**

### **1. Unrealistic Expectations**

Have our expectations been met, or do we have unrealistic expectations (for example, first impressions of meeting a gambler, does the gambler have unrealistic expectations of themselves/us, do we have unrealistic expectations of them?)

The following points were shared about impressions of our first meeting:

- Sometimes hard to know what to expect but lifelong programme is hard to accept at a first meeting;
- Feelings of being overwhelmed;
- Worry over debt is overshadowing factor;
- Relief of a weight being lifted off one's shoulders;
- Knowing the gambler is in the right place and has the chance to adapt to GA programme;
- Understanding and sympathy comes across;
- Surprise at laughter in the room.

### **Have our expectations been met?**

- Helps control feelings of anger;
- Enables day-to-day living, and the tools to protect yourself and your family;
- Gives ability to share our own experiences with others to aid their recovery;
- Helps gain knowledge that there is no cure for your compulsive gambler, and your life will change forever;
- Brings awareness of the difficulty for compulsive gamblers of avoidance of day-to-day gambling in today's society;
- Hope that one day we can be proud of the achievements of our compulsive gamblers.

**2. When your gambler stops gambling-** but has made no other changes to their character defects, how do we deal with the unpredictability of their personality changes, ie mood swings and unreasonable behaviour? Are we still walking on eggshells?

The following points were shared:

- When one walks on eggshells, does this suggest we are taking on responsibility for our gambler?
- Attending GA meetings helps the gambler to open up with their partner/parent;
- Lack of trust can improve when the gambler attends GA;
- Even although the gambler is progressing, we may still feel the need to ask many questions;

- When we struggle to agree with the gambler, the way we deliver our words can help;
- As we get stronger, live life for yourself and one day at a time but remain vigilant;
- Can be difficult to focus on yourself and mediation is often a way forward;
- Learning in Step One in Gam-Anon that we don't have an influence on whether the gambler gambles;
- Gam-Anon helps us change our habits, especially the fear that the gambler may gamble again;
- Realising that character traits may not necessarily be to do with gambling.

### **3. How successful are we at working One Day at Time?**

The following points were shared:

- Hard to switch off;
- Hard to get the gambler to attend GA;
- Compartmentalise your thoughts in your head;
- One day at a time is hard;
- Is a whole day too long to work the programme?

The following suggestions were put forward:

- Never let your guard down;
- Forgive;
- Offer practical suggestions;
- Use the strength in the Gam-Anon room as we are strong people;
- Think about the now;
- Use shorter time periods to think about yourself and not the gambler.

The meeting closed with the Serenity Prayer.