

MINUTES of GAM ANON UNITY MEETING
SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2023
SALVATION ARMY HALL
165 KING STREET RUTHERGLEN,
GLASGOW, G73 1BZ

1. Welcome and introductions
Millie in the Chair from Glasgow Saturday.
2. Reading: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow
Read by Margaret from Glasgow Saturday.
3. Attendance: David, Millie, Margaret Stacey, Charlotte, Amanada, Fiona (Glasgow Saturday); Diane, (Dundee); Karen, Jacqueline, Louise, (Ralston); Ellen, Fionna, Evelyn, Frances, Ann Marie, (Glasgow Wednesday); Janis, (Glasgow Friday); Murray, Sheila, (Perth); Ray, Marion, Jacqui, (Glasgow Monday); Barry, George, Ronni, David, Shona, George, Audrey, Doreen, Margaret, Susan (Edinburgh Thursday),
4. Apologies: Anne, Vicki, Jennifer, Louise, Val (Dundee); Rosemary Kircaldy); Irene, Dunella, Jackie (Glasgow Wednesday); Anne, Elizabeth (Glasgow Monday).
5. Minutes of Previous Meeting:
Approved by Ellen and seconded by George
6. Group Reports:
Glasgow Monday: Average of 8 regular attendees, no new members.
Ralston Tuesday: 12 regular attendees and last new member continued to attend. Meetings take place every second Tuesday and there are no plans to change this format.
Perth Tuesday: 6 regular attendees and no new members
Glasgow Wednesday: 8/9 regular attendees – numbers have declined since the last Unity meeting.
Dundee Thursday: 7 regular attendees and one new member in the previous 4 weeks.
Glasgow Thursday: 6 regular members, meetings take place every

second week.

Edinburgh Thursday: Strong meeting with 13/15 regular attendees, no new members recently.

Glasgow Friday: 5 regular attendees

Glasgow Saturday: 7 regular attendees including one recent new member.

7. Secretary's Report: (George)

George apologised to the group for the lack of secretary Zoom meetings due to illness and work commitments. There was nothing of significance to report with no group reporting problems.

It was agreed the Perth Zoom meeting should only be available to those who are unable to attend a meeting in person and it was suggested, rather than have Zoom meeting details available on the website a contact email address would be created as first contact for anyone who could not make a meeting in person. The email address will be monitored by Perth members and anyone who contacts will be given information on how to access the Zoom meeting. If there is a significant uptake on this service it can be brought to the next meeting for discussion. Margaret Mary has agreed to be the contact on the email address.

There has been a call by GA members for a GamAnon meeting to be set up in the Blackburn/Bathgate area where there is a strong GA presence. It was noted there has been no previous interest shown by relatives for a meeting in this area and they were welcome to join a zoom meeting to ascertain if there is an interest in creating a meeting. Edinburgh GamAnon would be happy to support the creation of a meeting in this area if there is sufficient interest. It was noted that whilst GamAnon is keen to support new groups we should be looking for commitment and not just interest before a new meeting is created.

There was an action on the secretary to contact Zander, the webmaster, to find out who owns the rights to the website and how to transfer ownership. Zander confirmed the website, which is at least 10 years old, is in need of updating. The website is currently in Zander's name however it can be transferred to another individual or entity if required and Zander would be happy to facilitate this. There were no offers from the attendees to take this on.

A copy of the full report including excerpts from Zander's communication with George was distributed at the meeting.

8. Treasurer's Report:

The group welcomed Sheila as the new treasurer. Copies of the treasurer's report were distributed at the meeting. The treasurer reported that financially GamAnon is in a good place with a current balance of £14,721. Nothing significant to report except to note that although income has increased during this reporting period it is not as high as pre-pandemic levels and the balance held is less than in the last reporting period which was £15,440.

There was a discussion about how the increase in rent and reduction in membership for many groups was making sustainability difficult. It was noted that GamAnon should not accept help from GA, or anyone else in regard to rental costs. It was suggested that members should be asked to pay for literature and it was agreed that this would be considered in the future. It was agreed to only provide new members with the GamAnon Way of Life until they committed to becoming regular members. Groups should hold copies of other books to be used during the meetings.

9. PRO Report

Barry presented the following report
GAMFAM/Police Scotland Trial:

This trial in Dumfries and Galloway and Inverclyde areas to ensure police officers attending domestic situations are aware of gambling issues and can signpost gambling support organisations (including GamAnon may be extended to all Police Scotland areas.

I have attended several TEAMS meetings on this for regular updates and also GamFam helped with introduction to the right people at CAB, Samaritans and RCA trust.

The organisation has asked for support from anybody willing to tell their story provided it had police involvement and could illustrate the lack of awareness within the police.

Steve Watts steve@gamfam.org.uk Beth Watts beth@gamfam.org.uk
can be contacted at these email addresses. The website is gamfam.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau Scotland

Initial discussion on Friday 31st March 2023:

Sophie Wylie +1 to discuss awareness training etc

2022/23 Citizens Advice Service network helped over 187,000 clients in Scotland

Operates 59 member bureaux across Scotland

Group Presentation on Thursday 15th June 2023:

Meeting (Via TEAMS) Citizens Advice Scotland, Broadside, 2 Powderhall Rd, Edinburgh, EH7 4GB

1 Hr presentation

Attendance (10 People):

Sophie Wylie Project Coordinator – Gambling Support Service + 1

Gambling Support Specialist Advisors (4 covering Scotland)

Training Support Officers who provide materials and training to front line volunteers

Explain:

GamAnon (History, Worldwide, how to find meetings, Anonymity, etc)

GamAnon website

Document with QR code

Are you living with a compulsive gambler? 20 Questions

Awareness recording

Access to meetings

My story

Emphasis potential hidden nature of gambling and that financial issues could have gambling as root cause and people asking for support may not know the cause.

SAMARITANS:

Initial discussion on Tuesday 29th August 2023

Neil Mathers - Executive Director for Scotland

Thursday 26th October 2023:

Meeting (Face to Face) with Samaritans Scotland (HQ), Norton Park Business Hub, 57 Albion Road, EH7 5QY

Clare Ritchie Administrative Lead (Not Neil due to meeting Scottish Government)

Policy people

Training and Support people for front line offices 9 or 10 in total.

1 Hr 30 Mins

Presentation (as with CAB). Also joined by Doreen from Edinburgh to add some of her personal experience.

Emphasis potential hidden nature of gambling and that issues being discussed could have gambling as root cause and people asking for support may not know the cause.

Again the organisation was interested in training people and ensuring systems used had adequate material to explore gambling harm and signpost to GamAnon/G.A.

RCA TRUST

Initial discussion on Tuesday 05th September 2023:

Andy Todd Chief Executive RCA Trust, 8 Ince Street, Paisley, PA1 1HP
+ Rebekah Hamill new family support worker

Supplied same material but still waiting to hear further.

Possible future contacts:

Womans Aid, Universities and Student Union organisations

If anybody can help with contact details that would help.

10. A.O.C.B.

Diane from Dundee asked for the group's advice on a privacy matter relating to the disclosure of personal contact details to new or prospective members. This was as a result of an incident reported by a Dundee member where inappropriate contact was made via the personal number. It was agreed that giving out phone numbers is a personal choice and that awareness should be raised across all groups that disclosure of personal information could be open to abuse. Any incidents that make members feel uncomfortable should be reported to the group secretary.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 24th April in Dundee

12. TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION: TRUST

After the break attendees were asked to consider the following questions:

- When do members feel they gain some trust?
- How do members feel when the Compulsive Gambler insists he/she should be trusted?
- How does any gained trust become affected when old behaviours appear to return OR if the gambler has a fall, especially after a long period of recovery?

There was a very honest and helpful discussion about trusting a gambler with members sharing experiences and giving suggestions for having a relationship without trust including:

Trust should be earned and not handed out;
Learn to let go;
See the difference between the person and the gambler;
Be cautious and alert to trust being broken again;
It's ok not to trust the gambler;
Accept there might never be trust;
Replace trust with hope.