

Minutes of the National Service Assembly of Overeaters Anonymous Great Britain 2013 on Saturday 19th October at the Millennium Copthorne Hotel, Plymouth

Note: Reference in these minutes to the National Service Assembly of Overeaters Anonymous Great Britain (OAGB) are abbreviated to “NSA”, to the National Service Board of OAGB to “NSB”, and to the Overeaters Anonymous World Service Business Conference as “WSBC” and to the World Service Office as “WSO”.

1. Welcome

The 28th National Service Assembly of OAGB opened at 10.30 am with Sue J., chair of the National Service Board, in the chair. After a moment's silence to remember the still-suffering compulsive overeater, we all said the Serenity Prayer.

2. Readings

Preamble – Jill; 12 Steps – Suzie; 12 Traditions – Chloe; 12 Concepts – Hannah.

3. Quorum

OAGB has 215 affiliated registered groups, and 10 intergroups, and there are 8 Board members, so total 233 potential votes. A quarter of these is a quorum, which is 59. Registered today were delegates from 54 groups, 7 intergroups and 7 Board members, total 68, so the meeting was quorate. Jacqueline, NSB Secretary, sent her apologies.

4. Introductions (moved up to precede adoption of agenda)

About half those present were attending their first NSA. NSB members introduced themselves. Sue reminded the assembly of the responsibilities of the NSA and particularly Rozanne S (OA co-founder) saying “submerge your ego for the good of the group”.

5. Agenda – was adopted as circulated with the amendment already made.

6. Minutes of 2011 and 2012 NSAs – were deemed accepted since no objections were raised, with minor amendment to 2011 minutes that Deborah's affiliation in Minutes 7 and 8 is Tuesday, not Saturday, Hinde Street 6.30 pm. Thanks were given to the Minutes Approval Committees of 2011 (Sue, Angela, Reshma and Deborah) and 2012 (Gail, Pam, Claire and Liz) and Sheila.

7. 2013 Minutes Approval Committee

In the absence of the NSB Secretary, who would normally be an ex-officio member of the committee, three other Board members, Elena, Pam G. and Emma, along with Chloe (Liverpool) and Linda (Caledonian Intergroup) were accepted to form this committee along with Sheila.

8. Matters Arising – none not covered in NSB reports.

9. Ground rules

Stella as Centre Mic(rophone) explained her role and introduced the special rules of order. These were accepted without objection.

10. Board Reports

Chair - Sue J – no questions

Treasurer - Emma - Emma reported on website redesign since she had had to join the website subcommittee after the NSB Communications Officer resigned. The new website was launched this

October. It had been designed by a professional paid by OAGB. Things should be easier to find on it. The subcommittee had underestimated the time required to prepare content. Emma appealed for members with technical expertise to join the committee to keep the website up to date.

Company Secretary – Elena- no questions.

Board Secretary - Jacqueline – absent – no questions were raised on her written report.

Literature – Pam G. – clarified a point she had made in her report to the previous evening's meeting, that the online retailer Amazon pays royalties to WSO on sales of Kindle downloads of OA literature, but royalties on Amazon sales of OA books do not go to WSO. The Literature subcommittee had found out that some OA books for sale on Amazon were out of date, i.e. not the most recent editions, although they are new not secondhand.

Public Information – Barbara- was asked whether the Radio 4 “Summer Nights” programme on addictions, mentioned in her report, had come out: it had, but OA content had been obscured by the wide focus on many disorders. A more focused programme on eating disorders was subsequently broadcast, and a member of OA was able to share her experience with others. She also reported that a producer of the TV series “Supersize, Superskinny” had contacted OAGB wanting named individuals as examples to appear on the programme, but Barbara had explained that members were anonymous. Contact continued, but nothing came of it.

Sue stated that with only five NSB members in the coming year, PI was likely to be reactive rather than proactive. A member asked about transmitting PI ideas to the Board: Sue encouraged members to email public.information@oagb.org.uk with suggestions for PI and to send in images of PI posters that could be made available for download on the OAGB website; but reminded us that use of the OA logo on posters must be approved case-by-case by WSO and that the logo should always be accompanied by the name of the service body sponsoring the poster. Members supported a suggestion that a PI subcommittee be formed to carry on PI work.

Professional Outreach - Sue H – A team is needed to run a stall at the biennial Eating Disorders Conference, which is next in February 2014 (note added 27/10/2013: MA Healthcare, which runs these conferences, says on its website that there will be an online Eating Disorders conference in April 2014, and the next “London International Eating Disorders Conference” is in 2015, 18-20 March). This could be managed at the level of an intergroup: there is a lot of support and information available, for instance from Heart of England Intergroup, which has guidelines and a committee for running its annual stall at the Primary Care Exhibition in Birmingham. A stall at the Eating Disorders Conference would cost £1000 plus expenses.

Twelfth Step Within - Angela – no questions (Angela had addressed a meeting earlier in the morning describing the “12-Steps-in-12-Weeks” project run in London by the NSB and Southeast England Intergroup).

Region 9 – Pam G. attended the 2012 Region 9 Assembly and Convention in Warsaw; **Elena** will attend the 2013 one in Israel in November. Sue from the floor said that the 2012 R9 convention had been “an amazing experience”.

World Service - Sue J – Sue was asked by Naomi about the rationale for the change in the Preamble, and explained that it was changed to say “eating” rather than “overeating” in line with WSBC policy to mix the terms to ensure inclusivity; and that there had been a great strength of feeling at the 2013 WSBC to insert the mention of the 12 Steps into the Preamble. Chloe asked why the word “current” had been inserted into the trustees' weight qualification. Sue replied that this made it clear that the trustees had maintained a healthy body weight for at least two years and were still maintaining it. The definition of “healthy body weight” was left to the individual.

11. Motions

(a) Motion A. This motion, proposed by the NSB, which updates OAGB by-laws in line with the 2011

Charities Act, and was recommended by OAGB's solicitor, was passed by the required 2/3 majority with no votes against. The new by-law is:

Under Section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 a person (“P”) is disqualified from being a charity trustee in the following circumstances:

Case A

P has been convicted of any offence involving dishonesty or deception.

Case B

P has been adjudged bankrupt or sequestration of P’s estate has been awarded and (in either case) -

(a) P has not been discharged, or

(b) P is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order.

Case C

P has made a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for, creditors and has not been discharged in respect of it.

Case D

P has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an order made -

(a) by the Commission under section 79(2)(a) or by the Commission or the Commissioners under a relevant earlier enactment (as defined by section 179(5)), or

(b) by the High Court, on the ground of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which P was responsible or to which P was privy, or which P’s conduct contributed to or facilitated.

Case E

P has been removed, under section 34(5)(e) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (asp 10) (powers of the Court of Session) or the relevant earlier legislation (as defined by section 179(6)), from being concerned in the management or control of any body.

Case F

P is subject to -

(a) a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 or the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 (S.I. 2002/3150 (N.I.4)),

or (b) an order made under section 429(2) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (disabilities on revocation of county court administration order).

If you come within one of these categories (and have not been granted leave to be excepted from disqualification as set out in Section 180 of the Charities Act 2011), you should immediately cease acting as a trustee. A person who acts as a trustee whilst disqualified is guilty of a criminal offence. If you feel that there are special reasons falling within Section 181 of the Charities Act 2011 as to why you should continue to act as a trustee you should apply to the Charity Commission for a waiver. If you have any queries concerning the application of Section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 you should take legal advice.

(b) Motion B

The NSB proposed a new business motion for OAGB to adopt a policy on donations and legacies from individuals to OAGB and general guidance for groups and individuals on donations. It replaces the policy made by the NSB in 1996. The NSB presented it as a new business motion to add to OAGB policy rather than just NSB policy because the matter of donations policy is important at group and intergroup level as well as at NSB level. The motion presented was slightly revised from the version circulated in the delegate pack, with different headings but the same text and rationale. The text of the motion includes a suggested format for a “tent card” to be displayed at OA meetings, listing the group's expenses and financial obligations to other service bodies.

Helen proposed, and Tanya seconded, an amendment to point (2) of the policy, to replace “There is no limit on the amount of such a bequest” with “The maximum bequest will be £250,000.” The amendment was lost on a show of hands. The unamended policy was passed on a show of hands (simple majority required). The new OAGB policy is:

The OAGB National Service Board has adopted the following policy regarding individual Member Donations to OAGB. It is broadly in line with guidance from the Board of Trustees of OA Inc. but is intended to better reflect circumstances in the UK.

- 1) A member may contribute to OAGB up to £3300 per year to the general fund, up to £3300 per year for any OAGB NSB approved specific purpose and up to £3300 per year to honour the memory of a deceased member.
- 2) OAGB NSB may accept a bequest from the will of a deceased member in cash or cash equivalent. There is no limit on the amount of such a bequest.
- 3) When making contributions, we recommend that OA members consider the total of all the contributions that they are making in a year, not just to OAGB but to OA as a whole lest their total contribution become sufficiently large that it is perilous to them or to the Fellowship.

Guidance notes for groups and individuals

It is a matter for group conscience whether to include in the meeting format a suggested contribution amount for individual group members. Historically OAGB has suggested an amount which is currently £3.50 per member per meeting. This may not be enough however as each group and IG will have different circumstances and funding requirements. In addition it is suggested that each group works out its approximate annual costs and divides them down into the average minimum weekly requirement. An example tent card can be downloaded from www.oagb.org.uk for this purpose (Appendix A). Once a group has funded their regular expenses such as rent, literature, PI, group rep funding to NSA and IG meetings, their group conscience will decide how and when to contribute to the other service bodies which rely on group support, e.g. IG/NSB/Region 9 and WSO.

For general information about making contributions to OA we suggest reading the pamphlet '7th Tradition of OA' which is available as a free download at www.oa.org. This pamphlet reminds us of the following:-

'Our Seventh Tradition states that OA is fully self-supporting, accepting contributions only from OA members. While no fees or dues will ever be required for membership, OA needs help to keep its rooms open, provide opportunities for fellowship and spread its message to still-suffering compulsive overeaters'.

OA members or service bodies wishing to contribute to WSO can do so via the Literature Service, which makes regular payments to WSO. This will save bank currency conversion charges. Or they can contribute directly online at www.oa.org.

Appendix A - Example of tent card showing group costs to take into account when making a Tradition 7 contribution

	Weekly	Annual
Rent		
Tea & Coffee		
Literature		
Intergroup Rep		
Group Public Information		
National Assembly Rep		
Intergroup contribution		
OAGB contribution		

The National Assembly of OA in Great Britain in 2007 suggested that to aid the efficient running of all service bodies that at every service level contributions be split 2/3 to the next service level and 1/3 to the level beyond that (i.e. Groups send 2/3 of their surplus funds to their Intergroup and 1/3 to OAGB).

(c) Resolution from Southeast England Intergroup on the format of the National Service Assembly and Convention

The motion, “that the NSB conduct a review of the National Assembly and Convention structure”, was passed by a standing vote (Hattie as teller), with 40 in favour and 22 against: since this is not a 2/3 majority, it is not binding on the NSB. Possible new formats are described in the rationale of the motion. The motion did not dictate how the review would be carried out, so this was left to the NSB. [It was noted that a possible consequence was the assembly and convention extending over more than two days; and that the suggested committees meeting during and between assemblies might require members with abstinence qualifications to the same level as current NSB subcommittees.]

The morning session closed with all saying “I put my hand in yours...”.

The afternoon session opened with the Serenity Prayer, then Cei reading the Preamble.

12. Board Elections

Stella reviewed the “elections” part of the special rules of order. Sue J. was replaced by Emma in the chair because Sue was standing for re-election. Pam G. was also standing for re-election, and Rachel was standing for a first term on the NSB. All three are from Heart of England Intergroup. They answered questions on their candidates' statements, and then a paper ballot was held, with Hattie and Tina as tellers. 68 votes were cast:

Pam G. 65

Rachel 65

Sue J. 67

All three were declared elected. Jill proposed, and Hannah seconded, that the ballot papers be destroyed, and this was carried by voice vote.

13. 7th Tradition £195.91 was collected.

14. 2014 Assembly and Convention

Bids from the North of England Intergroup to hold the assembly in Sheffield, and Northwest England Intergroup to hold it in Crewe, were presented by members of these intergroups, who then answered questions. A paper ballot (Tina and Hattie as tellers) gave 54 votes to the North of England bid and 13 to the Northwest England bid, so the 2014 National Service Assembly and Convention will be held in Sheffield and organised by the North of England Intergroup. Note that North of England Intergroup last hosted the NSA in 2006 (in Hull), and Northwest England Intergroup last hosted it in 2001.

15. 2015 Assembly and Convention

Sue reminded the assembly that according to OAGB by-laws an intergroup wishing to bid to host the 2015 NSA should notify the chair of the NSB by or at the annual meeting of the NSB with Intergroup Chairs, in June 2014.

16. Board subcommittees

(a) subcommittee to carry out review of format of National Service Assembly and Convention (minute 11(c), motion from SE England Intergroup) – Stuart, Francene, Jill, Angela (London); Sue D. (Birmingham); Sandra (Paisley); Ted (Gloucester); Claire (Penzance).

(b) PI subcommittee – Elaine (Lewes), Chloe (Liverpool), Tanya (Heart of England), Yvonne

(Cumbernauld), Clare (Truro), Liz (Torquay), Tina (Plymouth), Angela (Motherwell), Suzie (Manchester), Peter (London; withdrew his name immediately after the assembly).

17. **Intergroup representatives' reports** - representatives of eight intergroups reported on the activities of their intergroup.

16. **Group representatives' reports** – many group representatives reported, most giving their group's response to the request to, “one thing that worked for our group this year”.

17. **Thanks** – Sue J. expressed the meeting's thanks to:

Board minute taker – Janet;

Board subcommittees:

Step by Step – Lucy, Karen, Clare, Helen;

Communications (emails, website) – Vanessa, Karen;

Literature – Kathleen, Steve, Su, John; and Deborah (paid employee);

Those doing service today: centre mic – Stella; minutes – Sheila; timing – Cei and Bea; tellers –

Tina and Hattie; host intergroup – Devon and Cornwall; and to all reps and visitors attending today;

Board members standing down today – Sue H, Barbara, Angela and Jacqueline.

[who?] from the floor thanked Sue J. for chairing the assembly.

18. **Closing** – the meeting closed at 5.00 pm with the Serenity Prayer being said by all.