

CoDA Intergroup North – Saturday April 24th 2021

Agenda and Action Notes

Attendees: Lorna, GSR Hale Barns; Tony, Fallowfield; Philip, GSR Penmaenmawr; Gillian, GSR Stockton Heath; Bryony GSR Manchester City Centre; Sue, GSR Liverpool – 6 voting entities.

Agenda

1. Preamble, Welcome, Steps, Traditions, Sharing guidelines 10.30-10.45
2. Election of spiritual timekeeper – thanks to Lorna (timings below are all draft – we managed to finish some items quickly and had a longer discussion on the AOB items)
3. Introductions, feelings check and group reports 10.45-11am
 - a. Liverpool group: on Zoom, no decision to go back to in person yet; worries about 'Zoom bombers' which is ongoing and working on ways to resolve this if it happens again; no issues to raise today
 - b. Penmaenmawr group: 15-20 people attending on Zoom when usually about 4 in person, mainly newcomers; wants to ask advice about returning to in person with a lot of online members; group conscience next week; safe meeting; attenders from around the world; 7th tradition will make a donation when return to in person
 - c. Hale Barns group: have been able to set up a paypal pool for 7th tradition donations, having lots of group consciences for meeting business, well attended
 - d. Manchester City Centre group: meeting on Zoom for the foreseeable future as our venue has closed; about 8 core members and lots of newcomers/semi-regular attenders, and about 2-3 enquiries per week. No donation to region this time as our group conscience isn't till next week, and no items of any concern to raise with region.
 - e. Stockton Heath group: still on Zoom, have a reserve number in case Zoom bombed again but haven't been; 10-13 people every week; 25 people in meeting WhatsApp group; have a good format for the meeting; may continue on Zoom as well as returning to in person; will donate a lump sum on return to in person.
 - f. Fallowfield group: changing name to Didsbury and will be meeting in person from May, tbc.
4. Minutes approval from last meeting and review of actions 11am-11.15 am – approved, outstanding actions to be followed up by Bryony
5. Any other business requests from GSRs at meetings we serve – 11.15am-11.25am – to be added to AOB section below

6. Treasury – Temporary treasurer Bryony report and any questions – 11.25am-11.30am

- a. There is a balance in the bank account of £910.88 with no donations received this quarter. No outgoings.

7. Step workshops in the region? Is anyone planning any for this year? None reported 11.40-11.50pm

8. Positions for service at CoDA North and Regions Intergroup 11.10-11.30pm

- a. All: Please announce vacancies at your home groups. Guideline for people giving service at north region is that members need to have attended 3 regional meetings
- b. Full time secretary required – Bryony has offered to take action minutes in this format while we're online, on the basis that if anyone else wants to take the role that's fine! Bryony is happy to sponsor someone into the role.
- c. Chair needs to rotate out no later than July 2021 which will be Tony's last meeting, and requires support in terms of a Vice Chair to assist with smooth transition and possible support this year. Tony is happy to sponsor someone into either role.

Role description to be circulated to the region with these notes:

liaising with secretary; ensure minutes circulated and groups have the opportunity to send in motions; host the meeting, including monitoring timings, votes etc; able to act assertively in line with traditions to keep the meeting boundaried. If a member wants to volunteer to chair the meeting in July, with Tony's support, before committing to the role, that would be an option.

- d. Treasurer required – additional requirement is that a treasurer is solvent
- e. Literature secretary – Gillian is happy to sponsor someone into the role and Philip is going to discuss the possibility with her before the next meeting.
Role involves liaising with literature provider with questions, being available to take questions from regional group about literature, keeping in touch with regional groups about the topic.

9. Literature report 11.10–11.20pm

The CoDA Literature programme was maintained seamlessly throughout the past year in light of Covid, albeit with delays beyond control. Regular notices were posted on the website when provided by Royal Mail. CoDA members were requested to be more vigilant when receiving packages, and allow the standard times - up to 10 days - before querying the legally required smaller staff. The good news is that actual problems - outward delays - were minimal, and handled.

Due to the closing of face-to-face meetings, production of the basic CoDA pamphlets were paused. Some are being re-worked at conference level, others have been

previously replaced. These original basic pamphlets are CoDA Service Conference approved as downloads, and readily available on the website. New versions are in the works of some titles at the CoDA Literature Committee (CLC). These will be made available when ready and approved.

We are pleased to have found a new production partner and the quality of products is increasing throughout the programme - with an eye to green renewable sourcing wherever possible.

The ramifications of Brexit on CoDA members in the EU are layered and unfortunate. What was once a seamless service has become an arbitrary exercise in red tape, dramatically increased fees, and paperwork - although books remain Zero-VAT rated. A continent-based solution is being sought, as this affects CoDA as a whole.

As Covid restrictions relax, services are slowly returning to previous staff levels. However, no risks are being taken with the workplaces or the health of any staff. As the service has been maintained all along, the sole benefit here is an anticipated decrease in delivery times, but still well within the delivery promise windows. Any changes will be posted on the home page of the CoDA Literature UK website.

10. AOB 11.35pm-12.25pm

- a. Disability item raised by Gillian
 - i. CoDA Inc are exploring ways for people with sight, hearing and physical disabilities, as well as things like dyslexia and other protected characteristics, to be able to attend meetings more easily. Looking at ways of supporting people with specific difficulties to be able to participate, eg seating someone with hearing difficulties close to a speaker, allowing those with sight difficulties to 'read' literature differently
 - ii. Bryony shared that meetings in physical venues have been listing on the website whether a meeting has 'level access, adapted toilet, hearing loop, nearby parking' since at least 2011 but UK Equalities legislation may have moved on since then. It would be good to update all the meetings on the website in line with updated guidance to help meeting be more inclusive.
 - iii. Tony raised the issue of neuro-diverse fellows and how meetings can make fellows with such issues welcome and included.
 - iv. Lorna raised the issue around gender-neutral toilet provision which their group have been asked about.
 - v. Gillian asks that members can be made to feel that all meetings are approachable, eg those with dyslexia doing readings at meetings, people with non-obvious disabilities – all are welcome, whether online or in person, or a service meeting.
 - vi. Lorna raised that some of the meeting readings feel like 'rules' but it's hard to see how the format can be simplified. A lot of the readings are

about boundaries and are key documents of the programme itself. Gillian commented that the familiarity helps new members as the same items are repeated in the format each week.

- vii. Tony questions how we implement making fellows feel more welcome. Could we suggest that there are recordings of readings, Big Book etc for those who finding reading literature difficult and that these are widely publicised. Can we start to filter some of these issues into the literature as things have moved on a lot in the last 20 years.
 - viii. Bryony proposed we submit these minutes as a note of our discussion for possible taking forward by the NSC in some format. Agreed.
- b. Zoom bombings raised by Sue
- i. Liverpool meeting experienced three 'Zoom bombers' doing something obscene in their meeting; they were able to be removed by the host but they have had a number of group consciences to decide how to protect the meeting in future. The group are planning to change the password and/or log in details, adding a waiting room, and possibly to close the meeting to new joiners after a set amount of time.
 - ii. Lorna has been in a couple of meetings where this has happened, it sounds like a similar pattern to the above along with verbal abuse and insults; the Zoom bombers didn't have cameras on before disruption began so her home group has voted to start the meeting with cameras on; the item has been handled by process of immediate group conscience in order to eject the disrupters. A member with experience of this problem in another meeting was able to help the chair of the meeting in sorting out the issue.
 - iii. Philip shared that technical issues prevented him using a camera for a while; groups need to be aware that rules about cameras being on may exclude members with a genuine need to attend a meeting.
 - iv. Sharing information about problems between groups will help members with less experience of Zoom to deal with problems as they arise.
 - v. Gillian's experience of Zoom bombing last year was that they were able to end the home group meeting and contact all members of the meeting with a new link; this was possible as they had a list of contact details for members. Using a waiting room for the meeting has helped to solve this and the link isn't published on the website, but contact details are circulated for new members to have a conversation about how the meeting runs, before the link is shared. A spare Zoom link is available in case it ever happens again.
 - vi. Gillian also shared that when it happened at a service meeting, the same method to circulate a link to registered members was tried; however the Zoom bomber was still able to obtain details so must

have been a member of the fellowship. The conference voted to keep the member in the meeting on that occasion.

- vii. Bryony shared that guidance was circulated to the fellowship by the CoDA Board of Trustees during March and this has been shared on the website to assist UK fellows: <https://codauk.org/safer-online-meetings/>
 - viii. The Manchester City Centre meeting hasn't been targeted but members are aware of this issue, and since it was raised, one member acts as host each week to ensure that any problems arising can be dealt with.
 - ix. Philip raised that in person meetings have experienced similar issues with disruptive members, ie sharing inappropriately or not following CoDA guidelines – suggests that existing guidance for dealing with such issues can be referred to for disrupted Zoom meetings.
 - x. Gillian recommends the *Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meeting Matters* booklet – page 12 gives guidance for dealing with this issue, eg hold an immediate group conscience, principles before personalities, tackle issues together to lead to CoDA unity; and groups can also refer to the Fellowship Service Manual (FSM). Calling an immediate group conscience is helpful.
 - xi. Anyone chairing a meeting needs to be willing to uphold the boundaries set by the group conscience in a non-shaming and gentle way, eg if a member is sharing beyond the time boundary the group has set. Any member can call a group conscience, over and above a scheduled conscience.
- c. WhatsApp groups raised by Tony – is there any guidance to share around safety in these groups?
- i. Gillian shared that she is a member of a number of them, but when one group started to be used away from its original purpose, members held a mini group conscience to decide on the direction of the group.
 - ii. There are a number of WhatsApp member network groups within CoDA UK at present: <https://codauk.org/member-networks/> which are well boundaried, have clear guidelines and are facilitated by members in service. When a problem occurred in one of the groups, there was a mediation process to deal with it, following the FSM disagreements process, and there is also a mediation committee if it is required. Service is available in these groups – please contact them if you're willing to serve in helping to facilitate them.
 - iii. Mostly Gillian's experience of WhatsApp groups has been healthy and sharing of CoDA experience is uplifting. Clear guidance and boundaries for use of WhatsApp is helpful.
 - iv. Philip mentioned that concerns have been raised at the NSC around WhatsApp and technological security; other platforms are available

which may be more suited to retaining anonymity – members of the NSC are exploring this further and will report back.

- v. The Manchester City Centre group has a WhatsApp group which is purely for practical arrangements, eg sharing information from the fellowship about events, letting members know if someone in service needs to find cover for a service role etc, and this boundary is read out weekly with a note that any member is welcome to join on this understanding.

11. As several members had other commitments on or around 31st July, the group voted that the next North Region meeting will be a week earlier, on 24th July. Bryony will update the website.

12. Close and serenity prayer 12.25-12.30pm