

Gamblers Anonymous Scotland
Minutes of National Meeting 29th July 2022
Rutherglen

Voting Members Present(35)

Ardrossan Monday, Blackburn Monday, Dundee Monday, Dunfermline Monday, Edinburgh Monday, Greenock Monday, Parkhead Monday AM, Parkhead Monday PM, Broughty Ferry Tuesday, Dennistoun Tuesday, Edinburgh Tuesday, Garthamlock Tuesday, Govan Tuesday, Hamilton Tuesday, Motherwell Tuesday, Paisley Tuesday, Rutherglen Tuesday, Blackhill Wednesday, Forfar Wednesday, Kirkcaldy Wednesday, Maryhill Wednesday, Partick Wednesday, Toryglen Wednesday, Whitburn Wednesday, Dundee Thursday, Falkirk Thursday, Hamilton Thursday, Livingston Thursday, Parkhead Thursday, Rutherglen Thursday, Shawlands Thursday, Irvine Friday, Perth Friday, Hamilton Saturday, Rutherglen Saturday.

Non-Voting Members Present(9)

Ardrossan Monday, Blackburn Monday, Edinburgh Monday (2), Rutherglen Tuesday, Forfar Wednesday, Rutherglen Thursday(2), Shawlands Thursday.

Apologies (27)

Clydebank Monday, Garthamlock Monday, Troon Monday, Wee Monday, Coatbridge Tuesday, Perth Tuesday, Aberdeen Wednesday, Craigend Wednesday, Daisy St Wednesday, Kilmarnock Wednesday, Parkhead Wednesday, Ayr Thursday, Cumbernauld Thursday, East Kilbride Thursday, Edinburgh Thursday, Erskine Thursday, Kelso Thursday, Maryhill Thursday, Anderson Friday, Bath St Friday, Coatbridge Friday, Dumfries Friday, Parkhead Friday, Aberdeen Saturday, Dennistoun Saturday, Viewpark Saturday, Inverness Sunday.

In attendance

London John, Wednesday Conference Call

George W opened the meeting with introductions around the room.

National Treasurers Report

BANK	PINS/LIT	B/BOOK	BANK	TOTAL
29/07/2022				
MONDAY				
Airdrie				
Ardrossan			103.00	103.00
Big Monday				
Blackburn			600.00	600.00
Carlisle				
Clydebank			64.00	64.00
Cumbernauld			70.00	70.00
Dundee			100.00	100.00
Dunfermline			78.00	78.00
Edinburgh			100.00	100.00
Elgin				
Garthamlock			112.00	112.00
Greenock				
Hurlford				
Musselburgh			30.00	30.00
Parkhead AM				
Parkhead PM				
Troon			150.00	150.00
Wee Monday			130.00	130.00
Whiteinch				
TUESDAY				
Broughty Ferry			50.00	50.00
Coatbridge			75.00	75.00

Dennistoun				
Dumbarton				
Edinburgh Ovg			50.00	50.00
Falkirk				
Garthamlock				
Govan				
Hamilton			100.00	100.00
Motherwell			120.00	120.00
Paisley			75.00	75.00
Perth			100.00	100.00
Rutherglen			100.00	100.00
WEDNESDAY				
Aberdeen			46.25	46.25
Blackhill			150.00	150.00
Craigend				
Daisy St			91.75	91.75
Forfar				
Inverness				
Kilmarnock				
Kirkcaldy			50.00	50.00
Maryhill				
Paisley			200.00	200.00
Parkhead			80.00	80.00
Partick			150.00	150.00
Peterhead				
Toryglen			200.00	200.00
West Linton				
Whitburn			150.00	150.00

THURSDAY				
Ayr				
Cumbernauld			250.00	250.00
Dundee				
East Kilbride				
Edinburgh			20.00	20.00
Erskine			300.00	300.00
Falkirk			600.00	600.00
Greenock				
Hamilton				
Kelso				
Kirkintilloch				
Livingston			200.00	200.00
Maryhill				
Parkhead			100.00	100.00
Rutherglen			100.00	100.00
Shawlands			200.00	200.00
FRIDAY				
Anderson				
Bath St				
Coatbridge				
Dumfries				
Dundee			50.00	50.00
Edinburgh				
Irvine			201.85	201.85
Parkhead AM				
Perth			180.00	180.00
SATURDAY				

Aberdeen					
Dennistoun			250.00	250.00	
Hamilton					
Kirkcaldy					
Partick					
Rutherglen					
View Park			160.00	160.00	
SUNDAY					
Edinburgh					
Inverness			50.00	50.00	
Rutherglen	20.00			20.00	
NATIONAL COLLECTION			49.13	49.13	
NATIONAL EXPENSES			-20.50	-20.50	Nett 28.63
Total Income	20.00		6015.48	6035.48	

CASH EXPENSES	178.25
Petty Cash Top Up	80.00
Balance	258.25
Postage	16.75
Taxi re Banners	12.50
Iceland Sundries	14.26
Juice/Water National	14.00
TOTAL CASH EXPENSES	57.51
Balance C/FWD	200.74

<u>CASH CARD</u>	
Balance C/FWD	2003.83
Website	82.91
Internet Creations	318.00
Peterhead Rent	54.64
Digital Solutions	67.43
Peterhead Rent	68.30
Petty Cash Top Up	80.00
Total Cash Card Expenses	671.28
<u>TOTAL CASH CARD C/F</u>	<u>1332.55</u>

<u>CHEQUES/DIRECT DEBITS</u>	
<u>DIRECT DEBITS</u>	
British Telecom	368.92
Office Wages	2520.00
BT Helpline Quarterly Charge	30.36
<u>CHEQUES</u>	
Wiseman 011023	275.03
Greenwood Moreland 011024	1128.79
Office Rent 011025	2600.00
The Web Banners +011026	11880.00
<u>TOTAL D/D & CHEQUES</u>	<u>18,803.10</u>

TOTAL BANK £91,058.56

Charles advised the meeting that several donations had come in during the day, they will be added to the August cash sheet as the cut off point for bank donations showing on the June/ July cash sheet was yesterday. All future Internet Creations costs will increase by 5%. A couple of groups are still sending bank donation without a group reference Charles reminded groups to check this is included before sending them in.

Live Chat Coordinators Report

During this period on the chat the system fielded 216 chats
From the system I've got the following stats:

1. 83.66% of the chats were for personal help and 15.34% of the chats were from a friend or family member.
2. Chatters waited 72 seconds to chat, and the average chat time was 12 minutes and 38 seconds.
3. The chat was manned on average 21 hours and 26 minutes a day.
4. During the 1446 hours and 8 minutes (up over 200 hours from the previous period) the chat was manned nobody had to be put in a queue.
5. During this period there was 1 ticket raised on the chat.
6. We currently have 42 active live chat agents.
7. Chat satisfaction was 80% with 16 chats being rated as good.
8. We currently have 146 agents on the meet and greet page working hard to get new and returning members along to meetings.
9. We also have 66 agents on the Gam Anon page supporting friends and family to get the help they need.

Live chat and its associated groups have been working well with little issue.

That said, there was an incident recently when an inappropriate post was put on the meet and greet and it was dealt with swiftly and removed by the agent who posted it.

A post was placed on the group by the moderator team reminding agents of what should be posted and what is unacceptable on the chat.

We have put a halt on trying to get the small number of groups that are not on the meet and greet. Messages were posted on the secretary page a number of times and groups not on the meet and greet didn't come forward to get added. We will look at this again in a few months.

Every month agents not logging in or not fulfilling the minimum requirement of 10 hours per month, are either contacted in person or are sent messages of encouragement or support to see if we can help them up their hours and if the hours are still not met then they are removed from the agent list.

We have lost 3 agents this period, but only 1 due to non-fulfilment of hours, the other 2 were for personal reasons.

We will have a further drive for new agents after the national to see if we can recruit any new or returning agents.

All agents that have been removed are free to come back at any time when they have more time to commit to the chat.

Thanks to all agents and moderators for giving back some of their precious time that the fellowship has given them.

Tam Live Chat Coordinator/Blackburn Monday

Tam read out a chat received from a Mum thanking the fellowship for the help her son has been given since joining and the difference she has seen in him.

Scottish Life Editor Report

Latest issue went live on 12th July 2022, through distribution on the Secretary WhatsApp group and uploaded onto the website.

There were 10 submissions in the latest issue from 8 groups (Blackburn Monday, Rutherglen Saturday, Dennistoun Tuesday, Perth Friday, Motherwell, Broughty Ferry, Aberdeen Wednesday and Dumbarton)

Next Issue will be August and the deadline for articles will be 26th August and I will aim to have this out shortly after this.

At the time of writing this report I currently have no contributions for the August Edition of the magazine. I am looking at getting peoples stories put on the website as well as sharing them with the social media team. Before sharing these with the above I will gain permission from the sender before doing so. If you would like to have your story shared on the website or on the social platforms, then please let me know.

Please can you all share with your groups asking if anyone is able to send in an article. This can be a vital tool for members so please if you are free to write down your story then it would be very much appreciated.

Thank you to everyone for the contributions for the latest magazine and please continue to send in those articles (scottishlife@gascotland.org)

Stephen Magazine Editor/Motherwell Tuesday

The deadline for the next magazine is the 26th of August, submission numbers are still low, please encourage your groups to look at this.

PRO Report

Good evening, all,

Things have certainly ramped up with several positive projects upcoming.

Computer gaming and gambling

I received an email from a student looking to hear from any compulsive gamblers that have been directly affected by computer gaming gambling, more and more games offer the chance for you to buy mystery boxes or cards to win special items. Scott from East Kilbride took part in the interview and shared his experience of using these games and how it evolved into a destructive obsession, Scott also shared the power of GA recovery, the support he receives and the life he has today. This interview was recorded and will be available to website and for social media team use soon. I thank Scott for giving his time and service to the fellowship.

Bertha Park High School Perth

Katrina from Bertha Park High School reached out about what GA Scotland could provide in terms of information and advice to S4 students on compulsive gambling, where it leads to, the devastation it causes and the support that GA Scotland provides. I talked to Katrina about what we have done with schools in the past and she was delighted when I offered to provide members to attend the school for a 50min share/Q&A.

She would like us to attend 2x sessions in September/October 2022 with firm dates and times to be provided at the start of term in August. This is likely to be repeated annually which is fantastic as it means each year the message is being given to young adults who are just starting their own journeys in life and to raise awareness and carry the message will be fantastic for GA Scotland. 2x individuals who volunteered to be part of the PRO sharing team have already offered their services!

DWP teams share

Debbie McCrory of the DWP who we worked with last year was back in touch for another share. She is a big advocate of seeing past the label of addict and better understand the gambling illness and how the department can best support those who reach out. She felt the team had previously asked insensitive or impossible questions to those with gambling addictions and that our shares have been beneficial in being more supportive and respectful to those in need. Callum from Blackburn will take part in a share/ Q&A with DWP staff and various other departments in September.

Ardrossan workshop 2023

Last but not least Alan from The Scottish centre of personal safety would like GA to have a pop up workshop when the new premises is obtained early 2023 in Ardrossan. This would require a couple of hours time from willing volunteers in the area to provide leaflets and information on GA Support as well as sharing about their individual experiences on addiction and more importantly recovery, further details to come nearer the time.

Thanks to all our volunteers and the GA PRO team for their continued support.

David PRO/Broughty Ferry Monday

Helpline Coordinator Report

Overall Calls 110 with 103 answered first time giving us 93% answered first time.

Thanks to all volunteers and those who provided cover for office hours.

Karen has arranged and sent details of cover for the office hours during upcoming annual leave which I will update onto the system

No other issues to report and again anyone looking to volunteer please contact myself, Brian Mac or the office and we can discuss.

Bryan Helpline Coordinator/Rutherglen Tuesday

PLO Report

Good evening, everyone my report tonight is going to be the longest and most intricate I've written in my time in office to date we now have 12 agents nationwide thank you all. Just over 5 weeks ago the PLOs work took off in a very big and exciting way, thanks to a well worded email by our wonderful Office Coordinator GA Scotland now has a minimum of 2 named people covering every prison in Scotland and individual prisons are contacting GA. I will be meeting with an officer and prisoner (recently move) in Barlinnie (update ad-hoc during my report) and another officer this coming Monday at Perth.

With contact coming from HMPs Glenochil, Low Moss and Cornton Vale, Karen is arranging initial member visits with the above prisons.

It was a very good suggestion to use the meet and greet to reach out to the fellowship so whoever is local and free to help the compulsive gambler looking for support within a prison setting, 13 as soon as any prison requests GA support for a prisoner

Having had the opportunity to upgrade and rework the literature specifically for prisoners this again thanks to Karen for all her support this will be handed over at initial meetings.

Another first for the PLO, a prisoner will be released on the 12th of August, my first thought was to get him to a local live meeting, I contacted Mark from Kelso who kindly visited with

me to introduce him to Ashley and upon release he will support him to get along to the meeting, this is something going forward that can be imbedded into GA Scotland practice.

Told you it's a long one.

Now to a very sad part for myself, Charles from Oxfams Tuesday has decided to step back from his role within the PLO not only was he an integral cog for the fellowship but has been instrumental in my recovery so from me, Charles thank you.

Finally, to remind the fellowship that come the AGM in October I will be stepping back from my PLO role on the committee, therefore, can you please take back to your groups a very productive position will be available.

Thanks for listening.

Simon PLO/Livingston Thursday

Social Media Coordinator Report

The social media pages have again been busy since the last National, with a steady number of visitors to the pages.

Content from both literature, and members' own contributions have been posted on a regular basis.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the social media pages so far, in particular those who responded so quickly to the recent call for contributions. Step 12 in action was clear to see.

Aims

Continue to gather members' stories to post on all platforms.

Final word

The social media pages are always looking for contributions so if anyone would like to get involved, please don't hesitate to get in touch. We'd be pretty lost without contributions from the fellowship so thanks to everyone who has done so, so far.

Hamish Social Media Coordinator/Perth Friday

Web Team Report

Karen delivering report on behalf of Mark M.

This week, a major update to the G.A. web site is being implemented. If all goes to plan, this will take place overnight on Thursday 28th /Friday 29th. This update will achieve the following:

Fixes some **BUGS**:

- The most noticeable of these were sections suddenly vanishing for no apparent reason, and some 'featured meeting' dates being incorrectly displayed.

Provides a number of new functions and **ENHANCEMENTS FOR SITE ADMIN (KAREN)**:

- Full easy to use WYSIWYG page content editing. This replaces the existing (quite basic) editing functionality. Too many features to list here but copy and paste from MS Word straight onto web page is just one of the enhanced features.
- Improved links-library functionality to create, edit, manage, display, and re-order quick links.
- In diary management section, 'jump' to any future date to enter diary entries (in addition to the existing one day/one week 'arrow' navigation).
- Introduction of 'hover-over' tooltips throughout to explain icon functions and buttons.
- Full admin management of meeting and event categories (descriptions, attendance restrictions, colour-coding, and category visibility restrictions (whether everyone, or only logged-in members, are allowed to see meetings in a category, e.g., Nationals, AGMs)
- Improved back-up and restore functionality.

Provides a number of new functions and **ENHANCEMENTS FOR USERS**:

- Display meetings based on distance from a user-entered postcode; visitor enters their postcode and meetings for next 7 days are displayed in order of closest to furthest away.
- Maps provided for all meetings (with ability to easily invoke full google maps-based directions / sat-nav style navigation)
- A new, additional diary view is provided to show all meetings in a user-selected set of categories between two dates. For example, show a calendar of all 'pinning' meetings in the next three weeks, or display a 12-month view of national and AGM meetings.
- New scrolling banner of positive story 'snippets' on the home page. The idea is that visitors will relate to members' experiences and hear that G.A. has worked for members.

The work on this major update has unfortunately caused some delays in transferring pre-existing sections the previous version of the website; literature and back-copies of magazine and national minutes, etc. Once this update is implemented these can be easily re-added to the site. To do it earlier would have meant having to repeat the transfer later. Thank you for being patient!

The above implementation will be a big step forward. Future enhancements (in development) include:

- External/internal secure messaging to/between post-holders and groups replacing almost all requirement for e-mail (more to follow on this).
- Re-introduction of ability for group secretaries or other group-authorized member to directly add/update pinning information and news updates, e.g., temp. closures, changes of venue. etc., based on each group having a secure PIN number to make changes directly.
- Bi-directional integration with the various platforms looked after by Social Media team.

I would like to thank everyone for their continued support and patience as we progress the website to where it needs to be.

Mark M Web Team Co-ordinator/Kirkcaldy Saturday

Barrie from Greenock Monday raised an issue with disabled access, the website does not advise anyone if this is available at meetings, George W added that Karen could ask the groups if they have disabled access when she sends out the request for updated group numbers in September, Karen agreed this will be taken forward.

Office Coordinator Report

I am currently trying to look at ways to reduce the amount of paper used within the office/fellowship and the environmental impact paper usage/waste has. Paper amounts to almost 26% of total waste at landfills, and often needs to be burned causing air pollution and the many toxins in paper leak into the soil and causes a lot of ecological damage. We are a very small cog in a large wheel, but I feel that we need to try and do our bit for the environment, as it's our grandchildren and their children who will feel the effects of the above a lot more than us.

Tonight's minutes are double sided (it's a start), I would ask everyone to look at the amount of literature held and requested on a regular basis, also ask your members to check if they need to take that piece of literature away with them, (a lot of members will have several copies at home) all literature is available digitally on the website (or will be again after this week). I am not asking you to stop requesting literature or giving this out to members who do need it, I am asking that we all look at taking this into consideration and maybe look at making someone in the group responsible for looking after literature/ordering it when needed and collecting it in at the end of meetings.

I recently met with a couple of the committee members to discuss the Members Manual, there are only a few of these left within the office so the time was right to have a look at it. As most of you know this manual contains sections from a selection of GA literature, some groups give this out to members when they have been part of the fellowship for 90 days. Some of the content is very outdated and the manual doesn't flow very well, all of the

information is available digitally and is part of other literature we have. The cost to produce each manual is £3.50 (cost is not an issue I am just making everyone aware of this). To help with paper reduction, we won't be reordering the manuals.

In relation to pins over 400 have gone out from the office in the past 18 months, I am aware that a number of members gave their pins to new members during lockdowns and I have replaced their pins in this period, but I am also aware that a large number of members do not keep their pins and they have to be replaced, I just want to raise that it is the members responsibility to hold on to their pin and use it each year, the group should not be paying for a replacement pin for members who have lost or misplaced their pin, member should be paying the £3 replacement themselves, the only reason that there is a charge for this is to encourage members to try and take care of them, this is less likely to happen if groups pay for them.

Just a reminder to let me know as soon as group secretary's change over, also to check your meeting information on the website regularly.

Karen Office Coordinator/Rutherglen Thursday

A.O.C.B.

John - Wednesday Conference Call

John attended to discuss the Wednesday conference call meeting. He is returning back home to work permanently soon and will finish running the meeting at the end of September. He is looking for someone to take over the running of the Wednesday night meeting and added that it is now time to look at revamping the meeting and moving it over to Zoom. Contact John if you are interested in taking the meeting on.

John is on holiday for the next two weeks and needs someone to come forward and run the Wednesday meeting for the next two weeks, again contact John if you are interested.

George W - GA WhatsApp Groups/Protocol

George reminded groups that GA WhatsApp Groups are for GA business only, and there should be no racist/sexist or homophobic posts on any of the WhatsApp groups, and referred to the new protocol banner, this was raised due to a recent post, it was deleted, and the members removed from the group immediately.

Tam, Live Chat Coordinator, added that the criteria for the Live Chat/Meet & Greet and GAM-ANON WhatsApp groups is very strict, this is to ensure that they are used for the purpose intended only, the criterion for each group is regularly posted to remind members of this.

Karen raised the Safeguarding Policy in place for all members and was made aware that some members have not seen this, all group secretary's should have sent this out to their members via the WhatsApp groups. Copies of the policy were made available at the meeting to take back to groups for members who may not be on the WhatsApp groups. A copy of the policy is now within the beginners' pack, it is really important that all members are aware of the policy as there have been a couple of issues/incidents recently where the policy procedure should have been followed, we all have a responsibility to ensure that all members are safe, (I am adding the Overview and Basic Principle of the Policy as a reminder

and will resend the policy to all group secretary's). At the heart of safeguarding is creating a safe and welcoming environment where everyone is respected and valued.

Ensuring that GA Scotland is run in a way that actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse and neglect. It is also about being ready to respond safely and well if there is a problem, everyone in GA Scotland has a role to play in safeguarding and should be aware of their duties of care to others and hence follow the law and best practice regarding safeguarding, when acting in GA Scotland's name.

Everyone should recognise that all individuals regardless of race, age, ability, gender, identity, sexual orientation, religion or belief have the right to protection from all types of harm and abuse.

Collection

The collection on the night was £97.71.

Jean Parkhead Thursday – Hybrid Meetings

Jean was tasked by her group to ask why Zoom is still being used in some live meeting rooms, there are currently 4 meetings using hybrid in their room which accounts for 5% of the fellowship. Both Simon from Livingston Thursday and Chris from Hamilton Thursday use Hybrid within their rooms George asked them to let the meeting know why they still felt it necessary to use hybrid. Simon quoted step 4 of the unity programme, each group shall be self-governing, it is their decision to still use this, and they have members who are on holiday and ill at times who use it. Chris from Hamilton Thursday advised that his meeting had a recent vote on the use of this, he personally voted to remove it and was outvoted. Tam raised a recent issue on the meet & greet, where a member was looking for a hybrid meeting to get a new member along to who couldn't get to a live meeting, this then led to several members commenting and one where a current hybrid meeting member encouraged attending theirs, the conference call should have been the first point of contact for this new member if physically unable to attend a live meeting, the hybrid meeting information should only be available to base members of that meeting. The above situation took Tam all night to sort out and the various comments placed on the meet & greet page in relation to this should never have happened this is not what the group is for.

George added that maybe this is an opportunity for the groups to relook the use of hybrid and return to a live only meeting, it is of course the meetings choice to continue using this.

John T – September Convention

John highlighted the September Convention, there are a number of countries taking part and running workshops, current bookings show that not very many Scottish members are attending although a number have intimated, they will attend for the day on the Saturday, the cost for this is £10 including workshops and refreshments.

The meeting came to an end in the usual manner.

Date of Next Meeting: Friday 30th September Whitburn 7pm.

Date of AGM: Friday 28th October 7pm Rutherglen

