**HIGNA ASC 1st Annual Report December 2019**

The Highlands & Islands group was 8 years old on November the 19th and in 2019, has continued to grow as we have added a number of new meetings to the group and in December of 2018 formed into a fledgling ASC.

Our current meetings list looks like this:

* Sunday 7pm Just For Today 60 min
* Monday 1pm Step Meeting 60 min
* Tuesday 6:30 pm Ask it basket 90 min
* Wednesday 1pm Just for today 60 min
* Wednesday 6pm Women’s Meeting 90 min
* Thursday 6:30pm Illness in Recovery 90 min
* Thursday 1am Never Alone Group Deaf Meeting Via Zoom 60 min
* (O) Friday 7pm Living Clean Topic Discussion 90 min
* Saturday 5pm Never Alone Group Deaf Meeting Via Zoom 60 min
* (O) Saturday 6pm Speaker Meeting 90 min
* ASC Meets the last Sunday of every even month at 5pm

All the above meetings are well attended and despite one or two teething problems, largely brought about by some lapses in our communication skills collectively and as a committee, all are now well served and functioning well.

Most significantly in November of 2018 and in the spirit of both prudence and technicality we moved venues from Skype to the new platform of Bluejeans. That transition over the last year has not been without its own problems as we all adjusted to the change and huge thanks must be given to those trusted servants whose service efforts helped enormously in its early months. Thanks must also be given for the patience and tolerance of all our members as they too gathered together to help those who were struggling with the new technology. It seems to be generally accepted that the move has been a positive one for us and that the shared experience of both our regular members and the many newcomers attending our meetings for the first time reflects the ease of use and accessibility of the new platform.

During 2019 HIGNA members have had the privilege and opportunity to do service delivering and taking part in several workshops focused on Remote Recovery and Virtual meetings, as well as a number considering the role of the virtual meetings as Outreach and Fellowship Development resources. Most notable of which were the opportunities to deliver Remote Recovery workshops, face to face at the Florida Service Symposium and online at the South Australian Area Convention in April and May respectively, at which our members were also given the opportunity to participate online. The 2018-19 Xmas and New Year’s Marathon meetings we were able to collaborate on with NA at Home were inspiring. We were also able to provide a live link to our regular Saturday meeting from the UKCNA in Birmingham in July at which several of our regular members were able to meet face to face for the first time as well as a small number of members at the convention attending their 1st ever online meeting.

As a result of our understanding of changes to the UKNA Region Guidelines on accepting and seating Non-Geographical Areas we decided in December of 2018 to finally form as an ASC and announce our intention to become a part of the UKNA Region as a seated Area. Initially in January of 2019 we were welcomed. However, at the next RSC in March, some confusion came to light arising from the RSC steering committee not fully understanding the implications or intent of their own guidelines. After much heated discussion and questioning by the body of the RSC we were asked to give up our seat and step down while an Ad Hoc committee was formed to look into the issue. At this time our position as online meetings and as an online service body within the service structure of both UKNA and the Fellowship at large remains ambiguous as we await their determinations.

Following on from our experience at the UKNA region in the spring the continuing conversation with the remainder of the service structure has been ongoing as we attempt to gain clarity around the historic statement by NAWS that we, the online meetings and now our service bodies, are not considered to be a part of the service structure or part of NA. Questions relating to this were asked directly of the Wold Board at the WSCNA in Florida by one of our members who gained no meaningful response. NAWS held an open web meeting in September focusing on gathering and collating information and best practice from the online meetings community around the world, which, from the feedback of our members who attended, one can only take as a positive sign although our acceptance of any change has to be that it will, if ever, take time to happen. Our groups and our Area conscience is that we will carry on doing what we have been doing for the last eight years regardless of the confusion of others as to our status and that our journey will continue to be to carry the message to the still suffering addict and our regular members.

On a more positive note two of our members, with the help and support of other technically minded members across the fellowship; have been able to bring a long planned for and long discussed project to fruition this year in the shape of the [www.virtual-na.org](http://www.virtual-na.org) website. This is now providing an autonomous, accurate and up to date, globally accessible meetings directory of Virtual meetings both online and by phone together in one place for the first time and which is becoming the go to resource for members looking for virtual meetings in their own language and displayed in their own local time.

Financially HIGNA has never been healthier as we reap the rewards of our choice to change platforms from Skype to Bluejeans, an approximate saving of around £300 per year. Our current financial status this year was also much improved by Skype’s remarkable decision to treat us as valued customers and give us a full refund on our 2018 payments to the tune of £477.41. HIGNA’s current, fixed, total annual expenses are now £216.08 per year instead of the previous £526.41 per year which includes all our website and Bluejeans costs. That translates to the actual cost for each of the 8 meetings currently on Bluejeans as being approximately £0.50p per week per meeting. Our current financial status is a total balance of £1016.03, which after deducting our prudent reserve of £500 leave us a working balance of £516.03.

Our Treasure has completed our obligation to HMRC by submitting a full set of figures for the 2018/19 financial year, as requested, and we are happy to report that we will not be paying any Tax, nor likely to at any time in the future ☺ We are, more importantly, happy to report that HIGNA is now functioning fully within UK Tax laws and to best of our knowledge, are the first ever UK based NA service body to have that status.

It has always been part of the ethos behind HIGNA to grow in a measured way and up to now that has been the case. However in this last year or so that growth has inevitably become more rapid. Part of the rationale to gain a seat at the UK Region, and the initial frustration at no doing so, was in recognition of that growth and our need, after 8 years, to take advantage of the services created by us as a fellowship and that Region has to offer such as PI and H&I in particular. Our primary purpose as stated in Tradition 5 is that as meetings and as an Area that we continue to carry the message to the still suffering addict. It is easy sometimes to sit back on our laurels content that we have what we need in our meetings yet there is always more service to be done, and more addicts who we can reach out to because our own personal recovery and growth cannot exist in a vacuum. We face the prospect then that as we as an Area gather yet more momentum and find ourselves in possession of yet more Tradition 7 resources that we need to think carefully as to how best we can direct those resources to fulfil that primary purpose. I sincerely hope that in the next year we can continue to find the common ground on which to build on what together we have already built and look forwards to us creating yet more opportunities to continue to grow as we move into our ninth year.

We extend a huge debt of gratitude for all our fellow members who together continue to make our meetings possible.

As ever in loving fellowship and service Steve A (HIGNAASC Chair)