

Discussion for National AGM 2024

These ideas are a response to previous discussion about the ideas of creating a CLG and Points system and are a suggestion to address the current issues with doing that.

The suggestion is that the ideas in this proposal be discussed and that might lead to NEC being asked to draw up a motion for next year that would implement a plan that achieves these objectives.

The Objectives

Rightsize. Optimise. Move forward. Become relevant.

The Issues

Complexity - So many legal entities. Ridiculously complex for an organisation of 300.

Need to be a proper legal entity. Need to limit liability of committee members. Need to be able to defend brand name and image. Don't want to have it hijacked after putting all the investment in.

Outline Proposal to Form a Single National Organisation

300 is ridiculously small

Requires far too many committee members

If these proposals are accepted, a formal constitution setting out these ideas in legal language can be drawn up and ratified.

Advantages –

One clear National image, so people know what we stand for

Can Form CLG (Company Limited by Guarantee)

One national committee. A small number of the best people to run organisation.

National Finance.

Ability to develop with a national view. Current system has the issue that the organisation can focus on one successful Area. And rest of the country can be neglected.

Points system. (Tesco's know what they are doing.) Modelled on the enormously successful system in HAWOG (Harrow and Wembley Outdoor Group). Got more events than there is room for on the programme. Competition for dates. Loads of events means loads of new members. Taken membership from 70 to over 300. No reason why it shouldn't work the same for Plus. So 300 to 1,200 members. Or more, as we have a system of local groups too.

Is this what a Plus programme ought to look like - www.hawog.org.uk/programme.php

National organisation and groups.

Areas cease to exist.

National committee –

Chair - drive it all along

Secretary - clear records

Finance - national accounts. Consolidating group accounts into national account. Producing national accounts as CLG. National Committee empowered to obtain professional assistance to produce national accounts if necessary.

Marketing and Development

National Events

National Membership Officer -

National Training and Education - training programme, teach committees how to run groups

All national committee members have a vote. Chair has casting vote.

All can appoint assistants and project teams as required and agreed. (Membership of national project team gets points too.)

National Auditor as now.

VPs senior advisors as now. Do not have a vote. Emergency Powers to intervene and resolve national level disputes or misconduct.

National AGM as now. Appoint the national committee. All groups entitled to two delegates, as now.

Same rules about constitution changes as now.

(Concept of a president as we used to have. Someone with a national profile as a patron and advocate. Would be difficult to appoint at our current size. But non-compulsory position, desirable when possible.)

Groups operate as now. (Except legally part of the national organisation.)

Members can be members of a group or national (non-geographic group) if they have no group near enough. This is essential so once sufficient members are in an area, new groups can be formed. (Membership of the NGG only £10 (50% discount) as don't have benefits of a local group. Can attend all events. Only available to members living at least 25 miles from the nearest group.)

All members are members of a group. And hence members of the national organisation.

All groups are members of National.

Groups have bank accounts as now.

National has bank account as now.

At the point of changeover to the new structure, Areas can choose to distribute their funds amongst their area groups. Or transfer them all to National. Or a combination of both.

Area associations of local groups can continue to exist and meet to organise larger scale area events. But they will not have the legal status as separate organisations that they do now. These events can be funded by coalition of groups or by national.

National should agree to fund or underwrite everything that has a reasonable chance of success and attracting new members.

Be in a position to be able to Setup CLG. (and / or CIC (Community Interest Company))

This idea has been suggested before and the feasibility investigated. It is simply not practical at present, as we are multiple legal entities, and so could not be one company.

Why would we want to do it?

Protect committees. Protect marketing identity. (Are we currently exposed to big risks and we have just been lucky?)

(Side thought – if we have new younger members in the organisation – there is more potential for incidents to happen like it did in the old days. In the new litigious politically correct world, it will be much more important to ensure the committee and organisation are protected.)

Public image – one national organisation

All groups will legally be sub-committees of national. So we are one national organisation. And can have sub-committee bank accounts, as we have project bank accounts.

National chairman and treasurer signatory to all group bank accounts. But would never normally exercise unless there is a major problem or group ceases to function.

Groups must produce annual accounts and submit them promptly to national.

If a group closes, funds are subsumed into national.

National can fund the formation of new groups as required.

Points system. For organising events. for serving on committees.

Points can be redeemed against membership, attending events and meals and any chargeable event.

Points awarded for organising anything that requires effort. So a meal or theatre trip, but not a pub night.

Points awarded by groups and recorded on national database.

Adapt the HAWOG points system

Single national membership database. Vital for marketing and statistics.

Points must be cautious to begin with as we have limited funds. As the organisation and income grows, they can be increased substantially, as has been possible with HAWOG.

Groups and national entitled to charge a points levy (table as HAWOG - www.hawog.org.uk/rewardsandsupplements.php) for attending events which require organising (eg meals, theatre, events in private room, etc)

If people refuse to pay, and it cannot be resolved at group level, National has power to suspend or terminate them. (As with HAWOG, but it has never happened.)

Generally groups decide on points awarded and supplements charged. National available as arbitrator and enforcer if necessary or in case of complaints or disputes.

Transition

Discussion at AGM 2024

A full constitution capturing this proposal and any refinements agreed at the AGM is drawn up during the year.

The constituent is circulated for comment and refinement.

The constitution is voted on at AGM 2025.

The change takes effect from AGM 2025

The new national committee is elected at AGM 2025.

The new national committee to investigate and set up CLG as one of their first actions. Authorised to spend reasonable costs.

(For Constitution – the national organisation may operate a points system. Funded by event supplements. The rules of the points system and the number of points awarded and supplements will be as from time to time decided by national committee and AGM. The rules and rates will be documented in the organisations standing orders. The rules of the points system do not form part of the constitution and require a simple majority to amend.)