

ANC NEWS 2002

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Adrian Barnard (National Chairman) introduced the Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry, Cllr Ken Taylor, who thanked 18 Plus for coming to the city for the third consecutive year, and that groups such as 18 Plus were important to the community. He was born the same year 18 Plus was formed. Gerry Edwards (Presiding Vice President and NEO) gave the opening address. He said that this was his 18th ANC, and still got excited about it. He was honoured to be presiding over the conference and urged all to take part - and asked everyone to shake hands with their neighbour by way of introduction! Gerry commended the NEC for their hard work, thanked the ANC committee, and, stressed the importance of setting policies and trophies.

Tellers elected were Dave Filer, Jonathan Tall, Paul West and Gavin O'Mahoney (proposed Brentwood, Solihull, Basingstoke, and Havering respectively, block second Sudbury). Apologies were received from Leeds and Rothwell groups; plus Steve Sheldon, Terry 'Biggles' Drake, David Orsler and Clive Bryant plus another apology from the floor. John Smith and Jarrett Smith were elected ballot paper counters (proposed Stockport and Hounslow respectively, block second Northwich). Voting strength was established at 58.

The minutes of the 2001 ANC were presented, with an amendment of p.25 to change Mark Reynolds to Randall. Northwich proposed, Abingdon seconded; there were 44 votes for, the rest abstentions (carried Nem Com). Matters Arising – two written questions saw Northwich ask about second tier groups started (two) and Martin Mays (Direct Member) said National Officers never replied to him; Gerry said all that could be done on that had been. The Annual Federation Report came next - an amendment was made to the Midland Area Chairman's Report (should have read in the penultimate paragraph '...membership from 196 to 201'). Chris Porter (Sudbury Delegate) asked the NEC about threats from movements such as the Scouts; Adrian said this would be addressed. Proposed – Northwich; seconded – Abingdon. Three abstentions saw the report carried Nem Com. Tony Burgess (National Finance Officer) presented and took questions on the Federation's Accounts. Francis Wallington (Observer) asked about de-registration from VAT. Tony said National wouldn't pay out but not receive anything back. Finances were over the limit at present. Francis followed this with a question about the Charles Padgham Training Fund. Tony had tied up some of the Nicholson House accounts and the fund was now in memory of Charles. Dave Filer (Coventry Observer) said the accounts' figures were lower than stated; Tony replied this was turnover and not income. Corrina Haywood (Sutton Coldfield Observer) asked if the Department for Education grant had to be repaid. Tony had spoken to them and it was now being investigated. Corrina then asked about grant aid; Tony replied it usually only went to organisations for 13 to 19 year olds. Lee Mole (Maidenhead Delegate) asked how the training fund was spent; it was for the NEC to decide. Dave Spellar (Romford Delegate) wanted to know about investment on Nicholson House money. It is in a high investment account – but with only two banks in Newent investment opportunities were limited.

Paul West (Southern Area Treasurer) asked if there was a reserve fund for future projects; Tony said it is just a name on the accounts for specific one off projects. Jonathan Tall (Solihull Obs) wanted an update on money owed to National – there are outstanding invoices. Proposed – Northwich; seconded – Basingstoke. 54 votes for plus abstentions

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(carried Nem Com). Tony proposed the Accountant's Report; it was seconded and carried Nem Com (54 for plus abstentions).

There were no nominations for the position of National Chairman. Adrian must stand down so the senior Area Chairman (Bekki Randall, Northern AC) will caretake the post until the July NEC meeting. Then a new NC will be appointed. Pete Strawbridge (Solihull Del) asked for Adrian to explain the role of NC. He replied that it including chairing the ANC, heading the NEC, supervising the GPC (General Purposes Committee), acting as spokesman, and supervising links with other organisations. Corrina wanted to know if the NEC had discussed the situation. Adrian declared that it was up to individual consciences and if no one took the job it would be a caretaker post. In response to a question by Jonathan Tall, Adrian said the NEC had been aware of the situation for a few months.

There were birthday greetings, presents and a song for Donna Black (Honorary General Secretary) followed by a tea break. Afterwards the first motion for debate was to abolish the Think Tank with immediate effect. Voting strength was 59. James Rockcliffe (East Anglia AC) spoke for the NEC and said that the TT had never realised its potential and few had joined. It would take longer to get things done with it. Francis said if you thought the TT useless, vote for the motion. 18 Plus should use members' skills more, with more forward thinking. Lara Collins (Brentwood Del) said members did not want to follow their professions into their social lives. Simon George (Slough Obs) asked how much money would be saved (none) so why get rid of it? Stephen Sykes (Reading) wanted to know how much time would be saved (none). Pete said it made little difference so why not keep it in case it was needed in future? Ian Crawshaw (Hounslow Del) said there was a new TT – the National Restructuring Forum. Corinna suggested national posts were being jettisoned unnecessarily – vote against! James summed up; money was not the problem – it was individuals. He asked for ideas to be forwarded to the NEC via the office. The motion was carried with 82% for.

Tim Moores presented the next motion for the NEC – to award £100 to each group increasing its membership by 10% in a calendar year. He said it was done three years ago and several groups benefited. It would encourage membership growth. Francis said it was worthwhile but questioned if it would be effective. Jo Krasij asked if new members included ex-members. Lara said if that if this had existed last year her group would have had a cheque! Corrina applauded the innovation but is it the best way to get new members? Simon believed it was reasonable but what about retention? Chris Brandon (Northwich Del) said his group benefited but money shouldn't be needed to increase memberships. Jonathan said anything encouraging growth should be applauded. Coventry Del said retention is as important as getting new members. Pete said vote for this – and look at the membership figures to see how groups grow. After more speakers for, Tim summed up the vote went for with a figure of 94%. that a new article be added to the constitution to say that any Group or Area awarding Honorary Life Membership pay six times the current membership fee for full or associate membership. Martin Berry (Midland AC), proposing for the NEC, said that HLM enables full privileges of the Federation. Some Areas pay annually but those not could lose members. Paying in advance stops this and helps National as well. Pete said it would avoid future problems for committees, Ian Crawshaw (Hounslow) said it is up front money for National to spend on recruitment. Barry Healey (Havering) asked if payment stopped after six years (yes). Corrina wanted ACs to find out who their HLMs were, and Jonathan suggested a central list. Brentwood proposed the move to the vote, Solihull seconded; the motion was carried with 93% for.

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One dinner dance and several extremely sore heads later, conference resumed. Voting strength was 52. James Rockcliffe (East Anglia AC) proposed an Urgency Motion for the NEC to suspend Standing Order 4.1 to allow a National Chairman to be elected at this ANC. He said it was the most sensible option as there was a candidate willing to stand. This was carried 100%; a motion was then proposed by James to allow nominations to be accepted up to the tea break. It was also carried.

Solihull proposed a motion to amend the constitution to allow a 66% majority vote to allow motions through. Motions had been lost in the past despite 74% voting in favour (75% is the current figure) and only 36 members at the moment were required to keep the constitution the same. Coventry seconded, saying it would be more representative. The NEC spoke against the motion. Tim Moores (North Thames and Chiltern AC) asked the delegates to consider it in terms of controversial motions and the need for a solid foundation for the Federation's future. Lara Collins (Brentwood Del) said the minority should not dictate to the majority; Mark Randall (Stockport Del) said 66% would mean less well planned motions; Jo Krasij (Whitefield Del) argued that they would be passed if good enough but 66% was a dangerous precedent. Corrina said the top ten groups had most say. The age range motion from a previous ANC had not gone through because a small number had opposed it. Clive Bryant (Redbridge Obs) said overwhelming majorities were required to overturn the constitution. Pete summed up by saying the debate had been sensible and that people present were sensible (!) enough to not pass silly motions. Just fewer than 51% voted in favour but the vote was still lost. Adrian thanked Solihull for submitting the motion.

After the break the announcement of the candidates for National Chairman took place. There were two – Bekki Randall (prop Havering sec Solihull) and Wayne Fenton (prop Coventry sec Crawley). Bekki said she could offer 18 Plus a positive role and was sure she was ready for the challenge of turning round the membership decline, and giving Plus a bright future. Wayne said he had served at a number of levels and had the experience, knowledge and leadership ability for the job. Though he could only serve a year he would train a successor.

Questions followed. The candidates were asked about restructuring; Wayne looked forward to the findings of the National Restructuring Forum and Bekki looked to seeing the membership's reaction to the forum. Francis asked about training – Bekki believed it important but it was difficult to get members interested. Wayne agreed. Northwich asked if their decision to stand was because no one had stood Saturday. Wayne said no but he felt he had the greater experience. Bekki said it was her decision and she wanted to stand the full three years. Liam Wright (Solihull del) asked about strengths and weaknesses. Bekki said she was a strong character and would seek help to overcome weaknesses. Wayne said he was strong and determined, and would take on board anything suggested to him. Clive asked if either of them had resigned or stood down from a post. Wayne had resigned from the TAG committee over a previous conflict of interest whilst Bekki had stood down from a post that was abolished and as a Group Chairman to become Area Chairman. There was a question about membership costs. Bekki said it was possible to create value for money; Wayne said build the membership

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up, build up the events. Coventry asked how much time they could commit. Bekki worked flexi time and had full backing of her husband. Wayne also had the support of his partner and would have the time as he was mobile and flexible.

Various other questions were asked and to round up Adrian thanked both candidates. Everyone broke then up for lunch.

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After lunch the election of the National Chairman was held. Whilst the votes were counted the Facility for National Debate took place. Jonathan Tall (Solihull Obs) discussed voting by proportional representation. He said votes should depend on group size using statistics and examples. Chris Page (Brentwood Del) said Group size should not make a difference. Among the speakers for and against Mark Randall said 18 Plus was a Federation of Groups, not members whilst Chris Porter (Sudbury Del) had joined a group that couldn't send a delegate but agreed with the idea. Dot Sallis (Banbury Del) then brought up the subject of Group committee positions being a year rather than six months. Tim Moores said his group had suggested it a couple of years ago but had failed to get it passed. Lara thought it would be more difficult to get people to stand. Pete Strawbridge said many Solihull members were not interested in committee work. Alex Barber (Coventry Del) said people would have more time in six months to get things done. Liam Wright said it would be good for continuity. Dave Spellar spoke in favour of training for committee members whilst Martin Berry it would bring groups in line with Area and National. Jarrett Smith (National Activities Officer) then requested members provide suggestions for National events, particularly holidays such as TAG. Other subjects discussed included abolition of Areas, and the National Restructuring Forum. Many passionate voices were raised for and against!

The result of the National Chairman election was announced. The winner was Bekki with 39 votes. She thanked those present and said 'you will not regret this!' Congratulations Bekki.

In his NC's address, Adrian reminded members that they are the ones empowered to help the Federation. The National Video has been started and hopes people have seen some early footage. Adrian also told the conference that the office has a database up and running; that he hoped current events would be expanded on and looked forward to more specialised events in the future.

The awards were presented and the winners were:
Spirit of Linda Street Award – Dot Sallis
Charities Trophy – Barkingside
Gold Trail Trophy – Solihull
Recruitment Trophy – Solihull
Best New Group – not awarded

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Development Certificates – not awarded

Treasurers Trophy – East Anglia

Norbury Trophy – Southern Area's 'What's New'

Training Trophy – Southern Area

National Chairman's Merit Awards – not given

President's Trophy – Solihull

Cobb Dual Purpose Jug Mug – East Anglia

Jo Woodhead and Gerry were re-elected Vice Presidents and Jo was made an HLM.
Karen Grey, retiring Vice President was given special thanks.

Gerry Edwards (Presiding VP) said he had thoroughly enjoyed the conference – he had hoped delegates would join the debates and was pleased to have seen and heard the discussions. He also stated that whilst there was no Terry Dixon this year – he had been replaced by Simon George! He thanked all present for attending and taking part.

Adrian closed the 61st ANC by thanking everyone and wished all a safe journey home.