

Gazette

A SUMMARY OF PLUS NATIONAL NEWS

National Federation of Plus Areas National Gazette

By John A Smith, National Chairman

NEC meeting 10th May 2008

The May National Executive Council Meeting was held at a new venue for Plus, The Quadrant Business Centre, Coventry. It is planned to hold the August and November meetings at this venue.

Thanks to Adrian Barnard for acting as NEC Administrator for the meeting.

Election of National Officers

National Publicity Officer, Kirsty van Lieshout was re-elected. Robert Jones was re-elected as Deputy National Chairman.

There were no nominations for the following:

- Honorary General Secretary
- NEC Administrator
- Activities Officer
- Training Officer
- AGM co-ordinator

These posts remain open; questions and nominations should be directed to the National Chairman, John A Smith e-mail jas@anvil.uk.net for election at the August NEC meeting.

The NEC are also required to appoint Auditors for the 2007 and 2008 accounts, one candidate has already been found and another is needed. Volunteers should contact the National Finance Officer.

National Meetings

Dates for forthcoming National Meetings have been set: August 16th and November 29th. The venue will be the Quadrant Business Centre, Coventry, subject to booking confirmation.

Thanks to Sandra Brogan and her team for organising a well run AGM 2008.

Annual General Meeting 2009

This is to take place on Saturday 21st February 2009 starting at 10:00 a.m. and finishing at 6:00 p.m. The National Finance Officer volunteered to act as Bookings Officer. The Area Chairmen agreed to ask for volunteers to stand as AGM Co-ordinator: a plan and a budget should be submitted to the August NEC meeting. Rough budgets are to be submitted by 30th June to the National Chairman.

The NEC passed a unanimous resolution to invite the Groups to send delegates to the 2009 Annual General Meeting.

Web Site

The NEC agreed that the new CMS (Content Management System) web site (National Internet co-ordinator Richard Morton, Webmaster) now go live on the domain names plusgroups.org.uk and 18plus.org.uk. The domain name plusgroups.org remains directed to the existing Plus web site (Mark Hewson, Webmaster).

National Internet Co-ordinator, Richard Morton and Northern Area Chairman, Robert Jones are to set up a process for registering existing members with the web site and the new membership form is to be updated to include optional registration with the web site.

Training

The Fish! and World Cafe outcomes were published at the NEC meeting listing all the ideas and thoughts experienced by the participants of the Focus Day in their own words and as they were written down. There are some brilliant ideas.

Thanks to the organisers of Focus Day for putting on a landmark event.

Unfortunately the NEC was unable to discuss this fully due to time constraints, but agreed to include this on the agenda of their next Area Conference and bring any ideas to the August NEC meeting. All Area's are required to bring a copy of their Area action plan for 2009 to the November NEC meeting this should include outcomes from Focus day. The National Chairman also agreed to publicise the documents, (see the Plus web sites, ONElist and Plus News).

The Focus Day outcomes are for the whole of Plus to act upon and we should discuss and further explore the ideas generated at all levels of Plus with a view to putting them into action.

The idea of a Focus Day 2 was suggested, however as web site training is required as soon as possible the National Publicity Officer agreed to investigate the possibility of organising a more practical, hands-on type of event to cover training on inputting content to the new web site as well as practical Publicity training.

London & South East Area

The Area Committee decided to put motions on the agenda of the January Area Conference to divide up Area funds with a "Development Grant" to each Group and to close the Area if no Committee could be found. No Comm was elected at the January Conference and the AEC proposed the two motions; that the Area funds be given to each Group as a Development Grant (£507.18), leaving the Area with no funds and that the Area be closed if no Committee could be found by the end of February.

Both motions were passed and no nominations were received therefore the outgoing Area Chairman declared the Area closed at the end of February.

In early February the Area Chairman notified the NonEC of the decision to close the Area and to enquire of the National Finance Officer what debts the Area owed to the Federation. The National Finance Officer replied that the amount owing was the Annual membership fee for 2008 of £500.00 as per section 4.2 of the National Constitution. This was not forthcoming and the Area Chairman made it plain that it would not be.

Following the AGM the National Chairman notified the Area Chairman of the NEC decision made at the PreAGM meeting; not to close the Area due to lack of information. A follow up conversation resulted in the receipt of a cheque for £125.00 for the first instalment of the Area's Annual Membership Fee. No further instalments have been received.

The National Chairman Advised that as the Area was still open that the two Groups should send their memberships to the National Chairman and that the Area's assets and records should also be sent to the National Chairman.

Constitutional issues raised by the actions of the London & South East Area are as follows:

One, the Annual Membership Fee; the Constitution clearly states that the fee is annual, not quarterly nor bi-monthly, the Constitution does state that the Annual Membership Fee is payable quarterly. Therefore the official advice of the National Finance Officer was correct and well in advance of the deadline set by the January Area Conference.

Two, Debts and Liabilities: as the Area has voted to close following the disposal of its funds in Development Grants to its Groups the area is left in debt. The constitution is clear on this point stating that an Area must not pass on it s to another part of the organization. The finance report to the January Area Conference clearly states that the Area had sufficient funds to cover the debt.

Finally, Area Closure: only the NEC may officially close an Area and the NEC has been unable to do so, initially due to lack of information and latterly due to the fact that the Area has put itself into debt by its actions.

There seems to have been no desire on the part of the AEC to adhere to their obligations as Officers of the Federation; the aim was to close the Area and share out the funds between the two Groups regardless of the implications of this action.

The NEC has however reluctantly agreed to accept the c
Area subject to the following being carried out;

don & South East

- Southern Area consider offering membership of the Area to the two London & South East Area Plus Groups
- The two London & South East Area Plus Groups have an EGM to decide which Area they wish to join
- The adopting Areas are invoiced the proportions of the remaining National Membership Fee

East Anglia Area has already considered and agreed to adopt the two Groups if that is their wish. The adopting Area will be invoiced the remaining National Membership Fee less any Group members' membership fees received by the National Chairman.

Thanks to East Anglia Area Chairman, Joe Gurney and the NEC for putting together a practical solution to a difficult situation.

Motion to increase National Levy

Here is the wording East Anglia Area Chairman, Joe Gurney composed for a motion which would raise the Area Levy from £500 to £600 as of 1st January 2009.

With effect from 1st January 2009, the first sentence of Article 5.2.2 of the National Constitution shall be amended to read thus:

"5.2.2 As of 1st January 2009, the annual membership fee will be £600 payable quarterly, thus:

The rest of Article 5.2.2 shall remain unchanged.

Platinum Awards

The application form is now published for the Platinum Awards and can be obtained from your Area Chairman or the Plus web site.

NGOOT

This event is to return next year.

Plus News

As there is currently no Publications Officer (Plus News Editor) the National Chairman is putting together an issue of Plus News to be published shortly after the Spring Bank Holiday. Please send any items (articles, photos, adverts etc) for inclusion to John A Smith e-mail jas@anvil.uk.net

National Directory

Thanks to Katie Hawkins for putting together a National Directory, if your Group wishes to have a copy then please contact your Area Chairman.

Volunteers' Week 2008

Here's a link to the web site for Volunteer' Week: www.volunteersweek.org.uk

I think this is something that Plus could get involved with very easily and quickly.

Just organise an event on your Group night or at the weekend during Vulunteers' Week (1 to 7 June) and publicise it in the local press and to local radio.

The event could be to publicly thank your Group's volunteers (Committee) and highlight their contribution to the Group and Plus in the Area or Nationally.

Or you could hold an event where the benefits of volunteering in Plus are highlighted.

Both these sorts of event (or combine both into one event) would stand a good chance of getting some free coverage in the press and maybe attract the sort of new member interested in the organising side of Plus.

The following is from the Vulunteers' Week web site (www.volunteersweek.org.uk):

The following list may give you some inspiration...

- Give your volunteers a break, take them out for a day of pampering
- Get together with like-minded organisations and set up an information booth in your local shopping centre to inform people about volunteering with your organisation
- Make a display showcasing your fantastic volunteers and display the entries in a public place, such as your local library
- Organise taster sessions for potential volunteers to find out how rewarding this work can be
- Display Volunteers' Week posters in a prominent place – make sure people know what you are celebrating
- Write to your local paper and tell them about your wonderful volunteers - you can find useful tips on how to do this in the registered users' area
- Host a clothes-swapping party and donate a selection of clothes to a charity of your choice
- Inform your colleagues - invite them to a learning lunch and tell them about the volunteering that you do in your spare time and how they can go about volunteering in their spare time
- Boost team spirit amongst your volunteers and organise a sports day or a barbecue in the park or beach
- Break a world record - do something innovative with your volunteers
- Undertake a volunteer audit and release any interesting findings to local media
- Challenge your volunteers to get out their needle and thread and organise a fashion show. You could join up with a local college art department for tips
- Or keep it fun and simple; have a 'thank you' party and decorate the room with balloons, bunting and streamers

Whatever ideas you come up with, the aim is to get people involved in volunteering.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Adrian Barnard and Tina Bunyan on their recent engagement.