

Plus Gazette

A SUMMARY OF PLUS NATIONAL NEWS

February 2009

This National Gazette has been prepared by Francis Wallington and John A Smith to inform members of the decisions and happenings leading to and during the 3rd Annual General Meeting (68th Annual National Conference) held on 21st February 2009 at the County Hotel, Birmingham Road, Walsall.

People and Elections

The following persons were elected;
National Chairman: Adrian Barnard
National Finance Officer: Mark Harrington
National Publications Officer: John A Smith

Honorary Auditor: Katie Hawkins

Vice Presidents: Sandra Brogan
Gerry Edwards

Richard Morton resigned as Internet Co-Ordinator prior to the AGM
Kirsty van Lieshout resigned as National Public Relations Officer prior to the AGM

At the NEC Meeting held on 21st February, the Anglia and South East Area Chair, Joseph Gurney was elected Deputy National Chairman.

There are now a number of vacant posts, notably Honorary General Secretary which are essential to the operation of the Federation. We continue to seek volunteers to stand at the May NEC meeting. If you have any queries about these posts, please seek their job descriptions through your Area Chairman. We wish Adrian and Mark every success in their forthcoming year of office.

Trophies & Awards

The following were awarded;

Excellence Award – Richard Leach
The Linda Street Spirit of Plus Award – John A Smith
Treasurer's Trophy - Katie Hawkins
Charities Trophy - Lincs Quest
Gold Trail Trophy - Slough
National Recruitment Trophy - Lincs Quest
Norbury Trophy – East Anglia Area Angles
Charles Padgham Training Trophy – East Anglia Area
The President's Trophy (Best Group) – So'ton Friends
Cobb Dual Purpose Jug Mug (Best Area) – Midland Area

Congratulations to those who have been awarded and to those who have contributed to the awards. You have worked hard!

National Federation of Plus Areas - National Gazette

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was opened by National Chairman, John Smith and Vice President, Gerry Edwards welcomed delegates and observers.

Mark Hewson and Stephen Sykes were elected Tellers. Gary Schwimmer and John Horswell were elected Ballot Paper Counters.

Apologies for absence were received from Vice President, Sandra Brogan, Kirsty van Lieshout of South Hants Quest, Richard Morton and Paula Oakley of So'ton Friends.

The following groups were not represented as delegates, Leeds, Rothwell and Sheffield.

The voting strength of delegates 36 persons representing 22 Plus Groups.

Minutes

The Minutes of the 67th Annual General Meeting held at the Falstaff Hotel, Leamington Spa on 24th February 2008 were accepted.

Thank you to Erica Knight for translating the audio record to the printed page in time for presentation to this General Meeting.

The Federation's Report

The report prepared by the National Chairman and NEC members for the membership of the year 2008 was accepted by delegates.

Acceptance of Accounts

The audited accounts for 2007 were presented to the General Meeting and accepted.

Motions

1. Anglia & South East Area proposed a motion to remove the automatic price increase of the full membership fee

This motion required a 75 per cent majority to succeed. Motion lost

2. Anglia & South East Area proposed a motion for the location of the AGM to change from year to year.

This motion required a 75 per cent majority to succeed. Motion lost

3. Southern Area proposed a motion allowing Groups to submit motions directly to the Annual National General Meeting provided they have found another Group to second such a motion

This motion required a 75 per cent majority. Motion passed

4. Southern Area proposed a motion permitting Second Tier (Quest) Groups to have voting rights

This motion required a 75 per cent majority to succeed. Motion lost

National Federation of Plus Areas - National Gazette

5. Midland Area proposed a motion that non members can attend two National Scale Events within twelve months provided they pay a surcharge

This motion required a fifty per cent majority to be accepted. Motion Lost

6. North Thames and Chilterns Area proposed a motion enabling Groups to change and select the age range of members they can attract

This motion required a 75 per cent majority to succeed. Motion lost

Comment

Plus has always encouraged its members to practice the skills of debate and discussion through its meetings.

Some of the motions presented were incorrectly numbered against clauses in the constitution. This caused conflicts with essential items within the constitution that were not meant to be affected by the motion. The NEC had prepared a revision of the constitution in light of previous amendments for the General Meeting.

Traditionally it has been the task of HGS and Chair to clarify motions, questions, wording and their intent. Under current roles and responsibilities, we did not feel obliged to do this.

Please check your wording with your Area Chair or a friendly HLM

Nevertheless these motions promoted strong discussion and debate.

Facility for National Debate

The principle item for debate was the meaning and future of Plus. This sought the understanding of members concerning the aims of the organisation and its future aims.

Health and Safety Policy and Procedures

In light of recent legislation such as the Corporate Manslaughter Act, the need to protect volunteers such as event organisers and committee members from legal action, we have reviewed our existing procedures and updated them.

We have created a Health and Safety Policy Statement; a procedure for using Risk Assessment; Training Policy; an Incident or Near Miss Procedure and an Investigation Report Form for Accidents or Near Misses.

The documents that have been prepared are meant to compliment and support the existing process of researching, preparing and submitting an event risk assessment.

In planning and executing an event, a key component for an event team is the preparation and submission of risk assessment documents to the National Finance Officer and the Federation's insurer eight weeks before the event. This together with the publication of guidance or rules and the use of briefing before event delivery will contribute to the safety and enjoyment of events.

The NEC as part of its due-diligence will report the number of such risk assessment documents submitted and any issues associated with safety at the Annual General Meeting.

National Federation of Plus Areas - National Gazette

We seek your thoughts and ideas on this important issue. So please read and review these documents. We have also sought comment from the Federation's insurer.

At the next NEC meeting, these documents will be put forward for formal adoption.

Business Plan

Gerry Edwards, Vice President sought member's opinions on where they envisaged the Federation in the near future. If you have any ideas or opinions about building this organisation, please contact Vice Presidents Gerry Edwards or Sandra Brogan.

Publicity

John Smith announced a competition for publicity and marketing submissions to the press. A trophy will be awarded at the 2010 AGM to the highest scoring Group. Each Area has been asked to give a prize of £100 to the highest scoring Group in their Area. Rules and scoring will be issued soon. Please send all your press cuttings to John Smith.

New Members in September - The NEC plan to run a publicity campaign whereby any new member joining in September may have a £5 reduction in their membership fee, the NEC also passed a motion that any Area may offer the £5 reduction to new members throughout 2009.

Business Address and points of communication

With the election of Mark Harrington as National Finance Officer, the business address of Federation changes to that of Mark's home.

88, Wildhay Road,
Hilton,
Derbyshire
DE65 5NU

Telephone 01283- 734290

The 0870 [Flexitel] telephone numbers quoted on the National web-site for enquiries and business have been re-routed.

0870 874 7587 – New Member enquiries – John Smith

0870 879 4960 – Business – Adrian Barnard

Web-site Workshop

As part of the General Meeting weekend, a training session was held on using the national web-site to enable co-ordinators to contribute content. Participants shared how to post content, images and event reviews onto the new web-site.

It is hoped we will form two teams to manage the content and technical aspects of the web-site.

If you seek further support or training on this issue or another topic, please do not hesitate to contact your Area Chair.

National Federation of Plus Areas - National Gazette

Thank you

We wish to express our thanks to Corinna Teale, Erica Knight and the NEC past and present for their contribution to the General Meeting.