

ANC News 2003

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

The Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry, Cllr Peter Lacy, opened the 62nd ANC. He was pleased to see 18 Plus back in the city for a fourth year and hoped it would not be the last. Cllr Lacy knew little about 18 Plus before meeting a couple the previous evening who had met as members of Coventry in 1965! He hoped people would take time to see the city and wished for a successful conference. Vice President Jo Woodhead gave the Presidential Address. She commented that the proposals of the National Restructuring Forum were being debated this ANC and it would be good if people could be controversial! She also hoped everyone enjoyed the dinner dance and wished all a happy conference.

Tellers elected were Clive Bryant, Dave Filer and Mark Hewson. Voting strength was established at 50. Ballot Paper Counters elected were Steve Sykes and John Smith. Andover Group, Karen Grey, James Rockcliffe, Steve Sheldon and Christine Edwards gave apologies.

The minutes of the 61st ANC were proposed by Brentwood and seconded by South Bucks, and carried. Under Matters Arising Corrina Teale (Sutton Coldfield Delegate) asked if there had been any progress on TAG. Jarrett Smith (National Activities Officer) said last year's potential venue was suitable only for NGOOT and a possible venue for this year had been found at Rutland Water but there was no budget available – perhaps an Area could sponsor? There were no questions on the 2002 Federation Report, which, having been proposed by Solihull and seconded by Northwich, were passed.

The 2002 accounts were presented. Northwich asked about East Anglia Area's grant for publicity – had the recruitment drive been successful? Ian Robinson (EAA Chairman) replied that a newspaper advert had been placed for six months and that of around 60 enquiries, half those had joined. Corrina asked if the membership statistics were cross-referenced to income. Tony Burgess (National Finance Officer) replied no. Steve Sykes (Observer) queried the Nicholson House/Church Street figures – Tony said he would check these. Mark Hewson (Solihull Observer) said the answer to the question was on page ten. Alex Barker (Coventry Delegate) asked if the accounts could go through if not seen to be correct? Tony replied that the error was for 2001 and would not affect 2002. The accounts were proposed by Banbury and seconded by Brentwood, and passed. The report of the Accountants was also passed (proposed Tony, seconded Abingdon). Membership figures were incorporated into the accounts. Dunstable Group, it was pointed out, had not closed. Gary Schwimmer (Hillingdon Quest) said the figures were not correct; Tony said he was investigating this. Pete Strawbridge (Solihull Observer) asked if Life Members could be listed separately.

The Election of National Chairman was held over to the final business of the day, and the motion 13.4, that £5 of the £15 levy (or other figure determined by the NEC) be the levy for Direct Members. Presenting the motion, Martin Berry (Midland Area Chairman) said that the Direct Membership fee had increased, and that National postings went to Groups and DMs, hence the additional fee. Sending an extra £5 to the DM's Area would help those Areas pay for posting and to National to absorb VAT. Corrina asked how many Areas sent bulk postings (three). Tracy Thorn (Dunstable) wanted the fee to go to Groups (not possible). Lara Collins (Brentwood Delegate) explained bulk posting costs. Corrina said DM/s would be paying extra for events they can't attend. Marcus Shakespeare (Solihull Delegate) proposed an amendment to say that the motion should read 331/3 and not £5. Coventry seconded this. Pete Gurney (Thurrock Delegate) asked how many Areas had DMs (three). Marcus said that percentages would keep going to conference. Clive Bryant (Redbridge Observer) asked if it was correct that the proposal would swallow VAT (yes). Dave Smith (Crawley) proposed the move to the vote. Martin Berry summed up on the original motion to say that the levy had already been increased and this would allow money to pay for postings. The amendment was carried.

Donna Black (Honorary General Secretary) said in response to a question from Ian Crawshaw that voting would be taken in full and in the same order all the time. Pete Hurley (Northwich Observer) asked for the motion wording to be tightened up to make sure the money was not misused. Bekki Randall (National Chairman) said that this wording was for the benefit of Areas. Joseph Gurney proposed an

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amendment, to say the motion should read that Areas should be mandated to use the £5 for bulk postings. It was seconded by Sudbury. Chris Page (Brentwood) asked to move to next business (seconded Coventry). Donna read out the amended motion. The amendment to the amended motion was carried, as was the amended amended motion (*eh? - Ed*).

After a break conference resumed with a 49 voting strength and motion 13.6 – that the present system of Full and Associate membership in the first tier be scrapped without altering joining age limits. This would mean current Associates become Full Members and be charged standard membership fee. This would also affect Life Members. Ian Robinson explained the proposal and how it would redefine Groups. Current second tier members would become associated to 18 Plus irrespective of age. The motion also does away with segregation of active Associates. Paul Scott (Romford Delegate) said some Associates would love to be ANC Delegates. Pete Hurley felt that by allowing Associates back on to committees it would also mean prospective members over 35. Lara Collins (Brentwood Delegate) loved the motion because she would no longer be an Associate, and the recruiting age would still be 36. The average age was 30 for new members.

Corrina suggested this was a second tier compromise, and that 18 Plus should remain a young person's organisation. Ian Crawshaw said that 18 Plus was not succeeding in attracting young people. Iain Parkes (Banbury Delegate) suggested that Plus was for young people and needs to be relevant to them. David Ireland (Evesham Delegate) believed that life in general for young people had changed. Chris Brandon (Northwich Delegate) said two new members were now on his group's committee. Chris Page declared he had been active since 18 and was now nearly 36. Various other points made by speakers included 18 Plus no longer being a young person's organisation; that members should not be judged on their age; and this motion would help fill committees. Ian R summed up by saying it was up to each individual group to make the most of this proposal. The motion was carried.

There was one candidate for National Chairman – Bekki, who was seeking a second term. She gave her nomination speech to round off the first day's events.

SUNDAY MORNING

Once again everyone (*almost, give or take a few late delegates – you know who you are! –Ed*) was able to attend despite partying late into the night. Voting strength was 48. First business was 13.1 – that the name of the Federation be changed to 'The National Federation of Plus Groups of Great Britain'. Wayne Fenton presented the motion for the NEC. He asked why change the name – for a new direction, image, or just for fun? He argued that change costs could be minimal; that few members were aged 18 and that many groups had dropped '18' from their name. Huw Morris (Oxford Delegate) didn't think Plus a good alternative. Lara Collins (Brentwood Delegate) argued that a new name would make it easier to advertise the organisation. Martin Posner (Romford Delegate) said '18' was part of the Federation's identity. Adam Redshaw (Coventry Delegate) declared 'we are not a number – we are free Plussers'. Iain Parkes (Banbury Delegate) said this would set a precedent for the future and it was important to keep a name that had worked for 62 years. Chris Porter (Sudbury Delegate) said many organisations were well known by just a single name. Ian Broadbridge (Solihull Delegate) said the name meant a lot to him and the largest group in the country were proud of it. David Ireland (Evesham Delegate) suggested the name was out of date. Pete Gurney (Thurrock Delegate) said that Internet searches for 18 Plus did not come up with any 'inappropriate' web sites. Marcus Shakespeare (Solihull Delegate) said it was important to bring younger members in. Steve Sykes wanted groups to be able to advertise how they wish. David Smith (Crawley Delegate) wanted a wholesale name change. Clive Bryant (Redbridge Observer) said a single name was unsuitable. Pete Strawbridge (Solihull Observer) said the product, not the name was important. There was a move to go to the vote and Wayne summed up by saying groups could still use '18' as long as 'Plus' was in their title. The motion was rejected.

Next was a motion to say that all groups should include their geographical location in their name. Wayne presented the motion. Chris Page (Brentwood Delegate) said you should be proud of where you live and use the name to promote 18 Plus. Corrina Teale (Sutton Coldfield Delegate) said all that mattered was that it is an 18 Plus group. Ian Hartstone (South Bucks Delegate) asked if his group would

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have to change its name. Iain Parkes said calling your group by its town's name was common sense. Lara Collins said groups would be able to specifically say who they are and where. Pete Strawbridge suggested it could cause problems for groups that merge, such as South Bucks. David Smith said that groups like West Kent cover a large area. Alison (Fareham Observer) said it would maximise recruitment opportunities as long as there was some directional wording in the title. Chris Porter proposed an amendment – the motion read as 'local' geographical location. Iain P then proposed a move to the vote, which Coventry seconded. This was accepted, as was the amendment and finally the motion itself.

Upon returning after the break ballot papers for the National Chairman election were handed out. Voting strength was 49. Martin Berry then proposed for the NEC a motion which says that rules covering Direct Membership delete the condition that it be dependent on there not being a group within a 15 mile radius. The NEC proposes Direct Membership for those living where there is no group, with £15 extra paid for bulk postings. Lara C said this usually affected those with families, those who worked shifts, or those with transport difficulties. Mark H said that it would give freedom of choice to all members. Gary Schwimmer (Hillingdon Delegate) believed it would allow more DMs and fewer groups. David I suggested that those DMs in an area without a group could then be encouraged to start new groups. Corrina T said people who work shifts would rejoin to attend events such as WASH. Martin summed up the motion, which was passed.

Andy Cole spoke for the NEC on the next motion, which was to say that all National Officers, except NEOs, be elected at the ANC and that the constitution and standing orders be amended accordingly. Andy said it would widen the vote and make it that decisions were not seen to be behind closed doors. Pete (Northwich Observer) asked Bekki (National Chairman) to say which National Officers would be affected (HGO, Finance, Activities, et al). Clive B asked for procedural guidelines on this before the next ANC. Phil Bettis (Malvern Observer) said that people's capabilities for a job would be better known. Corrina T said that any NEC position up for election would have to be notified in time for the next ANC. Andy summed up and the motion was carried.

Mark Randall (Northern Area Chairman) presented a motion to change the NEC to consist of National Chairman, Area representatives (Chairmen), HGS and National Finance Officer. All would vote and the NC would have a casting vote if a decision were tied. Mark said it made for a better and more accountable NEC. Corrina was concerned about the NC having two votes, and that all National Officers should have a vote. Mark H said it was a good move as the HGO and FO would see the wider and not Area based picture. Ian Crawshaw (Hounslow Delegate) said it complemented the previous motion well. Lara said the other officers served a longer term and agreed that they would see the bigger picture. Mark summed up by saying that any business needed a good management structure. The motion was passed.

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Before and after lunch there was discussion on risk assessment. Ian Robinson introduced this topic. Risk assessments are necessary by law for events, especially as not all 18 Plus events have first aid coverage. Insurance companies carry out assessments on behalf of the Health and Safety Executive. A form must be completed if an event could cause risk of injury and this would be forwarded to the office and insurers.

The Facility for National Debate opened with Wayne introducing the concept of one member, one vote. Ian Crawshaw was disappointed that this was not a motion. Martin Posner was concerned that one or two groups could dominate all the motions. Chris Brandon said all members should have a vote but on a secret paper ballot. Corrina suggested postal voting with possibly a voting slip in Plus News. Ian Broadbridge said that all members should be represented, as this was a democracy. Phil Bettis reminded the conference that delegates were chosen by the groups to represent them. Gerry Edwards (Vice President) made a number of points; that Direct Members would have a vote, that the position of the upper tier groups would be uncertain, that he was in favour of a secret ballot, and it would mean a larger and more interesting ANC. He also reminded conference that a group with more members would

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not necessarily be able to out vote all the ANC. Pete Hurley (Northwich Observer) suggested restructuring the ANC to reflect this. Martin Berry said that all would have their say in how the Federation is run. Mark Hewson said large groups should have more say, as they are obviously doing something more right! Two straw polls were taken, the second including non-delegates. It seemed to be close!

Clive Bryant introduced a suggestion for alternative funding for the Federation. He first suggested trebling the membership fee, then cutting costs, or finding other income – so put forward buying a building which could act as a B&B, office, and meeting rooms, and also be used by non 18 Plus customers. He didn't know if premises could be afforded or whether it would work, but it had been looked into. Joseph Gurney (Thurrock) favoured an increased membership fee. Corrina suggested offering shares in it, and also National Lottery funding. Chris Page (Brentwood) wanted disability access. In response to a question by Dave Filer (Coventry Observer) Bekki said the NEC would make the final decision on this due to time scales. Pete Strawbridge and others thought it would be a better ANC decision. Donna Black (HGS) said the NEC had the power to buy and sell property. Bekki said that if the Working Party came up something other members would be notified. Tracy Thorn said the Federation by the next ANC could own a property and criteria should be set. The point was also made that the average income for a B&B was approximately £150 per week.

Gary Schwimmer started the third debate, which concerned extending terms of office for group committee post holders from six months to a year, and that groups could specify how long members could stay in a post. Mark H said continuity was important. Martin B said that this was the second time it had been on the National Debate Facility and if members felt strongly enough they should put this as a motion. Alison Berthier raised the problem she had when a Southampton member of committee members causing problems and only being ousted when their three terms ended. Pete Strawbridge said it had previously failed as motion because of wording. Donna said she would help with this for next time. A number of other points were raised on this subject.

Bekki was re-elected National Chairman with 46 votes for, two against and one abstention. In her address Bekki said chairing an NEC meeting is fun, and that chairing an ANC was one of the most impressive things she had done in her life! Members must now go back to their groups and build on what has been said and heard over the weekend. She thanked everyone for attending the ANC and thanked the NEC, particularly Donna, Sandra and the ANC committee, and gave special thanks to Martin Berry and her husband Mark Randall.

Trophy winners for 2003 were: Excellence Award – Simon Bunker (East Anglia), Linda Street Award – Iain Parkes (Midland), Charities Trophy – Rothwell, Gold Trail – Northwich, Recruitment – West Kent, New Group – Banbury, Norbury – Banbury Bulletin, Charles Padgham – Midland, Development – Midland, Presidents – Barking & Dagenham, Cobb Jug Mug – North Thames and Chiltern.

In her Presidents closing address, Jo Woodhead referred to the different order of the motions, and the amendments to two of them; and she also mentioned her love of clubbing, boob tubes and hot pants!! She also revealed that a different name had been chosen for the Federation but had not been bought forward as it was considered unsuitable. Bekki then closed the 62nd ANC.