

ANC News 2004

Saturday Afternoon

Bekki Randall welcomed everybody to the 63rd Annual National Conference. John Gazey, the Deputy Mayor of Coventry, opened the Conference by saying that Coventry was a city of ideas and had a tradition of building for the future, and therefore it was an appropriate location for the 63rd ANC. He was pleased to see so many people from all over the country and said if they were football supporters they might not want to come to Coventry! He wished everyone a successful conference. Vice President Gerry Edwards gave the Presidential Address. Following the example of the late Linda Street, he asked everybody to shake hands with their neighbour! He said the NEC have spent much time putting together the motions before the delegates and whatever your thoughts may be on them, to please listen to both sides of the debate before voting. He was pleased to see so many delegates and observers at the ANC and urged everyone to take part in the debate and ask questions if unsure of any aspects of the motions or procedures. Above all, do not lose sight of having fun and Gerry is looking forward to a beer in the Wetherspoons later today!

Bekki Randall (National Chairman) then explained a few ANC procedures. Please use the microphones near the windows to speak for a motion and the mics by the opposite wall to speak against [*and speak up if you want to get into this write up – Ed*]. Dave Filer, Joan Clifford, Ray Chaplin, and Kathy Morris were nominated as tellers and Francis Wallington took control of the Vote-ometer. Voting strength was established at 58. Phil Bettis and Dot Sallis were established as ballot paper counters.

Apologies for absence were received from Steve Sheldon, Christine Edwards, Clive Bryant, and Leeds. The minutes of the 2003 ANC were proposed by Brentwood, seconded by Sutton Coldfield, and accepted. Under matters arising Corinna Teale (Sutton Coldfield Del) asked about shares for members. Tony Burgess (National Finance Officer) said there wasn't enough money to make this option viable.

The Federation's Report for 2003 was proposed (Northwich) and seconded (Thatcham) and accepted. Corinna felt that the reports do not reflect the true state of affairs. Martin Berry (Midland Area Chairman) felt the report did but apologised for any confusion. Ian Oliver (Halesowen Del) and a written question asked about opening groups in new areas. Ian was thanked for volunteering! Alison Berthier (Fareham Del) recommended a change to the ordering of the motions. Bekki said the order may be changed in reality. Other points about the order and chosen motions were raised.

After a couple of questions, the Federation's Accounts were proposed (Brentwood) and seconded (Thatcham) and accepted. The Accountants' Report was proposed (Tony – NFO), seconded (Thatcham) and accepted.

Andy Cole (LSE Area Chairman) gave a presentation on the Future of 18 Plus, on behalf of the NEC. Currently we have 44 groups, 680 members, and a balance sheet of £89K. Today's structure and Constitution are too complex and out-dated and the NEC are not empowered enough. Memberships and finance are also declining. We can change our fortunes but this cannot be done without the delegates vote of approval. Andy then outlined the detail of the NEC motions (we will have more on this later).

ANC News 2004

After a coffee break, the voting strength was re-established at 59. Andy Cole presented the first motion, that the 75% voting majority should be suspended for Conference. He said the future of the Fed. would be in doubt if the motion was not accepted and urged the floor to vote in favour of democracy. Ian Crawshaw (Plus News Editor) said we may as well pack up and go home if this motion was not passed! Iain Parkes (Banbury del) felt constitutional changes needed a vast majority to work and urged to vote against. Chris Porter (Brentwood del) felt this would make the voting on other motions fairer. Phil Bettis (Coventry obs) felt 50% was not enough to support a constitutional change. Corinna (Sutton C del) said it was better than 74% leaving the Fed. A move to the vote was proposed and carried. The motion was carried with an 89% majority.

Tina Bunyan (Southern Area Chair) introduced the next motion, that the aims of the Federation be changed to reflect an emphasis on social activities, and said it would better reflect how the Federation currently is. Huw Morris (Oxford del) felt this was a time wasting motion and urged to vote against. Adam Redshaw (Coventry del) felt this would remove in writing what makes us unique. Jane Langstone (Havering del) and Iain Parkes (Banbury del) felt this was dumbing down what the Fed is about. Corinna [*Instead of typing Corinna in each time I think I'll set up a function key to key her name in one go ☺ – Ed*] proposed an amendment to reflect that there is an emphasis on organising activities as well as participating in them. Sandra Brogan and Paul West suggested slight alternatives to the wording. A move to the vote was carried. The amendment was then accepted. The amended motion was then passed (phew!)

Delegates, observers, others, do enjoy your Saturday evening and remember, if you're doing anything stupid, do it in front of me so it can go in Plus News!!

ANC News 2004

Sunday Morning

Good morning everybody, nice to see such an exemplary display of behaviour last night, we will just have to look a bit further afield for the *Plus News* articles.....!!!

Going back to late last afternoon, Steve Browning (EAA Chairman) presented the next motion, which was to accept the National Business Plan for 2004-05. He felt the plan was flexible and would carry the Fed forward. He felt people would be freed up to organise more activities and the plan was long term. Brian Taylor (Thurrock del) felt last year's motions did nothing to improve the Fed's finances and the business plan will address that. Gerry Edwards said the plan would balance the budget in the short to medium term. Iain Parkes (who has made the "against" mic his second home!) felt the business plan was hiding behind the real issues, finances not being addressed and communication poor. Chris Mann felt more observers should turn up to add their voice. Sandra Brogan (National HLM) said the NEC are asking the ANC to buy in to the plan and said it should not be necessary to get the ANC to ratify it, but vote for it anyway! Mike Shapcott (South Bucks del) felt more detail was needed. Gerry Edwards in answering a question from Jonathan Tall (Solihull del) said that savings could be made all over the board although it was a bit early to specify where they would be made. Various speakers made similar points. Tony Burgess said that the business plan is just the first step. The NEC have various ideas that they have come up with since the January NEC which need to be investigated further. Once that has been done there will then be some flesh to put onto the bare bones of the business plan. A 'move to the vote' [*I'll set up another function key for this – Ed*] was proposed and carried. In summing up, Steve said the plan was a series of targets, a framework, not a wish-list. The motion was carried.

Wayne Fenton, as sole standee for position of National Chairman (prop Sutton C, sec Crawley), spoke next. Wayne's highlights included winning Best Area for NT&C Area, running TAG, Brea, and other national activities. He is looking forward to directing the NEC to lead the Fed to a better future. Lara Collins (Brentwood del) asked Wayne's strengths and weaknesses; he is very knowledgeable but has a big gob! Huw Morris (Oxford del) asked Wayne's personal opinions re: the restructuring, Wayne answered his involvement with the NEC motions. In answer to Dan Geddes (SA Dev Officer) Wayne promised to visit more groups. Wayne fielded other questions on replacements for Brea (yes), National structure, balancing the sexes, and whether he had the balls!

Jo Taylor replaced the "indisposed" Kathy Morris as one of the tellers and the voting strength was re-established at 57 – not bad for a Sunday morning!

Martin Berry (Midland Area Chair) presented the next motion, to empower the NEC to reorganise the management and structure of the Federation. He said the Federation has made changes before and needs to change again to go forward. Huw (Oxford del) felt the NEC had not been open enough in the past but was for the motion. Iain (Banbury del), speaking against, felt this motion would strip delegates of the power they deserve and make an already top heavy organisation even more so. Corinna said the NEC needed to be able to make a choice. Ian Oliver (Halesowen del) said the motion was needed to prevent too many 'referenda'. The motion was carried.

ANC News 2004

John Braun (NT&C Area Chair) presented the next motion, to abolish the two-tier membership system and allow all members to become full members. John said it was up to the groups to find their market via their events and publicity. Lisa Howlett (Hounslow del) said this was a move away from ageism. Lara Collins (Brentwood del) felt 18 Plus should remain for 18-35s. Alison Berthier (Fareham del) said we need to recruit older members as they contribute more to the Fed. Adam Redshaw (Cov del) said that groups have power of positive veto. Huw (Oxford del) felt the 2nd tier should be retained and used. Chris Mann (Redbridge del) said with age comes wisdom and knowledge. Various other speakers spoke both for and against and there was some debate about what the motion was precisely addressing; upper age limits or removal of 2nd tier? A move to next business was proposed and carried by 56%.

After the tea break the NEC withdrew the motion to dissolve the Federation.

Next up was Tony Burgess who spoke for the NEC on the motion empowering them to set the membership fee. He said the NEC needs to act fast on decision making but the motion was not necessarily about increasing the fee immediately or “taxing” the members. A vote for this is a vote for change and if you can’t trust the NEC who are just ordinary members, who can you trust? Alison Berthier and Adam Redshaw asked if the NEC can give more detail about the membership fee change proposal, to which Tony replied it was all part of the restructuring package and it was too early make decisions without seeing which proposals go through and starting on the restructure itself. Brian (Thurrock) asked if the levies would vary depending on a group’s worth. Phil Bettis (Cov del) said the NEC need this motion to set budgets for their proposals. Jane Langstone (Havering del) said a vote against would hamper the NEC’s restructuring plans. Iain Parkes put up an umbrella and said voting for this motion would be bad luck! Steve Sykes (Bradford del) proposed an amendment that groups must ratify any membership fee change, although it was felt this went against the spirit of the motion. Tony summed up saying groups would see the NEC proposals and have the chance to have a say on them. Motion carried.

Enjoy your Sunday lunch, see you in the afternoon!

ANC News 2004

Sunday Afternoon

Mmmm. Full now ☺

The next motion was proposed by Oxford and seconded by Coventry and asked the NEC to **consider** restructuring along the lines of a document called "Clean Sheet Federation", which favoured simplifying various functions (finance, memberships etc) and advocated splitting them amongst Areas rather than National, thus vastly dropping the membership fee. Martin Berry spoke for the NEC in favour of the motion that it added to their options. Lara Collins (Brentwood del) spoke against, that a National body was needed for central activities like communication. Iain Parkes (Banbury del) proposed an amendment to mandate the NEC to restructure along these lines rather than just consider them, but the NEC rejected this as it was against the spirit of the motion. Martin Posner (Romford del) felt that National holidays would be threatened. Corinna said the document would help the NEC consider their options. Ian Oliver, Phil Bettis and Chris (Fareham del) felt discussing this was unnecessary as the option is already wide open for the NEC. Steve Sykes (Bradford del) said money would be directed to a local level and supported the motion. Jane Langstone (Havering del) worried about divergence growing from one area to the next. A move to the vote was proposed and carried. The motion was carried (88%).

Corinna then stood for National Publicity Officer. She said she has some good ideas for publicity and wants to carry them forward, such as an 18 Plus version of "Who wants to be a millionaire", and wants to raise the profile of 18 Plus at a national level. Ian Crawshaw stood for Plus News Editor.

After lunch, Alison Berthier (Fareham) opened the National Facility for Debate by talking about Standardised Publicity. She felt that by bringing different publicity under the same umbrella, initiatives could be put in place to deliver publicity centrally and professionally, and would act as a benchmark for regular review. Adrian Barnard (NEO) showed that Southern Area groups do employ centralised publicity. Corinna asked if Fareham use the national publicity already available. Francis Wallington (Nat. Training Officer) felt that publicity should carry the National phone number and website. Lorraine Whiting (Romford del) said her group's publicity is individually targeted. Adam Redshaw covered near Mark Hewson as he said the National website is too text based! Chris Mann urged caution in copying existing logos and brands.

Adrian Barnard (NEO) spoke of the future of 18 Plus and congratulated Oxford and Coventry on their motion. He spoke of various possible ways of restructuring and encouraged others to put their ideas. Brian Taylor suggested considering possible mergers with other organisations. Adam Redshaw (Cov del) would like to see a wider facility for debate. Pete Hurley (Northwich del) said the NEC need to act to save the Federation. Other speakers mentioned many topics including Spice, a need to work together, and a 3-tier membership.

Wayne Fenton discussed the future of the ANC and asked delegates what they would like. Ideas included Centreparks / Butlins, keeping the social night, not Coventry again (!), central / low cost venue, Southern venue (!), Travellers' Inn, Brighton, later start time on Sunday (which drew a big cheer!), externally publicised event, more prestigious entertainment, no more "move to a vote" (!)

ANC News 2004

Wayne Fenton was duly elected to the position of National Chairman. Wayne thanked everybody for putting their trust in him even though he still supports Man U [*0-1 – Ed*]! Corinna Teale, and Ian Crawshaw were duly elected to the positions of National PRO, and Plus News Editor. Congrats to all three.

Bekki then gave her Chairman's Address and thanked Iain for being entertaining! Bekki will not disappear just yet and along with everybody, will help to make this Federation great again.

The trophies were awarded as Spirit of 18 Plus (Corinna Teale), Charities (Solihull), Recruitment (Slough, Windsor and Eton), Best New Group (Soton Friends), Best Magazine (Southern Area for "Flying South"), Training trophy (Southern), Best Group (Crawley), Best Area (Southern).

Gerry Edwards was re-elected as Vice President and Kingscott Dix & Co. were re-elected as the Federation's Accountants.

Some future events were announced, before Gerry wrapped up saying he had enjoyed the Conference and some good decisions had been made, now they had to be built on. Bekki then closed the Conference and wished everybody a safe journey home.

That's all folks... hope you enjoyed it, and now to catch up on some sleep. See you next year!

Ian