

**THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF 18 PLUS GROUPS**

Minutes of the 63rd Annual National Conference held on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> and  
Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2004 at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry

**THOSE PRESENT:**

Vice President/National Executive Officer	Gerry Edwards
National Chairman	Bekki Randall
Honorary General Secretary	Donna Verrall
National Finance Officer	Tony Burgess
Vice President/National Executive Officer	Jo Woodhead
National Executive Officer	Adrian Barnard
East Anglia Area Chairman	Steve Browning
London & South East Area Chairman	Andy Cole
Midland Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman	Martin Berry
Northern Area Chairman	John Smith
North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman	John Braun
Southern Area Chairman	Tina Bunyan

Members of the Federation and invited guests.

## **1 CHAIRMAN WELCOMES THE DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE**

Bekki Randall, National Chairman, welcomed everyone to the Conference and introduced His Worshipful, the Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry, John Gazey and the Deputy Lady Mayoress, Mrs Hazel Gazey.

## **2 OPENING OF CONFERENCE**

John Gazey, Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry opened his speech by thanking 18 Plus for inviting him to open their Conference and by saying that Coventry was a “young” city. He went on to say that it was a city of ideas and had a tradition of building for the future. He pointed out that there were two Universities and a big campaign for further education. The Deputy Lord Mayor said that there was a “youth parliament” within the City council and he likened the ANC to their local government in that it was a forum for discussing ideas. John Gazey then said he was pleased to see people from all over the country in Coventry, but if Plus members had been football supporters they may not have wanted to come to Coventry! He said he had heard a lot of positive ideas for this Conference over lunch and hoped it would be a good one.

The Deputy Lord Mayor then went on to say that his first time of working with young people was when he tried to form a youth club and was tasked to find the building for this. The club was duly opened and events organised, therefore, he said he was most gratified to see the work 18 Plus was doing now. He then declared the Conference open.

## **3 THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY GERRY EDWARD, VICE PRESIDENT/NEO**

Gerry Edward, Vice President/NEO welcomed everyone to the Conference and hoped members, delegates and guests would enjoy it. He said that this was his twenty-third ANC and that he still got as much excitement now as when he attended his first one, but now that he now had to behave himself! Gerry Edward, Vice President/NEO then followed in Linda Street’s example and asked everyone to greet members next to them. He went on to say that this Conference would be a watershed for the Federation as serious decisions and changes must be made for 18 Plus to continue and develop. Declining membership levels must be attacked and the NEC had thought long and hard in preparing these motions for debate. He advised members to listen carefully to all the debates, both for and against motions, and join in with the debates before making their decision which way to vote.

Gerry Edward, Vice President/NEO went on to remind old members and to inform new members on the purpose of the ANC. He pointed out that members could ask the NEC questions should they so wish. He pointed out that the NEC were also members of the Federation and that they worked very hard for 18 Plus and spend a considerable amount of their own personal time to make sure the Federation was successful.

Gerry Edward, Vice President/NEO then said that the ANC was a forum to talk about 18 Plus policy and also for achievements and awards to be recognised publicly by the presentation of trophies and also to meet members from all over the country.

Gerry Edward, Vice President/NEO closed his speech by saying that above all, members must not lose sight of having fun and that he was looking forward to having a beer in Wetherspoons that evening!

#### **4 ELECTION OF TELLERS**

Coventry Group proposed Dave Filer; Sutton Coldfield proposed Joan Clifford; Thurrock Group proposed Katherine Morris and Solihull Group proposed Ray Chaplin. There was a block second by Bishops Stortford Group.

The voting strength was established at 59.

Francis Wallington, Training Co-ordinator was named as the Votometer operator.

#### **5 ELECTION OF BALLOT PAPER COUNTERS**

Coventry Group proposed Phil Bettis and Thatcham Group proposed Dot Sallis as Ballot Paper Counters. There was a block second from Northwich Group.

#### **6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary read out the following apologies for absence; Steve Sheldon, Direct Member; Christine Edwards, Hillingdon Quest; Clive Bryant, Redbridge Group and Leeds 18 Plus Group.

#### **7 ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE 62nd ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE, HELD AT THE BRITANNIA HOTEL, COVENTRY on the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> March 2003**

Acceptance of the Minutes was proposed by Brentwood Group and seconded by Sutton Coldfield Group.

CARRIED

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary read out some amendments to the Agenda:-

15:4 Should have added "subject to the agreement of Groups".

15:8 Should read "That this Conference requests the NEC to consider the restructuring of ....."

15:9 Motion has been withdrawn.

#### **8 MATTERS ARISING THEREON**

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked if anything had been done about the possible purchase of another residential property for the Federation, to which Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer replied that as a large amount of cash had to be repaid to the DFE this was no longer a viable option.

**9 PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE FEDERATION'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2003.**

Acceptance of the Federation's report for 2003 was proposed by Northwich Group and seconded by Thatcham Group.

CARRIED

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate said that she felt that the reports did not reflect the true state of affairs She referred to the Midland Area report where it said that Training Days were well attended. She felt that with only 2 Groups and 6 members in attendance that this was not so. Martin Berry, Midland Area Chairman, replied by saying that he felt they had been well attended compared to other Training Days held previously but apologised for any confusion,

Martin Mays, Direct Member had sent in a written question about seeing new Groups opened, especially in the London & South East Area. Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary replied that at present, with no National Development Officer, National is not carrying out any development, therefore it is the responsibility of the Areas to open Groups. She went on to say that hopefully, with someone considering standing for National Development Office this situation will change.

Geoff Buller, Lincs Quest observer had sent in a written question to ask why Groups should have to pay for membership cards that get lost in the post. Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary said that the NEC had discussed this and decided that if a member had not received their new card within 28 days and that the Office was notified within 28 days a new card would be sent from the Office with no further fee required.

Ian Oliver, Halesowen delegate wanted to know how to open Groups in Areas that had no publicity or other Groups near.

Alison Berthier, Fareham delegate asked why motion 15:7 had been placed above the other motions for debate as she thought it should go last. Bekki Randall, National Chairman told her that NEC motions always go first on the Agenda but the order the motions appear on the Agenda is not necessarily the order in which they will be attended to.

Peter Hurley, Northwich delegate asked why the closure motion was being discussed as he felt it was a defeatist motion. Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary told him that the NEC had put this on the Agenda because serious decisions must be passed this weekend and if certain motions are not passed then the Federation will have to be wound up.

Mike Shapcott, South Bucks delegate said that bearing in mind some of the motions have been deleted or amended, when did this happen and who authorised it? Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary told him that the NEC did this during their morning meeting prior to the ANC and most recently about lunchtime just before Conference.

He took his point that this did not give delegates time to discuss things at Group level but that delegates are chosen to actually make the final decision on motions after the debate has taken place.

**10 PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE FEDERATION'S ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2003.**

Jonathan Tall, Solihull delegate asked why the budget for membership income had been increased. Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer said it was because the budget had adjusted down but it was hoped membership fees would have increased by Associates upgrading to Full members but this did not happen. Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate asked how much less than last year and what are the examination fees for, to which Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer said the examination fees were in fact the accountant's fees, re-named at the accountant's request. The exact net loss was shown in the Profit and Loss account (£69, 222) but this did include paying the DFE back their grant.

Acceptance of the Accounts were proposed by Brentwood Group and seconded by Thatcham Group.

CARRIED

**11 ACCEPTANCE OF THE REPORT OF THE ACCOUNTANT**

Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer proposed acceptance of the Report of the Accountant and was seconded by Thatcham Group.

CARRIED

**12 ELECTION OF NATIONAL CHAIRMAN TO SERVE FROM MONDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2004**

Bekki Randall, National Chairman handed the Conference over to Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary to announce the nomination for the post of National Chairman. Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary read out the nomination from Wayne Fenton, ANC Chairman/Brean Co-ordinator proposed by Sutton Coldfield Group and seconded by Crawley Group.

Wayne Fenton, ANC Chairman/Brean Co-ordinator opened his speech by saying that he felt honoured by standing for National Chairman, had been an 18 Plus member for 18 years and was also a Manchester United supporter and a Trekkie! He told the Conference he had held various posts at all levels; at Group level - Chairman, Treasurer and Host and at Area level - Area Chairman for 2 Areas, Area Training Officer, Competitions, Co-ordinator and Activities Officers, the highlights including winning the Best Area for North Thames & Chilterns Area. At National level, Wayne Fenton, ANC Chairman/Brean Co-ordinator said he had been Sub Committee Chairman for Activities, had helped run TAG and Brean and this year was ANC Chairman.

Wayne Fenton, ANC Chairman/Brean Co-ordinator went on to say that he felt his successes outweighed any problems he may have had and that he had matured within 18 Plus, thereby giving him the experience to be able to stand for the position of National Chairman. He went on to say he had a deep passion for the Federation and had various ideas as to how he would fulfil the role.

Wayne Fenton, ANC Chairman/Brean Co-ordinator said that all members must look to the future of 18 Plus and that they must put their trust in the NEC who, after all, are elected by the members. He said that he would like to see younger and newer members getting involved as 18 Plus has always been “run by its’ members for its’ members” and promised that he would do the best he could to help to lead the Federation to a brighter future.

Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate asked Wayne what his strengths and weaknesses were, and how can they help in the post of National Chairman? He replied he was very knowledgeable about the Federation and got on with the majority of members, d had a big gob, shoots from the hip but felt sure that the Honorary General Secretary would keep him in line! Huw Morris, Oxford delegate wanted to know what Wayne’s personal opinions were on re-structuring, to which Wayne answered that he had already been involved with the NEC motions and supported them fully. In answer to Dan Geddes, Southern Area Development Officer, Wayne promised to visit as many Groups as was possible. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked about replacements for the positions of ANC Chairman and Brean Co-ordinator and was told this had been looked into.

Mark Randall, Northwich observer wanted to know about plans for National Development and was told Wayne would need to refer to the NEC if no National Development Officer was elected. Steve Geary Slough Group asked what were Wayne’s options if he did not get elected, to which Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary replied that if no National Chairman was elected today it would fall upon the deputy National Chairman to take over until the July NEC Meeting. If no one was appointed by then, the deputy National Chairman would become acting National Chairman.

Paul West, Andover delegate wanted to know if Wayne would have time to do the National Chairman’s job and was told his company regime was much better to enable him to carry out his duties as National Chairman. Sandra Brogan, HLM asked what Wayne would do to ensure he was not the last National Chairman and was told he seriously did not know, but would work hard with the NEC and members to ensure a future for the Federation. Brian Taylor, Thurrock delegate asked if there were more male than female members and Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate said if Wayne’s appointment would take three years of the Federation’s death penalty her Group would be more than happy.

### **13 ELECTION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS TO SERVE FROM MONDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2004**

#### **13:1 EXTERNAL PRO – CORINNA TEALE, SUTTON COLDFIELD GROUP**

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield Group told the Conference that she had been coming to Conferences and listened to members asking what is happening about national publicity, no one puts themselves forward for the post, so she is now putting herself forward for the position as External PRO.

She said she did not intend to save the Federation on her own, but had plenty of ideas on how to master mind the publicity for the Federation, for example, contacting Chris Tarrant on having an 18 Plus “Who Wants to be a Millionaire” – 50% of the winnings going to the contestant and 50% to 18 Plus! This way, Corinna said would be to maximise publicity and hopefully generate some income. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate went on to say that it is each Group’s responsibility to publicise their Group, she would concentrate on national publicity for the Federation as a whole and asked members to vote for her.

### **13:2 PLUS NEWS EDITOR – IAN CRAWSHAW – HOUNSLOW GROUP**

Ian Crawshaw, Hounslow Group had distributed his self nomination proposal with ANC paperwork, after having been co-opted at the January 2004 NEC meeting.

### **14 PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BY ANDY COLE, LONDON & SOUTH EAST AREA CHAIRMAN**

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman opened his presentation on behalf of the NEC, by stating that it is important for delegates to understand the importance of the motions on the Agenda and their background and how they are all linked together. He went on to say that the Federation was run according to the Constitution and that currently there were 44 Groups each belonging to 6 geographical Areas. He pointed out that there is a governing National Executive Committee consisting of the 6 Area Chairmen, the Honorary General Secretary, National Finance Officer and that the NEC make decisions, relying upon advise from National Executive Officers, Vice Presidents and Project Officers, who advise on specific issues on their own particular remit. He went on to explain that the General Purposes Committee, consisting of the Honorary General Secretary, National Finance Officer and VP was chaired by the National Chairman. He reminded the members, that it is at the ANC that members could decide on the policy for the future of the Federation.

He explained that currently, there are 680 members, 39 of those being Life Members and the membership fee is £28.00 per annum, other costs being managed by the Groups and Areas. He confirmed that at present there was approximately £89,000.00 in the bank and that there were some potential liabilities that may need to be considered, dependant on the decisions of the Federation, for example statutory payments, legal fees. He noted that the balance sheet was significantly lower this year than last due to the fact that the DFE had re-claimed their payment. He went on to say that it was forecast that there would be an income of approximately £22,000 this year, mainly derived from membership fees, levies and interest. He pointed out however, the expenditure was approximately £10,000 more than the income, mainly spent on staff and operating costs of the Office in Newent. He calculated this as a loss of £16 per member.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman went on to say that the current structure and Constitution were too complex, out dated and too lengthy for what is primarily a social organisation. He added that there were a large number of management committees within the Federation and in the running of the Federation the NEC were not empowered enough, with major decisions only being able to be made at the ANC. He stated that it was very unusual for general members to have such a large say in the decision making of an organisation. He reminded the Conference that the NEC are members too and put a lot of time and energy into the running of 18 Plus and want what is best for the organisation.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman went on to say that with memberships and finance declining and whilst the Federation's future can be changed it cannot be done without the approval of the delegates votes.

He agreed that for the size of the organisation, the overheads were extremely high, (the running costs approximately £32,000 per annum) and must be reduced or all the reserves would be used up in 3 years. He pointed out that many plans had been produced in the past, but never co-ordinated in order to address the financial position. He stated that the repayment of the government grant had reduced the reserves further. He believed too many members were on too many committees instead of joining in the activities. Also, that meetings cost money and should be reduced. He pointed out that the Constitution, if introduced to a potential new member, could put them off joining 18 Plus. He stated that the identity and purpose of the Federation must be closely looked at, age ranges must be looked into to see what is the age range now attracted to the Federation and to see if an open age range would attract many more new members. He believed that whilst the current larger events were attractive to current members, new large-scale events needed to be introduced to attract new members.

He said that the Members must empower and trust the NEC to run the organisation, as making decisions only at the ANC is too slow and democratic. He went on to say that the Federation must evolve during the year in order to survive and must have a structure and membership fee which will allow this. He said that to vote for empowerment of the NEC, the structure of the Federation would be run by those elected at Area Conferences, unlike previous Working Parties or Think Tank committees. He pointed out that if members think the NEC are not doing a good job, there is the power then to have them removed, so the overall control does remain with the members.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman then said that the current aims and ideals of the Federation were outdated and the Business Plan set out the proposed future of the Federation for the next five years and that the NEC want members to endorse the Plan. He believed that to increase membership a wider age range needed to be looked at. He pointed out that the plan would allow each Group to decide their own policy for marketing potential members.

He stated that the NEC believed the majority of the organisation should approve these changes. He stated that the requirements for a 75% majority unfairly limits the progress of the organisation and puts the balance for power in the hands of just a few delegates. He said that the revised aims should bring the Federation up into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and



be consistent with the proposed Business Plan. He stated that there were many possibilities for re-structuring in the plan Plan. He referred to the motion abolishing the upper age limit, removing the need for a 2<sup>nd</sup> tier and giving greater freedom to develop a wider age bracket, adding that the NEC believed this was the way forward to retain current members and recruit new ones.

He also pointed out that the members must also decide if they are in a position to manage the finances of the Federation or trust and empower the NEC to do so. He said that the final NEC motion on the Agenda was really the last resort. He stated that motions must be passed at this conference or closure is inevitable.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman then told the Conference there were alternatives saying either to empower the NEC to change the aims and structure of the Federation, to vote against or pass only some of the motions, which could result in closure of 18 Plus, ending more than 60 years of history and the name "18 Plus" forever.

He asked the delegates to support the NEC motions and empower the NEC to work to improve the organisation.

Voting strength re-established at 59.

## **15 MOTIONS TABLED FOR DEBATE**

**15:1 "That Article 17 of the National Constitution is suspended for the duration of this Conference."**

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary read an amendment to this motion to read "**17:1 and 17:2....**" after advise from an HLM, who pointed out that the motion as it read would have meant the Constitution could not have been changed.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman presented this motion to the Conference on behalf of the NEC by saying that the motions to be considered at this Conference were crucial to the future of the Federation and that if there was not significant change and the motions not accepted, then the future of the Federation would be in doubt. He said that the NEC believed that the motions on the Agenda were the best solutions for the future of the Federation. Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman went on to say this is also why the NEC believes that a 50% majority is needed to pass this first motion, not 75%. He said that in this day of democracy, a 75% majority is an unrealistically high percentage, meaning 3 out of every 4 delegates must vote in favour, putting the decision in the hands of a minority. He pointed out that this could mean a quarter of the voting delegates could make the decisions on the future of the Federation, thereby, letting the minority have the final say, rather than the majority. He said that Delegates must be clear in their own minds on how to vote on this motion allowing the Federation to move forward and modernise. He stated that the future of the Federation rested with the delegates and how they vote and urged delegates to vote for this motion.

Ian Crawshaw, Plus News Editor said this motion was vital to save the Federation, that it would take only 15 delegates to vote against this motion for it to be lost. Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate urged members to vote for this motion, because it makes

sense for a simple majority as opposed to a minority to see this motion is carried. Chris Mann, Redbridge delegate said that if the 50% is passed then democracy has seen to be done today and that 75% was unrealistic. Mark Randall, Northwich observer commented that it was good to have an open voting system and this motion should be passed. Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate thanked the NEC for putting forward this motion, proving the Federation had problems. He commented that constitutional changes needed a vast majority to work and urged delegates to vote against this motion.

Chris Porter, Bishop Stortford delegate said that if the Area Chairmen had convinced their Groups to vote against a motion, then those delegates could throw out the motion and therefore introducing the 50% would make the voting fairer. Steven Sykes, Bradford delegate said that changes were needed and urged delegates to vote for this motion. Phil Bettis, Coventry observer said there was no point in having 49.9% voting against this motion if they were not going to do anything about it afterwards, and could the 50.1% be able to carry the future of the Federation forward and not to vote for this motion. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate said now, having heard the presentation on this motion, she now agreed its concept and urged delegates to vote for this motion.

A move to the vote was proposed by Romford Group and seconded by Thatcham Group.

CARRIED

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman summed up on the motion on behalf of the NEC and said that the Federation must move forward and that means going with the majority, not the minority and urged delegates to vote for this motion.

CARRIED

**15:2 “That Article 2 of the National Constitution be replaced with ‘we are an organisation for people who want to enjoy a good social life and who want to participate in a wide range of activities’”.**

Tina Bunyan, Southern Area Chairman proposed this motion on behalf of the NEC by saying that the aims of the Federation needed to be changed and read out the current ones to the Conference. She said the words should be replaced with those words as in the above mentioned motion. She said summarising the main aims of the Federation in a few words, rather than a lot, made it more user friendly. Tina Bunyan, Southern Area Chairman went on to say some members were more active than others, but either kind of person had joined 18 Plus because they wanted to enjoy themselves and that these words would best express the Federation. She urged delegates to vote for this motion as quickly as possible, leaving more time for more urgent motions to be debated later.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate said this was a time wasting motion and urged delegates to vote against it. Adam Redshaw, Coventry delegate felt this would remove in writing what makes 18 Plus unique, for example non political. Ian Oliver, Halesowen

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delegate thought that the proposed changes would suggest 18 Plus members spend all their time in the pub and gave no indication about anyone organising the Federation. Jane Langstone, Havering delegate felt this was “dumbing down” what the Federation is all about, saying that it is much more than a social organisation. Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate said he was perusing a document about the time these aims and ideals were being looked at and said it was quite clear the Federation believed in its own aims, and whilst they did need to be presented more “user friendly”, the ones proposed by the NEC did not portray 18 Plus in its true light. Martin Posner, Romford delegate said that it would need a membership card of A4 to state all the 18 Plus aims.

A move to the vote was proposed by Redbridge Group and seconded by Reading Group.

LOST

Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate said that an amendment was being put together for this motion but needed some help with the wording. She went on to say that many members did not attend training, mostly attending the social activities and that this should be emphasised in the wording.

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate proposed an amendment to the motion, seconded by Coventry Group, to read “ That Article 2 of the National Constitution be replaced with ‘We are a voluntary organisation run by its’ members for its’ members who want to enjoy a good social life and who want to participate in and organise a wide range of activities. The Federation shall not be affiliated to any party political organisation or religious body.’”

Sandra Brogan, HLM suggested dropping the word “good”, it not being quantifiable. Chris Mann, Redbridge delegate said one of the good things about 18 Plus was that it was non-religious, non political, therefore, these should be kept in.

Mark Randall, Northwich observer said the amendment was much better than the original and to vote for this amended motion. Paul West, Andover delegate suggested that a mention about charity fund raising should be put in the mission statement.

A move to the vote was proposed by Alison Berthier, Fareham delegate and seconded by Thatcham Group. Voting took place on moving to the vote: -

CARRIED

Rita Grimes, HLM asked if this amendment had been accepted? Voting took place on the acceptance of the amended motion.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Ian Crawshaw, Plus News Editor suggested someone should propose voting on this motion. It was proposed by Redbridge Group and seconded by Halesowen Group.

A vote was taken on the amended motion:

CARRIED

**15:3 “That this Conference accepts the National Business Plan for 2004/2005”.**

Steve Browning, East Anglia Area Chairman presented this motion on behalf of the NEC by saying that a Business Plan was set out to plan the future of the Federation for several years rather than a detailed structure, as the Federation does not want to go from one straight jacket to another. He went on to say that there was too much at stake and, therefore, only one course of action. He said the NEC felt this long-term plan could help to change the finances, as the membership costs and levies did not cover the costs, spiralling into the “black hole” at Newent! He confirmed that the NEC did appreciate that a drastic spiralling of membership fees could be counter productive and that the Federation must also establish a new public identity.

Steve Browning, East Anglia Area Chairman went on to say that the re-structuring of the management of the Federation could reduce the number of committee posts and meetings, releasing manpower to organise more social events, also reducing the associated paperwork and help the NEC to investigate new ways of communications, for example using the internet or link mailing. He said the acceptance of this Business Plan would give hope for a steady increase of membership after 3 years, a growing public profile, another major event on the calendar and better attendance at events. Steve Browning, East Anglia Area Chairman urged the members to vote for this motion to improve, not his, not theirs, but a Federation belonging to everyone.

Brian Taylor, Thurrock delegate said that the National Finance Officer’s job must be the worst 18 Plus position at present! He said there must be major, financial changes now and for delegates to vote for the Business Plan. Chris Brandon, Northwich delegate asked for a point of information on page 5 of the Business Plan, as to how much the fees would be increased. Gerry Edward, Vice President said that there were various ideas to lower operating costs, which would be discussed at the July NEC meeting and that the Plan would balance the budget in the short to medium term. Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate said he felt the Business Plan was more of a wish list, full of “what ifs” and felt there was not enough information in it for delegates to vote on and that this Business Plan was trying to take away the members’ voice and urged members to vote against this motion.

Chris Mann, Redbridge delegate said more observers should attend to add their opinions but also felt the Business Plan was good. Sandra Brogan, HLM said that the NEC were asking the ANC to buy into this Plan, everyone should have a wish list and this Plan is the 18 Plus one and urged members to vote for this motion, as it gave members something to aim for, the future of the Federation.

Peter Hurley, Northwich delegate asked if this motion was passed were their any immediate plans for after the Conference, to which Bekki Randall, National Chairman replied no. Mike Shapcott, South Bucks delegate said more details were needed in the

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Business Plan as to how these changes can be made. Alex Barker, Coventry observer said that he was pleased at last problems were being investigated, but believed it had been left too late. He said that he did not originally know about the National level when he first joined 18 Plus. Jonathan Tall, Solihull delegate asked if the Plan was accepted would people be made redundant and the office sacrificed? Gerry Edward, Vice President replied that savings could be made right across the board but it was too early to specify where these saving would be made. David Ireland, Coventry observer said that the Business Plan needed financial projection and analysis. He said he felt that from looking at the current accounts, there was not 3 years left in which to balance the budget, and therefore did not feel he could vote for this motion. Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer then explained the NEC felt that there had been enough sub committee groups looking into the future and that the NEC itself must look at solutions and consider various options. He explained the current financial situation and said this Business Plan was just the first step. The next step would be what the options are, but the NEC had only had 3 months in which to start planning and that they needed the members to support them in this. Once that had been done then there would be some flesh to put on the bare bones of this Business Plan.

Sutton Coldfield Group proposed a move to the vote and was seconded by Thatcham Group.

CARRIED

Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon delegate asked why someone younger did not put the Business Plan together and was told by Gerry Edwards, Vice President that it was the NEC that had put the Plan together and there was a wide age range there. Jane Langstone, Havering delegate said the Plan was not detailed enough but was it still all right to vote for it and was advised it was.

Steve Browning, East Anglia Area Chairman summed up the motion by saying that this was a series of targets, not a wish list. He added that a clear identity must be established in order to widen the audience and cut costs, become less bureaucratic. He said that communications must be improved and activities enhanced to widen the audience. He said if members voted for this motion, it would give the NEC a framework to work from and provide targets to help improve the Federation.

CARRIED

Voting strength re-established at 57

Jo Taylor, Halesowen Group was nominated to replace Kathy Morris as a teller.

**15:4 “That this conference empowers the NEC to reorganise the management structure of the Federation and implement with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, subject to agreement of the Groups”.**

Martin Berry, deputy National Chairman/Midland Area Chairman presented this motion on behalf of the NEC by asking what is wrong with the current structure and management of the Federation. He said that some members may say too much bureaucracy, or red tape, too many meetings. He said that the decision making

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process was too slow and if any management changes were needed then a motion has to be presented to the ANC for the delegates to discuss and vote on it. He pointed out that with membership declining, Groups are getting smaller or closing. He stated that the current structure started about 60 years ago and although there have been some changes in the past, it is time to change again and can only benefit the Federation as a whole. He said that the right structure, number of committees and positions are needed for the Federation to run effectively and efficiently and this change needs to be made now to make sure there is a Federation tomorrow.

Martin Berry, deputy National Chairman/Midland Area Chairman went on to say that all members want to attend their own Group night or a Group nearby and have an enjoyable time. He agreed that most new members, did not want to get involved in the running of the Federation, resulting in positions being left vacant and the only ones willing to take an active part are members of long standing.

Martin Berry, deputy National Chairman/Midland Area Chairman then explained that the NEC was made up of members elected by member. He advised that any member was entitled to attend an NEC meeting and give their views to be considered and that an invitation was given to attend the July 2004 NEC meeting.

He stated that once the NEC had reached any decisions on structural changes, these would then be put to the Groups for ratification. He said that the NEC had looked into various ways and now had input in the form of the "Clean Sheet" which was shown further on in the Agenda. Martin Berry, deputy National Chairman/Midland Area Chairman said changes must be made now, therefore this motion needs to be voted for, empowering the NEC to make the decisions, then passing them to the Groups for ratification.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate asked how the members would be informed of any changes, to which Bekki Randall, National Chairman replied there would be a choice of options. Peter Hurley, Northwich delegate, asked if there would be any major decisions regarding the Constitution or other matters that would normally be brought to conference and was told this is why the motion was put in place. Huw Morris, Oxford delegate said initially he had a problem with this motion, thinking the NEC would have had too much power, but with the amended wording he now agreed it and members should vote for it. He also urged the NEC to be more open with members and keep them more informed in the future. Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate asked when any changes would take place and was told in the latter part of the year Area Chairman would visit the Groups and inform them of the decisions. He felt that by empowering the NEC this was de-powering the members. He said the NEC had had years to make any decisions but seemed to be keeping ideas from the members. He also said the office was too small for many observers to attend NEC meetings and asked delegates to vote against this motion as it is the members who must make the decisions, not just the NEC.

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate said that whilst initially she was against this motion, looking around the Conference hall, if members can read newspapers during the Conference, then they are not interested in the running of the Federation. She advised that this did not happen during NEC meetings! She likened voting for NEC members as to voting for members of Parliament. She pointed out that when an MP is

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voted for, voters elect someone who will do what they want. She said voting for the NEC is the same, let them do what the members want.

Ian Oliver, Halesowen delegate said that it should be a “higher body” running the organisation, as members cannot expect a referendum on every decision made and supported this motion. Chris Mann, Redbridge delegate pointed out that the NEC are also 18 Plus members and should be empowered to make decisions on behalf of all the members and urged delegates to vote for this motion. Mark Randall, Northwich observer said last year, the National Chairman was then asking members to change the NEC, to make it bigger and by doing so make it stronger. He said the Conference should vote for this motion and they must trust the NEC to think and act in the best interest of the Federation. Brian Taylor, Thurrock delegate said members needed to meet more than once a year to make decisions, therefore, members must trust the NEC, as they are a good thinking body and should vote for this motion.

Ian Crawshaw, Plus News Editor told the members the NEC were carrying on with the work set in place by the Working Party and asked the Conference to give the NEC a chance to get on with it and to vote for this motion.

Adam Redshaw, Coventry delegate said he was worried about how the motion was worded. He asked if the future of the ANC was known if this motion was passed, to which Bekki Randall, National Chairman replied it was not known at the moment.

In summing up, Martin Berry, deputy National Chairman/Midland Area Chairman wanted to clarify a point made earlier about top heavy management. He said that the right structure and number of committees is needed for the Federation to run effectively and efficiently and that these changes must be made now to ensure there is a Federation of tomorrow. He referred again to the “Clean Sheet” and pointed out that as soon as the NEC have made any decisions, they will be put to the Groups for ratification. Martin Berry, deputy National Chairman/Midland Area Chairman then reminded the Conference that the NEC are members, the same as everyone present and they must be trusted. Again, he invited members to attend the July NEC meeting and pointed out that if necessary a room away from the Office could be hired. He stated that the motion did not de-power the members but allowed the NEC to make the necessary structural changes. He reminded the Conference that the members would have the opportunity to ratify them. He concluded by saying that the only way forward for the Federation was for members to vote for this motion.

CARRIED

**15:5 “That with immediate effect the present system of a two tier membership be abolished without altering the lower joining age limit and that all members be allowed to stand for any position in the Federation regardless of age.**

**And that the National Constitution, Standing Orders, Model Area Constitution, Constitution for Member Groups and the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Constitution be amended accordingly.**

**Current members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Groups will henceforth be Full Members and charged the standard membership fee upon renewal. All 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Life Members**

**will revert to Full Membership status and no fee adjustment is to be requested.**

**All 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Groups will have Full Group status”.**

John Braun, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman presented this motion on behalf of the NEC by saying the Federation was currently made up by 2 types of Groups, the first tier Groups for people aged 18 – 35 and 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Groups who do not have an upper age limit. He pointed out that last year, the delegates voted at the Conference for Associate members to be able to revert to Full member status. He stated that the NEC think it is time the same was allowed to 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Groups. He pointed out that the motion would abolish Associate Memberships, allow all members to be able to participate in all events and decisions of the Federation and also draw in more members. John Braun, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman then urged all delegates to vote for this motion.

Lisa Howlett, Hounslow delegate said this was a move away from ageism. Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate said she hated this motion and that this is not what 18 Plus is all about. She pointed out that the age range started out as 18 – 30, then was upgraded to 18 – 35. She believed it should stay that way and delegates should vote against this motion.

Alison Berthier, Fareham delegate spoke for this motion by saying that older members needed to be recruited as younger members were not interested in joining a club or taking on responsibility. Martin Posner, Romford delegate felt that 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Groups were being forced into becoming Full Member Groups and might cause 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Group members to leave the Federation. Ian Oliver, Halesowen delegate said that most of Halesowen members, potential and existing, were aged over 30 now and that younger people had their own circle of friends. He went on to say older members could run the Federation more effectively, as they have more experience of life and once a member reached 35, they should not be “thrown out”!

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate spoke against the motion by saying that 83% of her Group were under 35 and the organisation should be kept that way. She said that this is what the Federation has always been about, as if a, for example, a 22 year old goes along to a Group and sees older members there already, this might put them off joining. Corinna went on to say that like attracts like and that for the Federation to survive they must look at the youth of the country and urged delegates to vote against this motion. Adam Redshaw, Coventry delegate said that age should not be an issue as any Group has the right to refuse membership and urged delegates to vote for this motion. Huw Morris, Oxford delegate thought the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Groups should be retained and used. Chris Mann, Redbridge delegate said that wisdom and knowledge come with age and not to vote for this motion could mean the Federation losing out on a lot of experience, also it could mean the death warrant for the Federation is this motion did not go through.

Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate said that 18 Plus is to help people improve their lives. He said his had changed dramatically for the better since joining 18 Plus, but did not believe it was possible to mix too wide an age range and that members should be prepared to move on at a certain age. He said that the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier had been set up previously to do exactly what this motion was proposing, by keeping the older members in the Federation. Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate went on to say that whilst



every member felt they were important to the Federation, there had to be a time when members did move on, because of the age they had reached, therefore, he urged delegates to vote against this motion. Dan Geddes, Southern Area Development Officer said that 18 year olds were not being attracted to the Federation any more.

Phil Bettis, Coventry observer asked why this motion was being debated, as this motion only mentions abolishing the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier, not abolishing the upper age limit. Chris Porter, Bishops Stortford delegate said that 18 year olds cannot organise events, meetings and the like, therefore older members were needed to be there for offering advice and suggested members voted for this motion. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate agreed with Phil Bettis and asked if the NEC could come to the microphone to define what the motion was about.

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary then told the Conference that the purpose of the motion was to abolish the upper age joining limit. She said there was the 2-tier system, but to join a Full member Group, members must be under the age of 36. The object of this motion was to still run the 2 Group levels, members could join either Group at any age and that 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Groups would be able to vote at future ANCs. Phil Bettis still stated the wording of the motion was not totally clear.

Coventry Group proposed a move to next business and was seconded by Thatcham Group. Bekki Randall, National Chairman explained that if this move to next business was carried, no vote would be taken on the motion.

The voting strength was re-established at 57.

CARRIED

Voting strength re-established at 59.

The NEC announced to the Conference that they were withdrawing Agenda Item 15:7

**15:6 “That this Conference empowers the NEC to set the Membership fee for the Federation”.**

Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer presented this motion on behalf of the NEC and opened his speech by saying that he assumed all members had read all the documentation produced for this motion. He said that he does read the OneList, even though he does not post on it. He said that there was a conspiracy by the current NEC to grasp the nettle, which is the Federation, and shake it until it is transformed from a dying, gasping sham of an organisation into a successful, growing, thriving social and activities organisation. He said previous motions had all focused on the future of the Federation and hoped delegates would also vote in favour of this one.

Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer said that fast, responsive action was needed and the NEC need the power to be able to act immediately on any plans, not wait for another 11 months to bring those plans to Conference. He went on to say there was, however, a fly in the ointment, that being “money”. He said that the NEC did not want to ask for more money at present, nor to give any back, but to be able to put in

place changes including the funding of the Federation and to make quick decisions on both finance and administration. He said that by delegates giving the NEC this power, members are not looking at an immediate increase in fees, government styling or stealth taxes by the back door. He said that financial changes have yet to be discussed and until plans are in place about the re-structuring of the Federation, the NEC will not know what finances are needed. Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer reminded delegates that the NEC are members, voted for by the members and they are to be trusted. He said that by voting for this motion, delegates would be voting for change and asked that members think long and hard before coming to a decision and asked that they vote for this motion.

Alison Berthier, Fareham delegate asked if the NEC would be able to advise Area Chairmen to go to Groups and inform them of any proposed changes before making a final decision. Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer replied that yes this could happen as finance and re-structuring had to be worked on together. Adam Redshaw, Coventry delegate wanted to clarify how often would the NEC review the membership fee, if this motion was passed, as the current fee is for 12 months and was told that, as stated before, the NEC do not know what will happen yet, but Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer said he could not imagine there would be more than an annual change to the membership fee, as budgets would be drawn up year by year.

Brian Taylor Thurrock delegate asked if the Groups could charge a higher membership fee than that set by National and keep the extra for themselves? He also wanted to know if the levies would be set and was told it, again, would depend on how the re-structuring was drawn up. Brian Taylor, Thurrock delegate then asked that it be taken into account, when setting up new levies, that some Groups were richer than others to which Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer said this would be borne in mind.

Phil Bettis, Coventry observer said this should be a very quick debate, as the Conference had already decided to set the NEC the task of the re-structuring of the Federation and that this re-structuring would have different financial restraints. He therefore he urged the delegates to vote for this motion, giving the NEC the control needed for the job. Jane Langstone, Havering delegate said if the members did not like the fee, they could vote against it, but as the NEC were fee-paying members as well, delegates should trust them to set the fees to benefit the Federation and to vote for the motion.

Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate said it would be bad luck for the Federation to vote for this motion. He went onto say that the NEC were going to go away and look at the re-structuring, including the finances, which would probably be done October, November time. This would only mean an approximate 5-month difference to leaving the membership fee as it was until next year's ANC, assuming there would be one. He said that this would be like giving the NEC a blank cheque and that it should be the members' decision about the fees and that membership fees were not the only means of raising funds for the Federation. He pointed out that there were Plus Products to be bought, as one example of putting money into the Federation, and delegates should vote against this motion.

Stephen Sykes, Bradford delegate proposed an amendment to the motion should read

to include “subject to the agreement of the Groups”.

Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer then explained to the Conference that this wording would change the spirit of the motion, and this is why it was not included, as it would take away the right of the NEC to set the fees, which is what this motion is about. He went on to say that due to the fact that this had been included in the speech, meant that the NEC would inform the Groups of any fee changes before anything was finalised. Stephen Sykes replied that as long as the Groups were being informed of changes before any decisions would be made, he was quite happy with that. Chris Brandon, Northwich delegate said that would this not contradict the motion, if passed, as the NEC would be mandated to change fees anyway and Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary then replied that the NEC plans were that they would make plans, come back to the Groups with the proposals and then the Groups could decide for themselves which proposal to accept.

Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer then summed up by saying that the whole point of this weekend was to give the NEC the power to do what had to be done, the basis of this motion being an extension of this, so that the finances could be included as well as the administration of the Federation. The Groups would still be consulted once proposals were put into place and would still be able to have their say without waiting for the next ANC.

CARRIED

Peter Strawbridge, Solihull observer then went to the microphone to say that it was felt that the summing up was done prematurely, and was told that as no one else was at either microphone, it was concluded that the debate on the motion had finished.

**15:8 “That this Conference requests the NEC to consider the re-structuring of the National Federation of 18 Plus Groups, along the lines provided for in the accompanying document entitled ‘Clean Sheet Federation’. This restructuring to be implemented wherever possible, within one calendar year of the date of the end of this Conference.”**

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate proposed this motion by saying that he hoped that, by at this stage, all members realised there was a need for a structural change and that, originally, this motion was set out of frustration of waiting to see what plans the NEC themselves had and that it is now clear there are currently no plans. He went on to urge the members to give the NEC a clear sense of direction and where the members think the Federation should be going. Huw Morris, Oxford delegate then went on to say that, in the account, the majority of expenditure went on the staff and Office. He said the Federation is an organisation run by its members, for its members and went on to query how the jobs done in the Office could be divided amongst the members and officers. At this point, Huw said a lot of this information was available in the “Clean Sheet” document and urged members to read it, if they had not already done so.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate then said that to ask Areas to issue memberships would not instil any more work on the officers. Area Chairmen would have less work to do if there were no National meetings to attend, and if an Area could not raise a

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committee, then perhaps that Area should close and members move to another. He said members can be either part of an Area and helping in the running of things or be run directly from National and by an Area organising things, members will have more say. National events can be run by Area sub-committees, as is WASH, and could always sell shares in events, to help with running costs, if the Area itself cannot afford to finance the event. The Area hosting the meeting, thus spreading costs around, could fund regarding expenses of any executive committee. Internet can be used for communicating amongst Groups and Areas, also e-mails and the 18 Plus Web Page. Costs savings on this Plan far outweigh the budgeted deficit, as, membership fees could be reduced, and small Groups would not have to struggle to find National levies of any sort as there would be none with no Office or National tier.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate went on to say that this Clean Sheet document has not been hastily put together, because he has been a member for a long time. All the implications have been thought out carefully and that if the members want it to work, they can make it work.

If it is accepted that an Office and staff cannot be afforded, then everything else will follow on automatically. This document offers an opportunity to restructure the Federation into something more sensible and appropriate than the 18 Plus of today. He urged delegates to take this opportunity and vote for this motion.

Coventry Group seconded this motion and their delegate Adam Redshaw addressed the conference by saying that the wording of this motion was not very specific and that the NEC had not given out any specific information, but this Clean Sheet document would do just that and also give the NEC a starting point for the restructuring of the Federation and hoped delegates would vote in favour of this motion.

Wayne Fenton, ANC Chairman then gave a point of information that the Clean Sheet document said the Federation employed two full time staff, whereas there are two part time staff.

Ian Oliver, Halesowen delegate asked what would happen to all the things in the Archives if the Office were to close.

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate wanted to know how the NEC stood on this proposal and then Martin Berry, deputy National Chairman/Midland Area Chairman then spoke on behalf of the NEC by saying the NEC supported this motion as it gives the NEC a clear sense of direction of what the members want. He said it also gave the NEC another option to look into for the way forward for the Federation and could benefit the Federation as a whole and said the NEC urged delegates to vote for this motion.

Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate said that she had been a member for a long while and had several problems with the Clean Sheet and felt that the Federation did need some form of National executive to co-ordinate communication and a National membership secretary. She said she did not like the fact there was no National committee, that a full core of people was needed, even if contact was done by instant messaging, to make sure all Areas were doing the same things and National scale events were publicised and National Diary kept together and urged delegates to vote

against this motion.

Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate proposed an amendment to the motion to read “ that this Conference mandates the NEC to restructure the National Federation of 18 Plus Groups along the lines to return it to what it originally was”. Bekki Randall, National Chairman said that this amendment was against the spirit of the motion as the motion “requests the NEC” and this amendment would be ordering the NEC to do restructuring as contained in the Clean Sheet document and not be able to consider other alternatives and the NEC rejected the amendment.

Martin Posner, Romford delegate said that a National tier was needed to co-ordinate National holidays, or they could be in jeopardy and that if Areas issued membership cards they could all be different colours. He urged delegates to vote against this motion. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate said she did not know if she was for or against this motion, but she said she knows the NEC were going to consider a lot of things in this document, so to vote for the motion would give them the opportunity to go away and consider things like the Office, staff, National holidays and National levels and felt members should vote for this motion.

Ian Oliver, Halesowen delegate said that technically speaking debating the motion was pointless, as the NEC were going to be discussing all these options anyway. Bekki Randall, National Chairman said this motion was to give the NEC an idea on how the members were thinking about the future of the Federation.

Chris Lincoln, Fareham delegate said that if members read the document there was a part in the National part of the Clean Sheet document about National Chairman, Honorary General Secretary and the like and this was, so far, the most positive thing to have come out of this Conference. Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate said she thought this document had been well thought out and it did give the NEC food for thought, if not perhaps for this year but for next.

Stephen Sykes, Bradford delegate said that if the NEC decided to run the Clean Sheet, nothing would be changed for the Federation except that perhaps membership fees would be smaller and monies diverted locally, not being spent on administration. He noted that Members at Area levels would have to take on some of the tasks currently carried out in the Office. He went on to say there had been a number of tasks to restructure the Federation and that lots of good people had been involved, but this is the best so far. He urged delegates to support this motion and give the NEC a clear direction towards the restructuring of the organisation. Jane Langstone, Havering delegate said she was worried about where the divergence would end if each Area had to do their own administration, would the organisation become a lot of small social Groups instead of one 18 Plus Federation and urged delegates to vote against this motion and keep 18 Plus a National organisation.

Bekki Randall, National Chairman told the Conference they were, at present, debating the Clean Sheet document, not the actual motion, which was to request the NEC to consider this document as an option. Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate said this was a straw poll vote, the Clean Sheet document was an option put forward by Southern Area and was basically members being able to say they were not mandating the NEC to do these proposals, just to consider them and urged members to vote for this

motion. Fareham Group then proposed a move to the vote, seconded by Banbury Group.

Move to the vote:-

Voting strength re-established at 58

CARRIED

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate then summed up on the motion by saying he would like to clear up one or two understandings. He said that to vote for this motion meant it would give the NEC a clear frame work on where the Federation should be going. He said that the Clean Sheet did have a National tier and that meeting could be scheduled as often as Area Chairmen thought they would be needed. He pointed out that there was nothing in the Clean Sheet document to suggest that National holidays, like Brean, could not continue. He said the divergence of Areas would not be a problem, and that the document would allow members to run their Areas how they thought fit and there would be plenty of communication between Areas and it would be up to Area Chairmen to ensure this divergence did not happen. Huw Morris, Oxford delegate went on to say this document could work if members were prepared to make it work and asked delegates to vote for this motion and allow the NEC to know where they stand.

CARRIED

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate then went to the microphone pointing out that the Clean Sheet document had not been accepted in its entirety, but that it will be considered as an option, amongst others, by the NEC when planning the future of the Federation.

## **16 FACILITY FOR NATIONAL DEBATE**

### **16:1 STANDARDISED PUBLICITY – FAREHAM GROUP**

Alison Berthier – Fareham delegate opened the Facility for National Debate on the subject of standardised publicity by saying that professional publicity materials specially designed for 18 Plus and its' target age range and activities would be more successful in attracting new members. She said that as long as these materials are reviewed at regular intervals and kept in tune with target members, this should help the organisation to grow. She said that at present there is no benchmark and at present, most Groups act individually instead of projecting a nationwide identity. She said it would also be financially crucial to have a uniform type of publicity. Alison Berthier, Fareham delegate said she had seen, during the Conference, a type of card produced by one of the Groups which could be used as an example. She went on to say that these were Fareham Group's thoughts and welcomed further input from the Conference.

Adrian Barnard, National Executive Officer said that he thought standardised publicity should be used and that Southern Area already did so and showed an example of each of Southern Area's Groups leaflets. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked if Fareham used the national Intro Info leaflets and Introduction Pack

folders already available, but also felt that each Group needed to put its' own identity on their publicity. Francis Wallington, National Training Co-ordinator said that he felt that any publicity should have certain core values in the Federation, such as the National Head Office address and telephone number, national web site address and a contact for the Group concerned. He said that as long as these important items were included, each Group could design their own posters and leaflets. Francis went on to say that the Federation did offer training and perhaps this should also be included in with the activities advertised as training can cover publicity.

Lorraine Whiting, Romford delegate said that her Group's publicity was individually targeted. Adam Redshaw, Coventry delegate said that the National web site was too text-based. Mark Hewson, National Web Site Co-ordinator replied to this by saying that he just puts factual information on the web site and would be happy for someone else to design the front page! Brian Taylor, Thurrock delegate said that whilst he had no quarrel with standardised publicity he still felt Groups should have the right to be able to design their own publicity as well. He also thought Groups should be able to put up their own web site and perhaps in the future an award could be given for the best web site design. Chris Brandon, Northwich observer said that it is what happens on Group night, which is more important, and how each Group is perceived when new members come through the door. Chris Mann, Redbridge delegate urged caution in copying existing brands and logos.

## 16:2 THE FUTURE SHAPE OF 18 PLUS

Adrian Barnard, National Executive Officer said that it was originally thought that this point of debate might be a straw poll debate for members to give their opinions on how the Federation should go forward but it was then it was turned into a motion. He commended Oxford and Coventry for their Clean Sheet motion.

He also congratulated everyone present at the pre-ANC meeting for agreeing to go forward together and making this a harmonious Conference. Adrian Barnard said that if the layout of the Conference appeared poor, this is what the NEC had been stuck with and commended all those who had worked through this. He then opened the floor for members to give their ideas on the way forward of the Federation and gave examples for discussion such as abolition of Groups, abolition of National.

Steve Geary, Slough delegate asked if it would be possible for the current complaints procedure to be revised. Brian Taylor, Thurrock delegate said that when companies go into decline, they often merge with another company. Would 18 Plus be able to look into a merger with another organisation? Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate said she did not understand what the previous speaker had meant when asking about the complaint procedure, to which Steve Geary replied that he had logged a number of complaints a few months ago and felt that they had not been dealt with correctly. Adam Redshaw, Coventry delegate said he would like to see more Facility for National Debate at future Conferences. He thought more Groups might put ideas forward for discussion, rather than have to use all the bureaucracy associated with motions. Pete Hurley, Northwich delegate said that he had seen during this Conference the fact that members must go away and do some serious thinking about

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the future of the Federation and that the NEC needed to act to save 18 Plus. Pete Strawbridge, Solihull delegate compared 18 Plus with Spice, another voluntary organisation, and said Spice charged higher membership fees, more for activities and had share holders in the organisation. Could 18 Plus look at doing this?

Gerry Edwards, National Executive Officer, said he would like to echo what the previous speaker had said and that he saw this Conference as the end of the beginning, and what must happen is that everyone must work together. He said it was important that members give their Area Chairmen their ideas to be brought to the NEC meetings and that at the end of the day, the final decisions belong to all members. Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate said she would like to hear more about a 3-tier membership level, mentioned previously, as she thought her Group might benefit from this. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked why Dunstable could not do that now and run it as a test scheme for the Federation to see if it could be successful. Tracy Thorn replied that she did not feel this could be done at present because, for one reason, of the current insurance policy. Also, if people were not paying the full membership fee, they could not be classed as members of the Federation, so it could appear a certain Group had no members. Jonathan Tall, Solihull delegate said he had a similar ideas, for example, pay one fee to become a member of the Federation and another fee to become a member of the Group.

Stephen Sykes, Bradford delegate felt that a cheaper National level was needed, not the 3 tier system. Jane Langstone, Havering delegate wondered if, during the restructuring, the possibility of reducing the number of Group committee posts could be considered, with some Area Officers taking over certain jobs.

Mark Hewson, National Web Site Co-ordinator said that the quality of activities should be more important than the membership fees. Peter Hurley, Northwich delegate said that when he joined 18 Plus in 1986, he thought the Federation had a very clear identity, but now in 2004 very few people outside the Federation knew what 18 Plus was about. He thought the name of the Federation needed to be looked at as well, as the "18" should be dropped, as his Group had done some time ago. Kate Buse, Reading delegate said there seemed to be a lot of talk about membership fees, but £28 was not a lot of money for an annual fee and felt she was getting value for money. She felt that some of the ideas put forward would increase the bureaucracy, therefore increase costs at National level, and that spending money must be saved not increased.

Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate said that her Group thought that facilitators mentioned previously were a good idea and that the Federation should be re-structured from top to bottom. Dan Geddes, Southern Area Development Officer said that whilst he thought the publicity items for sale were good, why wasn't the web site and office number on them? He went on to say that he had teamed up with a Radio Station and a Nightclub who would advertise 18 Plus on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate said that whilst current members who took an active part in the Federation felt that they were getting value for money in the membership fee, some new members who did not yet understand how the Federation ran, felt they were not, therefore, would a cut in the fee bring in new members? Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate then said that there were problems with recruitment when the



membership fee was £12! She went on to say that it is up to the members to sell their events well to bring in new members. Ian Oliver, Halesowen delegate said that he personally felt the membership fee was value for money, but there were few successful Groups in poorer areas of the country.

Adam Redshaw, Coventry delegate asked if the National Directory could have all members' details in? Lorraine Whiting, Romford delegate said that another organisation she belonged to issued a regional directory of members. Paul West, Andover delegate said that the Head Office could be used to obtain telephone numbers and that Adrian Barnard had a National Database. Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate said that none of the female members of their Group would want their information publicised in the National Directory. She also asked if it was necessary to notify the office if a Group committee remained unchanged? Kate Buse, Reading delegate said whilst she could understand some members not wanting their addresses and telephone numbers publicised, could there be a page with e-mail addresses on? She also agreed with a previous speaker that 18 Plus Groups seemed to thrive in more affluent areas. She went on to say she also belonged to another organisation who ran a two-tier membership system for those who worked and those who were unemployed and this seemed to work well.

Paul West, Andover delegate asked if it were possible to pay membership fees by Direct Debit and Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer replied that this has just been looked into but it would prove too costly for 18 Plus to run. He went on to say that there was a lot of talk of cutting costs and fees, but the money to run the Federation came from the membership fees, so if they were cut, there would be less money coming in to run the organisation.

Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate asked if new members were covered by the Federation's policy. Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary told the Conference that new members were covered by a temporary card system or by the fact that they may visit a Group for 4 weeks before being asked to sign a membership application form.

Tracy Thorn then asked if the Membership Renewal Letters could be sent to Groups as well, or at least a list of expiry dates. Bekki Randall, National Chairman replied by saying that all Groups should keep a membership record showing expiry dates.

Francis Wallington, National Training Co-ordinator then stressed to the Conference that Risk Assessments must be completed for all events and forwarded to the Office, so that the Federation's insurers are aware of what is happening. Mark Randall, Northwich observer said that going back to poorer Areas and 18 Plus Groups, he thought this was irrelevant, it was just that people did not want to join structural organisations. He thought to merge with other organisations would be a last straw, but perhaps the NEC should look at other groups to see what they do and if we can draw any ideas from them.

Jonathan Tall, Solihull delegate asked why the Membership Renewal Letters are being sent out when the Federation is looking to cut costs. He said in his Group they are notified well in advance of when the need to renew. Jonathan Tall also commented that perhaps Holiday Levies should be higher, thus sending more money to National.

16:3 FUTURE ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Wayne Fenton, ANC Chairman asked members to how they would like to see future ANCs run. He said some of the things he was looking for were venue type – hotel, holiday camp; location and ANCs of the future.

Adrian Barnard, National Executive Officer opened the discussion by saying he would like to see ANCs being held at Centre Parcs. Ian Crawshaw, Plus News Editor said keep the evening entertainment as it is now; Martin Posner, Romford delegate asked if there would be more ANCs after the re-structuring. Pete Strawbridge, Solihull delegate said not in Coventry please! He thought holiday camps kept delegates out of the Conference. Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate said she would like to see the ANC in another venue now, nearer to the southern part of the country perhaps, even if it was a holiday camp!

Chris Brandon, Northwich delegate asked for a central location and low cost venue and Lorraine Whiting, Romford delegate suggested changing from the northern part of the country to the southern part of the country alternate years, as before. Ian Oliver, Halesowen delegate asked for the ANC to be in Brighton, as he's never been there and also could the start times change? Bekki Randall, National Chairman then explained that the NEC have a meeting before every Conference, starting at 9.30 am and a lunchtime start also gives members time to travel if arriving at the venue on the Saturday. Pete Hurley, Northwich delegate raised the point that the ANC should be publicised externally more, to which Wayne Fenton, ANC Chairman said this year's Conference had been publicised in Coventry at least 3 weeks prior to the event.

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate said she would like to see the ANC a more prestigious event, for example, a running casino in one room and a comedian after the meal, before a dance would start. Brian Taylor, Thurrock delegate asked if the "move to the vote" action could be removed!

**17 ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN TO SERVE FROM MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> MAY 2004.**

Bekki Randall, retiring National Chairman announced the results of the vote for the Wayne Fenton standing as National Chairman: votes for 53; votes against 3; abstentions 1; spoilt paper 1. Wayne Fenton was duly elected to the post of National Chairman to stand from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

Wayne Fenton, National Chairman elect thanked everyone for voting for him and for those that did not, then he hoped he could prove himself and his team. Wayne Fenton went onto say that all he asked was that the members trusted him and that he would do the best he could and that his door would always be open. He wished Bekki luck in her future pursuits and said that he would always remain a Manchester United fan!

**18 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ELECTION RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL OFFICERS TO SERVE FROM MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> MAY 2004.**

Bekki Randall, National Chairman announced the election results for the positions of

External PRO and Plus News Editor.

Corinna Teale, standing for External Public Relations Officer; votes for 50; against 7; abstentions 1. Corinna Teale was duly elected as External Public Relations Officer and thanked the Conference for their votes and said she would do her best to help further the Federation's future.

Ian Crawshaw, standing for Plus News Editor; votes for 54; against 1; abstentions 2. Ian Crawshaw was duly elected as Plus News Editor, thanked the Conference for their trust in him and asked for articles and pictures to go in Plus News.

## **19 NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS**

Bekki Randall, National Chairman she was very pleased to see everyone at the Conference and was delighted with the debate, even though she did not agree with everyone! She thanked Iain for being entertaining. Bekki Randall went on to say she had enjoyed being National Chairman and what a great experience it had been. She said she would not be disappearing from 18 Plus, she already had another job in mind! She wished Wayne well in his new role and asked that members support the NEC and that together they could all raise the Federation from the mire and make it great again.

Mike Shapcott, South Bucks Group presented the National Badminton trophies to:-

Dave Filer and Pete Mann - Doubles  
Dave Filer - Men's Singles  
Lara Mellor - Ladies Singles

## **20 PRESENTATION OF TROPHIES**

20:1 Excellent Award

Not awarded

20:2 National Chairman's Merit Award

Not awarded

20:3 The Linda Street "Spirit of 18 Plus" Award

Presented by Jo Woodhead, Vice President to CORINNA TEALE, SUTTON COLDFIELD GROUP, Midland Area

20:4 Treasurers' Trophy

Not awarded

20:5 Charities Trophy

Presented by Tony Burgess, National Finance Office to SOLIHULL GROUP, Midland Area

## The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups

### 20:6 Gold Trail Trophy

Not awarded

### 20:7 National Recruitment Trophy

Presented by Gerry Edward, Vice President to SLOUGH, WINDSOR & ETON GROUP, Southern Area

### 20:8 Best New Group

Presented by Gerry Edward, Vice President to SO'TON FRIENDS GROUP, Southern Area

### 20:9 Norbury Trophy

Presented by Ian Crawshaw, Plus News Editor to FLYING SOUTH, editor STEVE CROTHERS, Southern Area

### 20:10 The Charles Padgham Training Trophy

Presented by Francis Wallington, National Training Co-ordinator to SOUTHERN AREA

### 20:11 Development Certificate

Not awarded

### 20:12 The President's Trophy (Best Group)

Presented by Jo Woodhead, Vice President to CRAWLEY GROUP, London & South East Area

### 20:13 "Cobb Dual Purpose 2-pint Jug Mug (Best Area)

Presented by Gerry Edward, Vice President to SOUTHERN AREA

## **21 ELECTION OF HONORARY SENIOR OFFICIALS**

### 21:1 VICE PRESIDENT

Gerry Edwards was re-elected as Vice President of the Federation.

Jo Woodhead was presented with a gift of appreciation for all her hard work for the Federation on her retirement as Vice President of the Federation.

### 21:2 HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

None elected

**22 APPOINTMENT OF THE ACCOUNTANT**

Martin Berry, Midland Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman on behalf of the NEC, proposed Kingscott, Dix as the Federation's accountants. They were accepted as the accountants for 2005.

**23 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

Ian Crawshaw, Plus News Editor reminded members about the National Treasure Hunt taking event in July in Central London.

Corinna Teale, External PRO told the Conference that she seemed to have found a perfect venue for TAG to be held in and wanted a straw poll on members' opinions as to whether or not to re-start this event. This was very positively received by the Conference.

Adrian Barnard, National Executive Officer reminded the Conference that whatever happens in the future, it is up to the members to bring new members in and make things work.

Wayne Fenton, National Chairman elect thanked the Hotel Conference Manager and staff for their help during the weekend, Mark Hawkins for the sound, Ian Crawshaw for helping with the News Sheet, Francis Wallington for managing the votometer and Christine and Sue for their help at the Conference.

Mark Randall, Northwich observer congratulated the top table for the way in which this Conference had been managed.

**24 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DATE AND VENUE OF THE 64<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE.**

To be advised when arranged.

**25 PRESIDENTIAL CLOSING ADDRESS BY GERRY EDWARDS, VICE PRESIDENT**

Before commencing his closing address, Gerry Edwards, Vice President presented some cheques to those Groups who had raised their membership figures by 5 or more new members during 2003. Those Groups were-

Crawley Group; Slough, Windsor & Eton Group and Sutton Coldfield Group.

Gerry Edwards, Vice President then said that he had remarked the day previously that it would be an interesting Conference and he had been correct. He thanked various people, including Wayne Fenton for masterminding the Conference on his own, Donna Verrall for her hard work behind the scenes and also the Office Staff, Bekki Randall for everything she has done as National Chairman for the last two years and the NEC for all their commitment to the Federation.

Gerry Edwards, Vice President continued his speech by saying he had thoroughly enjoyed the Conference, that one or two highlights sprang to mind to include, Paul West sitting in his pullover in the heat wave, the NEC being told they had no vigour and he loved it when a member commented there were no young people on the NEC! He also thought it was good to see Corinna Teale standing as External PRO, as this was not an easy job.

Gerry Edwards, Vice President then said he was pleased to see that during the debates at this Conference there had been no animosity, but that the debates had been vibrant and that it seemed that everyone now seemed determined to be able to work together and that now the changes must be pushed forward. He said the culture of the Federation must be changed to a “can do” culture for the better of the organisation. He said he hoped all members present would go back to their Groups invigorated by the proceedings from the weekend and wished everyone a safe journey home and asked that they dispel the rumours that 18 Plus is dead, but it is going to be restructured for the better – long live 18 Plus!

## **26 CLOSURE OF CONFERENCE BY THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN**

Bekki Randall, National Chairman then thanked everyone for making this a successful Conference and for supporting the NEC. She thanked the sound system operators, also Ian Crawshaw, Christine George and Sue Swan for the Minutes, Francis Wallington for operating the votometer and to the NEC who had done a wonderful job and had been great to work with. She then wished Wayne Fenton good luck in his new position as National Chairman and was sure he had a great future as National Chairman.

DVANC/2004/cg