

NEC MEETING 11th NOVEMBER 2023

Chaired by Martin, Minutes by Ian

Present (in person or remote):

Tina Bunyan (NTACC), John Smith (MAC), Martin Posner (ASEAC), Ben Allen (NAO), Adam Redshaw (NTO), Adrian Barnard (VP), Gerry Edwards (VP), Ian Crawshaw (VP), Matt Dickinson (Obs), Andy Rutter (Obs), Erik Bean (Obs), Chris Tillyard (Obs), Liz Gormley (Obs)

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

Meeting opened at 11.40.

2. Apologies for Absence

Jeff Rea, Alison Jones, Erica Knight, Steve and Nicky Rolfe

3. Voting Strength

3

4. Minutes of last meeting (Aug 2023)

Confusion re: AR – IC said the AR's referred to Adam but will make it clearer next time

Accepted Unanimously.

Matters Arising

MD – what happened re: ASEA loan of £400 for WASH. MP – Hope to get it back at WASH, will speak to them. MD – Did we not have published accounts. MP – Will have to ask Richard Leach (their Area treasurer). MD – did the shred zoom licence go ahead. JS – yes.

5. Actions Review

Covered above.

6. AREA REPORTS

ASEA report – Written report. No questions.

Midland Written report. MD – Only NTAC have face to face meetings now, all else on zoom. JS – The walking weekend made a slight loss. Will have to decide each year if we rerun it. Next one at Cambrian Mountains. CT – Enjoyed that event, lots of scope for local walks. MD – Are Facebook ads useful? JS – Did 4 so far. Got likes. Got >1000 visitors on landing pages. Yet to convert them to members. Two thirds groups don't have FB pages so use Area pages. Hopes to have Autumn / New

Year interest. JS – Lincs Quest don't have a FB page but they do have a FB group. Without ads. Member count went down due to covid and the upper age limit providing a barrier to entry. MD – We can still only join up to 65 – have a motion at the NAGM? AB – this is due to insurance policy.

Action – JS to look at raising the motion for upping the entry age (removing the barrier) for NAGM – in conjunction with Lincs Quest

NTAC Written report. TB – want more detail about individual groups on reports. MD – which events are you referring to re: “membership not required”. TB – WASH but could be others. AB – Membership will be required for his BBQ. TB deduced there are 2 Dunstable members from report but was not clear.

Action – TB to find out how many members Dunstable has, via Russell Taylor

JS – his area has a membership spreadsheet, name + membership type. MD – Katie Hawkins does ours verbally. AB – her spreadsheet is private! MP – we use a SWOT report. TB – Martin could ask his area to make it spreadsheet based.

Southern A written report. IC endorsed Centreparcs weekend and hope it expands. When asked if they were all members, he said he thought so.

Vote the reports en bloc, along with officers' reports.

7. OFFICERS' REPORTS

Chair - A written report from Steve. JS – his web page does have its own domain.

Adam Redshaw joined.

JS said that Jeff likes the pages and has given him free rein. The newly designed page is active on the internet and has its own domain name and there is also a QR code. MD – Has Jeff forwarded enquiries to Area Chairs? JS has received 1, TB 0, MP 0.

A discussion about where in England to hold the NEC meetings, central or vary. IC had liked moving it around but AB prefers having it centralised, with Erica having suggested Milton Keynes and BA saying it can build a relationship with the hotel. IC suggested someone's house but several spoke against this. MD asked if Steve was re-standing as National Chair but this was unknown.

HGS – Not present.

NFO – AJ did a written report. Short discussion about room hire for this meeting with TB saying NTAC had not been paid for this. Confusion as to the price £27/h or £29/h. TB – NEC would have to pay the £2 discrepancy (if the NEC was under-invoiced). TB commended Alison on her report.

Later on, TB rang Katie who was not aware that we would get invoiced less if we left the room 1 or more hours early.

8. National Training Officer

Adam said no report as such but he has helped Midland Area with publicity. AB – People can make money out of doing Youtube. Can we? JS – we make nothing!

Action – All to locate plusgroupsuk on youtube and subscribe to it (it helps with perception)

9. National Activities' Officer

Verbal report from BA. Nicky won tender for NAGM Holiday Inn South Reading. £77 which comes from £42 day delegate + £30 evening meal + £5 disco. People need to contact BA for the code for the discounted room hire (£99) then book it direct. Book room via hotel, other elements via Ben.

IC – delegate fee is more than meal! BA – it includes room hire.

BA discussed Hoburne. Getting booked up. Sadly several elements are closed for maintenance in 2024. Restaurant and bar open. Need the Hoburne app to aid booking stuff.

BA may stand for NFO (with Alison saying she will not continue) but still plans to run Hoburne and assist NAGM. IC – is this too much work for you? BA – No it's ok, accounts are organised and working well. MD – what would another NAO do? BA co-ordinate and they can also run activities! Adam – this could be a good thing.

10. National Internet Coordinator

JR had sent in an apology rather than a report as he was over committed this weekend. TB concerned not had a report from him. JS – Jeff has done some good work behind the scenes. TB – concerned that she can still see the generic pictures (dog, barber)

Action – JR to check / instigate which domain goes to the “puppy” site. JR to use John's domain not 'direct to the puppy'.

Not plusgroups.org.uk/landing

Redirect it to: aboutmeetingfriendsplus.org.uk

IC – seems to need proof you are over 18 (on his Vodafone network). IC found a fatal error, Wordpress? – and pointed it out to JS.

Vote the reports en bloc.

Carried unanimously.

LUNCH BREAK. ADAM AND GERRY LEFT.

11. Online membership records

Erica has agreed (contacted during lunch) to continue this work, and has completed Southern Area.

MP – The NAGM of 2 years ago was mandated to do this! AB – there could be a motion to get rid of it. BA – then what was the point in the first place. AB – to put it under central control, have some numbers, for insurance purposes. MD – can check membership at national events. This would be a shared Google drive document. Katie did forward our details to Erica. MD – he could do it if needed.

JS – Mark (Hewson) has done his bit. Kath Good and Richard Leach are the other membership officers. MD – it needs name, group, membership number, expiry date [Ian’s note – and membership type was mentioned earlier]

12. Expenses – Emission Zone and Public Transport Expenses

MD – The last NEC meeting was inside the ULEZ zone so we need to consider this in deciding future venues. £12.50 if vehicle is non compliant. What is a reasonable expense? There was a discussion on the reasonableness of expensing hotels for NEC meetings.

MD – What about NAGM expenses. BA – usually for NC, HGS, NFO, VPs and NEC Admin, but also up to Areas as to what they will fund.

BA to MP – why no delegates from your area? MP – Don’t know. Fran comes on to zoom. People don’t seem bothered.

AB – Expenses are stated as per mile but the rate of 15ppm is archaic! It was noted that 45ppm was carried at the August meeting. MP – may be avoided by having meetings in a centralised location.

13. AOB

[Ian – AKA “Tina’s bit” 😊]

- EB was not convinced this meeting was worthwhile. MP – difficult without some of the prominent people here. IC – I will do the minutes, please read them and do your actions. IC felt decisions were made and stuff clarified so it was worthwhile.
- TB asked are NAGM account signatories changed? Nick Grant has come off and Alison on. BA did not know. Not sure if Alison will do this. **Postpone to NAGM**
- TB asked JS who bought zoom licence shares? National? JS – It’s Midland’s account but NEC can use it for NEC business but NTAC don’t have access. If NTAC wanted it they’d have to pay one third, as it’s currently shared 50-50 National and Midland. JS – It’s about £160 pa. TB – could use Gerry’s account
- TB asks why 2 Secretaries? Do we need 2 roles? IC explained difference between HGS and NEC Admin roles. JS and TB both felt 1 position was enough these days especially as they are subsidised positions. AB – keep the NEC Admin role, defer to HGS when needed. BA – people can ask for help when needed. BA clarified the GPC = NC + HGS + NFO. IC – keep it as 2 roles, 1 role is a good idea in theory but none of the current likely suspects would take it on if both positions were merged into one. There was some debate on whether this should be debated at the NAGM and on the order of procedure (ie before or after the incumbents for the positions are voted)
- TB – let’s talk about the current membership – 255 members. BA – how many are active? Most of Southern, ASEA more marginal, many active in Midland especially Lincs Q. There was a rough estimate that 2/3 are active. MD – We don’t get new members because we all know each other too well. EB – Stevenage recruited a PNM this week! TB it has dropped from 300. AB Some due to Covid and no longer going to the theatre (Didcot group). LQ down 30. JS – There is a “turnover”. BA – what are we about now. The aims are outdated. MD – Yes it’s like an old friends’ club. IC – I agree, although we should not market ourselves as such, difficult. AB noted something Simon Good had said as a very good reason, Plus is a

place where you can absolutely relax. JS – The aims read out by BA are semi-constitutional not just marketing blurb. You wouldn't say that to somebody you are trying to get to join. Our marketing strategy should be about making / meeting friends. We do need to recruit though, one of our offerings is to provide / aid leadership.

- AB asked for people to respond to his wedding invite.

Action – All, to think about updated aims for Plus.

14. Close Meeting

Meeting closed at 15.47.

All present and some others enjoyed a few drinks and evening meal at a nearby pub restaurant.