Plus AGM Minutes
20th Annual General Meeting
Saturday 17th February 2024 Held at Holiday Inn South, Reading

Attendees:

Name	NEC Position	Name	NEC Position	Name	NEC Position
Steve Rolfe	NC	Martin Posner	ASEA Area Chair	Adam Redshaw	Training
Ian Crawshaw	VP	John Smith	Midland Area Chair	Ben Allen	Activities
Adrian Barnard	VP	Tina Barnard	NTAC Area Chair		
Gerry Edwards	VP	Nicky Rolfe	Southern Area Chair		
Erica Knight	HGS				
James Oliver	Solihull	Erik Bean	Stevenage	Lauren Crawley	Didcot
Tracey Washbrooke	Solihull	Liz Gormley	Stevenage	Gary Schwimmer	Hillingdon
Mark Hawkins	Barnet	Richard Haydon	Bromsgrove & Redditch	Chris Tillyard	Barnet
Katie Hawkins	Barnet	Matthew Dickinson	Hillingdon	Bobby Collins	Barnet
Faye Bunyan	Didcot	Andy Rutter	Hillingdon	Kath Good	Southern Area
Russell Forester	Didcot	Craig Bunyan	Didcot		
Erik Bean	Stevenage				

1. **Chairman's Welcome to Delegates**

Steve opening the meeting and welcomed everyone in the room and on Zoom.

Welcome to Reading, the first time I can recall Southern area has held the AGM in my Lifetime as far as I'm aware. Which is quite and achievement. Thanks to Ben Allen for his assistance in making it possible.

2. **The Presidential Address by Vice Presidents**

Ian Crawshaw Vice President:
Good morning and welcome to the Conference, I'm one of the 3 VPs, Adrian Barnard in the room and Gerry Edwards online, Gerry is very sorry for not being able to be here in person but will be online for as much as he can be. A new venue and some new faces like Kath and Craig and Lauren and some very old faces.

We are all friends here, it's all about healthy debate, do have a debate and if you have anything to say come up to the microphone, don't be nervous. Don't be the person who wanted to say something but didn't. Just say hello to the person next to you.

It's an important conference, the people that are here do care the most, not saying that others don't. The more you give today, the more you'll get out of it. It's your conference, use it wisely and enjoy.

3. Elections of Tellers

3.1.Determining Voting Strength

Establish Voting Strength

16

Elections of Tellers
Craig Bunyan
Tracey Washbrooke

Proposed Solihull
Seconded Barnet

Carried

3.2 Election of Ballot Counters

Erik (Stevenage Delegate) Craig and Tracey again.

Proposed Stevenage
Seconded Coventry

Carried

4. Apologies for Absence

Francesca Barclay from Redbridge
Chris Melloy

Minutes Silence for Members we have lost over the last 12 months.

Steve is wearing an orange tie today in remembrance of Janet Sykes who died recently.

5. Acceptance of the Minutes 19th AGM held at Didcot village hall on 28th February 2023

5.1 Points of Accuracy

No points of Accuracy

6. Matters Arising

Tina Bunyan – No mention of NEC on Minutes, Noted

Nick Leeks joined the meeting, voting strength now 17.

James Oliver Solihull, Judy Mander and Kathy Morris were online but aren't noted.

Proposer and Seconder for Minutes
Proposed Stevenage
Seconded Solihull

15 For
Carried

7. **Presentation of the Federations reports for the year.**

Chairman's Report
I've been quite frank and honest with my report and the direction I believe we should be going. Disappointing to see we have lost 15 members. Thanks to everyone for the time and effort they put into their group

James Oliver Solihull Delegate
Congratulations to Steve for taking the NEC meetings around the areas. I've only attended the Midland one but would have like to have attended more.

Gerry Edwards
I agree with James, well done Steve for the time and effort to do this as agree at the last NAGM.

Steve Rolfe Thanks to all areas but special thanks to Anglia and south East to invited us to a members home for Breakfast the following morning.

HGS Report

Francis Wallington Lichfield Delegate
Insurance policy will expire tomorrow, are in the process of having it renewed.

Steve Rolfe – Good Question Francis this was discussed in length last night as we need to know we are getting value for money.

Alison Jones The insurance Company has given us a weeks extension as I said we needed to discuss it here today.

Francis Wallington Are you going to shop around, we need to ensure we maintain the insurance policy as it's fundamental to the organisation and the organisations running.

Steve Rolfe – Yes, we'll have a closer look at this later

Francis Wallington – Will we have a new insurance policy by the end of the month.

Steve Rolfe – Yes, we will.

Finance Report

James Oliver Solihull Delegate - Have any groups sent risk assessments,

Alison Jones – I have only received risk assessments from James Oliver and Francis

Ben Allen – I have access to the risk assessments email and we haven't received anything in the last year.

James Oliver Solihull Delegate – Risk Assessments are being submitted as I have sent them myself so I will investigate in case the email address isn't working.

Insurance isn't covered if you haven't submitted a risk assessment unless you are covered by the venues insurance.

Independent Examiners Report

Thanks to Katie for the accounts

No questions

National Activities Report

Any Questions for Ben

Mark Hawkins Barnet Observer – Lots of events seem to be secret, maybe on Facebook but very little on mailing list. If I could change anything, I will change communication, to make sure events are available to everyone.

Matt Dickinson – Google groups replacement for onelist is available but isn't used very much.

Adrian Barnard – National Directory hasn't been available as only 3 or 4 groups have submitted data. This year take the time to email with meeting/committee details to a National Directory can be made.

Francis Wallington – Can you publish the mailing list again please.

Gary Schwimmer – Do we run enough events

Matt Dickinson - The link is Groups.google.com/plusgroupsuk it is on the website.

Anglia and South East Report

Francis Wallington – Would the area like to use my skills as I am living and working in Essex

Martin Posner I'll go back and ask the committee

Midland Area

No Questions

North Thames and Chiltern Report

James Oliver – The report says you meeting weekly but Adrians emails says you haven't been

Adrian Barnard – We will be meeting weekly now work has closed.

Southern Area

James Oliver - Questions about membership and renewals, a couple of people have tried to join but have not had a response.

Nicky Rolfe – We had a problem with our website but we weren't aware but this has been fixed now.

Vice Presidents Report

Gerry Edwards – We are here for everyone at any time

Katie Hawkins – I propose we vote on all reports except the Internet Report as we haven't received this in time

For 16

All votes in favour on all report except the Internet Coordinators report

For 16
Carried

Steve Osborne Kings Lynn Delegate Joined the meeting

Internet Coordinator Report

Jeff Rea joined the meeting

Matt Dickinson has read out his report

Any Questions for Jeff

James Oliver Solihull Delegate – Mark Hewson's website is on the provider who we haven't paid for for the last 3 years, when will it be moved over to your provider.

Jeff Rea, it's near enough ready now, Mark is going to do some testing.

Kath Good Southern Area - As someone who does not have vast internet knowledge, how come it has taken so long, so many years to make a website when Stevenage could do it in an afternoon.

Jeff I'd be surprised if that was one meeting as there are lots of good things on there. I'm trying to promote Nationally every group and direct people to the groups, we're trying to compete with other organisations, there are lots of competition. The site is there , lots of content it just needs to be continually improved.

Erik Bean Stevenage Delegate Point of Information, it wasn't our website that was made in the one meeting is was Adam's but it's a valid point.

Kath Good – There is a lot of competition out there and we have failed we aren't attracting members, everyone is searching the website for things but they can't do that with ours.
Adam Redshaw – Are we in a potentially in a position now that the internet has gone, the world now is social media based, Tiktok and you tube. People are going away from Facebook. Maybe that should be our strategy instead of a website. In addition to the old school things.

Erik Bean Stevenage Delegate – We've had some success recently a new PRO and new recruit to Plus who does Social Media professionally and we have had some new members from it. The two go together, social media gets them interested them the website/week night events get them to join.

Francis Wallington Lichfield Delegate – Have you been invited to the NEC meeting Jeff to give regular updates on what you are doing? To ensure progress is monitored and reviewed.

Jeff – I've had some health difficulties this year unfortunately and I've been to make meetings. I hope this can be avoided in future so we can get a more continuous dialogue going.

Mark Hawkins Barnet Observer – I was made aware of Jeff's website meetingfriends.org.uk it actually has got some content, it's not bad. It's taken 6 years but it is useable now. Erik's point of direct towards it is a good one. Although many parts of the country there isn't a place to point them as we have gaps in the groups.

As a side note, 18plus.org.uk leads to the puppies site I think that needs to be tidied up. We need to decide which domains we want to keep and point them to the hosting as appropriate.

Jeff Rea, do we really need 18plus.org.uk anymore as it's problematic when searching.

Thanks to John on the work he has done on the word press. I think it's time now to send money on a designer so the website looks good to our competition.

Kath Good Southern Delegate – Does access have to be via computer as on my phone if you click contact it just goes to a blank page (Jeff's site)

Steve Rolfe – On the old website, Mark Hewson's website, the certificate is invalid, it's http not https, might be worth looking at.

Bobby Collins Barnet Observer – on a local level, I have asked our group to use love Whetstone.com or lovebarnet.com. I think we are forgetting that we have a USP of trying to get people together without making profit.

Jeff – People who are searching arrive in puppies website, members go to Mark's site. We might need to redirect it. The 18plus URL, I have looked into, I think that advantage had gone. I appreciate it's historical but not really valid anymore. On Kath's point re the form not working, it works for some and not others, I think it's due to a Wordpress upgrade and we'll sort that in the next few days.

Geoff Buller – On the website the year to Federation started is incorrect. 1941 not 1946 and it says it's £10 to join which isn't the case.

Jeff – I'll correct the year. NTAC has always been £10 to join and this was opened up to the Federation at previous NAGMs

Reestablish Voting Strength 16

Voting on Internet Coordinators Report
For 5
Against 5
Abstentions 6

Report Rejected

Implications of Voting against Internet Coordinators Report

Adrian Barnard Vice President – It is noted that the report is rejected.

National Finance Officers Report

Francis Wallington – How much do we have in Reserves

Steve Rolfe – Training fund £709.68 General Reserves £20,908.07.

Proposer – Hillingdon
Seconded Rothwell

For 15
Against 0
Abstentions 2

9. **Election of National Chair to serve from 1st March 2024**

Steve Rolfe Restanding
Proposed Southern
Seconded Rothwell

James Oliver – Solihull Delegate – Why didn't you put in your report that you were restanding.

Steve Rolfe – I didn't know it was required and I think it would put people off from standing knowing someone is standing already.

Vote to see if we are happy to vote as a show of hands rather than ballot papers

For 16
Against 1

Vote for Steve Rolfe as National Chair

For 17

Elected

10. Election of National Officers to serve from 1st March 2024.

Honorary General Secretary

If no one is elected today we may be able to coopt someone at the next NEC meeting

National Finance Officer

Nomination – Ben Allen

Proposed Solihull
Seconded Stevenage

Any Questions

Katie Hawkins – Barnet
Bens accounts as beautifully clear, it's easy to see where the money has gone. I'm not sure on using the 80ish account as an area levy account. Alison's accounts are good too but she had issues getting access to accounts so had to open new accounts. There are plans to close 2 of then.

Ben Allen – Just an idea, I will discuss with previous NFOs.

Voting Strength increase to 18 with Dawn Petty joining the meeting

For 18

Elected

National Training Officer – No nominations

National Activities Officer – Adam Redshaw
Proposed Hillingdon
Seconded Rothwell
15 For
1 Abstention
Elected

National Public Relations Officer - No nominations

National Internet Officer – Jeff Rea
Proposed Hillingdon
Seconded Didcot
For 6
Against 6
Abstentions 3
Not Elected due to Chairmans casting vote

Round of applause for Jeff for his contribution to Internet Coordinator over the years.

National Publicity Officer No nominations

NEC Administrator – No nominations

Reestablish Voting Strength 17

For disbanding online database: 9
Against: 6
Abstentions 2

Motion was carried.

National Publicity Officer – Nomination Craig Bunyan (Didcot)
Proposed Hillingdon
Seconded Stevenage

Reestablish Voting Strength 16

For 16
Elected

Motions for Debate

That the Combined Membership Database be immediately curtailed, with the datasets deleted. This will remove:
• The requirement of each Area membership secretary to compile a redacted membership list monthly and submit it to the National Finance Officer
• The requirement on the National Finance Officer to compile a combined membership database.
• The requirement on the NEC of the National Federation of Plus Areas to create proposals for providing such a system.
Proposed: Stevenage Group

Seconded: Barnet Group

Proposed Solihull
Seconded Linc Quest

Mark Hawkins Point to information – What will happen if this will be accepted and passed.

James Oliver – Solihull Lincs Quest are getting requested for membership from people above the age range. At the minute they have to be turned away. We would like people to be able to join up to the age of 80.

Adrian Barnard – The history is that the insurance wanted to know what ages people were, since then insurance companies have been told they can't be ageist so withdrew it. I feel we need to withdraw it too as we are being ageist ourselves.

Matt Dickinson – Why is this an emergency motion? Couldn't it be submitted in line deadlines for motions to be submitted.

James Oliver – It just got missed as James was busy.

Erik Bean - Stevenage delegate As it's a constitutional change it will need 75% to pass.

John Smith – Midland Chair – Steve we are running out of time, if you rule this is an emergency motion to accept it we can just debate it.

Steve Rolfe – I'll accept emergency motion on to the floor as this may be an issue for other groups in future.

Lis Buller Lincs Quest Delegate – This came about from an email from a member concerned who was approaching 63 but most of their friends were 65 plus but not lincs quest members who are excluded from membership. Groups can chose either age range, a person over 60 would probably not want to mix with 30 year olds. This will enable us to recruit members over 65.

Reestablish voting strength 16

Vote on Emergency Motion
16 For
Carried

Steve Rolfe – I hope you can follow up with the members we have lost to see if they are willing to rejoin us.

Discussion and renewal of Insurance Policy
Alison Cumbers NFO
The current policy is quite complex, they insure all the group when really we only need to insure National, last year the insurance was £840+, on a insurance comparison website policybe, Hixcox is coming out at £90 a year.

Steve Rolfe – We are really over insured for this that we actually do, any group who do actually run events do need to risk assessments.

Mark Hawkins – Do we need to resubmit is assessments, re group night events, groups could benefit guidance regarding what is required.

Steve Rolfe – For example Center Parcs, we are on their land so should be insured on their insurance, Skittles, the venue should have insurance so we are covered by the venues insurance.

For example to hedge hop would need to be on our insurance as we are not at an event organised by other Companies providing a risk assessment as been filled in.

Francis Wallington – What Adrian and James have said is correct, we need public liability insurance, venues will ask for public liability insurance. Are you protecting your trustees from liability. We need employee liability insurance as part of that.

James Oliver – Solihull Delegate, point of information is this for the NEC to decide and not the conference.

Steve Rolfe, we felt members should be made aware.

Mark Hawkins – Are you seeking direction of which way to go, does the new insurance have smaller scope.

Alison Cumbers – It's cheaper but still has public liability insurance, we are currently covered for acts of terrorism which we don't need. The like of Spice with over 1000 members it might be applicable to but we have 265 at members at the last count. For what we want the cheaper insurance is adequate.

Matt Dickinson - This decision has to be made by the NEC/GPC.

Steve Rolfe – We are just being transparent to the membership.

Erik Bean – Stevenage Shall we elect Independent Examiner and VPS first otherwise we will run out of time.

Establish voting strength 15

14.Voting for Gerry Edwards, Ian Crawshaw and Adrian Barnard to be voted in as VPs and Katie Hawkins as Independent Examiner.

15 for – Elected.

Ian Crawshaw – Thanks for voting us back in.

Katie Hawkins £10 for 1st year membership was voted in on 2018 Minutes

Any Other Business

James Oliver – Land lines will be switched off in 2025.

Erik Bean – Make sure you recruit it's important.

Gary Schwimmer – I think you should look at one member one vote at AGMs, it'll liven things up and hopefully get more people to the NAGM.

Mark Hawkins –Facility for National Debate I think most people are aware Keith Israel has been forced by Searles to move the date of WASH, the date they have been offered is towards the end of Jan. We have Hoburne after Easter, the AGM but the diary is quite thin for the rest of the year. We need to think about more Autumn events and something that wont may people choose between going to one event over the other.

Gery Edwards Encouraging to see an active online presence today.

Announcing Date of Next Conference

Steve Opening the Tenders open to Areas for February 2025 to be presented at May NEC Meeting

Ben Allen – I am happy to help anyone who needs it to run an event.

Matthew Dickinson – Jeff submitted a proposal to revisit the National Structure. One National body as we are only 250 people. Give people points for attending National events and a discount off events with these points. I think this needs to be looked into.

James Oliver, this should be discussed online and at conferences and taken back to the NEC meetings.

17.Presidential Closing Address

Gerry Edwards – I might seem a bit of a flat meeting but most people have an input, the think the online presence has worked well and probably the way of the future.

It's sad some of the top posts aren't filled. Nice to see fresh blood on NEC.

Ian Crawshaw –
Francis wanted ensure we are insured
We have 3 microphones instead of the for and against, we had a top table , main room and a James Oliver microphone
Communications does seem to be improved and information does have be submitted on time.
Tina Barnard had the best cheer for announcing her name
Bobby Collins spoke at an AGM for the first time well done.

We did have someone not elected to a position, we need to remember we are all friends and friendship is first.

Steve Rolfe – Thanks everyone for attending today, we you later at the meal.