

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PLUS AREAS

21TH Annual General Meeting Minutes

Saturday 15th February 2025

Held at Mercure Hotel, Silver Street , Northampton NN1 2TA

Attendees

Steve Rolfe (National Chairman)

Erica Knight (HGS)

Ben Allen (NFO)

John Smith (Midland Area Chair)

Katie Hawkins (Standing in for NTAC Area Chair as Tina Barnard absent)

Martin Posner (ASEA Chair)

Nicky Rolfe (Southern Area Chair)

Adam Redshaw (NAO)

Gerry Edwards, Adrian Barnard (Remote), Ian Crawshaw (VPs)

Delegates and Observers of the Federation

(Minutes jointly by EK, SR, IC)

1. Chairman's Welcome

Good Morning everybody, great to see so many people here today in "Sunny" Northampton.

2. Presidential Address

Gerry Edwards VP

Love to see you all. It's been a long time since I was here, great to see some new faces.

We are here for one reason to try to rebuild the federation.

Clubs are starting to get going again since Covid.

Thanks for the support Personally over the last year.

3. Election of Tellers

3.1 Ian Crawshaw
Proposed Solihull
Seconded Stevenage

Determining Voting Strength

16

4. Election of Ballot Counters

4.1 Ian Crawshaw

5. Apologies for Absence

Brian Whittaker Rothwell Delegate Lateness can't get onto Zoom
Tina Barnard Didcot
Judi Mander Bromsgrove
Kath Good Southern Area

A minute's Silence was held.

6. Acceptance of the Minutes of the 20th Annual General Meeting at the Holiday Inn South,
Reading on 17th February 2024

6.1 Points of Accuracy

Gerry Edwards - VP At the moment the minutes are external we shouldn't have names
just initials

Lis Buller – Lincs Quest Delegate. The minutes don't show as Lincs or Rothwell were
there, they were on Zoom

James Oliver – Solihull Delegate Emergency motion wasn't stated in the minutes,
just that it was passed.

7. Matters Arising Thereon

No Matters Arising

15 For

1 Abstention

Carried Nem-com

8. Presentation and Acceptance of the Federation Reports for the Year 2024

Chairman's Report

Gary Schwimmer - Hillingdon Delegate I understand WASH had to be moved but couldn't they have considered somewhere else.

Steve Rolfe – Chairman There was late notification for WASH so the cost had to be weighed up.

Mark Hawkins – Barnet Delegate Numbers were a few down but the event worked in the new room

Francis Wallington – Lichfield Delegate What equipment have you got for aiding meetings

Steve Rolfe Chairman NEC decided against equipment but online meetings weren't that successful due to signal, we have to justify spending money.

Francesca Barclay – Redbridge Delegate How about less meetings to be more cost effective

Steve Rolfe Chairman – With Area lead we have to have 4 meeting a year.

Southern Area Report

James Oliver – Solihull Delegate What are your plans to grow the area

Nicky Rolfe – Southern Chair Hoping to recruit, especially for Center Parcs.

NTAC Report

No Questions

ASEA Report

Francesca Barclay – Redbridge Delegate What does Martin coming to meetings do for the members

Martin Posner – ASEA Chair Ask the Area to help where needed.

I pass back info from the meetings to groups.

Steve Rolfe – Chairman Has the £400 been paid back?

Martin Posner – ASEA Chair No, I'm sure it will be paid back at some stage.

Midland Report

James Oliver – Solihull Do you think the walking holidays represent good value for money

Francis Wallington -Lichfield Yes, but we welcome other options, the option is there not to walk.

PRO Report

No Questions

Training Report

No Questions

VP Report

No Questions

Activities Report

No Questions

Voting Strength 18

Voting to have the vote for all reports en bloc, except Finance/Auditor:

16 For

2 Against

So we will vote en bloc except Finance.

Now the vote on the en bloc reports

Vote 18 carried Unanimously

9. Finance Report

Mark Hawkins – Barnet Some payments show but they will be for next year's event

Francis Wallington – Lichfield Delegate What is the situation with the £752 declared in report, what is going to be done?

Voting Strength 15

Ben Allen – NFO Error on account on amount not countersigned as soon as it was noticed it was paid.

Francis Wallington What would you do in the future to make sure this doesn't happen again.

Ben Allen Changing account for Lloyds and have to be countersigned. Any payments for myself will have to be authorised and paid by someone else.

Francis Wallington – Insurance expires on 22/2/25, are you looking at increasing it to 2 maybe 5 million.

Francis Wallington- Are you looking at a higher rate of savings for the Federation?

Alison Jones - Previous NFO, Saving account was all set up after Covid when all rates were down, might be worth looking at again

Ben Allen - NFO There are £171 interest for the Financial year 2024.

James Oliver- Solihull delegate – Are you getting risk assessments? Ben Allen Yes

Adrian Barnard – VP When accounts were set up. They only allowed one signatory, this has changed now.

Francesca Barclay – Redbridge Delegate What will the surplus be used for.

Mark Hawkins – Barnet Events may make a surplus but National itself made a loss

Presentation and Acceptance of the Finance Report for the Year 2024

James Oliver Solihull Delegate
274 members at the end of December

EB Stevenage 266 Last year so we are up slightly.

Steve Rolfe Chairman How are areas notified of Area Levy?

Ben Allen – NFO By Spreadsheet by quarter. HLMs aren't counted the levy if they have a Gold Card

Francesca Barclay – Redbridge Delegate: If everyone becomes a life member we are going to run out of Money.

Adrian Barnard – 6 x 20 would take 24 years to run out at £5 per year so we don't necessarily need to worry.

Vote on Finance report

17 For
1 Abstention

Independent Auditors Report

18 Carried Unanimously

Item 10 Election of National Chair 2025-2026

Steve Rolfe The National Chair asked if there were any other members wishing to stand as National Chair for the next year? As no one came forward then the National Chair confirmed that as stated in his report he would seek to stand as National Chair. On asking for a proposer and seconder.

Proposed: Mark Hawkins (Barnet Delegate)

Seconded: Craig Bunyan (Didcot Delegate)

Point of Information Ben Allen (Stevenage delegate) asked if there was going to be a ballot vote or show of hands? The National Chair stated that as there was only one nomination then a show of hands would be appropriate given he would be out of the room.

Point of Information Katie Hawkins (Acting NTAC Chair) asked should Martin Posner (Deputy National Chair) be running this part of the election process? Martin Posner then continued to chair the meeting as the National Chair gave an explanation to why he wanted to re-stand.

Adam Redshaw asked why the National Chair wanted to re-stand.

Steve gave a brief reply

Adrian Barnard (Didcot Observer)

Point of Information stated that the Federation membership was actually growing.

Matthew Dickinson (Hillingdon Delegate) point of information that the nominations should be from groups not individual people.

Mark Hawkins responded that he was proposing on behalf of Barnet group.

Matthew Dickinson asked what the current National Chair do differently if elected. The National Chair responded that he had once an issue had been identified agreed with the National Finance officer to instigate dual authorisation of all National Financial accounts. Other issues are based around the fact that we are only a small organisation but act like a large organisation. For example, the National Chair has asked the former National Internet Officer for all passwords to website domains owned by Plus. Another issue is that as the world gets busier then volunteers have less time to contribute and taking on a paid member of staff would help in some situations.

Francesca Barclay (Redbridge Online Delegate) asked with all the meetings that National hold her members don't see much difference. National Chair then asked Francesca what would her members like to see from National? The National Chair stated that if your members are empowered to give National direction on where they want to go at this very meeting every year.

Ian Crawshaw (VP) clarified that Francesca members and groups can raise this direction via a motion at this meeting.

Erik Bean (Stevenage Delegate) reminded Francesca that recruitment is being covered this afternoon and that the people at this meeting are participating and not just an audience.

The National Chair left the meeting, and Martin Posner continued to chair the meeting.

Mark Hawkins (Barnet Delegate) gave his nomination speech.

Carig Bunyan (Didcot Delegate) gave his seconder speech.

Martin Posner called for the vote

Voting Strength 18

For 17

Against 1

Abstention 0

Steve Rolfe re-elected as National Chair

Item 11.1 Election of Honorary General Secretary 2025-2026

Erica Knight

Proposed by Stevenage

Seconded by Hillingdon

No questions asked.

Erik Bean (Stevenage Delegate) gave his nomination speech.

Gary Swimmer (Hillingdon Delegate) gave his second speech.

Voting strength 18

For 18

Against 0

Abstention 0

Erica Knight re-elected as Honorary General Secretary

Item 11.2 Election of National Finance Officer

Ben Allen

Proposed: James Oliver (Solihull Delegate)

Seconded: Erik Bean (Stevenage Delegate)

Ben Allen (NFO) admitted mistakes had been made and also closed a number of accounts over the last year. They gave the meeting assurances that the list of signatures would be cleared up. Next year would be their last year if elected but reach out that if anyone is interested to be NFO then they can always shadow them this year. Steve (NC) reiterated that point for all National posts. Shadowing National officers can be beneficial for anyone keen to join the National tier next year.

Questions from the floor

Matthew Dickinson (Hillingdon delegate)

Given that you are running a number of excellent quality National events do you think that this is the best post for you than National Activities Officer?

Ben answered that he felt it was fine until someone else stands then it is ok to do both roles.

Adrian Barnard (Didcot Observer)

Stated that Ben Allen works extremely hard and he shadows him in some way as he sends him all the data.

National Chair asked looking back at the last 12 months is there anything that needs to be done that you could not do? With the aim of doing, it next year?

Ben Allen stated that getting the accounts into better order, closing dormant accounts and the signatures list is up to date. Monitoring signatures and stopping people using other people's ID. Ben Allen confirmed that it has already happened before. No details given or asked by the meeting.

James Oliver: Gave a brief statement of support.

Erik Bean: One year in and going in the right direction.

Voting strength 18

For 16

Against 0

Abstention 2

Ben Allen re-elected as National Finance Officer

Ben thanked Craig Bunyan for the help with selection of the lunch menu today.

Meeting closed for lunch

Steve (National Chair) reopened the meeting advising the members online that they had missed a wonderful lunch. Acknowledging that Tina Barnard was not able to attend and wishing her a speedy recovery.

Voting strength 18

Steve (National Chair) advised the meeting that a motion has been presented and accepted by them. He asked those at the meeting to please come to the microphone. This will help with the recording of the meeting, and it allows everyone to hear your point.

Item 11.3 Election of National Training Officer

No nominations received

Item 11.4 Election of National Activities Officer

Alison Jones agreed to stand and gave a short presentation of activities.

Proposed: Matthew Dickinson Hillingdon

Seconded Brian Whittaker Rothwell

Gary Swimmer Hillingdon Delegate

Asked about organizing cheap holidays in the UK at the seaside. Alison said that events were possible and the cost shared between attendees.

Erik Bean Stevenage

Ask if not being able to drive is a hinderance to the role?

Alison gave an example of getting a train to Cornwall.

Francesca Barclay Redbridge Delegate

Stated that there are train stations near to events too.

Steve (NC) asked about hiring a minibus, which would be something that a group would do. Hiring a coach and picking people up on route to an event be done by the event Organiser?

What are your thoughts on organizing an event in November now that WASH is now in January?
Alison felt that there is a member already doing an event in November.

Ian Crawshaw asked, "Would you consider events with members and non-members attending?"
Alison answered that she would encourage nonmembers to assume the £10 membership.

Joan Osborne Kings Lynn Delegate – asked how you would compete with the activities that
Adam Redshaw did at WASH this year.

Proposer: Matthew Dickinson (Hillingdon Delegate)

It stated that it was more about setting up a team rather than the ability to travel to a venue to
negotiate.

Seconded Brain Whittaker (Rothwell Del)

Ian Crawshaw added that Alison is good at finding best prices online, which is more cost
efficient.

Voting Strength 18

For 15

Against 2

Abstention 1

Item 11.5 Election of National Public Relations Officer

No received

Item 11.6 Election of National Internet Officer

No received

Item 11.6 Election of National Publications Officer

No received

Item 11.6 Election of NEC Administrator

Joan Osborne agreed to stand as she has been an admin before. Steve Osborne has agreed to
help.

Proposed: James Oliver (Solihull Delegate)

James gave a short speech.

Seconded: Gary Swimmer (Hillingdon Delegate)

Gary gave a short speech of support.

Ian Crawshaw: Point of Information voting strength is now 17.

For 17

Against 0

Abstention 0

Steve (NC) advised the meeting that if anyone would like to know more about any vacant posts then do please ask me or anyone on the current or new National committee.

12. Motions for Debate

Originally none but Steve Rolfe accepted a late motion.

Mark Hawkins (Barnet Del).

In recognition of the likely longevity within the organisation of those taking out life membership, that the multiple of the standard annual membership that life membership is charged at should increase from 6x to 10x

Proposed: Barnet

Seconded: Stevenage

Mark Hawkins (Barnet Del): 10x is more reasonable than 6x in view of members staying with the Federation longer, and that the cost of membership has gone down in real terms. Erik Bean (Stevenage Del) seconding, agrees with Mark's points and anyone who wanted to, should have bought one by now!

Ian Crawshaw (VP) – it is Constitutional and so requires 75% to pass. Martin Posner (ASEA Chair) – When will this come into effect. Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) – immediately! Francesca Barclay (Redbridge Delegate) – Would this be used to discourage Life Memberships and save money? Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) – The last one paid for (HLM) was 2006! We'd only lose income if said member stayed on for longer than the number of years paid. Matthew Dickinson

(Hillingdon Delegate) – Please clarify this won't affect existing Life Members. Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) – Correct. James Oliver (Solihull Delegate) – please vote for this. Mark Hawkins (Barnet Del) summing up – wants it to be immediate and will not be retrospective. It's to make the price in line with likely benefit. Areas could pick up a liability so this will help them.

MOTION CARRIED (14 for, 1 against, 3 abstain)

Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) thanked those responsible for putting the motion together.

13 Facility for National Debate

13.1 Why is your group not recruiting (Erik Bean – Stevenage)

Erik Bean (Stevenage Del): Why is your group not recruiting? Memberships are going up: 266-274 and Stevenage improved by 9 last year. Whatever your group does is the product. Whether meeting in a pub once a month or whatever. Show your product so others know what you are doing. Believe in your group, believe in your product, bother to spread the word, and keep bothering. There are people you can ask how to do it, and you can succeed. If it was not worthwhile, you would not be doing it yourself! And if worthwhile for you, then it is for others.

Mark Hawkins (Barnet Del) – A summary for Barnet. Weekly Sunday night. 10-12 of 30 there. Quizzes, games etc. Saturday program meals, pubs, days out, walks, we do get a small flow of new members, due to Facebook, Next Door, people come looking for us. Even if small, set an achievable program, that + Facebook presence, grow it little by little and continuously. Take our programme as an example.

James Oliver (Solihull Delegate) – Some events will attract more than others, it's about getting the right engagement. Francesca Barclay (Redbridge Delegate) – My brother has created a very good website. We do stuff on Facebook, Insta, Whatsapp, exploring different ways to publicise. Thanks to Liz from LQ for her help. Can be months between advert and people responding to it, people can be shy. Some people may not see the benefits of being a member, so we need an incentive to join and to publicise it. Adrian Barnard (Didcot Obs) – Ref: What do people get out of Plus. 100+ at Center Parcs of old. 3x the price by default and fuller chalets generally than via Plus, so Plus has value. Didcot maxed at 68 due to the Theatre sweet spot that happened, spoiled by Covid. Some Facebook presence, posters, advertising. May have to wait a long time for responses! Adrian said on behalf of Tina Barnard – we need to be proud and not run events with non-members. Adrian continued – said his 50th Karting birthday was heavily subsidised but benefits were for members only, even worth joining just for the 1 event. You don't get that for £10 or £20! Once in, new members may enjoy other events. "Everybody wants to be in Plus, they just don't know it yet"

Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) – WHY is your group not recruiting? Adrian Barnard (Didcot Obs) – Covid hurt us. Gary Schwimmer (Hillingdon Del) – Can get complacent or cliquey. Other events like marriage can change things and alter membership. Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) – It can be like old comfy slippers! But we do need more people to survive as a Fed. Francesca Barclay (Redbridge Delegate) – Treat the new members as VIPs, also advertise better, eg her group is near an Elizabeth Line station so say that! Geoff Buller (Lincs Quest Del) – recruitment is very hard, but your group needs to do what works best for you. Make members feel welcome to retain them. Publicity – it's trial and error. James Oliver (Solihull Delegate) – on Facebook, photos are best at getting people engaged.

Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) – Let's talk about the difficulties of recruiting. Adrian Barnard (Didcot Obs) – Non members at events puts people off. It's only the event cost plus £10 or £20. Francesca Barclay (Redbridge Delegate) – Groups should communicate with each other more. We have 3 groups geographically very close together, 2 in the same road even! Cross comms should be better. Adrian Barnard (Didcot Obs) – Communication is key! Make use of my National Directory. abarnard03@outlook.com I can only put details in this with your permission due to GDPR, you must give me permission every year. Gary Schwimmer (Hillingdon Del) – Sickness including mental health has got worse. We are also competing with meetup etc so we really have to sell our benefits. Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) – but groups do have trial periods. Erik Bean (Stevenage Del) – we need to veto people who are not going to benefit the group. Adrian Barnard (Didcot Obs) – The “free” events do not cover accidents, we have insurance. Francesca Barclay (Redbridge Delegate) – All groups could join some sort of platform so everybody knows how others are doing. Adam Redshaw (Coventry Del) – we have been trying to sort out a website now for 20 years and we have missed the boat. People want video, reels, podcasts. We are not using the right technology. 7-11-4 principle. Need 7 types of contact for 11 instances on 4 different medias. Somebody did a shirt with our latest logo on, I have seen this nowhere else, we should be doing this sort of brand recognition. Programmes, goodies and stuff. Ian Crawshaw (VP) – I like the way Plus groups are using Facebook. We are a very honest people I had my lost wallet announced and returned to me at WASH. Craig Bunyan (Didcot Del) – I created a Facebook messenger chat group which could grow – could be useful for PRO.

Erik Bean (Stevenage Del) – Summing up. We like recruitment, lots of stuff to do and being done, actually do it and keep doing it and don't give up if not working at first. Steve Osborne (Kings Lynn Del) – We saw T-Shirts, pens etc, where is all this? We need to do more of all this. John Smith (Midland AC) – I can help with web stuff for any other area or group, come to me for help or to look at what I have already. Francesca Barclay (Redbridge Delegate) – Would Adam be willing to create a Whatsapp group for all to discuss their publicity experiences. Adam Redshaw (Coventry Del) – Yes!

Adam Redshaw wants to stand as PRO. Proposed Rothwell. Seconded Kings Lynn.

Adam was voted in as PRO.

14 Announcement of Election Results of National Chairman to serve from 1st March 2025.

Covered earlier under 10.

15 Announcement of Election Results of National Officers to service from 1st March 2025

Honorary General Secretary

National Finance Officer

National Activities Officer

National Public Relations Officer

National Internet Co-ordinator

National Publications Officer/Plus News Editor

NEC Administrator

Covered earlier under 11.

16 National Chairman's Address

Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) wants to remind us about the National Directory and GDPR. Katie Hawkins (NTAC Standing Chairman), I was talking about the membership form. Mark Hawkins (Barnet Del) – we don't need DOB or addresses on membership forms now, so why do we collect? I don't think we need to do this. Adrian Barnard (Didcot Obs) – Both these are still required, we cannot take on a 17yo. The home address is not public but it is needed, citing a story about a false address.

Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) did not give his "Chairman's address" but moved on to...

17 Election of Honorary Officers

17.1 Independent Examiner of the 2025 Accounts

Katie Hawkins is happy to do this for the next year. Prop Stevenage Second Solihull.

Elected Unanimously.

17.2 Vice Presidents

Gerry Edwards, Adrian Barnard and Ian Crawshaw all happy to re-stand. Prop Hillingdon. The tape has no mention of a seconder. However....

Elected Unanimously.

18 Any Other Urgent Business (not Promotion of Events)

Francesca Barclay (Redbridge Delegate) – Can at least 1 NEC meeting be in Romford Area, and anyway each area should take on one. Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) – your one was successful with a weekend of events. Would be good if the other areas could also bring members along to their home NEC meeting. Adrian Barnard (Didcot Obs) – Zoom should be considered as well unless face to face is necessary and maybe should become the norm, not least to save costs. Erik Bean (Stevenage Del) – Please have the reports etc for next year's NAGM earlier again. It was good this year! Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) clarified that Life Memberships would raise to 10x at the end of this meeting, but any already in progress would be honoured at 6x. Adam Redshaw (Coventry Del) – take photos of today and tonight and spread it on social media. Matthew Dickinson (Hillingdon Delegate) – Will the NEC meeting dates change as well as NAGM? Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) – We need to set these. James Oliver (Solihull Delegate) – we may need to be guided by the Constitution. Adrian Barnard (Didcot Obs) – Please send the remote link for the evening festivities. He plugged the National Directory again. abarnard03@outlook.com Ian Crawshaw (VP) – Can requests be made “in perpetuity”. Adrian Barnard (Didcot Obs) – Yes.

19 Announcement of the Date of the Annual General Meeting 2026

Ben Allen (NAGM Organiser) – We would move the date of NAGM to March to accommodate the move of WASH to late January. Hotel can do the 7th. James Oliver (Solihull Delegate) + Francis Wallington (Lichfield Delegate) says this is non constitutional and James wanted an emergency motion to ratify March as the date for the 2026 NAGM. Mark Hawkins then set this out.

Mark Hawkins (Barnet Del) – Motion

7.1 National Constitution

To change clause 7.1.1 from

7.1.1. The Federation shall hold its National Annual General Meeting (hereinafter: “AGM”) during the month of February each year PROVIDED THAT the first AGM of the Federation will be held in the year following its Inaugural Meeting.

To

7.1.1. The Federation shall hold its National Annual General Meeting (hereinafter: “AGM”) during the month of February or March each year PROVIDED THAT the first AGM of the Federation will be held in the year following its Inaugural Meeting.

Proposed Barnet Seconded Stevenage.

Francis Wallington (Lichfield Del) – This should be for 2026 not for all years so I object as it is. Ian Crawshaw (VP) Does Francis want to propose an amendment? Francis – No I am just arguing against a precedent. Ian Crawshaw – if no amendment then we vote the motion as it is. Ben Allen (NAGM Organiser) – The motion gives us flexibility not to have to do this every year. Mark Hawkins (Barnet Del) summing up – I think the flexibility is advantageous.

MOTION CARRIED (15 for, 3 against)

The exact date has still to be finalised.

20 Presidential Closing Address by Vice President

Gerry Edwards – I was pleased it went on as long as it has, some interesting debates. Good to see Francis back on form with his alternative views, also Joan and Steve. I see Solihull often on my Social Media. “Good” to see some people fall asleep! Covid has damaged us and we are only starting to recover. Still difficult for pubs. Younger people tend to not go out as much we want to reverse this. We are not recruiting because we can be too comfortable with what we have. We also have to value our existing members. Good to see membership up. Adam Redshaw is suave and sophisticated but the Jubilee Wine was awful – as was the 18plus song!! Good to see everyone engaged in debate. I want to thank all those who have done stuff and are standing back, as well as the new ones coming forward. And we can just maybe make use of new technology, hybrid meetings and so on, but not lose face to face.

I look forward to recognising some people and groups at the awards later.

Thank you all.

21 Closure of the meeting by the National Chairman

Steve Rolfe (National Chairman) – Thanks Gerry as always, inspiring. We will tell you the next NAGM date ASAP and NEC meetings. Thanks for your attendance, look forward to seeing you all later.