

**Minutes of National Annual General Meeting 2009
of the National Federation of Plus Areas
February 21st 2009 The County Hotel Birmingham Rd Walsall**

Prepared by Francis Wallington
Chaired by John Smith

Meeting was opened at 10.20 am

1] Chairman's Opening Remarks

John Smith, National Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the 3rd General Meeting or the 68th Annual National Conference.

He requested that everyone present turned their mobile telephones off or to silent if "on call" so as not to interfere with sound equipment. The National Chairman encouraged participants to use the sound system rather than from the floor to ensure their comments are recorded into the minutes.

He reminded everyone to have patience with all speakers, participants can be nervous and stressed that we were amongst friends. He explained that the reason that Francis Wallington was sitting next to him, was that he persuaded FW to fulfil the role of HGS for this meeting as none has been elected over the previous year

He thanked everyone who helped generate record of the previous General Meeting, Erica Knight for translating the tape into print and Joseph Gurney. Others have been mentioned in the Chairman's report.

Amendments to the agenda

FW informed the meeting of the likely times for breaks and lunch.

Corinna Teale as Conference Co-Ordinator, informed delegates and visitors of the conditions and arrangements for using the County Hotel as a conference and dance venue

2] The Presidential Address

Gerry Edwards, Vice President commenced his address by saying it was good to be back at the AGM and enjoying the buzz of the meeting after an absence of a year.

He welcomed the opportunity to be amongst old faces and noticed the many new faces attending. Gerry stressed that the conference was delegates opportunity to discuss the issues facing Plus which are featured in the motions presented

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He reminded delegates those NEC members who are volunteers and give a lot of their time and energy for the Federation.

Individual members have the opportunity to debate and to suggest through the Forum for debate.

The Vice President praised the commitment and works the retiring Chair John Smith. Without John, the Federation would not be where it is today. Gerry closed by encouraging participants to enjoy themselves and the day.

3] Election of Tellers

- A] Stephen Sykes
- B] Mark Hewson

Proposed Thatcham
Seconded Solihull
Carried Unanimously

The Voting Strength was established at 36 persons.
The quorum for the meeting is 18 delegates

Ballot Paper Counters
John Horswell Proposed Thatcham, Seconded Solihull
Gary Shimmer Proposed Chiswick; Seconded Solihull

5] Apologies for Absence

Honorary Vice President; Sandra Brogan, Richard Morton, Kirsty Van Lieshout, Paula Oakley of Soton Friends; Rothwell Plus Group; Sheffield and Leeds Plus Groups

6] Acceptance of Minutes of Annual General Meeting [67th Annual National Conference] held on 24th February 2008 at the Falstaff Hotel, Leamington

The Chair thanked Erica Knight for her contribution in generating this set of minutes for presentation at this meeting.

No amendments were received from delegates and observers.

Proposed; Bishops Stortford
Seconded; Sutton Coldfield
For 28
Abstentions 6
Motion to accept carried

7] Matters Arising from the minutes

None

8] Presentation of Report

A] National Chairman's Report

Emma Campbell, Sutton Coldfield delegate said that the National Chair's report and East Anglia Chair's report conflicted with each other over the loss of London and South East Area. The comment that EAA is saving single handed the constituent groups suggests that the NEC is not working together. Is that so?

The Chairman suggests that EASE is bragging and the NEC did work together to look after those members. East Anglia and South East Area did a lot of work to welcome them, once they agreed to join the area.

Joe Gurney East Anglia Chair and Deputy National Chair said he remembered that most of the work was left to him and the matter was fully discussed.

Emma Campbell confirmed to the Chair that the question was answered.

Geoff Butler of Lincs Quest asked for the membership statistics for Northern Area which are not published?

Robert Jones, Northern Area Chairman said the Membership Officer was unavailable due to health reasons to provide the data at time of publication. NAC said he would happy to provide the information later.

Phil Bettis, Lichfield delegate, as a point of information gave the current membership statistics for Northern Area as Lincs Quest 52; Leeds 2; Rothwell Plus 16; Bradford plus 6; Bradford Quest 2; Sheffield plus 7.

James Oliver, Solihull Plus Delegate asked the Chairman, how many members were in the Federation?

The Chairman replied that he could not readily give a figure [The NFO had commented that not all submitted such statistics in time]. He suggested that the NEC might consider giving this information in summary.

Mark Hawkins asked for the Brean Event statement of accounts as his area North Thames and Chiltern had a financial stake in the event and he is unsure of its worth .

The Chair asked Andy Campbell of Barkingside Plus group to supply information on the event. Receipted Expenditure £8757.16 and a problem with Income at

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£8750. Andy examined the accounts and said it should be £27.00 due to some groups underpaying by £5.00 , another by £15.00 and a person did not go on the Real Ale Trip which is the reminder £7.00. Andy having audited the accounts said it made a loss of £507.16. It is his intention to ask stakeholders [Areas] to write off the loss.

Katie Hawkins, Barnet Delegate said the Federation has 498 members.

Motion; to accept report
Proposed Sutton Coldfield
Seconded Leamington Spa
Abstentions; 1
Motion carried Nem Con

**8] Presentations of the Federation's Accounts for 2007 by Alison Jones
National Finance Officer**

Alison Jones National Finance Officer asked for questions from those attending.

National Chair explained that the NEC experienced problems in auditing the accounts for 2008 and so the published accounts are for delegates' information. It is not possible in the timescale from closure to conference occurring.

Iain Parkes Delegate asked if the NFO had informed the Treasury about £675 for printing?

The NFO said that this is from the 2006 accounts.

Motion to accept the National Federation of Plus Area's accounts for 2007
Proposed; Bradford
Seconded; Fareham
Against None. Abstentions 1
Motion carried Nem Com

**10 Presentation of Federation's accounts for the year ending 31st December
2009. These accounts are presented for information only.**

Steve Geary, delegate Reading Plus group asked for the accounts statement to be presented in a larger format.

The National Chair acknowledged for the request and the incoming NFO will respond.

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Dave Filer, Chair Coventry Plus Group says that there is a note within the accounts that if the interest payment goes over five hundred pounds then we need to inform the Inland Revenue. The previous year's accounts states that the interest payment is £480.00. Assuming that the interest rate increases and yields a payment of over £500, what are the implications?

The NFO said that you will be requiring to complete a return for corporation tax.

Corinna Teale, AGM Co-Ordinator asked about a five pound receipt that has been recorded as a charity donation yet no payment has been made. Please explain why nothing further has happened

National Finance Officer, Alison Jones replied that the nominated charity is the Holt Christie's Hospital. However their funds were lost in the Icelandic banking crisis. Payment will be made very soon.

11. Election of Officers

A] National Chairman;

One candidate, Adrian Barnard
Proposed by Thatcham
Seconded by Oxford

Adrian gave his nomination speech by introducing himself and stating he was willing to stand as National Chairman for a year. He stated that it was a necessity for a volunteer to stand for the Federation.

As to his history within Plus, he has only missed pre- conference meetings as a consequence he was well informed as the happenings within the Federation.

He actively sought questions from delegates and members

Robert Jones, Bradford delegate asked Adrian why he was standing when previously he had stated that he had achieved what he wanted to achieve as National Finance Officer?

Adrian replied that he stood as NFO because we need one at a difficult time and he was asked. He believed he did not do a good job. Alison Jones rescued him by taking on the role Alison had managed to persuade HMRC that we did not need to be registered for VAT when previously they had ignored Adrian. He stood down as NFO because a better qualified person was standing.

Adam Redshaw, Leamington Spa Plus group delegate asked Adrian
“Without the aid of navigation devices such as Tom Tom, where do you see the
Federation going over the next year?”

Adrian replied the role of National Chairman is to facilitate the wishes of the
members; the volunteers who compose the NEC do the work. National exists to
facilitate what the members want. Adrian said that the work done by members to
have a conference or general meeting within the standing orders and constitution
was an excellent piece of work. He said that we can trust the membership to do
the right thing

The National Chairman thanked Adrian and delegates gave a round of applause
in response.

12 .Election of National Officers

The National Chair stated that there are a number of vacant posts and he sought
volunteers from the members to fill these posts. Such volunteers could be
elected at a NEC meeting. He encouraged members to seek more information if
interested from him or their Area Chair.

12.1 Honorary General Secretary – No Candidate

12.2 National Finance Officer – Mark Harrington

Proposed by Barnet Plus Group
Seconded by Coventry Plus Group

Mark Harrington said he stood for the post of NFO, because he saw that the
vacancy existed on Onelist and the posts of Chair, HGS and NFO needed to be
filled. He has been an active member since 1995; he held a number of posts at
group level but not at National or Area Level. He is employed as a Finance
Officer for the Derby Citizen’s Advice and Law Centre and accountant for the
parent group, Derbyshire Access to Law. He has plenty of free time out of office
hours to devote to the running of the Federation.

12.3 National Training Officer – No Candidate

12.4 National Activities Officer – No Candidate

12.5 National Public Relations Officer- No Candidate

12.6 Internet Co-Ordinator – No Candidate

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JS hoped that a candidate would come forward from the Internet workshop to be held on Sunday morning. Volunteers interested in other posts can attend the NEC meeting.

12.7 National Publications Officer/ Plus News Officer-John Smith

Proposed Coventry Plus Group
Seconded Fareham Plus Group

Joseph Gurney, Deputy National Chair took the Chair for questions to the candidate.

John Smith thanked everyone for their nominations. He joined Plus at the age of nineteen and held a number of posts at all levels of the organisation.

As National Chairman, he has prepared and issued two editions, the latest one autumn was well received.

He would like to continue doing this and already is preparing a winter edition containing news from this AGM.

Robert Jones, Bradford Delegate asked John about his ideas for obtaining content from groups. John replied that everyone writes how good things are on the discussion list and Facebook. Pictures are easier to find as members publish them on Facebook and are happy to share them. There is no shortage of content. He is not going to be one of those editors that just sit moans and wait for content. He believes part of the role is to go out, obtain the stories and report happenings.

Mark Hawkins Barnet Observer What is your thoughts about electronic versions against paper editions of Plus News?

John thanked Mark for his question and said he would like to see a paper copy. Such editions can be used to promote Plus on group nights, showing events outside the group to existing and new members. Having a hard copy of Plus News is the ideal, but the National tier cannot to do this due to lack of finance. If you feel that we need paper copies then we have to work out a means to do this and make it happen.

Francis Wallington, Honorary Life Member, Lichfield Eighteen Plus Group asked if Mr Smith had any comments about grammatical style.

No. Contributors to a magazine will have different grammatical styles. John asked FW to clarify the question.

Do you believe that Plus News has a set grammatical style? Would you go out of your way to amend a contributor's grammar such as FW?

Yes was John's reply.

John explained that he would edit the overuse of jargon and grandiose technical terms. A magazine like Plus News has to be fun. If people read articles that read like technical or legal documents then they will be put off. There is a campaign for plain English which has been adopted by many councils including Kirklees his employer. Council colleagues do amend documents into plain English. John has had to do this to documents produced by Francis.

Teabreak

Gary Schwimmer Hillingdon Delegate asked if Mark Harrington as a delegate is allowed to vote for himself during the election for National Finance Officer.

After some hesitation, the National Chair confirmed that Mark could vote for himself.

Rob Jones, Bradford Delegate raised a point of information. Rob queried that the ballot papers circulated should have the option for abstention within.

The National Chair responded that if any delegate chose to abstain during the election process then they should indicate so by placing an A on the paper

13 Motions for Debate

The Voting Strength was established at 36

13.1 "With the intent to abolish the automatic price increase of the full Membership Fee, Article 9.1.3 of the Model Area Constitution shall be deleted, and the remaining clauses of Article 9.1 shall be renumbered"

The NEC was neutral on this motion

Joseph Gurney, East Anglia and South East Area Chair proposed the motion.

Joseph said the original scheme for automatically increasing the membership fee was based on the retail price index, this was replaced by increasing membership by a fixed pound increase last year. The latter scheme was introduced to make the situation simpler. An even simpler scheme, he suggested by removing the annual automatic price increase as the NEC has the right to increase by vote.

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If an area makes a surplus for the year then there is no need to increase the membership fee.

He believed that in the future an increase in membership fee would occur. The NEC had agreed in November by vote that the fee should at twenty five pounds instead of allowing it to increase to twenty six pounds.

He urged delegates to vote for this motion and remove a pointless piece of democracy from our constitution

The National Chair informed delegates of the procedural rules of debate .He indicated the time length for those proposing motions and for other speakers.

Robert Jones Bradford Delegate spoke in favour of the motion. Northern area would have put a similar proposal forward, but believed it would not be accepted in this form. He urged delegates to accept this motion.

Emma Campbell Sutton Coldfield delegate, urged delegates to vote against the motion. The constitution informs everyone of what is happening with regard to increasing the cost of membership on January 1st. If it were left to the NEC then we have six individuals who can vote for a significant increase such as forty pounds a year. If a significant increase is needed then a motion should be brought forward to this AGM for the Federation to vote on and democracy practiced. She does not believe that it is up to the NEC to dictate the price of membership each year to members.

Corinna Teale Conference Co-Ordinator asked the National Chair if there is an automatic increase within the constitution and standing orders, do the NEC still have the right to increase membership.

The National Chair confirmed that this is correct.

Steve Browning Bishop Stortford Delegate reminded delegates that it was at Conference the membership fee was set. There were long arguments. This was followed by periods where the cost of membership did not increase until it was realised that the Federation risked bankruptcy. The consequence being it got too expensive for the Federation to operate in this way. The Federation as a whole cut the primary expense, restructuring happened and the increment was put to place to stop things going wrong. One of motions put forward empowered the NEC to alter the membership fee and made obsolete the need for automatic increment. Members should trust the elected volunteers of the NEC.

He highlighted his experience of other organisations, saying the management committee looked at the financial structure of the organisation.

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As most of the elected volunteers of the NEC, pay a membership fee it is unlikely they choose to pay the highest amount. The NEC reset the membership fee every year at the previous NEC meeting, so members do not necessarily know the level of the membership fee after January 1st. Members need to be informed as what is happening.

Adam Redshaw Leamington Plus delegate said he was proud and valued being a member of Plus. Members belittle that value by making it cheaper. If this value is too cheap, no-one wants it. People want to buy into a quality object.

Adam said that we were getting a bargain at the current and past levels of membership fee. The Areas have to supply more money to National this year. The source of these funds is the membership fee. The Federation needs the membership fee increase. He believed the motion to be wrong.

Andy Campbell, Barkingside delegate said we need to invest in Plus to enable it to grow and get better. We need to build reserves for rainy days, otherwise Plus will struggle. He said that we need the price increase so we can have bigger and better events.

Iain Parkes, Fareham Delegate said that the problem with an automatic price increase is that it is not considered, it just happens. If an increase is required then it should be debated and voted upon. He urged delegates to vote for the motion.

Joseph Gurney summed by responding to delegates comments by reminding conference that the Area Chairmen are their elected representatives and if the motion was passed then the NEC still has the right to raise the membership fee. He would welcome event ideas being put to the NEC. The objections raised are not technically barriers to voting for this motion.

This motion requires 75% majority to pass

For – 26

Against – 10

The motion was lost

13.2 The following shall be appended to the National Standing Orders; “The National AGM shall not be held in the territory of the same Area two years in succession”.

Joseph Gurney East Anglia and South East Area Chair proposed the motion on behalf of Anglia and South East Area.

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He said that if the motion was passed then the 2010 General Meeting would not be held in the Midlands but it might be in 2011. He would hope that as a consequence of this motion that the General Meeting could be run successfully in other locations. This does not stop Midlands based members from running and organising a general meeting in a different locale.

He desired the National AGM to be staged close to his Area and give members based in Anglia and South Eastern areas of the UK a chance to attend. He asked how can we stop the AGM being organised and monopolised by one area? How can we make it fair for all members?

Joseph pointed out that the ANC was held successfully in a variety of locations from Weston Super Mare, Hastings, Buxton and Derby. Deliberately varying the location of this Conference would be seen as a tool for publicity and development. It encouraged the attendance of locally based members. These events were opened by the local mayor offering excellent opportunities for publicity.

By voting for this motion, one will be voting to change the location of the conference, encouraging the attendance of grass roots members and enabling it as a publicity and development tool. Voting for the motion, will make the General Meeting more like the ANC at its best.

The National Chairman complimented the Anglia and South East Area Chair for speaking twenty seconds over his allotted time

Procedural Motion to move to the vote that was seconded
This was withdrawn

Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon Observer objected to this motion saying that this is an English organisation we should meet in the middle of the country in particular Coventry.

Stephen Browning, Bishop's Stortford delegate felt he was in cleft stick on this motion he was for moving the General Meeting around the UK, but against having it formally within the constitution. There are some arguments for this motion.

Ian Crawshaw, Chiswick Delegate considered this motion restrictive, we should be supporting those volunteers that organise these events. The organisation is smaller and the days when we could use the resources of Hastings are gone. He urged members who want the General Meeting to be held elsewhere to organise the event. He asked delegates to vote against the motion.

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Sarah Rost Barking and Dagenham delegate was in favour of the motion. Eighteen Plus is a national organisation therefore these events should be held nationally, not just in one area of the country. She enjoyed travelling the country, visiting other parts. Sarah asked delegates to vote for this motion to give other areas the chance to organise these events.

Corinna Teale Meeting Co-Ordinator would like to clarify some of the points raised by the East Anglia Area Chair. Firstly the ANC was organised by the NEC for the benefit of the membership as groups were mandated to attend. The NEC moved its location to encourage local membership participation. Now with the AGM, the event was put out to tender and as a result three areas submitted bids Northern, Anglia and Midland. Midland was successful.

Corinna said the process of tendering for the event seemed the most fair as the event is not imposed on an area who cannot afford to run it. Members are asked to travel great distances to attend events such as WASH. There has to be give and take. Corinna urged delegates to vote against the motion.

Martin Posner, Romford Delegate encouraged delegates to vote for the motion. He pointed out that Anglia Area was the first Area to tender to run the 2009 General Meeting. He could not understand why the bid failed. This is the reason why the motion has been submitted. To make it fair for all members in terms of travelling to attend.

Robert Jones Bradford Delegate reminded delegates that the organisation is a democracy and key is providing easy access for voting members to a general meeting. The Northern Area bid was to run the General Meeting in a Midland location. It was subsequently withdrawn in light of the Midland Area bid. There is an advantage to members in terms of time taken in travelling holding the General Meeting at a central venue.

He urged members to consider costs of running this event, attendance to the meeting is subsidised by Groups, Areas and NEC. Moving away from a central location will increase costs and the volunteers who run the organisation will not give up holidays to travel and attend.

Robert said we should not be tied by constitution to specific locations. Emma Campbell said that we should be seeking value for money and recognises that in certain regions we would be offered venues of lesser quality for the same money. Plus is a democracy and therefore the best tender wins. She urged delegates to vote against the motion.

Lucy Smith, Barnet Delegate said that her group were not approached about the motion and disagree with it. She urged delegates to vote against the motion.

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Joseph Gurney, Anglia and South East Area Chairman replied that he did discuss the motion with members of North Thames and Chiltern.

Adrian Barnard, Oxford Delegate said he would vote against the motion as it is limiting.

Janet Rintoul, Reading delegate said that we should trust the Area Chairman to evaluate bids on merit for the General Meeting and not force them to vote for a specific location.

Joseph Gurney, Anglia and South East Area Chairman summed up by saying that membership have voted not to be mandated to attend General Meeting. It is important to encourage the attendance of groups. Varying location for meetings will encourage members to volunteer for posts. Whether or not his Area is successful in the motion, they will submit a bid for the running of next year's meeting.

Against; 28

For 5

Abstentions 3

Motion was lost.

13.3 Submitted by Southern Area "That in order to permit obligatorily invited member groups to submit motions directly to the National AGM Into the National Constitution: insert before 7.2.2, remaining 7.2 clauses to be renumbered - Groups that are members of Areas federated to the National Federation of Plus Areas are permitted to submit motions for debate and items for discussion to the National Annual General Meeting providing that they are able to submit a fully formed motion which has a seconded which must be another member group within the National Federation."

Adrian Barnard, Oxford Delegate, presented the motion on behalf of Southern Area. Prior to the change in structure could present motions to the membership as a whole at a National Conference. Since the restructure a group cannot do this directly, motions need to go through their Area. This was a surprise to some and to a member group who put forward several motions for the 2009 General Meeting. He said they felt it important that such motions are discussed in a National Meeting.

Emma Campbell Sutton Coldfield Delegate is for the motion. She reminded the meeting that Plus is a democratic organisation. The motion is well constructed, saying that the propositions is formally written and seconded by another group. Such proposals do need to be presented so we can move the Federation forward.

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Robert Jones, Bradford Delegate said a Northern Area group had a similar problem with wanting to put forward a proposal but their area was not interested in supporting them. They got stuck in having an important issue that no-one in their area wanted to discuss. It would make sense that two groups from different areas have a similar interest or need can join together to express this by presenting motions at a General Meeting

Adam Redshaw agreed to the motion. There are groups that provide major events for the Federation who have to go through their Area to discuss an idea, event or issue. This motion would allow that group to talk directly to members at a General Meeting.

Ian Crawshaw, Chiswick Delegate said the motion was about removing barriers and promoting free flowing debate. He urged delegates to vote for this motion.

Ian Parkes, Fareham Delegate said that the members are the important people in the Federation. Voting for this motion will empower members and that we become a more democratic and better organisation.

Adrian Barnard summed up by saying at the next general meeting we may end up with six motions proposed to debate. He thanks participants for their positive contributions.

Voting Strength established at 35 delegates

A constitutional motion and a 75% majority is required

Voting Strength 35

Against 0

For 34

Abstentions 1

Carried Nem Com

Luncheon was served

Resume at 13.30 hours

13.4 Submitted by Southern Area "That in order so that Quest/Associate member groups have voting rights in the area constitution: insert 7.2.3 with the exception of the age-range, Quest groups are regarded as groups for the purposes of the constitution. throughout the Area constitution and related documents; "Second-Tier" be replaced with 'Quest' and 'Associate' with 'Quest' delete clause 8.2.1.1 - "An Associate Member may not hold office or vote in matters of the Area;" replace the phrase "full member" with "member" throughout the constitutions.

Janet Rintoul presented the motion by saying that there are Quest groups located around the country and growing successfully in number. Quest Groups are contributing [£18.75] money as membership fees to their area and yet they have no say in how the money is spent. Why not let these members have the right to vote?

Janet highlighted that a large number of delegates were aged over thirty six and eligible to be Quest Members. Do you think it is fair that these older members have a right to vote, when a new Quest member does not?

Quest groups were set up to separate older members who wish to participate from Plus Groups with younger members. A new member's maybe reluctance to do things with a group of older members.

The motion does not have a negative impact on Plus. It may encourage and re invigorate older members to join in. She said the motion does not affect existing age limits

Ian Crawshaw , Chiswick Delegate pointed out that if Quest Members got the right to vote they will have the same rights as members at less cost namely £18.75

Janet replied that the motion allows Quest members to have the same voting rights as Plus for the same cost.

It was pointed by Robert Jones out that the motion does not read to change the membership fee of Quest

Matthew Mole , Oxford Delegate , he wanted to know about the voting rights of Quest members ? What is the difference between the ordinary member and Quest members if the motion went through?

The National Chairman explained that the motion was to allow Quest Members voting rights that they do not currently have. There would be no difference between groups and Quest groups if the motion was successful

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Corinna Teale, AGM Co-Ordinator is neither for or against the motion. She asked the meeting to look at the issue differently. She suggested that the reason that members who are over thirty six do not transfer to Quest is because we lose the right to vote. Yet Quest members are happy not to get involved in the politics and voting of Plus. The question that should really be asked is at what do we kick older members into Quest?

Adrian Barnard, Oxford Delegate said that the motion is about having members who aged from eighteen to a hundred and eighty by taking the age range away. Quest members and groups do influence Areas, they do have a say and can attend meetings to present their point of view. Adrian said that this is about plus affecting the operation of Quest, we should leave Quest alone. Adrian wanted to hear the thoughts of Quest members.

Adrian said that when Associate members were created, it was an accepted inequality that they did not have the right to vote. Quest is for the people over thirty six. If members are worried about older ones running the organisation, then step forward.

Older groups are more successful than Plus and that is what older people want. They would swamp Plus. It is wrong to argue differently and urged delegates to vote against the motion

Steve Geary of Reading Plus Group found the motion unclear and urged members to vote against the motion.

Geoff Buller of Lincs Quest spoke stating that they at Christmas 2008 had fifty two members. He said that group were not happy with the motion. They were happy to pay the current Quest membership fee of £ 18.75 not the full membership fee of twenty five pounds. He pointed that his group is geographically isolated from other groups, they have to organise their own events. Lincs Quest members will not travel to events in their area as their age is over fifty five and not interested in the organisation. Geoff and Liz Buller are interested and present to express their views. He urged the meeting to vote against the motion

Robert Jones Bradford Delegate said if this motion were accepted then it will destroy Northern Area's strongest group. He said he would transfer his membership to Quest if the motion was accepted and would expect a motion to rename plus to Quest. He thought the origin of the motion is a germ of a reasonable idea and urged delegates to vote against the motion.

Emma Campbell, Sutton Coldfield Delegate was neither for or against this motion.

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She felt the motion would open a can of worms and other things need to be examined. The motion if were accepted it allows Quest members to have votes at a lower price without consulting Quest members. We become one federation. Serious consideration needs to be given to this motion and its effects on the Federation.

Iain Parkes, Fareham delegate is against this motion and felt it would destroy the Federation. It removes power from young people and gives it to the older members. Ian said 1936 a report called Disinherited Youth came out that highlighted for people aged over eighteen and below middle age, there was no social provision whatsoever. The reason being was that people of that age range were not willing to participate in activities with older people.

The Federation exists for young people. There is a market for Quest groups, but we should not destroy the Federation in seeking it .Quest Groups can form their own national and area tiers .There is insufficient number to do this. Once they are viable in number they will leave the organisation for younger people.

Janet Rintoul summed up by saying that the Motion is about giving Quest groups voting rights. The motion may need rewording. Plus is for younger people and we should be recruiting them. If there were sufficient number of members then we can outvote Quest groups. The motion has nothing to do with the age range of members.

Janet highlighted their are people over the age of thirty six already controlling the organisation.

75 % majority required

Voting Strength 36

Against 33

For 0

Abstentions 3

Motion is lost

- 13.5 Submitted by Midland Area "That non-members be eligible to attend National Scale Weekend events subject to the following;**
- a) A non-member is only entitled to attend a maximum of two events in any 12 month period without joining**
 - b) An additional fee of £20.00 per event is levied**
 - c) A National Scale Event is defined in line with the National Constitution and Standing Orders (Rules of engagement for events organised or funded by several parties)**
 - d) If a non-member joins within a month of the event they have attended then the £20.00 is re-imbursed**
 - e) Non-members must be endorsed by an existing Member who is responsible for the behaviour of that individual"**

The motion requires a simple majority of over 50 per cent

Adam Redshaw Midland Area Publicity Officer presented the motion by saying that the motion is about allowing Non members being able to attend national scale weekend events. To allow them to attend at a surcharge and experience Plus.

Adam said that through his publicity of events such as Brean, his friends were interested in attending and experience but reluctant to pay the cost of membership and participate with a group. It is an opportunity to bring some extra money for Area or groups.

Adam said that was not a simple thing, a non member can only attend two Plus events per year. It affects a large number of events. It will encourage these persons to join Plus. The suggested fee is £20 per event. If a non member joins within a month attending an event then the cost of membership is returned to the new member. He said it was a good publicity and marketing tool.

The new member will be endorsed by an existing member who is responsible for their behaviour. It is someone already known and vouched for.

He said that the future of Plus is reliant on good quality flagship events that encourage people to attend in number and enabling a large budget to be spent encouraging quality entertainment. Members want events that are cheaper and cheaper for less work. While we are fighting that battle we cannot provide the quality events for Plus to succeed.

Andy Campbell Barking Delegate asked delegates to vote for the motion. From his experience of auditing the accounts for Brean which made a loss of £500, the revenue from Non Member attendance would bring it into profit. It is one of the best ways of getting members to join and see the bigger picture. Events such as

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WASH were allowed to bring non members in, whereas events such SADY and BREAN are not allowed to do so. This is an obvious inequality.

Adrian Barnard Oxford Delegate said he will be voting against this motion. We offer a fantastic range of events; non members have a chance to attend provided they pay a surcharge in the form of membership. Both Leo Glover and Adrian organise a National Skiing Holiday to which non members pay a membership fee to participate. To pay less than the membership fee encourages the person not to join.

Robert Jones, Bradford Delegate informed delegates about insurance cover that the WASH committee had found out that Plus is covered for anyone entering a venue and attend events.

Robert asked delegates if they ever wanted to bring friends and partners to events. We will break any stigma about Plus by them participating a national event. We want to encourage people's attendance, no matter what the level of charge is

Janet Rintoul thought that non members had four weeks to try out events including National Events before joining. [An offstage voice corrects her statement]. Non members cannot attend National Scale events just Area events. The barrier to participation is spending the weekend with strangers. Joining is not that difficult, a person wishing to become needs to provide name and address with a date of birth.

Janet is not against this motion, if the person is willing to attend the event then they will be willing to join the Federation.

Matthew Mole, Oxford Delegate joined Plus as a result of attending Southern Area's Aunt Sally event and meeting Iain Parkes . He had experience of encouraging his flatmate a fellow University student to try Plus, but his friend was discouraged by the size of the group he tried. Had his friend had the opportunity of appreciating the scale of Plus by attending a National event such as WASH, he might have joined. Matthew had not appreciated the Federation's size until he had sat in this room today. Until a person attends a National event then no-one appreciates what this organisation really is.

Steve Geary, Reading delegate felt undecided about this motion. Is the insurance cover the same as a full member? Can a person attend a National event more than once; the motion does not say this. He urged delegates to vote against the motion.

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Corinna Teale, AGM Co-Ordinator wanted to respond to Adrian Barnard. Midland Area wanted to formalise the surcharge of non-members for event organisers citing that the WASH Committee had charging non members £10.00 for attendance. The participation of non members means increase number at National events and could be a selling tool to encourage members to book ahead. Corinna said the number of times that a non member can attend an event is twice in a year. The motion is meant to be a consistent ruling for all event organisers.

Christine Ticehurst Kings Lynn Delegate said as an outgoing WASH committee member, that the WASH Committee contacted the insurer to obtain a copy of the Insurance document and clarify what it covered. It did not exclude non members from attending. The motion is about setting a price for non member attendance and a formula about we are going to deal with it. Delegates are putting a lot of valid points during this debate. Until we define what a national scale event is, this motion would prove difficult to administer.

She believed that it is right for non members to be surcharge attending such events; it is up to the event organisers to set their own charge.

Emma Campbell was for this motion. It might be a way of encouraging past members to attend. She encouraged delegates who are unhappy with the level of the charge to amend the motion.

Steve Browning, Bishop Stortford delegate was against the motion as it took away the organisers discretion. He highlighted that East Anglia uses a Preliminary Pass Card for a prospective member to try out events organised by East Anglia. He wondered if there is scope to expand this scheme.

Both Steve Geary and Andy Campbell sought clarification from the NEC about whether non-members could attend National scale events.

John Smith National Chair confirmed that non members are not allowed to attend National events; such events are for members only.

WASH committee allowed non member attendance at reunion years such as the 20th and 25th anniversaries as exception.

Ian Crawshaw Chiswick delegate spoke against the motion as an event organiser

Iain Parkers was against this motion. He said that we should be proud to be members and not offer a discount for non member participation. We should be promoting the benefits of membership and are excited that events are of good quality to be attractive and members only.

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Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon delegate asked why the proposer did chose the sum of twenty pounds.

Adam Redshaw summed up the debate by saying non members will be vetted by existing members. The sum of twenty pounds was chosen as surcharge because that is approximately a third of the cost for a weekend event. He suggested that encouraging non members to become members just to attend National events would screw insurance charges and membership numbers. Adam had overlooked the need for event organiser's discretion in excluding non members and encourages delegates to put forward an amendment. The definition of a national scale event is a separate issue; he cited examples of Brean, SADY, NGOOT and WASH. He as an event organiser is trying to prevent Plus incurring major losses by encouraging attendance.

Point of Order

Corinna Teale raised a point of order by asking if the motion is lost the NEC to rule consistently that events are for members only?

John Smith National Chairman replied that the answer to the question is yes. However we are a voluntary democratic organisation and not a police force. We will do what we can. If someone has an idea of how we achieve this then propose a motion and give us the power.

The motion requires a simple majority

Voting Strength 36

Against; 18

For; 15

Abstentions 3

Motion was lost.

13.6 Submitted by North Thames & Chilterns Area That any group may choose (by a majority vote at its AGM or an EGM), to change its status between these options:

- a) admitting members of any age**
- b) maintaining a second tier group**
- c) admitting members up to the age of 36.**

This choice would not affect the membership status of any existing full or associate members. This requires that the area constitution be amended as follows: To insert in the Area Constitution new articles: 7.2.4 shall read "A member group that does not maintain a Second-Tier group can decide at a group AGM or EGM to become a "Member Group (admitting Associates)" 7.2.5 shall read "A Member Group (admitting Associates) can decide at a group AGM or EGM to become a "Member Group" (not admitting Associates), with the option of creating a Second Tier Group. This will not affect the status of any existing group full or associate members" 7.2.6 shall read "A member group that maintains a Second-Tier group can decide at a group AGM or EGM to become a "Member Group (admitting Associates)". All members, assets and liabilities of the Second Tier group shall be transferred to the member group. This will not affect the status of any existing group full or associate members". and to amend article 8.3.2 to read "Associate membership shall be only through a Member Group (admitting Associates), or a Second-Tier group." and that the model group constitution be amended as follows Article 4.2.1 shall read "Persons over the age of 36 may join the group if it has decided to admit associate members, or maintain a Second-tier group, in accordance with Article 14" Article 4.2.2 shall read "Persons over the age of 36 who join a Member Group (admitting Associates), or a Second-tier group, shall be known as associate members of the area". Article 14.2 shall read "A member group that does not maintain a Second-Tier group can decide at a group AGM or EGM to become a "Member Group (admitting Associates)" To insert new articles 14.3 "A Member Group admitting Associates can decide at a group AGM or EGM to become a "Member Group" (not admitting Associates), with the option of creating a Second Tier Group. This will not affect the status of any existing group full or associate members" 14.4 "A member group that maintains a Second-Tier group can decide at a group AGM or EGM to become a "Member Group (admitting Associates)". All members, assets and liabilities of the Second Tier group shall be transferred to the member group. This will not affect the status of any existing group full or associate members."

Proposed by North Thames and Chiltern Area Chairman Matthew Dickinson

Matthew proposed the motion by saying that the age range of members is increasing. Some will establish Quest groups for these members. Other groups will want to do what is best for them which this motion enables them to do.

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The motion allows new associates over the age of thirty six to join the group. They do not have voting rights. The members aged fewer than thirty six are given first call to any posts as according to the constitution so the group will not be dominated by older members. If the composition of the group changed then this can be altered at any subsequent group general meeting. This motion allows groups to have the needs of a Plus group met at a particular time

Adrian Barnard Oxford Delegate said that this motion was discussed on the discussion list previously. He expressed his thanks to Matthew for bringing this motion forward. The motion permits groups to run under three different constitutions and organisations. Some of the stated options will kill Quest. He said that we are once again discussing what to do with our older members; we are wasting time on this and have no right to do this. He asked delegates to vote against this motion.

Janet Rintoul Reading delegate agreed with Adrian

Emma Campbell Sutton Coldfield Delegate that acceptance of this motion would result in the destruction of the Federation.

Mark Hawkins of Barnet Group said he had given delegates the demographics for North Thames and Chiltern Area. He suggested that it might be similar to that of groups in other areas. Some groups would benefit from recruiting a wider age range to become a combined Plus and Quest group, some have no problem recruiting people fewer than thirty six. If you think that groups will not benefit from recruiting a wider age range then do not vote for motion. No groups are forced to change their age range, but he asks consider other groups who would benefit and vote for this motion.

Robert Jones, Bradford Delegate asked the delegates to vote against the motion. He explained that we cannot discuss this motion without the active participation of Quest members and their input. An emergency motion be deployed giving the Quest groups the right to vote for that meeting only.

Iain Parkes, Fareham delegate said that the motion if passed would result in the Federation losing its identity. Groups would have their own policies and ignore national policies. He urged delegates to vote against the motion

Corinna Teale, Conference Co-Ordinator said the motion will have impact on all groups particularly a group that is young and vibrant surrounded by groups with older members.

Matthew Dickenson closed the debate by saying that Quest has a voice through the Area Councils and NEC. The subject of the motion has been on the table for several years. The reality is that there are active members of groups up to any age. This motion will solve this problem enabling groups to do what they need to do for survival.

Voting Strength is 36

The motion requires a seventy five per cent majority.

Against 29

For 5

Abstentions 2

Motion is lost

14 Facility for National Debate

14.1 The Meaning and future of Plus

Robert Jones said that the discussion was initiated in his home group of Bradford and realised it needed to be open to all. He cited the prose on the reverse of the membership card. Other voluntary organisations such as Rotary, Lions have a clear aim and are more successful. Is that because they have a clear direction or purpose? Should Plus pick a goal to adopt permanently or change annually? What do you say to sell the organisation to a person?

Ian Crawshaw, Chiswick Plus said this is a difficult question to answer. He says to his friends that he is going to a conference run by Plus and that is a social activities organisation. This description is very open, if we put too many goals then we narrow our focus but it might seem wishy washy.

Janet Rintoul of Reading Group said this is what we do to answer new member questions asking what we are about.

We are about having fun and making new friends.

This is what Janet says to explain.

Adrian Barnard Oxford Delegate said he is old enough to remember the description on the back of the previous membership card. It said about social development by participating in activities.

Adrian said he learnt a lot about people, organisation and made a lot of friends, more than just having fun.

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We are about having fun. There are commercial organisations that say they are better at this. He suggested delegates find out the lie.

We should be proud of this organisation. Adrian enjoys Plus and tells everyone about it.

Francis Wallington HLM Lichfield Group said he would agree with Adrian. In writing Health and Safety Policies, he had to consider what the organisation is and how it portrays itself. He thought the organisation is about the realisation of the potential in people. All members have latent skills, by participating in activities they realise their skills, what they can and cannot do. Also enabling and empowering people in the skills to manage their lives and other people's Lives. Engage in the community and the world around them.

Steve Geary of Reading Plus agreed with Janet that Plus is about people enjoying themselves.

Gary Schwimmer Observer of Hillingdon Plus Group suggested that members should leave the Discussion List and Facebook and go out to organise events. He said that we have too many men joining in his Area. He wondered why on the membership form we were required to place our address rather than just an email to prevent the attention of stalkers.

Corinna Teale Conference Co-Ordinator said that Sutton Coldfield group had a recruitment campaign with an open evening. The poster that the group used reflected what activities did and suggested participating enriched a person's life. The problem she said that this is not consistent with other groups. The future of Plus is dependent on different groups of different make up, attitude and age range. She suggested that groups promote what they have to offer and are good at. Hoping that someone will want this.

Geoff Buller of Lincs Quest said that his group attracted Fifty members by having a planned programme.

Janet Rintoul said the future of Plus is about recruitment and attracting people to join

Adam Redshaw of Leamington Plus Group said it is about being visible.

Iain Parkes of Fareham and Gosport Group said the future of Plus is not within the room, we are the caretakers of it. Existing members want to leave the organisation in a better state than they found it.

He suggested that the member's task is to take the organisation forward and it is the people that we recruit that are the future.

Robert Jones said he the reason he raised this issue, was that members can be very negative about the organisation rather than stress the positive. How do members know what is right about the organisation? He asked the meeting if the tone had not changed since the debate began and comments were positive. He encouraged delegates to be positive when working with their groups. This is one of the last things he wanted to do as Northern Area Chair and step back concentrate on Bradford group.

14.2 Communications in Plus

Emma Campbell of Sutton Coldfield Plus Group said that since the restructure she felt concern about communication within Plus as it has become fragmented.

The organisation does not communicate well, bond well and make friends well. It is often difficult to find information about what is happening as we do have access to a website or discussion list. This is not constructive and not everyone wants that access.

Emma said members are frustrated by the negative comments found on the Discussion List. Inappropriate use of communication is a problem within the Federation, for example the circulation of a work email address to all.

Communication needs to be done in the right way and in a consistent manner. The result being that we pulled together, attract members and improve the future of Plus.

Emma would like to hear how we can improve communication at all levels of the Federation.

Joseph Gurney, Deputy National Chairman said that a number of HLM pointed out they were copied into any National Bulk Posting that was issued. Since office closure we have no national bulk posting. Joe asked for National and Area HLM to be included in Area Bulk postings.

Adrian Barnard Oxford Delegate said we are no longer a nationally led organisation; members have to seize the opportunities for communication.

There is the discussion list "One list". Yes people who contribute can be negative in their comments. Adrian said if people complain about a poster then the individual will be put on moderated control. Although moderators are reluctant to place individuals on controlled status due to the work involved.

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He suggested members publicise their events by taking information to events and sharing including NEC Meetings through your Area Chairmen. It is up to the membership to publicise events to groups. We still have a National Directory compiled by HLM Katie Hawkins. He encouraged delegates to submit their group information to Area Administrators so that information is correct and events can be marketed.

Adrian said these are the routes of communication and it is up to event organisers to talk to other areas. We have a new website and one provided by

Mark Hewson that has unrestricted access. Members have a lot of communication tools to use.

Corinna Teale, Conference Co-Ordinator asked what can we do improve internal communication? Corinna is not a member of the Onelist discussion list and the only way she discovers that she is mentioned in a post is a friend tells her. She welcomed John Smith's suggestion during his nomination for Publications officer that there needs to be a paper copy of Plus News. This could include the National Gazette so that members are informed of what is happening within the organisation. Information is filtered through a long chain from Area Chairman to member and it does not always get there to members. For example the nomination for National AGM Co-Ordinator was discussed on line between the Area Chairmen as an NEC as a deadline had been missed. The post was not advertised at group level. This is unacceptable that it was not discussed generally at group level. Corinna suggested that money is spent on a bi monthly national bulk posting utilising reserve. Members have the right to mandate their Area Chairman to do this under the constitution.

James Oliver , Solihull Delegate said that when he edits the Midland Area Gazette he includes information from other areas , so members have a choice to participate .He finds websites provided by Plus are not kept up to date .

Katie Hawkins, Barnet Delegate would like to talk about the National Directory. She has contacted all people listed in the previous directory and through the Discussion List to obtain a good response. One Area has not responded with the consequence they will not be getting emails from Katie. The information provided is compiled and circulated to the Area Chairman by email for them to distribute to groups. Thames Valley Areas produces hard copy by photocopy for distribution. Katie was willing to extend the facility of hard copy for others with negotiation. Some Honorary Life Members are listed within the directory as they are active; however she is happy to list other HLM within the directory if known.

Adam Redshaw Leamington Spa Delegates; said he found the discussion list an unproductive form of communication to publicise the Brean event with personal criticism.

Also Brean being close to the AGM to publicise. A properly professional printed Plus News that has internal communications, posters that can shown to members and the public. We use to have a printed Plus News, now he just gets a few pieces of paper that do not look professional.

Andy Campbell of Barkingside Group said that he like Emma had stopped the Discussion List and as a consequence he has been missing useful information from the Federation. The Discussion List has degenerated into a slanging match. There needs to be a better form of communication. The lack of a Honorary General Secretary has caused problems with minutes and information not being published in time to assist us. This situation needs to improve.

Robert Jones, Bradford Delegate said he is familiar with the budgets of the NEC. There is no money for bulk posting yet at Area level there is. Northern Area has been trying to spend money and find someone to co-ordinate a Bulk Posting. Why doesn't each area appoint someone to collate and distribute materials to groups for posting? This is simple way forward.

Iain Parkes, Fareham delegate said we have not discussed networking and person to person contact within the Federation. Taking the opportunity to talk someone different, finding out what is happening within the organisation. This personal communication is important. He urged the meeting to talk and smile to someone different at tea break.

15. Presentations

15.1 Health and Safety by Francis Wallington

Francis opened his presentation by describing an incident of a member going over an assault course freezing on an obstacle and not moving. What is your reaction? Fear or panic

Yet the organisation is about members learning, gain and grow. We learn by doing and collaborating. We share that experience and utilise different skills to make a better event. If you are helping to run an event, it is great to stand with someone who knows how to and discover what does not work. We learn to manage projects and some are very addicted to running such projects. Projects such as running a group night, publicity or the Federation. What are the pressures that prevent us from delivering projects?

We learn by being a team and we learn from our mistakes.

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Society says to the Federation that we should have regard to the safety of others and members of the public. Yet we want to continue functioning as an organisation. New legislation is coming into play in the form of the Corporate Manslaughter Act.

This act means that those who hold responsibility for running this organisation have a duty of care to those who organise and participate in the events of the Federation. If there is an accident then we need to protect them as first port of call and the organiser. We have responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and its subsidiary regulations.

We have people who receive an injury, will lose earnings, suffer inconvenience, and will seek recompense from us. We must ensure they are treated fairly. If there is a problem with the event then we need to know how we can resolve and to improve.

We need to protect everyone in the organisation.

Francis reviewed the contents of the Health and Safety Policies and Procedures. The risk assessment form asks the organisers to challenge and review planning of events. We need to encourage organisers to document their events. We need to liaise with the insurer to ensure that the members, organisers and public are covered. We have included an Incident or Near Miss Reporting procedure so we can find the root cause. He discussed the Training Policy requiring members to be trained to be competent in running events.

He asked the meeting how reliant are we on contractors such as DJs and venues to operate safely?

We need to demonstrate that we are compliant to legislation and policy by monitoring. We need to review so we can see if the policy and procedures are working and make improvements.

We want to encourage volunteers to become first aiders and maintain their qualifications, so we can assess an injury.

Francis said organisers need to document event planning through minutes and use risk assessment. We have had problems with risk assessments not being in time and we now encourage members to submit a risk assessment eight weeks ahead of the event so we can make the event better. We need to share experience and learning.

Better quality events mean more new members and retention of members.

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Francis encouraged delegates to distribute event rules and brief event participants. He asked them to select contractors with care, by reputation and to read any contract.

He wanted these policies and procedures to be adopted by the Areas and used.

He sought feedback from members, so it can be improved.

He is conscious that he had not been contacted over the past five years by members seeking advice over an incident or injury. He remembered past incidents that have occurred.

He closed by stating the application of these policies and procedures will result in better quality and safer events where people have clear rules , briefings, statistical reporting and risk assessments are submitted at all levels . He wanted members to have fun.

Robert Jones, Bradford Delegate expressed his concern that the majority of members are not submitting risk assessments for events and are personally liable. The organisation has not been informed about the event. The Federation has obtained insurance at great cost and members are not able to use it unless the organisation is informed about the event being organised. He urged delegates to use this facility fully.

Steve Geary of Reading Plus Group asked if the Risk Assessment form is available for download. Is it easy to complete within five minutes?

FW replied that yes such a form has been available for download for over five years. He simply updated the Health and Safety policies with John Smith, keeping them simple and appropriate.

To complete a risk assessment should take an evening of good talking amongst event organisers. A risk assessment challenges your planning and thinking.

15.2 Business Plan by Gerry Edwards

Gerry Edwards, Honorary Vice President asked delegates if they had received and read Business Plan presented at the 2007 General Meeting. He sought three ideas of what we need to be doing for the next three years to push the organisation forward. He did this by leading a brainstorm and recording key terms on flipchart easel.

Common themes were publicity, communication, recruitment, retention and having fun.

Gerry said these themes can be a basis for strategies for business planning for the Areas within the National Executive to adopt and review through the next three years. He stressed the organisation needs to adapt and expressed his concern that a large number of people participating are aged over thirty six. Gerry thanked participants for their contributions.

15.3 Publicity

John Smith, National Chairman said at the last NEC meeting, the National Publicity Officer suggested a campaign called New Members in September. Part of this is to offer a five pound on membership fee reduction to any member recruited in September and extended into October. The area chairman was asked to go their areas, seek ideas and support. One area has agreed to do this throughout 2009. The NEC subsequently agreed to extend this for every area to offer this reduction of membership fee for every new member recruited under its power to set a membership fee. Any area may charge a new member twenty pounds for membership in 2009. John said that publicity materials will be created to support the campaign.

Secondly a press competition, where any item placed within the press can be submitted and points awarded over the year. At the end of the year, the group who gains the most points will be awarded a trophy at next year's General Meeting. The areas are being asked to award their highest scoring group, a hundred pounds however we have yet to create the rules due to the resignation of the National Publicity Officer. The NEC will subsequently discuss and agree the rules so that this competition can operate at Area level.

John said the competition is now live and asked groups to submit their printed copy to him assuming he is elected as Publications Officer.

16. Announcement of election results of National Chairman to serve from 1st March 2009

Adrian Barnard was elected.

17. Announcement of election results of National Officers to serve from 1st March 2009

17.1 Honorary General Secretary – Vacant

17.2 National Finance Officer

Mark Harrington was elected

17.3 National Training Officer- vacant

17.4 National Activities Co-Ordinator - vacant

17.5 National Public Relations Co-Ordinator - vacant

17.6 National Publications Officer/ Plus News Editor

John Smith was elected

17.7 NEC Administrator - vacant

18 National Chairman's Address by John Smith

John said he as Chairman is very keen on National Plan towards the Platinum Jubilee in 2011. He has experienced three such celebrations as a member, 40, 50 and 60th Anniversaries.

He shared his memories of past celebrations in particular the Golden Jubilee. For example a 1941 disco and a Gang Show. Yorkshire Area had a gala day at Roundhay Park with stalls offering amusements and goods for sale. A highlight was a Pantomime Horse Race which was open to the public and people were allowed to bet. North West Area did Giant Trivial Pursuit in Chester. John hoped that groups would do something similar to celebrate the Federation's Platinum Jubilee.

John's first AGM was the last National Conference , he was very nervous , however with support he has become very confident .He has learnt to run a conference with a light touch and has been complimented for it. He remembered attending an East Anglia Training Day with split trousers and not being able to take his coat off. At the last NEC meeting held in Newent, he complained loudly about not being served an ordered apple pie to the consternation of fellow NEC members.

He reminded members that we had a lot of serious difficult tasks to do such as restructure and closing the office. He believes that the organisation has undergone a change in attitude from one that is failing to one that has a future.

There is still negativity in the organisation. He observed that everyone loves Plus and wants it to work. He suggested that by working together members will secure the future and he has contributed to that future.

19 Elections of Honorary Officials

The Deputy National Chairman, Joe Gurney gave FW the floor.

Francis Wallington said that there is an item missing that is the election of Honorary Life Members. He said he had tried to have John Smith nominated as an Honorary Life Member. The constitution does not permit this. He said that John Smith is worthy of being elected a HLM. He asked those present to stand up and to give three cheers in honour of John Smith followed by a round of applause.

National Chairman, John Smith thanked everyone.

19.1 Honorary Auditor – Katie Hawkins

Proposed by NEC
Carried unanimously

19.2 Vice Presidents

Gerry Edwards and Sandra Brogan

Proposed by NEC
Carried

National Finance Officer Alison Jones asked in the absence of an elected HGS whether members would agree to allow John Smith to continue as a signatory to the Federation's bank accounts. This was decided by a vote.

Conference agreed to this.

20 Any Other Urgent Business

Membership Fees

John Smith replied to a question by stating the Full membership fee is £20.00 and Associate Membership fee is £18.75 [Quest membership]. If someone wants the membership fee to stay static then the NEC needs to vote on this matter.

21 Announcement of the date for the Annual National General Meeting 2010

The National Chairman said this will be announced at the next NEC meeting.

22 Presidential Closing Address by Gerry Edwards, Vice President.

Gerry thanked everyone for his election as Vice President.

Gerry remembered the Golden Jubilee celebration and the wine brewed as part of the celebration. He found it to be disgusting.

He remembered a Golden Jubilee quiz where Hillingdon group won a box of Jubilee wine and no one would take it home. He said it was one item too far. He found the debate and discussion of a high standard he .He awarded the Gary Schwimmer Trophy for speaking to Janet Rintoul for speaking on a motion that was not hers and gaining an extension to conclude. He praised, Adam Redshaw, Adrian Barnard, Ian Crawshaw, Gary Schwimmer, FW and Iain Parkes for their participation. In particular FW's Health and Safety presentation.

He said that in the past with motions concerning membership fees they would challenge the vote result several times.

As a founder of Quest, he said in his opinion that giving Quest members the vote is wrong. He was distressed that no Quest groups were consulted on the motion. He said that Plus is a forum for eighteen to thirty five year olds. He found it scary that most people in this room were over thirty six, it highlighted that the issue needs to discuss.

He welcomed the participation of newer members and faces. He asked delegates to consider taking on the role of HGS.

Gerry said that John Smith had done a brilliant job over the past three years and thanked him for his contribution.

He thanked everyone for their contribution and participation in making it a lively conference.

23 Closure of meeting by the National Chairman

John Smith National Chairman thanked everyone for their participation and contribution over the past four years. The Dance begins with the awards ceremony at 20.00 hours in the Stratford Room. The website workshop will be happening on Sunday.

Corinna and Richard Teale were thanked for their help in organising and running the conference.

John Smith, National Chairman closed the Annual General Meeting.