

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PLUS AREAS**

**10<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting  
(75<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference)**

**AGENDA**

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2016  
Held at the The Jacobean Hotel, Coventry  
Assemble for a prompt 10.00 am Start**

Item	Description	Introduced By	Time Allocated
1	Chairman's Welcome to Delegates	NC	10.00 – 10.05
2	The Presidential Address by Vice President	VP	10.05 – 10.15
3	Elections of Tellers	HGS	10.15 – 10.20
3.1	Determining Voting Strength		
4	Election of Ballot Counters	HGS	10.20 – 10.25
4.1	Nominations of 2 Volunteers from the Observers		
5	Apologies for Absence	HGS	10.25 – 10.30
6	Acceptance of the Minutes of the 9 <sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting at the The Oak, on 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2015	HGS	10.30 – 10.45

6.1	Points of Accuracy	HGS	10.45 – 10.55
7	Matters Arising thereon		10.55 – 11.00
8	Presentation and Acceptance of the Federation Reports for the Year 2015	NC	11.00 – 11.15
9	Presentation and Acceptance of the Federation Accounts for the Year 2015	NFO	11.15 – 11.30
	BREAK		11.30 – 11.45
10	Election of National Chairman to serve from 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2016	DNC	11.45 – 12.00
11	Election of National Officers to serve from 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2016	NC	12.00 – 12.45
11.1	Honorary General Secretary		
11.2	National Finance Officer		
11.3	National Training Officer		
11.4	National Activities Officer		
11.5	National Public Relations Officer		
11.6	National Internet Co-ordinator		
11.7	National Publications Officer/ Plus News Editor		
11.8	NEC Administrator		
	LUNCH		13.00 – 14.00
12.	<u>Motions for Debate</u>		
12.1	<u>National Lite</u>  This conference instructs the National body to restructure the organisation as follows:  National should consist of a figurehead and deputy.  Their duties are to ensure that the National website(s) and insurance are paid for the organisation as one body		14.00 – 14.20

<p>12.2</p>	<p>They are to ensure membership cards are issued centrally to Areas annually (or as required if higher frequency required).</p> <p>They are to ensure a directory is collated centrally for distribution to Areas and thence down annually.</p> <p>They are a contact point for the National organisation.</p> <p>They ensure an annual meeting for election of new National body, facilitating the meeting of Groups from across the organisation.</p> <p>They will present audited accounts to the annual meeting.</p> <p>This will be funded as justified at the annual meeting equally by the member Areas.</p> <p>National funds, bar a contingency of a years running costs, will be divided equally among the Areas.</p> <p>Areas are relieved of quarterly national meeting representation at National.</p> <p>Groups see no change.</p> <p>Proposed by Didcot Plus Seconded by Stevenage Plus</p> <p><b>Current rules forbid the membership to the organisation of anyone over the age of sixty five. The proposal is that the rules should be changed to allow anyone who was previously a members to re-join the organisation irrespective of their current age unless misconduct precludes this</b></p> <p><b>The parts of the group constitution that would need to be altered are:</b></p> <p><b>4. MEMBERSHIP</b></p> <p><b>4.1. FULL MEMBERSHIP</b></p> <p><b>4.1.1. Full membership of the Area is open to all persons over the age of 18 who agree with its fundamental values and objectives. Persons under the age of 18 and those who have reached their 66th birthday may not join the Area as full</b></p>		<p>14.20 – 14.40</p>
-------------	--	--	----------------------

<p>12.3</p>	<p><b>members</b></p> <p><b>.4.6 A member who holds a valid membership card issued prior to their 66th birthday shall remain entitled to full membership notwithstanding that they attain the age of 66 during the currency of such card.</b></p> <p><b>4.7 After reaching the age of 66, a member may only renew their membership only if they hold a current valid membership card at the time.</b></p> <p><b>4.8 Membership terminates at the age of 81.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed Lincs Quest</b></p> <p><b>Secoded Leeds</b></p> <p><b>75% majority</b></p> <p><b>Review of the decision regarding Hillingdon Motion H1 at the 2015 National AGM</b></p> <p>In summary this motion was that groups may keep up to 50% of the membership fee. The motion appears in full in the appendices at the end of this document.</p> <p>It was argued that this motion required only a simple majority because it does not amend the constitution, as the constitution does not state that groups must pay the full membership fee to their areas.</p> <p>Detailed study of the constitution would suggest that the ruling given by the chairman regarding the majority needed for this motion was not correct.</p> <p>The constitution has clearly been carefully worded in legal language. In several places it distinguishes between a specific fee and an unspecified fee.</p> <p>In paras 10.1.3 and 10.2.4 of the Area Constitution the wording “the annual membership” fee is used where that specific fee is being referred to.</p> <p>In Article 9: Finance of the Area Constitution the difference in usage is very clear –</p>		<p>14.40 – 15.00</p>
-------------	---	--	----------------------

In Para 9.1.1 the wording is “The annual membership fee for Full Members shall be determined by the NEC of the Federation from time to time.” “The” is used because it is referring to the specific fee.

Para 9.1.2 the wording is “Nothing in this Constitution shall prevent a Member Group from setting an annual membership fee which is higher than that agreed by the NEC under this Article.” “An” is used because it is referring to an unspecified amount, to be determined.

Para 9.1.5 of the Area Constitution reads “Each Member Group shall submit an annual membership fee for each enrolled member to the Area Treasurer (or their representative) within seven days of receipt and in accordance with the internal procedures of the Area Committee.” Again, “an” is used because it is referring to an unspecified amount, to be determined.

So, both within the context of the wording of the rest of the constitution and normal English usage, the meaning of the constitution is quite clearly that groups must pay a membership fee to area, but it does not state that they have to pass on the full membership fee and no precise amount is specified in the constitution.

Therefore it is asserted that the chairman’s ruling was wrong and the motion only required a simple majority.

Notwithstanding that –

The decision was taken at the conference to allow constitution changes at 66%.

The initial count of the vote was that it was exactly 66%. There was then a discussion in which it was suggested that 66 + 1 % was required to pass. This is not correct – as the conference had agreed that a 66% majority was required for motions which made changes to the constitution, 66% was sufficient for it to have been recorded as passed.

### **Hillingdon Motions for 2016 National AGM**

The following motions are proposed by Hillingdon. Seconders are invited to come forward.

## **Motion H5 - To Implement Special Measures**

Our constitution is written for an organisation of thousands of members, but we now have only a few hundred. The number and the cost of meetings being held are excessive for the size and income of the organisation now. The money being spent on meetings means that funds are not available for marketing, development and events, which is contributing to the further decline of the organisation.

We cannot allow a situation where the National Federation simply fades away because it runs out of money. Therefore we must put in place measures to control costs. Proposals to do this by continuing with a full NEC but using online meetings have been unsuccessful.

However, we hope to recover and do not wish to cut off our route to future development by permanently changing the constitution.

Therefore it is proposed that temporary special measures be implemented. The special measures will end and we will revert to normal once national membership has recovered to the point where it exceeds 1000. This will then provide sufficient income to return to a full NEC and regular meetings.

The Special Measures to be implemented are as follows –

- We opt only to elect a National Chairman, Honorary General Secretary and National Finance Officer (all three are needed in order to maintain the number of signatories required by the constitution)

Their duties are to include the following –

- To ensure that the National website(s) and insurance are organised and paid for centrally
- To ensure membership cards are issued centrally to Areas
- To ensure a directory is collated centrally for distribution to Areas
- To provide a contact point for the National organisation.

- To ensure that an annual National AGM is held.
- To present audited accounts to the National AGM.
- This will be funded as agreed at the National AGM.
- Quarterly National meetings with Area representation are not required. However such meetings may be held if necessitated by exceptional circumstances.

National funds will not be distributed to the areas and are to be held in reserve. Any expenditure of this reserve will require the agreement of a majority of the area chairs or a resolution at the National AGM. The Special Measures NEC are not to make expenditure from the national reserve without such authorisation.

It is asserted that this motion does not require any amendments to the constitution and therefore only a simple majority is required –

- It implements only a temporary and necessary expediency
- In passing this motion we are simply opting not to elect a full NEC committee.  
This has happened before.
- Motion H3 (see appendices below), which was passed last year, has already removed the requirement for a specific number of meetings to be held each year.
- 

#### **Motion H4 – Setting the Area Levy for 2016**

It is proposed to set the area levy on the same basis as last year. The following motion may be irrelevant if some preceding motions are passed, in which case the proposer may withdraw it.

Motion H4 - That the compulsory element of the area levy be set at 25% of the total income from membership fees for each area in the preceding year. And, that any proposals for expenditure exceeding this to be put to Areas. Instead of all areas paying the same, areas would continue to pay a levy in proportion to their membership. ("Total income from membership fees" means the full amount of the

membership fee, including any part retained by the group.) The levy would be calculated as 25% of the membership fee income in the preceding year.

To clarify any doubt about what the motion passed last year meant, the contribution should be 25% of income received – so for new members who are charged £10 the contribution will be £2.50 and for life members it will be nil because no income has been received from them in the preceding year.

This would be the compulsory element of the levy; areas could pay more if they elected to do so. This would provide sufficient funds for NEC to hold meetings and pay for insurance and website. Areas or Groups which are in a strong financial position may wish to help by supporting their members by contributing to their expenses for attending meetings.

Other expenditure proposals, such as funding national holidays and training events, would be put to the areas. So, when the NEC wishes to authorise expenditure which exceeds their total income in the year from member area fees (“the levy”), any monies which areas or groups voluntarily contribute and any other income, such proposals shall be put to Areas for a vote on whether the expenditure should proceed and whether it should be funded by further contributions from Areas and Groups, from the National Reserves or by other means. The expenditure may proceed if the majority of Areas vote in favour.

This is not an amendment to the constitution; it is simply a resolution to set the levy for the coming year and a mandate to the NEC on how they should act for the coming year. It can be reviewed and revised at the next National AGM

### **Motion H6 – To Reverse the Decision to Allow Project Officers to Vote on NEC**

This was proposed from the floor at the National AGM last year. It was passed perhaps without the full consideration it should have had. It is felt that it is wrong. The area chairs represent their members. The project officers have no mandate to represent

anybody. Therefore it cannot be right that they could potentially outvote area chairs representing their members. Therefore it is proposed this change be reversed and only area chairs to have a vote.



The Constitution to return to what it was on this matter before the National AGM last year. As this motion was passed last year on a 66% majority it should require only a 66% majority to reverse it. (This motion should proceed even if special measures have been implemented, as it is still necessary to correct the constitution.)

**Motion H1** - That groups may keep up to 50% of the membership fee.

If it has not been confirmed that this motion was carried last year, then it is proposed again, as below in the appendices.

### **Appendices**

Motions which were proposed at the 2015 National AGM –

#### **Motion H1**

The outcome of Motion H1 below is disputed.

**Motion H1** - That groups may keep up to 50% of the membership fee.

This is to enable groups to have direct access to funds for marketing, development and events, and so assist them to grow.

The proposal is that paying 50% of membership fee income to Area will be a minimum. Some groups have very healthy bank accounts and have other ways of raising money too, and so have no need of the membership income. They will be free to continue to contribute as much of membership fee income as they wish to their Area and can carry on contributing 100% if they elect to do so.

It is asserted that this motion requires a simple majority and does not require an amendment to the constitution.

Article 9.1.5 of the Model Area Constitution currently reads –

Each Member Group shall submit an annual membership fee for each enrolled member to the Area Treasurer (or their representative) within seven days of receipt and in accordance with the internal procedures of the Area Committee.

It does not say “**the** annual membership fee” which would imply it meant the full fee. As it is, the amount of the fee to be submitted to the Area Treasurer is not specified.

This motion is that the following be incorporated into the Standing Orders –

Each Member Group shall submit at least one half of the annual membership fee for each enrolled member to the Area Treasurer (or their representative).

Groups may elect to submit more than half. The remainder of the annual membership fee shall be retained by the group.

If the meeting should take the view that “an annual membership fee” means “the full annual membership fee”, then this motion is that the Model Area Constitution be amended as follows:

Article 9.1.5 to read:

Each Member Group shall submit at least one half of the annual membership fee for each enrolled member to the Area Treasurer (or their representative) within seven days of receipt and in accordance with the internal procedures of the Area Committee. Groups may elect to submit more than half. The remainder of the annual membership fee shall be retained by the group.

### **Motion H3**

Motion H3 below was passed at the 2015 National AGM.

**Motion H3** - That the requirement for committees to hold a specific number of meetings per year be removed from the constitution and that only such meetings as are necessary and practical within available budget should be held. Also, that wherever possible matters should be agreed by email or other electronic discussion to avoid the cost of a meeting.

Our constitution is written for an organisation of thousands of members, but we now have only a few hundred. The number and the cost of meetings being held are excessive for the size and income of the organisation now. The money being spent on

meetings means that funds are not available for marketing, development and events, which is contributing to the further decline of the organisation

This motion amends the constitution so as to reduce and control costs, as well as enabling the federation to move forward to more modern and effective methods of discussion. However, the amendments are worded so as not to preclude the possibility that we might recover and go back to a full programme of meetings in the future.

The main focus of this motion is the cost of national meetings; however similar amendments regarding area meetings are also included, mainly because the member groups of the NGA (Non-Geographic Area)<sup>i</sup> will be all over the country and it may not be practical to hold more than one area meeting or conference per year. But the amendments also allow the other areas to reduce the number of meetings and therefore cost if necessary.

This requires that the National Constitution be amended as follows:

Article 3.3.6 to read:

Each Area shall hold at least one conference per year which shall be the Annual Conference of the Area. Areas may hold such other conferences as are necessary and practical within available budget. Electronic discussion and electronic voting using an agreed system shall be recognised as having the same status as meetings or conferences held in person.

Article 3.3.7 to be deleted

Article 8.1 to be amended to read:

The NEC shall hold such other meetings as are necessary and practical within available budget (hereinafter called "NEC Meetings"). Electronic discussion and electronic voting using an agreed system shall be recognised as having the same status as meetings held in person.

And that the Model Area Constitution be amended as follows:

Article 4.4 to be amended to read:

<p>12.4</p>	<p>Meetings of the Area Committee shall be held at such times as the Area Chairman in their discretion may direct. Electronic discussion and electronic voting using an agreed system shall be recognised as having the same status as meetings held in person.</p> <p>Article 5.1 to be amended to read:</p> <p>The Area Chairman shall be a full member of one of the Member Groups within the Area (hereinafter called "the Member Groups"). The term of office for the Area Chairman will be one year in duration, elections to take place at the <i>Annual Conference of the Area</i> and the term of office will start on the 1st day of the month following the National AGM.</p> <p>Article 13.1 to be amended to read:</p> <p>Each Area shall hold at least one conference per year which shall be the Annual Conference of the Area. Areas may hold such other conferences as are necessary and practical within available budget. Electronic discussion and electronic voting using an agreed system shall be recognised as having the same status as meetings or conferences held in person.</p> <p>Articles 13.1.1 to 13.1.2 inclusive to be deleted</p> <p><sup>1</sup> Motion H2 passed at the 2015 National AGM allowed the creation of a National or Non-Geographic Area.</p> <p>Proposed by Hillindon Plus Seconded by (T.B.A)</p> <p>“The Federation adopts a set year for a term of memberships. All memberships will be due for renewal on the same day.”</p> <p>All memberships should become due for renewal on the same day. It is proposed that this falls in line with the National Accounts.</p> <p>“The Federation adopts a National Lead structure.”</p> <p>“The Federation adopts a system that replaces the 4 NEC meetings with having an AGM and a Bi-AGM that every Group is invited.</p>		<p>15.20 – 15.40</p>
-------------	--	--	----------------------

	<p>“Groups implement a minimum standards policy. Any groups that are not following this are helped to achieve it –then after an agreed time period they are to close as they are weakening the “brand” of Plus.”</p> <p>“Areas implement a minimum standards policy. Any area that are not following this are helped to achieve it – then after an agreed time period they are to close as they are weakening the “brand” of Plus.”</p> <p>The Federation invests in running a 2 day event where a guide is created to aide with the running of the Federation</p>		
	BREAK		
13.	Facility for National Debate		
13.1	<p>Feasibility of Achieving Charitable Status or Limited Liability</p> <p>For the future , what steps can we take to achieve charitable status or limit the liability of the organisation and its members</p>	Francis Wallington/ James Oliver	15.40 – 16.00
14	Announcement of Election Results of National Chairman to serve from 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2016		HGS
15	Announcement of Election Results of National Officers to serve from 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2016		NC
	Honorary General Secretary		
	National Finance Officer		
	National Activities Co-Ordinator		
	National Public Relations Officer		
	National Internet Co-Ordinator		

	National Publications Officer/ Plus News Editor		
	NEC Administrator		
16	National Chairman Address		
17	Election of Honorary Officials		
17.1	Independent Examiner of the 2016 Accounts		
17.2	The Impact of Plus – Gerry Edwards		
17.3	Vice-Presidents		
18	Any Other Urgent Business (Not Promotion of Events)		
19	Announcement of the Date of the Annual General Meeting 2017		
20	Presidential Closing Address by Vice President		
21	Closure of the meeting by the National Chairman		