

## **National AGM 2017 – Sunday Workshop**

I'm sorry I will not be available on Sunday for the Growing the Federation, building a Guide Workshop

But I have some ideas for you to think about.

### **What are the problems?**

Competition –

Meet Up – so much choice, people expect to have everything done for them, no membership fees

Spice – paid organisers, more expensive, but high quality events.

It's a big ask – we want them to come along, some groups have not got many events (struggling for members and organisers), we want them to help run the group and we want them to pay £20 on top of it!

Why would they?

Plus in many areas we simply haven't got groups nearby.

Do we look at paying organisers? Would mean we were a different kind of group. Would we just be a poor man's Spice?

There is no point in surveys. What people say does not necessarily correspond with what they do. And it's all too easy to see what people want – just look at Meetup – see which of the groups have loads of members and loads of events – that's what people want!

The question is not what people want. The question is can we be good enough against such strong competition?

It's hard enough to just get people along to events – especially near major cities where competition is fierce.

Getting anyone prepared to help organise events and run the group can be near impossible.

### **The Way Forward**

We need a “shop window” website that gives the group profile, attracts interest, gets the enquiries in and tells us where the interest is strongest, so we know where to try opening new groups.

I'm working on that and there will be progress over the coming months.

In parallel, we need to make sure that when we generate the interest, we've got something to offer people!

How do we start groups where they are needed? We will need a plan on how we can open new groups which are not close to existing groups. “There's a new group – there are no events, we want you to come along and run it yourselves and on top of that we want you to pay for it.” Not going to work is it?

## **A Different Approach to Getting Organisers**

The suggestion is that as well as recruiting members in the usual way, we actually offer volunteer “jobs”. With a proper job description and offer real benefits in the form of training, experience and references that will help our volunteers get real paid jobs. There are volunteer job sites on which we can do this. But we need to have everything set up first.

Many people are struggling to find work and are looking for work experience opportunities to help them get started.

It would mean we would genuinely need to give something back. But think it’s possible.

We need the guide to How Plus works – history, structure, how things are organised, what makes Plus special. We need in the guide to Plus what we expect from all the committee roles – but think that may be around already somewhere?

We would need to offer training, support doing roles, and to be willing act as referees when our volunteers apply for jobs outside. Many of us have relevant work experience and would be able to give references.

So we advertise we can offer all those things in exchange for people’s time as volunteers.

Activities, Treasurer, Membership, Publicity, Administrator, etc would need job descriptions. All these need the same skills as real world jobs. We could really sell the advantages of volunteering / work experience with Plus.

And there are opportunities to progress to higher levels of management in Plus – on area and national committees