

Website, Marketing and Development

National AGM 2018

Current Position

- Sunmaia who were hosting the “old” new website have gone out of business. So this has now disappeared. The idea of updating the old new site as a stop-gap marketing front page is not on and we start afresh.
- Our target audience, even if they are not in their teens and twenties, use mobile to access the internet more than desktop. So the primary design will be mobile friendly. Using responsive design so it adapts when viewed on larger screens.
- Work has been done on research and planning. This has led to ideas we need to discuss. This is not just about a new website. We need to look at the big picture.
- Thinking about Wendy, our inspirational speaker at the National AGM and how this can really be a new way forward. We need to think about the image of our organisation, what we want to achieve with our website and the rest of our marketing.
- So – there are proposals for some major changes coming...

Our Marketing Image

- Our objective is to be found by people looking for a social group like ours.
- And we must face up to the fact that we have got a problem with our name – or names...
- Plus – doesn't mean anything. Far too common a word, can't search for it. Far too many other organisations we can be confused with.
- Plus Groups – same problems as Plus
- 18 Plus – still gets used. Outdated. No longer our official name. Obvious search problems!
- Active Plus – name of a well established organisation. Aims to help elderly and housebound people be more active and get some exercise. Risks of confusion...
- National Federation of Plus Areas – what a mouthful. Too long. No one is going to use it. No one would search for it. And again doesn't mean anything, no indication of what we do.
- We need a new marketing identity. Not a formal change to the name of the organisation with all the hassle of changing bank accounts, etc. But establish a brand under which we sell ourselves.
- This is exactly what Wendy told us we needed to do.
- This new marketing identity should be a name which describes us and attracts people.
- And unlike “Plus” - it should be highly effective in Google search.
- We would need to get logo and graphics designed for the new identity. So we have got a proper, consistent national image. One of the things which Wendy emphasised we were falling down on.
- We would need a budget for all that of about £1000.
- In the past we have had several different examples and had a vote on it at the National AGM. Do we want to do that?
- Let's ask ourselves, are we here really the right people to make that decision? Are we our target audience?
- Propose pick a designer who works in this type of area, understands what we want to achieve and go with it.
- What counts is whether the new site delivers results. And we can measure that.

- Websites are never fixed and we can refine it until we are getting the results we need.
- And our primary object is to generate national level enquiries.
- I would not initially plan to have groups or events on the shop window site. We are selling ourselves as a national organisation, so we need to play down how thin we have really got.
- That information will remain on Mark's site which will stay in place as internal information for existing members.

Opening New Groups and Expanding

- So what will we do with these enquiries?
- We will use enquiries and visits to the site to map the density of interest.
- If people are near an existing group, they will get a reply directing them to it. If not, they will get a holding reply.
- We then use that to plan the priority areas for opening new groups – where there are the greatest number of people interested.
- How do we start groups where they are needed? We need a plan on how we can open new groups which are not close to existing groups.
- And how will we run those new groups, especially if they are far from existing groups?
- Certain groups have been very successful. But always because they are driven by one or two really dedicated people. We always say we need to copy that. But it just hasn't worked. Few people are that dedicated and we can't clone them.
- So we need another way forward...
- Propose a different approach from what we have tried before – volunteering with Plus.

A Different Approach to Getting Organisers

- As well as recruiting members in the usual way, we offer volunteer "jobs". With a job description and benefits in the form of training, experience and references that will help our volunteers get paid jobs. There are volunteer job sites which we can use to link in too.
- Many people are struggling to find work and are looking for work experience opportunities to help them get started or progress.
- We would need to offer training, support doing roles, and to be willing to act as referees when our volunteers apply for jobs outside.
- We advertise we can offer those things in exchange for people's time as volunteers.
- Activities, Treasurer, Membership, Publicity, Administrator, all need the same skills as real world jobs. So we could really sell the advantages of work experience with Plus.
- And there are opportunities to progress to higher levels of management in Plus – on area and national committees.

A New Hope

- If these ideas are agreed we can launch in the summer. Then we will start generating new enquiries. People who want to join and people who want to volunteer.
- We will need to be ready to plan a volunteer event. Leading up to new groups launching.
- This could be the way forward to really transform things. We were told at the last National AGM we could do it.
- Let's try.