

The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF 18 PLUS GROUPS

Minutes of the 62nd Annual National Conference held on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th
March 2003 at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry

THOSE PRESENT:

Vice President/National Executive Officer	Jo Woodhead
National Chairman	Bekki Randall, Honorary
General Secretary	Donna Black
National Finance Officer	Tony Burgess
Vice President/National Executive Officer	Gerry Edwards
National Executive Officer	Adrian Barnard
East Anglia Area Chairman	Ian Robinson
London & South East Area Chairman	Andy Cole
Midland Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman	Martin Berry
Northern Area Chairman	Mark Randall
North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman	Wayne Fenton
Southern Area Chairman	Paul West

Members of the Federation and invited guests.

1 CHAIRMAN WELCOMES THE DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE

Bekki Randall, National Chairman, welcomed everyone to the Conference and introduced His Worshipful the Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry, Peter Lacey and the Deputy Lady Mayoress, Mrs Sheila Lacey.

2 OPENING OF CONFERENCE

The Deputy Lord Mayor of Coventry, Peter Lacey thanked Bekki Randall, National Chairman, for her welcome and said he also welcomed 18 Plus back to Coventry for the fourth year running and said it must be something in the Coventry water or the air to keep bringing 18 Plus back! Peter Lacey said he hoped that even though this was 18 Plus' fourth visit it would not be the last. He went on to say that when he was first invited to this Conference he knew little of 18 Plus but that at a dinner dance on the previous evening he and his wife had met some former 18 Plussers from the first Coventry Group. Mr Lacey said he and his wife had just shared a very good lunch with the National Executive Committee, and hoped that 18 Plus members would be able to find time to see more of Coventry itself, including three Cathedrals, two former ones and the current modern one and the Museum of British Road Transport – even if this meant missing a session of the Conference! He said it was possible to sit in a simulator and experience the drive of the land speed car which was the first to break through the sound barrier, and that he thought driving at 60 miles per hour for the first time was wonderful! Peter Lacey, hoped that this would be as successful a Conference as the previous ones at Coventry, even though he understood there were some serious decisions to be made about the future of the Federation. He went on to say he hoped this would make the Federation stronger and then declared the Conference open.

3 THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY JO WOODHEAD, VICE PRESIDENT

Jo Woodhead, Vice President said that over the last two years, the National Restructuring Forum and the NEC had worked very hard to put together some motions for this Conference. She said this was done as part of the way forward for the Federation. Jo Woodhead went on to say it was good to see some new Groups at the Conference, but was disappointed that there were also Groups not represented. She urged members to be involved in lively debate, whatever their opinions, hoped the Conference flowed smoothly and that everyone would have a good time together at the dinner dance.

4 ELECTION OF TELLERS

Brentwood Group proposed Clive Bryant, Redbridge Group; Coventry Group proposed Dave Filer, Coventry Group; Solihull Group proposed Mark Hewson, Solihull Group. There was a block second by Thatcham Group

The voting strength was determined at 50 and Francis Wallington, Training o-ordinator was named as Votometer operator.

5 ELECTION OF BALLOT PAPER COUNTERS

Thatcham Group proposed Steve Sykes, Sudbury Group proposed John Smith and Northwich Group second gave a block.

6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Donna Black, Honorary General Secretary read out the following apologies for absence, Andover Group, Steve Sheldon, Direct Member, Karen Grey, Honorary Life Member, James Rockcliffe, East Anglia Area and Christine Edwards, Hillingdon Quest Group.

7 ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES OF THE 61ST ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD AT THE BRITANNIA HOTEL, COVENTRY ON SATURDAY 20TH & SUNDAY 21ST APRIL 2002.

Acceptance of the Minutes was proposed by Brentwood Group and seconded by South Bucks Group.

CARRIED

8 MATTERS ARISING THEREON

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate referred to page 18 item 14:3 about TAG and asked about the progress for TAG 2003 and if a venue had been found. Jarrett Smith, National Activities Officer replied by saying that the venue found was only suitable for NGOOT, not TAG, that being the venue suggested at last year's ANC and that none other had been found after exhaustive searches. He added that for this year, a venue had been found at Rutland Water, a water sports centre, but there was no budget for the event, so he wondered if an Area or joint Areas would like to sponsor TAG.

9 PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE FEDERATION'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2002

There were no questions on the Annual Report. Solihull Group proposed acceptance and was seconded by Northwich Group.

CARRIED

10 PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE FEDERATION'S ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31ST 2002.

Donna Black, Honorary General Secretary, read out a written question from Northwich Group, asking about the grant given to East Anglia Area for £1,820 for publicity and asked for information on how it was spent and if the publicity drive was successful. Ian Robinson, East Anglia Area Chairman replied that the grant was used for newspaper advertisements for a six-month period. He added that there had been many enquiries and about half of those had turned up at Group nights.

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked if Membership Statistics were cross referenced to the income received and if this figure was accurate, to which Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer replied they were not. Corinna Teale said she asked this question because the Group figures differed to those from National. Stephen Sykes, Bradford observer then asked about the Nicholson House/Church Street expense figures and Tony Burgess answered that he would look into this. Mark Hewson, Solihull observer then pointed out the answer to this question was on page 10 of the Accounts. Dave Filer, Coventry observer then said would this not make the accounts show a loss, to which Tony Burgess replied it would as there was a loss shown for 2001. Alex Barker, Coventry delegate queried if the Accounts could go through if not seen to be correct, but Tony Burgess replied that this affected 2001 and not 2002, those being discussed.

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Banbury Group and seconded by Brentwood Group.

CARRIED

11 ACCEPTANCE OF THE REPORT OF THE ACCOUNTANTS

Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer proposed acceptance of the Report of the Accountants and was seconded by Abingdon Group.

CARRIED

Bekki Randall, National Chairman, then pointed out that with reference to the Memberships Statistics booklet, Dunstable Group was not closed. Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon Quest member said that he thought the Hillingdon Quest figures were incorrect. Tony Burgess replied that he had double checked the figures and found one error, being the statistics chart not carrying a figure forward; he said that on the figures Hillingdon Group had 12 members and Quest 6 and he would also double check against the Membership Database. Ben Allen, Reading delegate then said that he had noticed a difference on the Slough figures and was told this was to be investigated. Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate said Andover Group was not listed on the Groups opened list. Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer asked if it would be possible for Life Members to be listed separately.

Tony Burgess said that the membership figures in the main were Full members because this is what the Federation is about, hence some of today's motions, and was surprised that because some figures were on separate pages people were unable to understand them. He did say the format could be changed if this is what members wanted.

12 ELECTION OF THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN TO SERVE FROM MONDAY 14TH APRIL 2003.

Martin Berry, deputy National Chairman/Midland Area Chairman handed the Conference over to Donna Black, Honorary General Secretary to announce the nomination for the post of National Chairman. Donna read out the nomination from Bekki Randall, National Chairman, proposed by Northwich Group and seconded by Coventry Group.

Bekki Randall, National Chairman in her nomination speech said that as promised when she first stood for election, she was standing for another term. She said she had had an interesting year, meeting new people, making new friends and travelling as much as she could. She said she would have liked to have been able to attend more events, but due to personal circumstances could not. Bekki Randall, National Chairman said she had learned a lot during the last 12 months and would like to use her knowledge for the benefit of the Federation. She said that as so many changes could result from this Conference, it was difficult to predict what could happen over the next twelve months.

Bekki Randall, National Chairman went on to say that she believed that if the motions were passed, 18 Plus would be looking at a significant period of change. She said she was aware that there were some people who thought the motions would not change the Federation enough, but added that all changes needed to begin somewhere and these motions were the beginning of 18 Plus' future and not the end. She went on to say that more changes would be needed and that already ideas were being put in place for further changes. She asked delegates to vote for her as National Chairman as she had the future of 18 Plus in her heart.

Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate asked if Bekki Randall, National Chairman had any specific goals she would like to see put in place before the end of her next term. Bekki Randall, National Chairman replied she hoped that the Federation would have changed somewhat from what it is now, that there will be more 2nd tier Groups, that the 1st tier Groups will recruit more younger members and that all members would work together. Tracy Thorn then asked if Bekki Randall, National Chairman thought the Groups themselves might change thus having to bring changes to the Constitution. Bekki Randall, National Chairman said there were a few Groups in the Federation who could teach others the secrets of recruitment and perhaps could submit guidelines for others to follow. Francis Wallington, Training Co-ordinator, then asked Bekki Randall, National Chairman what she had learned over the past year, to which she replied "an awful lot"! She said she had learned new things about herself, the Constitution, members and still had things to learn, but felt she had more now to offer the Federation.

Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate asked if Bekki Randall, National Chairman would be able to do more travelling to which she replied she hoped she would be able to now her circumstances had changed. Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon delegate asked if there could be a National Publicity Drive organised by the NEC with National finances and Bekki Randall, National Chairman said this was an NEC decision and not one she could make on her own, but it would be discussed. Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate then said that anyone willing to chair the Federation should have finances available for anything they need to do on behalf of 18 Plus.

13 MOTIONS TABLED FOR DEBATE

Donna Black, Honorary General Secretary said a request had been received from Northwich Group that, due to the importance of Motion 13:6, that this be the first motion to be debated at this year's ANC. This was because the voting strength was always lower first thing on a Sunday morning.

Donna Black, went on to say that the National Chairman had suggested that motion 13:4 be debated before this afternoon's tea break and then 13:6 be debated afterwards.

13:1 “That with immediate effect the name of the Federation be changed to the National Federation of Plus Groups of Great Britain and that article 1:1 of the National Constitution, article 2:1 of the model Area Constitution, article 2 of the model Group Constitution and article 2 of the model Constitution for Second Tier Groups be amended accordingly.”

Wayne Fenton, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman proposed this motion on behalf of the NEC by asking why the Federation should change its' name? He asked if it was to change the Federation's direction, the image or just for fun? He pointed out that the costs of not using the word “18” in the terms of new stationery, publicity, etc had already been taken into account and would be minimal. Wayne Fenton then outlined the reasons why this name change should take place, such as members already called themselves “plussers”, members “go down to Plus each week”, few members are now aged 18 years and that there were other organisations with the words “18 Plus” in their title, for example, a pornographic magazine and adult television channel – he asked if the Federation really wanted to be associated with the likes of these or to get away from this image? Wayne said the Federation needed to get away from these sorts of things as it could show a false image of the Federation. He pointed out that some Groups had already dropped the word “18” from their title. He confirmed the NRF had come up with this suggestion as one of their findings for improving the Federation - keeping the main identity but with a subtle change and urged delegates to vote for this motion.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate said he thought that “Plus” was a good alternative and Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate said that changing the name would not be a magic wand to bring in new members but the new name would be easier to advertise the Federation. It would also mean that the Federation would not be likened to the sorts of organisations Wayne had mentioned. She said her Group had already dropped the word “18” from their title and it seemed to have worked. Martin Posner, Romford delegate said that “18 Plus” is the Federation's identity and to vote against this motion. Adam Redshaw, Coventry delegate declared, “we are not a number – we are free “plussers” (quoting from Patrick McGoohan) and if the word “18” is kept – we are prisoners.

Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate said “18 Plus” is a fantastic name and that changing the name could set a precedent for the future as this name has lasted for 62 years. By changing now, in a few years time the name change could come up again. He said the Federation now is for any adults over the age of 18 years and that 18 Plus is a positive statement, focusing on the good the younger members bring to the Federation and that they are important to the organisation. Iain went on to say that 18 Plus is a force for good in this country, an organisation set up in 1941 to help young people improve their life styles, so the Federation should keep it's name and urged delegates to vote against this motion. Chris Porter, Sudbury delegate was the next speaker and commented that he had made a list of single name organisations that were very well known and that “Plus” could have the same impact and urged members to vote for this motion. Ian Broadbridge, Solihull delegate said he was proud of his name, it meant a lot to him so should “18 Plus”.

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He said he belonged to the largest Group in the Federation – largest because they are proud of who they belong to and urged members to vote against this motion as a name change could mean the Federation loses its' identity.

The debate continued with David Ireland, Evesham delegate saying that speakers had mentioned “identity”, but this was an identity set up 62 years ago and is now out of date. He pointed out that the membership statistics showed this, as this was the fifth year that the figures have dropped by 20%. He also felt that the proposed name did not mean anything but saw no point in voting against this motion as already some Groups are already using alternative names. Peter Gurney, Thurrock delegate focused on what Wayne had said about items that had been found on the Internet and said that Wayne must have been using the wrong search engine! He said Thurrock's web site had attracted new members and to do away with “18 Plus” would be to lose the Federation's identity so urged members to vote against this motion. Simon Bloe, Southampton delegate said that at the previous days' session a motion was voted on for Associate members to become Full members so his Group now could have a crisis as most of their new members are 25 years and over, so it would be beneficial to drop the “18” and urged delegates to vote for this motion.

Marcus Shakespeare, Solihull delegate commented that younger people needed to be brought into the Federation and asked that members vote against this motion. Stephen Sykes, Bradford observer made the point that the important thing is how the Federation projects itself to new members and that Groups should be allowed to have the freedom to advertise how they wished. David Smith, Crawley delegate said his Group were in favour of a name change but not to what was proposed in the motion as just the word “Plus” does not mean a lot to an outsider. A change package should be put together also to include a new logo and urged delegates to vote against this motion.

Clive Bryant, Redbridge observer commented that there had been excellent debate on this motion but the Federation cannot be “all things to all people” and that a single name would not be suitable. He went on to say that to talk about losing identity was not appropriate because outside of the Federation there was no identity and that other single named organisations were losing members as well. He said he was cautious about this motion and that this motion sought to allow Groups to use whatever name they wished as long as the word “Plus” was included. Clive Bryant went on to say members must put on the best of activities, advertise in the best possible way and it will not matter what the name is eventually. He suggested voting for this motion so that the Groups are released to do the best they can to help themselves towards their future.

Peter Strawbridge, Solihull observer said he had been looking at the membership statistics and that some Groups still using “18” had lost members during the last year. He said it is not the name; it is the product that each Group offers is what is important and what will bring in new members and keep the current ones. Ralph Grimble, Oxford delegate proposed a move to the vote and was seconded by Thatcham Group.

Move to the Vote

CARRIED

Wayne Fenton, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman summed up the motion on behalf of the NEC by saying that the Groups could call themselves what they wanted as long as the word “Plus” was included. He liked the phrase “we are free Plussers”. Wayne Fenton pointed out that a motion in 2001 was put for debate, which included four different names for the Federation and that, was lost. Members were “plussers” in the main and that the Federation could lose its’ identity if the name change did not go through, therefore, he urged delegates to vote for this motion.

MOTION LOST

13:2 “That a new article 3:3 (j) be added to the National Constitution to read: ‘That the name of all Members Groups must include the geographical location of that Group’”.

Wayne Fenton, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman proposed this motion on behalf of the NEC by saying that this simply meant that if a Group did not use a geographical location in its name, this would no longer be allowed. The Group must reside in or near that geographical location given in the name, and urged delegates to vote for this motion.

Chris Page, Brentwood delegate was the first speaker on this motion and said if you live in a certain area and like it there, to be proud of it and use that name to promote the Federation. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked why the insistence about this name proposal, surely all that mattered is the fact that there is an 18 Plus Group there and urged delegates to vote against this motion. Jane Langstone, Havering delegate said this motion would make it clearer for prospective new members to find their nearest Group and that it would give a unity overall.

Ian Hartstone, South Bucks delegate made a point of order to ask if his Group would have to change their name if this motion was passed. Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate said it was common sense to call your Group by the town in which the members met and to vote for this motion. Mark Hewson, Solihull observer commented that whilst he was in favour of this motion he felt the wording should be more specific. Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate said that this motion gave the Groups who advertise the chance to actually pinpoint who they are and where they are, so for delegates to vote for this motion.

Peter Strawbridge, Solihull observer commented on the fact that this motion could cause problems for Groups that had merged, for example South Bucks and David Smith, Crawley delegate said that he had liked this motion initially, but after listening to the debates, he too thought it could cause problems for Groups merging or covering large areas, for example West Kent, so to vote against this motion. David Ireland, Evesham delegate said he was proud to have just opened Evesham Group and to have the town name in their Group name and thought this was an important factor. He urged delegates to vote for this motion. Alison Berthier, Fareham observer said members should be maximising their chances of recruitment as long as there was some directional wording in the title and urged members to vote against this motion. Chris Porter, Sudbury delegate proposed an amendment to this motion to read:

“that the word ‘local’ be added before ‘geographical location’ ”. The NEC accepted the amendment.

Abingdon seconded the amendment.

Chris Porter said that he wished the word ‘local’ to be added because just ‘geographical’ could mean anywhere.

Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate then proposed a move to the vote and was seconded by Coventry Group.

Move to the Vote
CARRIED

AMENDED MOTION: CARRIED

Voting strength re-established at 49.

The ballot papers were handed out to delegates for the election of the National Chairman.

13:3 “That the rules governing the Direct Member scheme be altered to delete the condition that to become a direct member, there must be no existing Group within a 15 mile radius”.

Martin Berry, Midland Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman/Deputy National Chairman proposed this motion on behalf of the NEC by saying that as referred to in the supporting documentation, at the 1997 ANC it was proposed in a motion regarding Direct Membership Scheme that Direct Membership would only be available where there was no Group within a 15 mile radius and that the NEC would be responsible for Direct Members and for bulk postings for them. The NEC would also take into account the location of Direct Members when considering recruitment and development plans. As the membership decreases each year, the members able to join the Federation must be optimised. Therefore, by deleting the 15 mile radius rule, this would increase the number of prospective members to 18 Plus.

He went on to say that if a current member wishes to become a Direct Member, this must first be approved by the NEC and that also Direct Members pay an extra £15 on top of their membership fee, allowing them the privilege of receiving bulk postings from their Area and National. This additional levy would make current members think twice before reverting to Direct Membership. He confirmed that Nationally, at present, there were 13 Direct Members, mostly in areas where Groups do not exist. He believed that Direct Members would prefer to be a Group member and take advantage of its social benefits. He said that generally, Direct Members are former members of the Federation’s Groups and now live where Groups do not exist. He went on to say that the motion allowed people who live in places where there is no Group the chance to join in with 18 Plus. Martin Berry said this motion would also give current members the chance to become Direct Members and urged delegates to vote for this motion.

Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate was the first speaker on this motion and she said this motion would allow those people who worked shifts, through personal situations, perhaps lack of transport or any other reason they could not attend a regular Group night to stay in touch with the Federation's activities and still be able to be a member. Mark Hewson, Solihull observer said this is about personal freedom of choice and members should be allowed to have whatever sort of membership suited them and asked delegates to vote for this motion. Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon delegate thought it might bring in more Direct Members and the Groups may suffer because of this and to vote against this motion. David Ireland, Evesham delegate said that his Group was generally in favour of this motion and that perhaps Direct Members could be encouraged to start new Groups. He also went on to say that it might encourage anti social people to join the Federation, but ultimately delegates should vote for this motion.

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate pointed out that she presented the original motion for Direct Membership to the 1997 ANC and it did not include the 15 mile radius because, at that time, the NEC thought people might become Direct Members rather than join a Group. Corinna Teale mentioned a current Direct Member who, although she lived near a Group, because of her job was unable to attend a Group night. The Northern Area at that time had been worried that there would be a mass exodus of people turning to Direct Membership but she went on to say that, generally, people join 18 Plus because of the social aspect of the Group night. The amendment to the original motion to add the 15mile radius was passed and had not made any difference to the opening or closing of Groups. The abolition of the 15 mile radius would re-dress the balance and asked delegates to vote for this motion.

Martin Berry, Midland Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman then summed up the motion, on behalf of the NEC and said to delete the 15 mile radius would optimise the number of members that could join 18 Plus and that the £15 levy could discourage current members from converting to Direct Membership. He went on to say that members would prefer to belong to a local Group and that most Direct Members were those that had moved away from local Groups and some were new members where there was no 18 Plus Group. He said this motion allowed anyone to choose whether or not to become a Direct Member and that ultimately the NEC and the relevant Area Chairman should approve any Direct Membership. Taking into account there were currently only 13 Direct Members he urged delegates to vote for this motion.

MOTION CARRIED

13:4 “That with immediate effect, £5 of the £15 levy, or such other figure the NEC may determine under article 6:1:6 of the National Constitution as being the levy for Direct Members, be returned to the Members’ Area”.

Martin Berry, Midland Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman proposed this motion on behalf of the NEC by saying there were a few things to be asked. Firstly, why was the NEC proposing this motion? He confirmed that at the January NEC meeting, the NEC decided to increase the levy, in addition to the membership fee, for Direct Members from £10 to £15 to take effect from 1st March 2003. He felt the Areas

would benefit from this increase.

He explained that as a Group member, information regarding events is given to the member via a National bulk posting received by the Group. He pointed out that as a Direct Member, you had to rely upon an individual bulk posting from the Area. He added that by returning the additional £5 to the Areas, it would enable the Areas financially to send out their postings to Direct Members, thereby bringing Areas in line with National. He pointed out that National would absorb the VAT on the £5 and urged delegates to vote for this motion.

Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate proposed that the money be sent direct to the Groups and was told this could not be accepted as a motion as it went against the spirit of the motion. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked how many Areas sent out bulk postings and Bekki Randall, National Chairman replied 3. Corinna then asked if the other 3 Areas were just trying to claim extra money from their Direct Members and was told by the National Chairman that it was her understanding that those Areas with Direct Members were the Areas sending out the bulk postings.

Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate explained the idea behind bulk postings and the cost involved. She urged members to vote for the motion because Area budgets were tight and the extra £5 would make a difference. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate urged delegates to vote against the motion because it was not thinking about the Direct Members themselves, as they may not be able to attend events but have to pay the additional levy anyway.

Bekki Randall, National Chairman pointed out that the NEC had already increased the Direct Members fee and that this motion was about the £5 going back to the Areas.

Marcus Shakespeare, Solihull delegate proposed an amendment to the motion that the figure should read as a percentage of 33.1/3% and not £5.00p and this was seconded by Coventry Group. Bekki Randall, National Chairman, then said as there had been an amendment the NEC would sum up on the original motion, to which Clive Bryant said as a point of order the summing up should take place at the end of the debate, to which the National Chairman agreed. Marcus Shakespeare, Solihull delegate asked as a point of information could the wording of the motion be made clear and was told this applied to the levy of £15 being charged to Direct Members. Peter Gurney, Thurrock delegate asked how many Areas had Direct Members and was told 4.

Marcus Shakespeare, Solihull Group then addressed the Conference on the amendment by saying that it was more logical to have the levy passed to Areas as a percentage to avoid having to keep bringing this subject to Conference in the future. Alex Barker, Coventry Group formally seconded the amendment.

Clive Bryant, Redbridge observer opened the amendment debate by asking as a point of information if the VAT was swallowed by this amendment and was told the full 33.1/3% would go to Areas and National would absorb the VAT. Dave Smith, Crawley delegate proposed a move to the vote.

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Martin Berry, Midland Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman then summed up on the original motion, on behalf of the NEC, by saying that he wished to point out that, as at 1st March 2003, this levy had been increased to £15 by the NEC and that by returning £5 to Areas, this would help with their posting costs and that National would absorb the VAT. He urged delegates to vote for the original motion.

Voting acceptance of the amendment to the motion: -

AMENDMENT CARRIED

Ian Crawshaw, Hounslow delegate asked to make a point of order that could the National Chairman just take votes against and abstentions to save Conference time. Donna Black, Honorary General Secretary replied by saying that during her HGS training she learned that throughout the Conference the same routine had to be maintained continually.

Pete Hurley, Northwich observer asked if the wording could be tightened up to make sure the money returned to Areas is not misused. Bekki Randall, National Chairman told him that the original wording was made so that Areas would not be railroaded into how it was used. An amendment to the motion would have to be made to change the wording now. Joseph Gurney, Thurrock delegate proposed an amendment to the amended motion to the effect that the Areas are mandated to send bulk postings to their Direct Members. Bekki Randall, National Chairman pointed out that it would be difficult to police this. Sudbury Group seconded this amendment. Chris Page, Brentwood delegate proposed to move to next business, seconded by Coventry Group.

Voting on procedural motion to move to next business took place.

Ian Crawshaw, Hounslow delegate asked if the move to next business motion was passed would there be a chance to vote on the motion and the National Chairman told him no.

Move to next business: -

LOST

Joseph Gurney, Thurrock delegate said basically if £5 is to go back to Areas, then it must be made certain that this money is used for bulk postings to ensure Direct Members are informed of all events. Chris Porter, Sudbury delegate formally seconded this amendment.

Donna Black, Honorary General Secretary then read out the amendment: -

“that with immediate effect 33.1/3% of the £15 levy, or such other figure the NEC may determine under article 6:1:6 of the National Constitution as being the levy for Direct Members, be returned to the Members’ Area and that the Areas which have Direct Members are mandated to send bulk postings to those Direct Members”

Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon delegate said the Conference was now in a muddle and that the amendment had been agreed by the Solihull amendment and that the Conference should now move on. Phil Bettis, Malvern observer asked who determined which Area Direct Members were referred to. The National Chairman said it had been decided the Direct Members themselves could choose which Area they belonged to. Mark Hewson, Solihull observer said the amendment was fair and it must be made certain the money was used for which it was issued.

Voting on acceptance of the amendment to the amended motion took place: -

CARRIED

Voting on the amended, amended motion took place: -

MOTION CARRIED

Voting strength was established at 49.

13:5 “That with immediate effect all National Officers, with the exception of National Executive Officers, be elected at the ANC and that the National Constitution and Standing Orders be amended in accordance with appendix 1 to this Agenda.”

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman presented this motion to the Conference, on behalf of the NEC, by saying the current system for election of National Officers is that the six Area Chairmen elect them at an NEC meeting. He said this motion would increase the accountability of this process in two ways; firstly to increase visibility of the process and removes it from the limited audience generally at NEC meetings. He pointed out that by bringing these elections to the ANC it would eliminate any ideas that the process is carried out behind closed doors. Secondly, by widening the vote from Area Chairman to Group delegates it would mean the election of National Officers were fully supported by the Groups. Andy Cole went on to say that when considering this motion, the NEC were keen to ensure there was a correct balance between democracy and what was achievable within the limitations of time and cost at an ANC.

He said to prevent a dramatic increase in the duration of an ANC it was proposed to exclude proposal speeches but that delegates could approach any candidate prior to the ANC and during the Saturday evening and during a set time limit in the Conference and at the discretion of the National Chairman. Terms of Office would remain the same for National Officers, the current system for election of National Chairman would remain the same and National Project Officers and Co-ordinators would continue to be elected by the NEC and urged delegates to vote for this motion.

Pete Hurley, Northwich delegate asked the National Chairman if the NEC would explain which National Officers would be up for election at the ANC.

Bekki Randall, National Chairman informed the Conference it would be the Honorary General Secretary, National Finance Officer, National Activities Officer, National Development Officer, National External PRO and the National Training Officer. Clive Bryant, Redbridge observer asked if the NEC would put forward a set of guidelines for procedures so that members will know who is being elected and what must be done for these elections in time before next year's ANC, to which he was informed it would be done. Phil Bettis, Malvern observer commented that he felt the NEC would be more likely to know if members were capable of holding different posts than general members and urged members to think carefully whether delegates knew what they were voting on. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked if there were any positions vacant for election at this July's NEC meeting and how this would be addressed. Bekki Randall, National Chairman said that the NEC would retain the right to fill any vacancies and that anyone appointed at this meeting would have to be ratified at next year's ANC.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman then summed up on behalf of the NEC saying this gives the members the accountability to make decisions on who holds National Officers' positions.

MOTION CARRIED

13:6 “That with immediate effect, the present system of Full and Associate membership within the first tier of the Federation be abolished, without altering the joining age limits.

Current Associate members of the first tier will henceforth be Full Members and be charged the standard membership fee upon renewal. All Associate Life members will revert to Full Life membership status and no fee adjustment is to be requested.

Current members of the second tier, irrespective of age, will have the opportunity at their next renewal only or by existing Group transfer prior to their next renewal, to become a Full member of the lower tier. If this is not done, they will remain as a member of the second tier.”

Bekki Randall, National Chairman, read out an amendment to the wording of the supporting documentation for this motion. On the 4th paragraph, the 4th line it should read “**full members of the 1st tier**” not “full members of the 2nd tier.”

Ian Robinson, East Anglia Area Chairman proposed this motion on behalf of the NEC by saying the supporting documentation had already been issued and so he would sum up the essential points of this motion. He said there were currently 4 types of membership within the Federation - the traditional membership split between the 1st tier and in the 2nd tier Groups with members aged 36 and above. He said this motion would define the tiers into 2 membership types, one in each tier. He confirmed the upper recruiting age range for the first tier would not change. He went on to say the first part of the motion meant members in the 1st tier would be classed as Full members and pay the Full membership fee. All members of the 2nd tier would be known as

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Associate members, irrespective of age and pay an Associate membership fee. He confirmed the motion would do away with the segregation between Full and Associate membership within the first tier and give everyone the chance of equal status. He pointed out that it was well known that some Associates did a lot of work for the Federation. He concluded that the motion would give all members the chance, at their next renewal, to choose which tier they wished to belong, keeping in sight the fact that 18 Plus is a democratic organisation.

Martin Posner, Romford delegate said some people in their Group were over the age of 36 but were still very active members of the Group and would like to be able to be delegates at the ANC so to vote for this motion. Pete Hurley, Northwich observer said at their pre-ANC Training Day he found that with this motion, Associate members can come back and start running Groups again and this could show prospective members there were people over the age of 36 and may wonder why they cannot join the 1st tier Group. Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate said she loved this motion because for the 2nd time in her 18 Plus life she wouldn't become an Associate for ages unless she chose to! She also reminded delegates that prospective members over the age of 36 could only join a 2nd tier Group. She went on to say that the average age of a new Full member was 30 so this motion needed to be voted in to keep these members involved for as long as possible.

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked if this motion had been put forward as a compromise to having a definitive kick out to the 2nd tier Groups. She asked if members thought it would act as a crutch for the problem of membership loss? She went on to say that members must believe 18 Plus is a young people's organisation and believed that the age problem was because current Groups are afraid to go out and encourage younger people to join. She questioned why, if the Federation thinks 18 Plus will attract older members, is Quest not as successful as it should be? She urged members to vote against this motion. Ian Crawshaw Hounslow delegate said he agreed with Lara Collins and whilst sympathising with Corinna Teal, it was a fact that younger members were not coming forward to join the Federation. He said delegates should accept the motion as it was, even if it came back to the table in time to be refined and urged delegates to vote for this motion.

Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate then spoke saying 18 Plus was set up to empower young people to take charge and improve their lives. He went on to say that whilst 18 Plus needed fresh blood, younger members must be encouraged to join the organisation, as the Federation needs to be relevant to young people. David Ireland, Evesham delegate said he had listened to the debate so far, with interest, especially about being frightened to recruit younger members. He said this was irrelevant as the younger peoples' circumstances in life had changed, for example going to university or college, or high powered careers, so the focus should be going away from the younger generation and focus on people aged 26 upwards. He felt this motion was looking in the right direction and urged delegates to vote for this motion. Chris Brandon, Northwich delegate said his Group had a varied age range from 19 years upwards with 2 other members aged 22 having joined since Christmas. He said these younger members could bring new ideas to the Group and let older members stand aside, just to advise and encourage. He urged delegates to vote against this motion.

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Chris Page, Brentwood delegate said he had joined the Federation at the age of 21 and was still at college. He confirmed he was approaching his 35th birthday and still had as much energy as the younger members and that people should not be defined by their age. He added his Group had just enrolled a member aged 18 and encouraged members to vote for this motion.

Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon delegate said that 18 Plus should be whatever the members want it to be and should be for people aged 18 and onwards. David Smith, Crawley delegate said that the last 7 new members they had recruited were in their mid 20's and they were not put off by older Group members. He confirmed Crawley was going to set up a 2nd tier Group for the benefit of their older members and urged delegates to vote for this motion. Alex Barker, Coventry delegate said he was concerned that this might be an easy way out to make membership figures look better. He said whilst the older membership should be valued, younger people should be encouraged to join the Federation. Clive Bryant, Redbridge observer said people over 36 could sit on committees by co-option. He pointed out the motion acknowledged an existing state of affairs, the average age of dwindling numbers. He said this was a young person's Federation; no-one is not frightened of recruiting, just mis-recruiting for various reasons and that the best Recruitment Officer in the Federation is in his 40's! Clive Bryant said he felt the 2nd tier was a mistake because it could split the organisation in two. He said this motion partially addressed that and it was good to be able to say to older members please come back if you want to. He finished by saying that recruitment and retention were the keys to the Federation and this motion did not affect these two items and urged members to vote for this motion.

Marcus Shakespeare, Solihull delegate made a couple of points to try and help the motion to be passed. He said 18 Plus was no longer a "young person's" organisation with the average age being 30, but thought there should also be an age cap. Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate said she had joined 18 Plus at the age of 20 and other members should not be judged by their age but by their personalities and interests and this motion supported her feelings in this matter. Lorraine Whiting, Romford observer said she agreed with this motion because the older members could give support and advice to the younger members. Chris Porter, Sudbury delegate told members that his age was 28 even though some thought him older! He asked could this put off prospective younger members? He said they liked Associates in their Area and let them vote if they so wished.

Chris Lincoln Fareham delegate said this motion could bring in more revenue for the Federation. Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer said that 18 Plus was a product and that it is easier for new members to be quoted one fee and for delegates to vote for this motion. Barry Healey, Barkingside observer asked is 18 Plus working? Could current Full members fill committee positions? He finished by saying this motion could help and urged delegates to vote for the motion.

Ian Robinson, East Anglia Area Chairman summed up the motion by saying it had been very welcoming to hear all the different views debated on this motion and the NEC appreciated the feed back. He clarified a few points by saying that this motion would make everyone equal, would not address the age limit, as this would be a separate issue.

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He went on to comment about older members running Groups by telling members it would be up to the individual members in each Group who runs their Group and what their age ranges would be.

He concluded by saying the motion would revert everyone to equal status and reward every one of their efforts put into the Federation, regardless of age. Ian Robinson then urged the Conference to vote for this motion.

MOTION CARRIED

Voting strength re-established at 48.

13:7 “That with immediate effect article 7:1 of the National Constitution be amended to read:

‘The NEC shall consist of:-

- (a) National Chairman**
- (b) Chairman (or failing him a representative [hereinafter called an Area Representative]), who shall be appointed by the Area Executive Council and approved by the NEC of each of the Area Councils.**
- (c) The Honorary General Secretary**
- (d) The National Finance Officer**

Only the Area Chairmen (or the Area Representative), Honorary General Secretary and National Finance Officer shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the NEC PROVIDED THAT the National Chairman shall be entitled to a casting vote in the event of a tie. If an Area Chairman is elected as the acting Chairman of the meeting, he shall be entitled to vote in his own right as Area Chairman, and will also be entitled to a casting vote in the event of a tie.’”

Mark Randall, Northern Area Chairman proposed this motion on behalf of the NEC by asking if any one at the ANC knew what the NEC did. He went on to explain that they discussed and organised the day-to-day running of the Federation, which included the power to expel unwanted members and close Groups. He said when there were a dozen Areas in the Federation there must have been interesting debates. Now there were only six Areas and it had been shown in professional studies that an ideal decision making board would be eight people, not just six. Also, Mark went on to say that there was also a very small risk that an Area Chairman could be elected with a personal agenda and that with persuasion could convince others to vote against something that might work against the Federation. Mark Randall then went on to say that Tony Burgess, Finance Officer spent his time finding ways how not to spend the Federation’s money! Donna Black, as HGS was in charge of the office, guiding everyone in the ways of 18 Plus and was one of the Federation’s experts on Constitutional matters. He believed both of these people should be included in the voting, because not only of their knowledge of the Federation but the fact that they are neutral, having no Area to promote. He pointed out that their presence at NEC meetings was already obligatory, and would not cost the Federation any more for them to attend and will also create a

safer and better NEC.

Mark Randall said the NEC commended this motion to the Conference.

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate said that having the HGS and Finance Officer as part of the decision making team was great but that she had reservations for the Area Chairman, representing the National Chairman. She did not believe the National Chairman not having a vote was acceptable. She went on to say that a motion had just been passed to elect National Officers at an ANC and so it was only fair that they have a vote as well. Mark Hewson, Solihull observer commented that at present the Area Chairman were the only ones with a vote at NEC meetings but that their interests could be split between their Area and National and that it was a good idea to allow the HGS and Finance Officer a vote as they would have a wider picture and urged delegates to vote for this motion.

Ian Crawshaw, Hounslow delegate said this motion complimented the previous one and that the HGS and Finance Officer deserved to be rewarded by a vote. They would be able to make it clear what their jobs entailed and that with their experience of the Federation they deserved their vote along with the Area Chairmen and asked members to vote for this motion. Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate said that the Finance Officer and HGS do deserve a vote as they are aware of the wider implications both financially and generally to the Federation in terms of Constitution and have a wider view overall and urged members to vote for this motion.

Mark Randall, Northern Area Chairman then summed up by saying that any business needs a good management structure. It must be effective, efficient and trustworthy. He said in reply to Corinna's point about all officers having a vote, that this was considered but rejected due to (a) cost of bringing in extra people to NEC meetings and (b) being very unwieldy by reducing the power of the Area Chairmen by an extra point. Mark Randall went on to say the NEC was already a very effective decision making body but this proposed change will make their position more effective and asked delegates to vote for this motion.

MOTION CARRIED

14 RISK ASSESSMENT

Ian Robinson, East Anglia Area Chairman on behalf of the NEC gave a presentation on Risk Assessments by saying that injured backs, broken legs and arms, etc are risks of active lives and that anyone suffering from an injury can say how awkward things can be whilst recovering. He said that because of this it is common sense to reduce these risks. Ian went on to say that 18 Plus had always thought about safety but a couple of incidents have highlighted that more care should be taken. He pointed out that until now, no formal assessments of risk had been made for events. He noted that some larger events had brought in First Aid cover, but not all and what has not been recognised until now is that the Health and Safety Executive now require Risk Assessments. Ian Robinson said that whilst he realised this was not a most interesting topic it was an important one and that there are certain guidelines that must now be followed.

He confirmed he had produced a Risk Assessment Form and guidelines, which must be completed and sent into the Office who will forward them on to the Federation's insurers. He confirmed that the Federation must have insurance but it did not automatically cover everything. He pointed out that some specific events may need additional cover and if the insurers are not notified, that event may not be covered. It was pointed out that any accident/injury not covered properly by the insurers could cost the member/the Federation thousands of pounds if a claim were made.

Ian Robinson went on to give a brief outline of what was needed to be done for the insurance purposes. He said the person responsible for the completing of the Risk Assessment form must be the organiser of any event and that it must be done as soon as the necessary information is available. He said the NEC had agreed this must be done at least within two months of the event being placed on the National Diary. He went on to say the forms must be forwarded to the Office, to be passed on to the insurers, and perhaps a copy to the Area Committee. He confirmed the forms were available from the Office. He also advised organisers to check that any facilities they use also have adequate insurance of their own and also that the insurers had highlighted the need for First Aid facilities. Ian reminded event organisers that more dangerous events could need additional cover and that they should bear this in mind when arranging their budgets. He reminded the Conference that these things must be done to keep within the Health and Safety regulations and to keep the Federation legal and insured.

Clive Bryant, Redbridge observer asked if a Group organised their own insurance would that insurers form be acceptable and was told it would. Ian Robinson said that in the first instance the venue must be approached for their insurance cover and then the Federation's form be completed. Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate said she had noticed that on the Raft Race details it stated attendees should be a competent swimmer and that all of the small print should be read very carefully and perhaps distances noted, for example, how far should members be able to swim. David Ireland, Evesham delegate wanted the legal liability clarified in the event of a claim being made. He said he had heard that if an organisation was a member run organisation there could be no legal personal liability, it was up to the organisation as a whole, to which Ian Robinson replied there was a certain amount of grey area in this. Members were responsible for debts incurred against the Federation, but the having regard to the structure, liability would be towards the organiser of any event. He went on to say that no one would want to take personal responsibility for any incidents so to have the correct cover is most important.

Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate then asked about their weekly Badminton game cover and was advised that one Risk Assessment Form marked, as an ongoing event would cover this. She also asked about a waiver document for organisers of events, in the case of any incident and was told under the civil law these documents were meaningless. Tracy Thorn also commented about perhaps members having their own personal liability, covering sickness pay, etc but this could prove very costly and was advised if this was so, these insurers may want to recover their costs from the Federation's insurers.

Chris Porter, Sudbury delegate gave a point of information that perhaps some training should be offered for the completing of forms and Francis Wallington, National Training Officer said that there was going to be a National training event in September and that perhaps this could be covered during that weekend. Ian Robinson, East Anglia Area Chairman said he was more than happy to answer any questions at any time about this subject if anyone needed help.

Chris Porter then pointed out it might be wise to ask any venue if they already had a Risk Assessment that could be copied, to reduce the paperwork. Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer asked when these Risk Assessments had to be started to be used and was told with immediate effect. Chris Lincoln Fareham delegate asked about glasses or personal belongings, would these be covered and was told they could be covered the same as a broken limb. Chris Page, Brentwood delegate then asked if things like wheelchairs were covered and was told yes. Tracy Thorn then asked what would happen if there were members with disabilities or health issues and was told they might need a separate Risk Assessment, as might someone under the age of 18. Chris Porter, Sudbury delegate made a point of suggesting advice on completing the forms.

David Smith, Crawley delegate asked if the information about the Risk Assessment forms discussed at this conference be manuscripted and sent to the Federation's insurers for official answers. Bekki Randall, National Chairman, said once the Conference minutes were drawn up this could be done, but the minutes were not manuscripted immediately after the Conference.

Ian Robinson, East Anglia Area Chairman then rounded up the discussion by saying he had spoken to various people during the break and read extracts from the guidelines available with the Risk Assessment Forms. He finalised by saying that for any ongoing events only one form needs to be completed and attach a copy of the venue's public liability policy, this will cover any future events in that venue.

15 FACILITY FOR NATIONAL DEBATE

15:1 ONE MEMBER, ONE VOTE

Wayne Fenton, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman presented this topic to the conference for debate, on behalf of the NEC, by saying that the NEC wanted members' views and opinions on this subject. Wayne said that if every member could have a vote, at the ANC, it would be beneficial, especially when a Group may be split over a motion. He pointed out that everyone in the Federation had an opinion and added that the organisation is run by its' members for its' members and urged everyone to discuss this fully so that the NEC knew what the opinions on this subject were.

Ian Crawshaw, Hounslow delegate said he was disappointed that this was not a motion. He said that since the previous day's motion about Full and Associate members and future Conferences there would be a lot more Full members and potentially, more delegates and thought this idea was a good one. Martin Posner, Romford delegate said that if this policy was adopted then, for example Solihull and Coventry Groups, both large Groups, could dominate the motions. Barry Healey, Barkingside observer

thanked the previous speaker for saying what he had wanted to say!

David Smith, Crawley delegate said that whilst he agreed with the previous speaker to some extent, he also queried if each member eligible to vote had to be present for the whole of the Conference, or just to turn up and vote on chosen motions? Chris Brandon, Northwich delegate said his Group felt that with one member, one vote, each person in the Federation had an equal say, but felt that voting should be done by secret ballot. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked if it would be possible to issue voting slips, for example, print the motions in the January edition of Plus News with a voting slip attached? Ian Broadbridge, Solihull delegate said he belonged to the Federation's largest Group and thought that his Group members and others from large Groups would be disappointed if it were thought they might not be given the right to vote because of the size of the Group.

Phil Bettis, Malvern observer was not sure if he agreed with one member, one vote. He said that if this were so, why not be able to vote at NEC meetings, not just an ANC? He said that members elected various tiers of representation for the management of the Organisation and that there might always be a split of opinion whatever the system. Gerry Edwards, Vice President/National Executive Officer asked whether "with one member, one vote", would direct Members be able to vote at the ANC? Would second tier members be allowed to vote? Gerry Edwards said he believed in secret ballots because it took any pressure away from people expressing their opinions. He went on to say that with more members being able to vote, this would mean larger ANC's and therefore a wider audience to debate subjects, meaning a more interesting ANC. He then said that larger Groups should not be penalised because they have the right to more votes, because they have gone out and recruited more members. He felt that one member, one vote, was more democratic. Gerry Edwards then said that that he believed postal ballots were not suitable because no one would hear any arguments put forward on the motions. He did not believe that members would come to the Conference just to come in and vote as he felt members came to ANCs to take part generally.

Pete Hurley, Northwich observer spoke next saying that there had been discussed and passed some quite radical motions and perhaps, in the future, the re-structuring of the ANC could be looked at to incorporate more than the current two delegates per Group system and to use a secret paper ballot system. Stephen Sykes, Bradford observer made the point that it costs around £100 to send members to an ANC so there was the risk that some Groups might be less able financially, to send more delegates. Martin Berry, Midland Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman said that one member, one vote, would allow all members to have a bigger say in the way that National is run. He added that it is, in the end, the members Federation.

David Smith, Crawley delegate spoke again saying that regarding the number of delegates per Group, some Groups have trouble getting one delegate to the Conference, so this may not make that much difference. He went on to say that larger Groups attending the Conference venue, therefore having a larger number of attendees might be able to sway a vote in their favour. Mark Hewson, Solihull observer said regarding larger Groups having more of a say, that this was quite right as they were obviously doing something better to have more members!

Bekki Randall, National Chairman then said the NEC would like to conduct a straw poll amongst the delegates on this subject. There seemed to be more against this idea than for it.

15:2 ALTERNATIVE FUNDING FOR THE FEDERATION

Clive Bryant, National Re-structuring Forum Member presented this subject by saying that on 1 January 2001 there was £128,000 in reserves and on 1 January 2003 there was £118,00. He said, counting the interest accrued; this was an excess of spending by £19,000. Clive Bryant said that the Federation had to find ways to increase income. He asked whether this could be done by tripling the membership fee, reducing outgoings, or find a third path? He stated that another source of income needed to be found and one idea that the National Re-structuring Forum had come up with was to purchase a building, use it for a Bed and Breakfast property, house the office and have facilities for NEC meetings. He said that the income from the B&B, over and above its running costs would go towards National level running costs. He added that it would need to be in, or very near, the existing base in Newent, as it was unthinkable to have an 18 Plus without the current staff. It would need to be big enough to earn a sufficient surplus and would house NEC meetings and training events. He asked if the Federation could afford this? Yes, he replied. Would it work? No one knows at present, this must be investigated in finer details he replied. He went on to say that the next Working Party, already being set up, would investigate as it would have more time than the previous working party had and it would also continue to investigate further funding methods.

An un-named speaker said she was all for increasing income, as long-term advertising was expensive, but wondered if there was anyone in the Federation with the experience of running and Bed and Breakfast premises? Also, she wondered if there would be enough profit and was there the need to own another large property, such as Nicholson House? Her concerns were also for the staffing levels, which may have to increase, therefore costing more again. Joseph Gurney, Thurrock delegate said that since the membership fee increased, the membership figures had decreased. He said this could be due to poor retention, badly organised events, bad publicity, for example, but the other option could have been people were frightened of too high a membership fee, so would a further increase frighten off more people. Clive Bryant, pointed out that when he suggested trebling the membership fee, this was not a serious comment, to which Joseph Gurney replied he did understand this!

Wayne Fenton, North Thames Chilterns Area Chairman told the Conference that he worked for a brewery and that breweries had tenancies and tenancy agreements and for the Federation to obtain a property through these means it would be within the costs limitations. Francis Wallington, National Training Co-ordinator said that most organisations have an executive council to manage their reserves in the best possible way and asked if the NEC was doing this? He added that the membership fee should also be looked into to raise capital. Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer said that the idea of a Bed and Breakfast was an excellent idea and that the Federation had a Direct Member, Wendy Turner, who ran a Bed and Breakfast establishment herself, so would be able to offer advice. He also went on to say that there must be a member who

works in the financial world that could also offer advise to the working party. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate said she too thought this was an excellent idea. She said she was one of the fortunate members that was regularly able to use Nicholson House and could not understand why it was ever sold, although she did realise that because of dwindling memberships the money was not there to finance the staff needed to run such a property.

Corinna Teale said a Bed and Breakfast property would be offering a different service and thought that perhaps shares should be offered to members in the purchase of such a property. Gerry Edwards, Vice President/National Executive Officer commented that, as a property manager and chartered surveyor, he felt this was a very good idea and that a lot of issues would be considered first and that the Federation would be very careful before entering any purchase. He went on to say it could prove to be a good revenue stream and he reminded Corinna Teale that he had been involved in the purchase of Nicholson House and this was done by the purchase of shares.

Chris Page, Brentwood delegate asked, as a point of information, if there would be disabled access and Clive Bryant told him these issues had not yet been discussed but could not see the Federation purchasing any property without disabled access. Corinna Haywood, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked if National Lottery Funding had been looked into and was told it had not. Alex Barker, Coventry delegate said that whilst this looked a grand idea on paper, was it such a good idea in practice with the fall in membership? An un-named speaker then asked how much was being looked at to spend and how much to leave in reserves. David Filer, Coventry observer said that he knows Nicholson House was sold after a vote by the NEC, but prior to a purchase of any business or property, would that be a vote of the NEC or the ANC? Bekki Randall, National Chairman told him it would be the NEC because of time restraints. Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer thought that this should be brought to the ANC because it is such a big project.

Donna Black, Honorary General Secretary told the Conference that under the current Constitution, the NEC has the power to acquire and sell property. On this basis, if the Federation decided it wanted to go ahead and buy a property, the NEC would not have to bring it to an ANC and this discussion was to find out the views of the members. She said she was on the NEC when Nicholson House was sold and it was a very difficult decision to make, but the problem at that time was that 18 Plus needed more money and this was the only asset the Federation had.

Brian Taylor, Thurrock delegate said he was not too sure how much revenue was coming in from the membership fees, but suggested that the money spent on the purchase of a whole building could perhaps be used for National advertising to bring in a host of new members. Alex Barker, Coventry delegate asked if 18 Plus had to have a certain amount of reserves left to cover the costs of the forthcoming year. Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer replied that there were no rules saying how much money 18 Plus had to have, but money was needed to run the Head Office's tenancy. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate said surely long term income should be looked at and that, at present, the current membership fee was being used to run the Federation and that some money should be used to attract new members. Dave Smith, Crawley delegate said this was a good idea but felt it should not be only the NEC who

decide on spending a large amount of the Federation's money in one go.

Venita Olayemi Coventry observer asked how quickly would it take for the NEC to get together if a property did become available and if a property did become available could it not be put on the internet so that all members could put their opinion forward to the NEC? Bekki Randall, National Chairman, said opinions would be sought after. Wayne Fenton, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman said that, as with any property, from the time it is first looked at up to the time an offer is put in, this can be a very short time. If the NEC had to come back to an ANC or by any other method, this could mean the property is lost. He asked that members abide by the NEC decision, as it is the members who vote the NEC in, and trust them to make a good judgment. He said the NEC would, of course, keep members informed as to what was happening.

Ian Crawshaw, Hounslow delegate proposed a move to next business and was told this could not be done in the Chairman's debate. Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer said that to spend the money on advertising would prove very expensive and that the money the Federation had would not last very long! He went on to say that the idea of a Bed and Breakfast was multi purpose, housing the NEC meetings and NEC, housing the Head Office and selling accommodation to outsiders as well and Plus members. Mark Hewson, Solihull observer said that property these days was a reasonably sound investment and that if the system did not work out, not too much money would be lost.

Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate said that, in effect, by next year's ANC the Federation could own a property so certain criteria should be set as quickly as possible and let the NEC do the work required. She also asked how much time was left on the lease on the current office and was told it was due for renewal next year. Tracy did suggest properties were looked at in various areas not just where the office is now.

Phil Bettis, Malvern observer said that the National Re-structuring Forum have come back with an idea, what members must now do is to set up another working party, create a feasibility study and look for a suitable property. Brain Taylor, Thurrock delegate pointed out that he had learned that an approximate income from a Bed and Breakfast property could be £150.00 per week.

15:3 TERMS OF OFFICE FOR GROUP COMMITTEE POST HOLDERS

Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon delegate presented this topic for debate by saying that, according to the National Constitution, there must be two half yearly committee meetings, but felt this was not giving committees time to get used to their posts. Secondly, he felt that to say committee posts cannot be held for longer than three consecutive terms was unfair, adding that if someone was very good at their particular job they should be allowed to stay in that post indefinitely if they so wished.

Mark Hewson, Solihull observer said that continuity was important and felt that a six-month term was not long enough, but perhaps a year should be looked at, at Group level. Martin Berry, Midland Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman said this basically was a good idea. It had been previously a motion but due to a misunderstanding, had been lost and that this was the second time this item had appeared on the National Facility for Debate. He said if members felt strongly enough about this, this should be put to the Conference as a motion.

Alison Berthier, Fareham observer told the Conference about some problems that had occurred at Southampton Group but due to this ruling about current terms of office, those members had been able to be ousted out of the organisation. She said that if this ruling had not been in place it could have caused a lot more severe problems for her Group. Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon delegate said that he had put this motion forward but had been rejected but did not know why and hoped to see it as a motion next year.

Chris Brandon, Northwich delegate said that he was at the last ANC when this was debated as a motion, but felt that the six-month term of office should be kept as this encouraged everyone to try their skills at committee work. Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer said that his Group had put this in as a motion before but it had been rejected because of incorrect wording. It had been put forward so that Group committees tied in with the time scales of Area committees.

Donna Black, Honorary General Secretary said that she had offered help last year but was not taken up on this. She also said she had received this year's motion a day before the deadline for Agenda items and there was not time to correct it to go forward as a motion. Donna said she did not mind how early motions were sent to her but plenty of time was needed to make sure they were correct. Martin Posner, Romford delegate said he had done all sorts of committee posts and the three term of office should be abolished so that people can continue to fill posts if they wished, or it could mean a position is left vacant. Dave Smith, Crawley delegate said that his Group's biggest problem with changing every six-months was having to change the bank mandates. He had found his Group's banks had not been using the current signatories. He said he had personally found it was usually the same people who stood for posts and also felt that there would be more consistency to have annual meetings for Groups in line with Areas. He said he had understood the three-term ruling had been in order to avoid anyone dominating a certain Group but asked if this did happen, would the NEC have the authority to remove these people.

Bekki Randall, National Chairman replied that it is up to the Group who elects the committee and also the Group who removes them but if there was any intimidation it must be referred to higher levels. Alison Berthier did say that it was her Area committee that removed the offending members ultimately.

Wayne Fenton, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman wondered why the Group Constitution should not have choices, for example, six month terms for three terms maximum, or one year term for three terms maximum, giving the Group the choice of which they prefer. Pete Hurley, Northwich observer said that Groups have their Bi-AGMs every six months, so members have the choice either to vote members in or not, backed up by the Group Constitution. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate said she agreed with Gary Schwimmer but felt that the three terms gave everyone else a chance to hold a post and also that no-one is taken advantage of to stay in post.

Tracy Thorn, Dunstable delegate said that when she was a chairman she had the backing of a good committee, which is important. All committee members must support each other.

16 ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN TO SERVE FROM MONDAY 14th APRIL 2003

Martin Berry, Midland Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman announced the results of the vote for the National Chairman; votes for 46, against 2 and abstentions 1. Bekki Randall, National Chairman was duly elected National Chairman.

17 NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

Bekki Randall, National Chairman addressed the Conference by saying that to chair an Area Conference is fun, chairing an NEC meeting is fun, but to chair an ANC is incredible. She said it was one of the foremost memorable experiences of her life, one other was getting married and she would not say about the other! Bekki Randall, National Chairman said this had been a particularly interesting Conference to chair, seven motions, six of which had been passed, amendments, procedural motions and a lot of lively debate. She went on to say she was pleased the Conference had had such a positive outcome, together laying down the foundations for the future of the Federation. She said now members must go back to their Groups and Areas and start to build on them. She confirmed there would be a new working party, looking into the Bed and Breakfast prospect to see if it will work and already, a carefully chosen group of experienced people are being put together.

Bekki Randall, National Chairman then thanked everyone for attending the ANC and for electing her for her second term. She thanked the NEC for their hard work in putting together the motions, particularly Donna for her hard work in putting together the Agenda, the ANC committee, headed by Sandra Cawthra, for all the effort put in to arrange this weekend and said she hoped everyone had enjoyed the weekend as much as she had. Lastly, but not least, Bekki Randall, National Chairman thanked Martin Berry, deputy National Chairman and her husband, Mark Randall, Northern Area Chairman, for all the support and help they have given her over the last year.

18 PRESENTATION OF TROPHIES

18:1 Excellence Award

Presented by Bekki Randall, National Chairman to SIMON BUNKER, EAST ANGLIA AREA

18:2 National Chairman's Merit Award

Not awarded

18:3 The Linda Street "Spirit of 18 Plus" Award

Presented by Jo Woodhead, Vice President to IAIN PARKES, BANBURY GROUP, Midland Area

The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups

18:4 Treasurer's Trophy

Not awarded

18:5 Charities Trophy

Presented by Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer to ROTHWELL GROUP, Northern Area

18:6 Gold Trail Trophy

Presented by Donna Black, Honorary General Secretary to NORTHWICH GROUP, Northern Area

18:7 National Recruitment Trophy

Presented by Jo Woodhead, Vice President to WEST KENT GROUP, London & South East Area

18:8 Best New Group

Presented by Gerry Edwards, Vice President to BANBURY GROUP Midland Area

18:9 Norbury Trophy

Presented by Peter Sharples, Plus News Editor to BANBURY BULLETIN, Banbury Group, Midland Area

18:10 The Charles Padgham Training Trophy

Presented by Francis Wallington, National Training Co-ordinator to MIDLAND AREA

18:11 Development Certificate

Presented by Gerry Edwards, Vice President to MIDLAND AREA

18:12 The President's Trophy

Presented by Jo Woodhead, Vice President to BARKING & DAGENHAM GROUP, East Anglia Area

18:13 "Cobb Dual Purpose 2-pint Jug Mug"

Presented by Gerry Edwards, Vice President to NORTH THAMES & CHILTERN AREA

19 ELECTION OF HONORARY SENIOR OFFICIALS

19:1 VICE PRESIDENTS

Gerry Edwards and Jo Woodhead were unanimously re-elected as Vice Presidents of the Federation.

19:2 HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Wayne Fenton was unanimously elected as an Honorary Life Member of the Federation.

Barking & Dagenham and West Kent Groups were awarded a cheque for £100 each for their increase in membership by either 10% of the previous year or 5 more members.

20 APPOINTMENT OF ACCOUNTANTS

Martin Berry, Midland Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman, on behalf of the NEC proposed Kingscott, Dix as the Federation's accountants. They were accepted unanimously.

21 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Barkingside Group then commented about the change to the Charities Trophy last year and felt that this had affected the monies raised this year. They said one of the events they had held, whilst raising a lot of money for charity overall, if they had kept within the guidelines and reduced the number of members of public participating, the event would have run at a loss. Bekki Randall, National Chairman said this would be put on the Agenda for the next NEC meeting.

Mark Randall, Northern Area Chairman then asked the Conference to congratulate Bekki Randall, National Chairman on her calm, consistent and superb stewardship of this year's ANC.

Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer then asked where the Solihull entry was for the charities trophy was and was told the situation would be investigated. Bekki Randall, National Chairman later informed the Conference that this entry had not been received at the office.

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield delegate said she felt this Conference had been very positive except for the Risk Assessment debate. She thought members' attitude to this had been very selfish. Corinna then asked if there was a venue for TAG. Jarrett Smith, National Activities Officer said it had been hard to find a suitable venue. One had now been found but needed to be finalised and that it would be discussed with Midland Area to host it.

Mark Hewson, Solihull observer told the Conference there had been a slight incident

regarding the web site.

An advertisement in The Sun newspaper had used the “warwick” web site address, the one which was originally set up for 18 Plus, and asked that the “warwick” address is no longer used, as a complaint had been made. He went on to say he is happy to put Group programmes, diaries, etc on the web site if they are sent by electronic mail.

22 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DATE AND VENUE OF THE 63rd ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

To be advised when arranged.

23 PRESIDENTIAL CLOSING ADDRESS BY JO WOODHEAD VICE PRESIDENT

Jo Woodhead, Vice President/National Executive Officer opened her address by asking for how many members this was their first Conference? She said it had been a little unusual with all the motions being proposed by the NEC, agenda items had been changed, amendments and more amendments and hoped everyone had been able to keep up. Jo went on to say that she would have been about to become an Associate, but now things had changed. Someone mentioned earlier about going clubbing and she said she went to a nice little club in Market Harborough and her usual outfit was a furry boob tube and hot pants! She said new friends would have been made this weekend differences of opinions given and made out.

Jo Woodhead then went on to thank members of the National Re-structuring Forum for all their hard work during the last year, namely, Dawn Petty, Clive Bryant, Jarrett Smith, Dot Sallis, Stephen Sykes, Simon Bunker and lately Iain Parkes and Gerry Edwards.

Jo said it was a great honour to be a presiding Vice President. When she went to her first ANC at the Metropole, Birmingham, she was most impressed at everyone on the top table although she was not sure what was going on with the voting! Jo said she hoped members would find the trophy giving inspirational, as she had done in the past. She also went on to congratulate all the trophy and award winners, to Bekki Randall, National Chairman for her chairmanship and Donna for her help. Jo Woodhead then wished everyone a safe journey home and looked forward to seeing everyone next year.

24 CLOSURE OF CONFERENCE BY THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

Bekki Randall, National Chairman closed the conference by thanking everyone for Attending and wishing them a safe journey home.

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