

Agenda Item: 15:8

Clean Sheet Federation

The Problem:

The National Federation is losing money. Current membership is too low to sustain the operating costs that are incurred at a National level. If we continue along the same path then the Federation will be forced to close.

It is assumed that all “easy” ways of cutting costs have already been implemented. Therefore there are three ways to balance the books:

- 1) Increase membership numbers
- 2) Increase the membership fee
- 3) Slash the operating costs

The contention of this document is that:

- 1) If membership was easy to increase we would not be discussing this issue at all
- 2) The membership fee cannot rise without losing more members
- 3) Slashing costs is the only viable option.

The Costs:

The main costs incurred by the National Federation are twofold:

- 1) Maintaining a central Office
- 2) Retaining two full-time staff.

The Solution:

We get rid of these drains on our finances! We do not renew the lease on the Office space, and we offer redundancy to the staff.

How Can We Operate Without An Office or Staff?

We will adopt the sort of structure that is appropriate to an organisation of just a few hundred members. We will devolve all power to the Areas.

The following structure is a proposal only. It is deliberately vague on details, since it is suggested that the NEC implement this plan in the way it thinks best.

National

The role of the National Tier will be to co-ordinate the Areas only. Area Chairmen are to meet regularly (suggested two or three times a year). No policy is to be set, other than diary co-ordination, to discuss best practices and an exchange of ideas between Area committee representatives. Decisions concerning the creation of new Areas, the re-organisation of Areas or the closure of Areas should be made at these meetings. Each meeting should last no more than a few hours.

The following posts are suggested. All posts to be elected annually by the Area Chairmen.

National Chairman: To chair meetings of the Area Chairmen.

National Finance Officer: To audit the accounts of the Areas yearly.

Honorary General Secretary: To keep minutes of the meetings, check insurance, and any assorted duties deemed necessary.

Areas

Areas will operate completely autonomously, subject to the basic structure detailed here. Each Area will have the power to set its own membership fee, although it is suggested that the Area Chairmen agree a common fee for all Areas. Areas will be responsible for maintaining membership lists and for issuing membership cards. All valid Area membership cards must be recognised by all other Areas. All Area events are to be open to any member of any Area. All current national membership cards will be valid until their expiry date.

It is suggested that the following roles make an ideal Area. However, it is recognised that Areas are free to adopt whatever structure is most appropriate to them.

Chairman: Head of structure. Ensure all departments are functioning or covered.

Administrator: Record of minutes. Area directory to date and its issue.

Treasurer: Accounts. Membership record and card issue.

Activities: Area Scale Events. Events publicity.

Publicity: Publicity materials. Liaise with groups regards publicity aid and requirements.

Development: Investigate and promote new groups, work with publicity.

Training: To empower and educate group (and area) members to best fulfil their appointed roles.

Magazine: Record of events past and those to come, views.

All elected annually at area conference. Remuneration available by agreement on material, and in exceptional cases time. All recognised groups to have two delegates to vote at conferences. Delegates must be in receipt of a valid membership card. Essentially each Area will follow the ideals and model the current constitution of 'The National Federation of Eighteen Plus Groups'.

Groups

Require to be in a format capable of running their own evenings and own events. They must run their own publicity and recruitment, possibly with Area assistance. Each Group must have a firm contact details structure. It is suggested that the Groups continue as they are currently constituted. They should have their own bank account.

Structure

It is considered the general structure from member – group – area functions well. It is suggested no change is made.

Finance

The National bank account is to be closed. The money must be used to pay any costs and debts that we owe. Examples are: staff redundancy, rent etc. If there is any money left over, then it should be distributed to the Areas. It is suggested that each Area receives a sum commensurate with the number of members in that Area.

Concerning the member: The annual fee would be all they needed to cover their administrative year through Area. No charge needs be levied on the Groups. They require no intrinsic funding but we do recommend they continue to levy a subs charge on members attending to both cover their incidental costs and give a sense of belonging. The Area in no way lays claim to the group's money accumulated, it belongs to the Group.

We believe that the membership fee could be set as low as £5 - £10, without Area and Group levies disappearing to National.

ANC

For 2004, the cost to a Group of the ANC was (realistically) £70 each for two delegates, and a £57 levy. That totals nearly £200 that each Group will save each year.

Under this structure, there will be no need of an ANC. The spirit of the motion for debate implies that there will be no need to hold an ANC in 2005 to ratify the new constitution. Thus, 2004 will be the last ANC.

Events

Events are the lifeblood of 18 Plus, and it is important that we run as many large-scale events as we can. Clearly there can be no "National" events with no national tier. All national events must therefore become "National Scale" events. It is up to the Areas and the individual Groups to organise the events that keep us as members.