

ANC News 2006

Saturday Afternoon

National Chairman John Smith welcomed everybody to the 65th National Conference, and said this Conference was about adopting the new constitution and protecting the future of Eighteen Plus. He was inspired by his first ANC and hopes delegates this year will feel the same!

This was followed by Gerry Edwards' Presidential Address. He said this Conference was probably the most important to date and hoped everyone would enjoy it. He explained there was no choice but to hold an ANC this year to vote in the new Constitution. The NEC and others have worked extremely hard over the year to put Area Lead in place, overcoming legal obstacles along the way. He also recognised the valuable work given by Christine George and Sue Swan over the years. Gerry advised us to listen to the debate rather than go in with opinions already formed, don't personalise the debate, give speakers a chance, and don't allow any divisions to leave the room. He ended by congratulating those Areas who had increased their membership, and the organisers of WASH, Brean, and SADY for putting on brilliant events.

The elected tellers were Fil Bettis and Mark Hewson. The voting strength was established at 54. Wayne Fenton and Tony Burgess were elected as ballot paper counters. Apologies for absence were received from Donna Cook, Rita Grimes, Terry Dixon, Leeds & Rothwell.

The minutes of the 64th ANC were proposed by Kings Lynn, seconded by So'ton Friends, and accepted, with Tony Burgess (HLM) explaining under matters arising that the copier was accounted for in this year's accounts. Francis Wallington (HGS) was asked by Hounslow if a central list of members would be made available, and answered that the HGS should encourage the Area Membership Officers to furnish them with details for collation. In answer to "Should over 35s attend events", Francis answered we need to reflect the community we live in. In response to a question about including the Life member statistics in with the rest, the advice was to ask the Area Membership Officers.

The accounts were proposed (Bradford) and seconded (West Kent). After a barrage of questions and corrections about the detail and deficits from Tony Burgess (HLM), Wayne Fenton (HLM) and others, they were not accepted. The questions included why is there an 8K ANC deficit (2 expenditures and one income in the year), loss of £622 on holiday levies (no answer), office depreciation accounting, VAT rebate on auxiliary expenditure, and what will remain in the Reserves after the Office closes (28K). Therefore, the Accountant's Report was not presented.

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John Smith, proposed by Bradford and seconded by Hounslow, in his nomination speech for National Chairman, reminisced about The Dossers and referred to his written nomination. He fielded questions from Wayne about travelling to meetings/events (his NAC successor has a car!), and from Simon George (Slough, Windsor & Eton delegate) on working with Areas on development (recruitment and expansion, use new and old ways to get members to join). He was congratulated by Wayne for steering the Federation thus far through a difficult period.

Other positions up for election were HGS (Emma Dunning, proposed Thurrock seconded Lichfield), NFO (Adrian Barnard, proposed Slough W&E seconded Thatcham), Plus News Editor (Richard Mahaffey, proposed Barnet seconded Hounslow).

Emma in her nomination speech says she is a Project Officer dealing with change. She wants to help the Federation to move forward. Paul West (Andover delegate) asked what she plans to do over the year, and was told that Emma would work on implementation of the changes afoot (no office, new mailbox). She was asked if she would have the time to do the job (yes, as her other workload would decrease), and what experiences would help her (being MAC with its learning curve).

Adrian in his nomination speech said he would ask the Auditors to re-appraise the accounts following their defeat. He said there were still a lot of loose ends to tie up, and would draw upon his experience as Area Treasurer to help him through. He fielded questions on focusing his commitment singly to the post (no – he will remain focussed in several roles), should Area Treasurers go through criminal checks (it's up to the Area), SAGE accounting package (no longer required – will use Excel).

Richard Mahaffey (Barnet observer) in his speech for Plus News Editor said he wants a new Plus challenge having been in the Federation in various roles for 12 years. He was asked about the format of Plus News he would adopt (PDF).

After a wee break, Corinna Teale (Sutton Coldfield observer) expressed her upset that nobody had stood for EPRO or Training Officer, despite voting in number to endorse Area Lead last year.

There was a presentation on the New Constitutions by Steve Browning (EAA Chair) and Joe Gurney (National Training Officer). The Constitutions / Standing Orders have been drafted to follow Area Lead as closely as possible, have been updated to reflect ANC decisions, and are focused on *freedom* rather than *obligation*. The National Constitution is a Constitution of **Areas** focusing on the 6 members (Areas) rather than on individuals. The Model Area Constitution reflects the added responsibility Areas have over governing memberships. The Group Constitution will only undergo minor change from present, for example AGMs, not Bi-AGMs. The implementation is intended to start with the adoption of the new documents at this ANC, thus transforming the Federation as described.

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Sunday Morning

Moving back to the remainder of Saturday afternoon, the next business was a motion proposed by the NEC to reduce the constitutional majority required from 75% to 65% for the rest of Conference. Tracey Thorn (NT&C Chair) spoke for the NEC, arguing the figure needed to be lower to increase the chance of the success of these important motions. Iain Parkes (Leamington Spa delegate) spoke against, feeling the NEC were trying to railroad the motions through. Paul West (Andover delegate) spoke for, echoing that other democratic organisations use figures like 65% or 51%. Wayne (HLM) pointed out that technically the outcome of the motion should not affect this conference (as it should become active at the end). Richard Morton (So'ton Friends delegate) believes we need to have everybody behind these motions for them to succeed and therefore wanted delegates to vote against. With 27 in favour and 24 against the motion was **lost**.

There was then some discussion about whether the next block of motions should instead be formed of one main motion and several amendments, and then cheers in support of "let's get on with it"!

Steve Browning (EAA Chair) introduced the next NEC motion which was acceptance of the new Constitutions, saying the Federation needed to adopt this framework in order to move forwards and secure its future. Andy Campbell (Barkingside delegate) proposed an amendment to accept the constitutions subject to amendments voted on at this Conference. This was seconded by So'ton Friends. The amendment was **carried**. After no further debate (surprisingly), the motion was **carried** with 5 against and 51 in favour.

The last business of the Saturday was a presentation on WASH 2006 given by Christine Ticehurst and Paul Favell of Kings Lynn. They said they need to see 300 Plussers at WASH and offered a range of incentives including a party pack and the best caravans for early bookers.

We all enjoyed a fantastic evening in honour of Christine and Sue, who received a number of gifts including a hand decorated cake from Hazel Bunker. The casino was a big success and we are told Gerry got his wish on the dance floor!

Sunday morning saw many tired faces eventually stumble their way into the Conference suite.

Martin Posner said he was disappointed to know why his motion (Areas to receive money from National to cover the March – May period) was not on the Agenda, and was told it was because it was illegal and retrospective.

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The next motion was proposed by Barkingside (Andrew Campbell) and seconded by Thurrock and was to remove the word "Eighteen" from the Federation's title and update the documentation accordingly. Andy believes the 18 to have connotations with the adult industry and is misleading. He said now is the time to do it as we are revamping our publicity anyway. Alison Cumbers (Bradford delegate) said it would involve changing all the bank accounts. Richard Mahaffey (Barnet observer) asked what would happen with the old emblem. Paul West (Andover delegate) did not want to have to change his group's publicity without a transitional phase. Mark Hewson (Solihull observer) said it was time this motion went through. Iain Parkes (Leamington Spa delegate) speaking against, said that changing the name hasn't worked for the groups that have already lost the '18' and we were there first with the Internet presence. Richard Morton (So'ton Friends delegate) and Terry Drake (Lichfield observer) said it wouldn't be that much work to change the name. With a voting strength of 52, the motion was **carried** by 41 votes to 8.

The next motion was proposed by Barkingside (Andy Campbell) and seconded by Coventry and extended the Constitution to allow group delegates to attend the Federation's AGM. Andy said that the motion would allow members to have more of a say, and would encourage networking. Dave Filer, seconding, said this would enable decisions to be made quicker. Iain Parkes (at the 'for' microphone for once, and clearly struggling from the previous motion) said the sum of the members was greater than its parts. Fil Bettis (Lichfield observer) said there was no mention of quora, and was told by Kirsty van Lieshout (So'ton Friends delegate) that it was in the Citrine. The motion was **carried**.

Andy Campbell (Barkingside delegate) introduced the next motion which was to enact the previous motion for 2007. It was seconded by Coventry. Iain Parkes also spoke for the motion. Janet Rintoul (Bradford delegate) spoke against due to the costs and hard work that would be involved. The motion was **carried**.

After a coffee break, it was clarified that our formal new name would be The National Federation of Plus Areas. The votes for the National Chairman and Officers were taken.

The next motion, proposed by So'ton Friends and seconded by Lichfield, was about setting up a parallel tier such that one was for 18-35s and the other was for anybody over 18. Richard Morton and Kirsty van Lieshout introduced the motion. They said this removes the barrier to those over 35 wishing to enter. Joan Clifford (Lichfield delegate) said this gives new members more choice. Rob Jones (NAC) spoke for the NEC against the motion, believing its meaning to be unclear. He also said that Quest members may not want to become higher paying full members. Katie Buse (Slough Windsor & Eton delegate) said vote against because society wasn't ready to accommodate big age differences in groups. Geoff Buller (Lincs Quest observer) did not want his group to become a full group. Simon George (Slough Windsor & Eton delegate) said the motion addressed key issues which the NEC should go away and consider. Several others spoke against and the motion was **lost**. Richard was commended for not trying to push his motion.

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Gary Schwimmer (Hillingdon delegate) opened the facility for debate by expressing concerns about losing members and, in a uniquely amusing style, asked for a debate on who Plus wants to attract and how. He also lamented the lack of new girls in his group! Katie Buse (Slough delegate) said if members in their 30s need Plus then continue to be a member, or else join Quest or move on. Corinna Teale (Sutton Coldfield observer) wanted her group to clone Gary! Adrian Barnard (NFO) said young people need to stand on committees if they wish to “oust the fogies”! Lorraine Whiting (Havering delegate) said her group and Romford have a new website with links to related societies. Emma Dunning (MAC) said keeping older members in should be a ‘personal choice’. Rob Jones (NAC) said we need to put on more activities to retain members. Iain Parkes (Leamington Spa delegate) said he would be moving on soon and older members needed to give way to the younger. Matt Bonar (Sutton Coldfield observer) said groups should conduct surveys to find what people want. Tracey Thorn (NTCAC) said groups in her area had increased members and friendliness was key.

Francis Wallington (HGS) wanted to talk about Health & Safety. He was concerned that without the National Office we may not have protection in the event of an accident as certain procedures (eg. Risk Assessment) would not properly be in place or that it could be fragmented. Ian Crawshaw (Plus News Editor) said Areas needed to work together with National under the new structure. Iain Parkes said H&S was incredibly important and told of an accident some years ago affecting somebody close to him. Lorraine Whiting (Havering delegate) said accident forms need to be completed and could be obtained from the NHS website. Adrian Barnard (NFO) said that H&S procedures will evolve over time with experience. Tracy Thorn (NTCAC) said the risk assessment needs to match the type of event. Terry Drake (Lichfield observer) said that unfortunately common sense is not that common these days.

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After a superb buffet lunch, the results of the ballot were announced. Congratulations to John Smith (National Chairman), Emma Dunning (HGS), Adrian Barnard (NFO), Richard Mahaffey (Plus News Editor). The vote-ometer person (Terry Drake), tellers and ballot counters were all thanked.

John Smith gave the Chairman's Address. He was inspired by the work of others in his early Plus days and urged us to go away and open new groups. He says we need to get new people on to committees by encouragement rather than pressure, and if we disagree, we remain friends. We also need to create publicity and enjoy doing it, and let's leave this ANC with new enthusiasm for Eighteen Plus.

The NEC then presented gifts to Christine George, Sue Swan, Gerry Edwards, Andy Cole, and Francis Wallington.

The Awards were then made as follows: Excellence Awards (Lisa Ward and Terry Drake), National Chairman's Merit (Joe Gurney and Adam Redshaw), Linda Street (Francis Wallington), Treasurer's Trophy (L&SE Area), Recruitment (Hillingdon), Best Magazine (Barnet Flyer), Training (EAA), Development (Northern Area), Best Group (Hillingdon), Best Area (NT&C).

Sandra Brogan and Gerry Edwards were elected as Vice Presidents, and Christine George and Sue Swan, Francis Wallington, Mark Hewson, and Gerry Edwards all received their HLM.

The decision to elect the Federation's Accountants will be deferred until the next NEC meeting.

Gerry Edwards gave his closing Presidential Address. He was pleased with the way the ANC had gone and reminisced on events that had amused him such as Paul West being asleep and suggestive overtones involving Tracey Thorn and a microphone!

John Smith officially declared the conference closed and, to the strains of *The Frog Chorus*, we all went home.

Ian Crawshaw
Ex-Plus News Editor