

NEC Committee Meeting

Coventry, 21 November 2015

Minutes

Present: Erica Knight (NC), Joan Clifford (HGS), James Oliver (NFO), Matthew Dickinson (Dep. NC / NTAC Chair), Martin Posner (ASEA Chair), Nicky Rolfe (SA Chair), Steve Rolfe (Internet Co-ordinator), Adrian Barnard (NAO), John Smith (Plus News Editor), Francis Wallington (VP), Gerry Edwards (VP), Andrea Rutter (Observer)

Minutes: Ian Crawshaw (via dictafone)

Agenda:

Meeting opened at 10:15am.

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| 1 | Open Meeting
Erica opened the meeting. | Chair |
| 2 | A short review of procedures and the meeting will be run | Chair /HGS |
| 3 | Apologies for Absence, acknowledge of proxies
Adam Redshaw, Ian Crawshaw | HGS |
| 3.1 | Establish of Voting Strength of Meeting
Established at 6. | HGS |
| 4 | Minutes of last meeting | All |
| 4.1 | Points of Accuracy
Date of this meeting is the 21 st not 23 rd | |
| 4.2 | Acceptance of August 2015 NEC meeting Minutes
Proposed NTAC, 2 nd ASEA and carried | Areas |
| 4.3 | Review of Action list
The action list was reviewed and some items added.
The revised action list, with old items removed and the rest renumbered, is at the end. | All |
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1. Areas & Groups to send to National Finance Officer all copies of completed risk assessments **Ongoing**
 2. Areas to put National Chairman or a National Officer on the signatory of Area Bank Accounts **Ongoing – but this needs to actually happen. Target May 2016 NEC meeting (for new top tier)**
 3. Areas / HGS to come back to National Tier with plans for 2016 PLUS 75th Jubilee **Ongoing (even if just inviting ex-members. NR objected that was this all we are doing, others said this was the only resource we had). GE suggested picture/video montage.**
 4. Honorary General Secretary to maintain National Trophies Register (with help from NFO as necessary) **Ongoing**

5. National Finance Officer to maintain a list of people banned from PLUS, areas to provide details **Ongoing**
6. Website team to search for a good blogger and twitter poster for the new National Website. **Ongoing**
7. Internet Co-ordinator to establish test login for new website when it is live. **To be reviewed**
8. NC to send reminders of next meeting within a month of the next meeting and a week before **Ongoing**
9. Area Chairs to make sure area/group websites are up to date **Ongoing**
10. MD to compile a list of orphaned area/group websites **Ongoing**
11. Areas to forward NAO their area diary to compile National diary (to abarnard@jet.co.uk) **Ongoing**
12. Ian Crawshaw to ask BBC for permission to use Sara Cox interview on our website **Ongoing**
13. NR/SR to inform National/Areas when online communicating tool training is well in advance so other areas can be involved **Ongoing. NR to put SA online comms tool trial to test. Skype appears to be the most popular tool according to discussion. We need to communicate our Skype names!**
14. NFO / Adam to see about making sure the Public Liability Insurance figure is at £5m (rather than £2m) **Ongoing. 325 members.**
15. NFO to investigate other venues for NEC meetings **Ongoing**
16. NAO to look into different locations for National Spring Holiday by the end of August **Dropped**
17. HGS to amend constitution to reflect 2014 and 2015 NAGM changes and decisions made **Ongoing**
18. NTAC to be in charge of researching collaborative software with a view to amending constitutions **Ongoing – MD thinks Google Drive is the easiest**
19. MAC to sort out Barkingside finance – when they closed they wanted their funds to go to the WASH Committee **Ongoing**
20. Internet Co-ordinator to look at websites on advertising **Ongoing. This is NOT about encouraging pop up type advertising!**
21. Internet Co-Ordinator to investigate remote NEC meetings **Ongoing**

22. ALL - Consider alternatives for when to start the accounting year (for setting budgets) bearing in mind the NAGM can mandate the NEC re: finance **Ongoing MD says problem with Apr-Apr means we are a year behind. But at least NAGM could set budgets. JO prefers what ever is easier to mandate at NAGM. Bear in mind time needed to do the audit. Keep as is for time being. NEC to present article for debate – where the money is to be spent. (Discussed but no action – it is about openness)**
23. Area Chairmen – Each Area to produce a list of Area HLMs to aid calculation of Area Levy **Can Areas feed this back to NAGM.** Names not needed but numbers.
24. NAO / Corinna Teale – Discuss possibilities for the 75th Anniversary and look into possible venues **Done**
25. Review Insurance policies (AR / JO) **Done (some of this done after the meeting)**
26. Finalise the output document from the POW WOW style event of Feb 2016 (JS / FW) **Done – a document was produced.**
27. Send John Area Diaries for e-Newsletter (All) **Done. John looks at the websites.**

New Entries

28. NFO to send HGS a list of National Trophies
29. Steve to email everyone regarding setting up “new group” sub-committee.
30. All – to submit tenders to Erica for ideas for National events (for March / April) with idea of costs by 31st December 2015, a guideline of £150 pp.
31. Area Chairs to follow up group / area activities regarding Risk Assessments. There are guidelines on MH website.
32. James to inquire to the Insurance Company regarding whether volunteer organisers are covered.
33. Internet Coordinator to think of a new name for the twitter handle.
34. All involved with SADY Bank Account: Remove Corinna Teale from the SADY Bank Account and get the bank statement re-directed to James

4.4 Matters arising thereon
Insurance – minuted at Finance Officer’s Report.

All

MD – Recommends a sub-committee for Pow-Wow type stuff. EK how would this be done – meetings? Skype? NR advocated doing it online. JS and FW volunteered. **Action** Steve to email everybody to invite them to join.

MD asked JS if there was any response to the Plus e-Newsletter. JS said people were not receiving it but he has increased the distribution list to 18 and has a sign up form on the Plus News web page. JS says it is an activity list sourced from various places, unlikely to develop into a full magazine, however he said if people send him articles he will put them in. It is still evolving. JO – a direct link can be made to Facebook pages.

MD – National Spring Holiday. Will this continue, it is not good for National if we keep losing national events. EK – how about each Area doing an event that all can attend? Some examples were discussed but these are more local than national events eg Butlins. JS – (high) costs should not be seen as a restrictive parameter to an event. **Action** Erica wants people to submit tenders for National events (for March / April) with idea of costs by **31st December 2015, cost guideline £150 pp.** JS – publicising the opportunity for tendering for the NAGM has not been good, which is why there is a lack of tenders.

A **motion** was raised to subsidise the NEC and VP NAGM costs each for Saturday attendance, tea / coffee, meals, dance and 1 night standard accommodation from the National Reserves. Proposed by NTAC, seconded by SA and **carried** nem con.

A **motion** was raised for the Internet Co-ordinator to set up a parallel website to Mark Hewson's website and investigate cost of cancelling the original (Sunmaia) contract. Proposed NTAC and 2nd SA and **carried** (unanimously).

5 Officers reports (No verbal report will be taken) All

Written reports received.

Chair - No questions for Erica.

HGS - No questions for Joan.

SAA written report. MD asks about Caversham. NR said (inaudible) spoke to South Bucks who offered to support them. Still to get firm details out but seems it may end up being a badminton oriented group. South Bucks associate with lifelong friends which are made at Plus, but we can't always get ex-Plusers to rejoin. MD – people taking advantage of Plus. SR – if we isolate South B and Oxford we'd effectively lose 2 groups. If forced to say you're either Plus or not you'd end up losing people.

NTAC written report. MD was asked what's happening with Slough. MD – none of the members live in Slough, so won't meet in Slough! EK – how was Chiswick dance. MD – 37 people and nearly broke even. AB – only had 1 parking space! MD – proves that Plus discos can still happen. EK – noted Stevenage plan to have a disco. MD Hillingdon doing well, something to be said for running a Plus group in the traditional way.

ASEA report. FW – you have Joe Gurney as advisor – is he active? MP replies yes he comes to the meetings. FW pleased by this.

AB asks where is MA's report. There wasn't one.

NFO reported on behalf of MA – 6K in account. 3 on Committee. Stopping with Google adverts as not been beneficial. Lincs Quest have Christmas meal coming. Trying to get nearly 80 members. Adwords had 1 enquiry. 4-5 enquiries on Google ads. None converted. James was asked if Area was going to close, but the response was that's just rumours. EK – people joined the area hoping to get some money if it shut! Asked why are none of the MA committee here? Work commitments. EK nominated Adam Redshaw to do the report retrospectively!

Dates of Area Conferences were reviewed.

Internet Co-Ordinator: SR said the website payments are in hand. SR said Drupal website not usable. JO – Google sites cost of hosting £240 a year (inaudible). SA's costing around £100 a year – whole package. Easy to manage too. Mark Hewson's site always up to date, others are not. EK – why is MH website reaching end of life? SR – it's Front Page based. Eventually it will stop working. EK – can we do something like that that's easy to update. SR – it's MH's baby does not want anyone to touch it. JO – National gave him free reign to run it. AB – successful because single point of entry. Cited example of his library website at work, multiple point of entry, looks fantastic but it is a mess, people not fully trained to be consistent with content. JS – need to make a decision. We have an internet coordinator prepared to start from scratch, will you let him? SR – will the host provider release us from contract, or will we have to continue to August 2016 and then look at moving URL to

new host provider based on a budget you guys will set me, probably around £100 a year. Wibley (? inaudible) or 1-2-1 – will be similar to SA’s website in format. Could make it similar to MH’s website, able to be used on phones, Paypal online membership. Similar to SA’s, content navigation similar to MH’s. MH not yet been approached re handing it over. If we update it in line with MH this would be counter-productive. AB – build new website, show that it works, then let the existing contract run out. How long to set up? One like the SA one, a couple of weeks. JS said Mark has been told his website will have a finite life. MD – JS did a Wordpress one. JS – don’t want to force that on SR if he does not want it. MD – is this for existing members or to attract new? JO – how many would pay membership fee online? SR – all of them. MD – NTAC do it via our Area treasurer. Groups can send the BACS transfers through. MD – thinks NTAC want the gate keeper to be there. Some discussion about which areas pay online or group cheques.

JO – so leave the current contract to run out then? SR what are we paying for then? MD – hosting. JS – we need a firm proposal what we can and cannot do. SR suggested cancelling the current contract and starting based on SA website. AB said set the new website on the provider, keep current until it expires, in the meantime evaluate Steve’s work before deciding whether to commit to it. EK asks what does changing hosting entail, MD explained it. JS says the server where files are stored are one thing, the hosts name (123 reg) is where you point the URL to the file store. MD – need a budget for the hosting (the server), Sunmaia hosting, 123 has web name. JO last meeting we set a budget of £250 for website. JS – if allow SR to set up new website, there is a cost implication. EK – enquire as to cancellation – cost options. MD – set up the website before sorting out the hosting.

MD said the proposal is to empower SR to set up new website imitating MH as far as possible and then enquire about running costs. **Proposal** - Internet Coordinator to set up a parallel website with same feel to it as MH’s and investigate cost of cancelling current contract (with Sunmaia). Proposed NTAC 2nd SA voted unanimously.

NEC Admin – a report was emailed.

The reports were voted en bloc, proposed by NTAC 2nd by SA and accepted unanimously.

6	Finances	NFO
6.1	National Finance Officer’s Report	NFO

Written statements from James.

Katie Hawkins (NTAC Treasurer) emailed JO re perception of what the area membership is. (NTAC is owing £30). After some discussion it was agreed to use the membership numbers that were given at the last NAGM. Somebody asked about the SADY Loan? It’s the account for the Shropshire Walking Weekend. MD - SADY account owes us money? Was told that if the Shropshire weekend did not happen the money would come back to National. MD – there is a National Spring Holiday account but the holiday may not happen again. EK – Do the leisure park have some of our money? AB – they did but not anymore, they were very hard to get hold of. 60 people for Brean last time. MD – used to be in 100s. MD questioned the higher insurance liability limit - £5m. JO – will cost an extra £200. JO has sent out details. There was a statement saying that we do have some special limits of Trustees’ Liability Insurance written into our policy, these stand at £100K, that was a brief note from the underwriter about what our insurance premium covers. This provides cover where a Trustee becomes legally liable to pay damages following a wrongful act carried out as Trustee. EK asked are we looking for another insurance provider (Ecclesiastical runs out 1st January). MD/JO commented there won’t be another cheaper. AB cited recent history and said Ecclesiastical were hard to beat – decent company. EK and NR advocate being seen to have shopped around for the best deal. EK asked JO about the Income and Expenditure statement, what’s last year and what’s this year. JO – the £50 “Meetings” was last year, as was £7.25 of NEC expenses, £630 AGM and the £252 “website 2014”. JO did not put last year’s web hosting on that account so it is entered twice this year. This year’s NAGM costs is always paid out a year in arrears so would go on next year’s statement.

[After the meeting: several quotes were sought and we went with Hiscox, which has Public Liability Indemnity limit of £5M and special limits for criminal liability and pollution liability at £100K each. The cost of this annual insurance is £602.25]

6.2	Outstanding Debts from Areas	NFO
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MD – would correspond with Katie (Hawkins, NTAC Treasurer) re the NTAC owings.

6.3 General (incl. Risk Assessments)

NFO

MD – do we need to be more proactive? What we are doing is not working as we are not getting RAs. National scale events should have RAs. If outside events use 3rd parties we need confirmation of their public liability insurance that would cover the event. Need to think more when not using 3rd parties eg risks when having a walk outside. FW – delegation has responsibility to have RAs in place. Responsibility rests with Area Chairman, as representative of the NEC. Area Chairs need to be proactive in looking at diaries re submitting RAs.

Concerns raised about whether organisers are covered by PLI – as opposed to attendees.

Action Area Chairs to follow up group / area activities regarding RAs. There are guidelines on MH website.

Action James to inquire to the Insurance Company regarding whether volunteer organisers are covered.

NTAC prop ASEA 2nd JO's report was accepted unanimously.

7 Publicity (excl website)

Chair / All

FW – would be happy to distribute report for searching social organisation or social group by word search and paying for it. FW – can send report to NEC to the end of October. GE – we have a Twitter account that is virtually unused and has a confusing handle (average punter might look up Plusgroups and get porn etc).

SR – thinks the top table closed group is working well. Explore Facebook more. GE knows organisations that thrive on getting members via social media.

AB advocated word of mouth communications. GE – social media hooks people, you have to do the rest yourself. **Action** Internet Coordinator to think of a new name for the twitter handle.

Redbridge did charity walk recently, MP unsure if they did a press release specifically, as they do get in the papers quite often.

8 Membership

EK – it's at 325. GE said Hillingdon getting members, Didcot doing well, peaked at 30 but slid off a bit. JS said former Barnsley members were at WASH → some enthusiasm for opening a group in Sheffield. Already been having a reunion every so often.

MP – **Proposal** membership stays at £20. Proposed ASEA 2nd NTAC and accepted unanimously.

JO wanted to increase it but felt it won't make a difference to quality of events as areas have loads of money already.

9 National Meeting

9.1 Dates for National Meeting(s)

Friday 26th Feb 8pm. Pre NAGM briefing (discuss motions etc)

Saturday 27th NAGM

Sunday 28th Treasure Hunt

GE – don't make the Pow-Wow-esque part of the NAGM on the Sunday, it won't be popular. FW – what about postponing the NAGM to give us more time to prepare for the 75th Anniversary properly. MD – having it around Easter would bring its own problems eg venues. GE – the hotel element is traditional. Discussion about the merits of having the Pow-Wow on the Sunday. GE – Pow-Wow could be on Friday night or Sat morning before the NAGM. JO – the Pow-Wow could be an opportunity to discuss and better word the motions. AB – this could become the Debate Facility and bring this to earlier in the NAGM. EK – wonders if this could make the Friday too long for people. EK likes the idea of Treasure Hunt for the Sunday. Geo-caching was also mooted. AB said the hotel has 2 twin, 15 family (treat as double), 10 double, 2 single = 56 beds. There are also local hotels around. JS – trying to crowbar the Pow-Wow into the NAGM will not fit, suggest drop this idea. It worked the first time because it was a separate event. JO – have the Debate Facility straight after the opening. MD – debate

what? JO – How do we see ourselves in 5 years' time? MD – NTAC propose the abolition of National. JO/GE – could have ex-members present. GE – AB can finalise booking requirements as the venue is also here. FW – World Café idea for everyone present at that time. Not necessarily popular. MD – original purpose (of Pow-Wow) was guide for opening groups. This needs to be an editorial. EK likes this as everyone can input their different views into this. MD – do we still need such a guide? JS – the enthusiasm for this idea seems to have gone.

MD – are we doing 75th Anniversary stuff in the evening? A resounding YES! GE thinks the informal networking element will attract people. GE has a list of HLMs. FW – Facebook is a good networking tool. JS has had an enquiry from someone who had the 1979 National Directory!

AB said the full package currently stands as £128 (2 nights accomm), £98 1 night package, £25 day delegate rate. Suggests any excess comes out of national reserves as we had no formal budget. AB calculated costs for the various package / individual options based on the available budget / latest information. [*After the meeting: These costs have been revised and publicised to all Plussers*]. MD funding against reserves goes against last year's mandate. AB replied that could not be done, we had blown the budget when it was imposed on us. EK wants to know what Areas would think about bearing costs. MD and NR think the areas would feel the costs have to be borne by Reserves rather than Areas or individuals. **Vote** – The top tier and VPs costs for 1 night accommodation and NAGM attendance are met by national reserves. Prop NTAC 2nd SA **Carried** nem con.

AB to sort out deposit cheque to hotel £1000 with JO. Sounds a lot but actually designed to break even.

9.2 NAGM tender 2016

AB has the only tender.

10 Other Matters

Chair / All

10.1 General

Chair / All

Covered elsewhere.

10.2 Groups Development

Covered elsewhere.

11 Activities

Chair / All

Shropshire Walking Weekend

Income / expenditure account against budget for last year's event – shows we made a slight surplus. FW had notes. We had 10 people, surplus £50. Balance on SADY account is £596.48. Corinna Teale wants to emphasise the event is now self-financing. Wants to do it again same basis: £115 / head cost, for 2016 event. The Federation will gain a YHA Approved membership card as a consequence. FW is showing us the proposed budget – the event is underwritten. Corinna gets the bank statements. FW will change the signatories in the near future. FW and JS have to go to Sutton Coldfield to meet Corinna / JO to change the sigs.

Action Take Corinna off statements and make sure JO gets the bank statements for the SADY account.

2016 event weekend set for 5-8th August.

11.1 Diary

Chair / All

WASH Fri 6 – Mon 9 November

Send any other National or Area diary dates to Adrian abarnard@jet.uk

12 Any Other Business

Chair

AB reminded us that Jeff's proposals re budget 2015 got through on the basis of being for 1 year, so the Area membership fees would revert back to £600 / Area. JO said he did not think he could restand as he has served 3 consecutive terms.

AB said Merry Christmas!

AB – National Pool – move from December to avoid clashes.

12.1 2015 – 2016 NEC

Why is this on agenda? Perhaps to cover who will stand for next year's NEC, but not discussed.

13 Date, time and Venue of Next Meeting
The NAGM!

HGS

Future NEC Meetings

Saturday 14th May 2016

13th August

Sat 19th Nov (provisional)

JO will be late on the Friday (of the NAGM)

14 Close Meeting

Erica closed the meeting at 14.37

Chair

Restated Action List following NEC Meeting 21st Nov 15

1. Areas & Groups to send to National Finance Officer all copies of completed risk assessments
2. Areas to put National Chairman or a National Officer on the signatory of Area Bank Accounts
3. Areas / HGS to come back to National Tier with plans for 2016 PLUS 75th Jubilee
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