

## **National Chairman's report February 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

Dear Plus Friends,

As we left the Jacobean hotel on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2020 unaware of what the future held for us all. 2020 will go down in history as the year when the greatest number of people of the world have ever suffered since the end of the Second World War.

Having never been in a pandemic no-one knew what to expect or how long the situation would go on. National lockdowns came and went then tiers of restrictions following in an attempted to control the affects of the virus. Then back to lockdown three.

This made running a National social club challenging with people's plans and social events being cancelled or restricted.

It is pleasing to see so many groups continuing to meet online weekly. Thank you for those who have invited me to your meetings.

From Kings Lynn, Bromsgrove & Redditch, Lincs Quest, Midland area meetings, WASH and the Midlands New Years Eve online party. There are a few that I still have not been able to join. So please send me a link to your meeting so I can meet your members.

Bromsgrove & Redditch opened as a new group and continues to meet as an online group. This is fantastic news as it has been far too long since a new Plus group has opened.

As I said last year, this is the ideal time to promote Plus online to a captive audience that stuck at home. When the time comes and we are allowed to return to a normal life. Then meeting up

face to face will become easy. Lincs Quest have still been able to recruit some new members so there is no limit.

For many of you I know that the past 12 months have been extremely tough on your personal lives, work and careers & mental health. The one factor that can help is to keep in contact with your friends. Actively join online Plus meetings and be a part of the meeting may help. Sharing with someone how you are feeling may also help too. Just telling someone when it is beginning to get too much. The tough part is telling someone and it can be easier if it is someone you do not know. Which is why talking to the Samaritans for example may help.

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

Last year only one large scale face to face event was held after NAGM 2020 and that was the Centre Parcs Weekend in Suffolk. Thank you for everyone who attended and help make it an memorable event despite the numerous restrictions in place to help keep everyone safe. Everyone agreed that they had as good a time as they could. We had two break out areas outside the villa's both with lighting. One was a huge shelter and the other one an open space with a patio heater that made sitting outside at night more bearable. Thank you Nick Grant for loaning the heater.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of November Lincs Quest held a quiz in support of their nominated charity DEBRA. The charity supports those people who have unusual skin complaints. £282.10 was raised on the night. The final total of monies raised by the group for the year for a number of well-known charities totalled £1154.10.

Well done Lis, Geoff and your members.

WASH was one event that was helped by keeping the event alive online with the help of Adam Redshaw and James Oliver hosting the music and event via zoom. It finally finished in the early hours of the 16<sup>th</sup> November.

I am please to announce that for a second year the membership fee is to be suspended along with area levies.

Please ensure that you continue to maintain your membership by contacting your group or area membership officer. In the case of Southern Area we have an online function to re-join.

This year is the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Plus and a subcommittee was setup last year to oversee the planning and execution of the event. I know that there has been quite a few concerns raised over the event. I believe that despite the current situation which no one even the Government can honesty predict. The subcommittee have a contingency plan in the unlikely event it cannot be held on its original date of the 12th June. The deposit was paid using a credit card to minimise any loss. The ticket monies are being held separately and only if the Government allows a lifting of the current restrictions will the event be held. We are nearly 5 months away from the date and anything can change. If in the unlikely event it cannot be held or only with a fewer number of people attending. Then the committee will explore other avenues to allow everyone to attend. This for example could be members from far a field joining us online. What ever happens then the plan remains fluid. The date could be moved to later in the year or next year.

Please be assured that your safely will always be paramount in any decisions made.

2021 will be another year of challenges and no-one can be assured where it will end.

I will be standing as National Chair this year and if elected it will be my last year. Public service is calling me and I expect that 2022 I will be elected as a Councillor for Basingstoke Council.

If you would like to become a member of the NEC but are unsure that you can do it. Then now is the time to come forward. The opportunity to shadow a member of the NEC is always available.

Finally below is a link to a form to register to join the National Annual General Meeting on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2021 from 10.00 am.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPage.aspx?lang=en-GB&origin=OfficeDotCom&route=Start&fromAR=1#FormId=DQSlkWdsW0yxEjajBLZtrQAAAAAAAAAAAAAFvESX4Zu9UMFYzTKNSMTAyNzl1U1AzQVE1RUNXTExCOC4u>

It is free to join and is available via zoom. Each group has two delegates who can vote and all members are welcome to join and watch the meeting.

Please note that delegates will only be able to speak online. Visitors can use the chat function and at the discretion of the National Chair may speak at the meeting.

So if you have an important point remembering that time is quite tight and that online meetings do zap peoples energy more so than face to face meetings. There will be an evening event of music and pause during the evening. To award trophies in recognition of successes and achievements over the past year.

I look forward to seeing you all online at NAGM this year and if possible face to face in the future.

Take care, stay safe and remember to ensure you continue to follow all Government and local instructions during the pandemic.

Steve

Steve Rolfe

National Chairman